

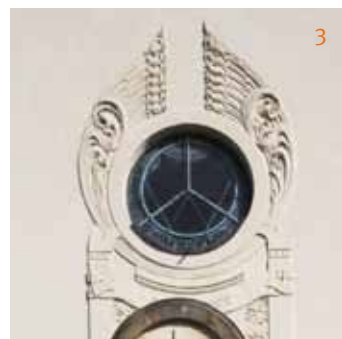
CHURCH DESCRIPTION

The church has a single nave, with the presbytery facing north-east. A short entrance hallway leads to the vestibule beneath the choir loft. The nave ends with a separate polygonal presbytery¹, connected by a staircase with the vestry, unusually located in a semi-basement. The former sexton's quarters and the boiler room are on the same level. A granite stairway leads to an elevated landing with the entry portal. The entrance is surrounded by an overhanging Art Nouveau gable, flanked by the statuettes of singing angels.² Originally, the center of the gable contained a christogram, which was replaced by the sign of the fish topped by a cross, the official symbol of the Old Catholic Church, during the 1990s renovations. The stone door jamb alternates a simple, smooth surface with a rich rose-motif décor. There is a circular window above the portal, on the choir loft level, surrounded by a stylized tulip motif. Beneath the window, a stucco cartouche bears the inscription "Ehre sei Gott in der Hohe und Frieden Menschen auf Erden" (Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth).³ The front façade has delicate stucco decorations. The sides of the church are decorated with small gables, identical in shape and decoration to the frontage. The most prominent feature of the building is the slender, square-section steeple, placed asymmetrically to the left of the front façade axis.

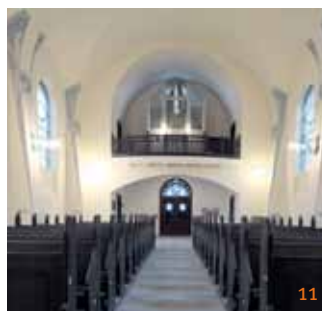
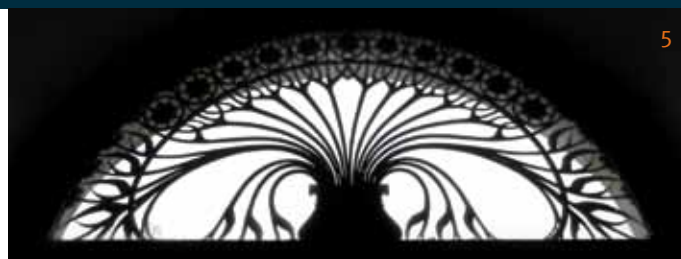
The church's interior furnishings complement the elegant simplicity of the exterior. The nave is covered by a suspended concrete shell vault. The side walls are lined with four simple pilasters, covered with delicate floral décor.^{7,8} The niches between the pilasters house six arch top windows, their



Overall view of the presbytery vault with decorative painting (after restoration)



stained glazing decorated with tulip motifs.⁴ The vaulted presbytery recedes into an apse. The altar stands on a simple platform. A rectangular plinth holds a large wooden crucifix, flanked by half-figures of singing angels. The simple cross is surrounded by an intricate latticework of oak branches, originally gold-plated. The simple wooden communion table is topped by a wooden inlaid tabernacle. The altar is architect Josef Zásche's own design. The polygonal pulpit stands beneath the triumphal arch on the Gospel side of the church. The nave is illuminated by triple-branched, wrought-iron wall sconces,¹⁰ and has two rows of wooden pews with asymmetrically rounded fronts. The choir loft overseeing the nave is encircled by a wooden banister.¹¹ The baptismal chapel contains an original pendant chandelier, and a baptismal font of reddish brown marble.



ARCHITEKT



JOSEF ZÁSČE was born on November 9th, 1871, to glass cutter Josef Zásche Sr. and his wife Franziska. They lived in the house No. 164, which still stands today in Křižová street.

In the years 1885–89, Zásche studied at the State Technical School of Civil Engineering in Liberec. His fellow schoolmates included, among others, famous architects Adolf Loos and Rudolf Bitzan.

In 1889, Zásche enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, studying under the tutelage of Karl von Hassenauer. Three years later, he graduated with the prestigious Haggenmüller Award, and obtained a position in a construction and engineering company owned by Friedrich Schachner. In 1895, Zásche relocated to Prague and established his own architecture firm. His first independent projects were located in northern and western Bohemia. From square, abstract Art Nouveau style structures, such as the former savings bank building in Aš or the Old Catholic church in Jablonec, which foreshadowed the ascent of modernism, he gradually evolved toward a reductionist, reformed Neo-Classical style, clearly present in his most important projects prior to World War I: the palace built for the Prague Iron and Steel Industry Company, the building of the Viennese Bank Union in Prague, and the library in Ústí nad Labem. Neo-Classical approach to architecture is also apparent in Zásche's later works. Zásche's most significant project is the Church of the Sacred Heart in Jablonec nad Nisou. Zásche's contemporary, art historian Rudolf Hönigschmid, remarked that Zásche "was able to utilize modern architectural elements to create a sacred building that still managed to maintain its traditional aspect and connection to the glorious past."

Zásche was one of the few German architects who maintained amicable relationships with his Czech colleagues, such as Jan Kotěra and Pavel Janák; he even collaborated with them on a few projects. Unfortunately, as an ethnic German he was forced to leave Prague in 1945, despite the attempts of his Czech colleagues to intercede on his behalf. Zásche's archive was destroyed and he was forcibly resettled to Germany. He died forgotten in the town of Schackensleben near Magdeburg, on 11th October 1957.

Architect Josef Zásche in the autumn of his life

The Old Catholic Church in the Czech Republic
Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

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tel: (+420) 731 260 051
e-mail: kolaczek@seznam.cz
www.starokatolici-jablonec.cz

Services are held at 5 pm every Thursday
(in the heated church basement)
and 10 am on Sundays

(in the church nave from Easter through November,
and in the heated church basement for the rest
of the year).



GPS souřadnice

N 50.7250839°, E 15.1860806°

More information at

www.npu.cz/uop-li

heritage promotion section

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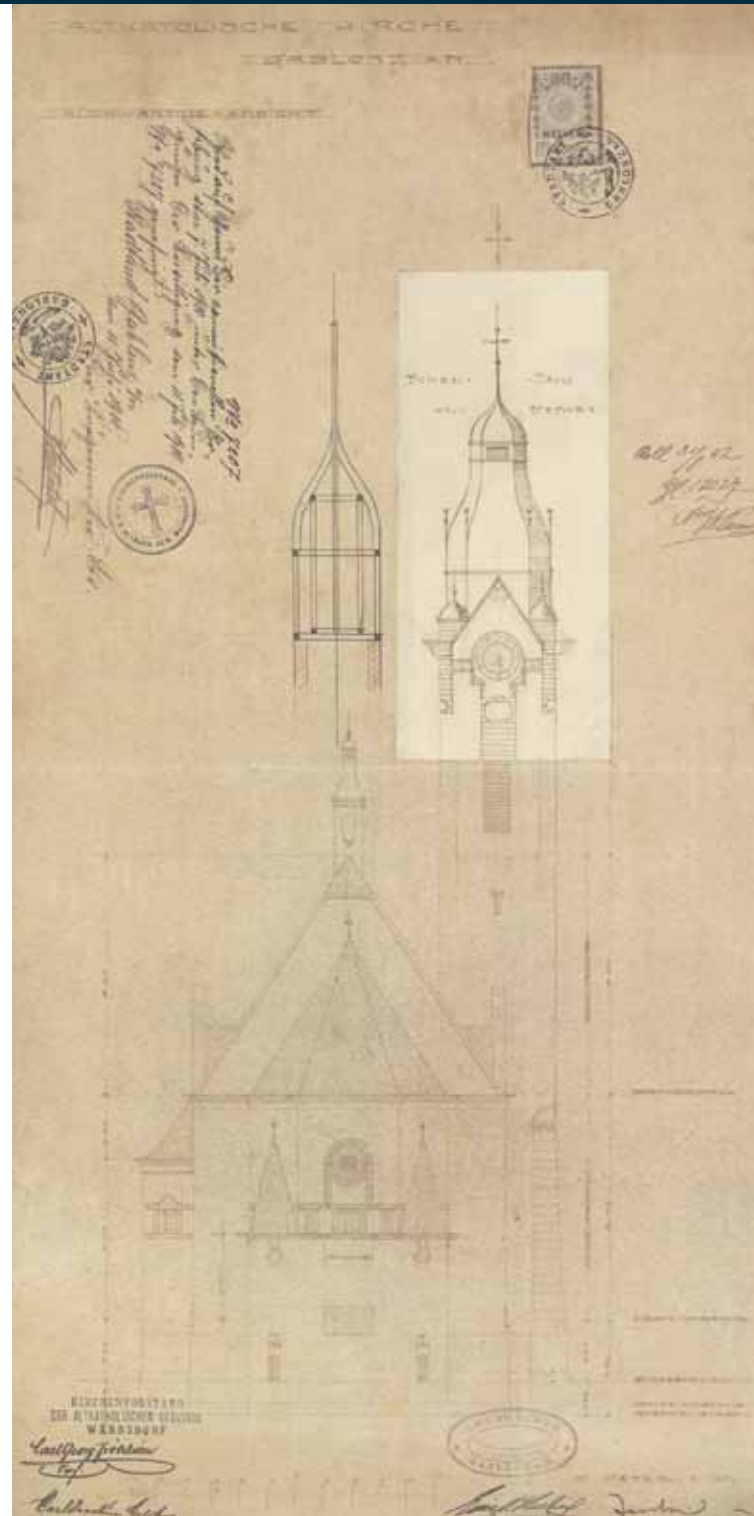
JABLONEC NAD NISOU

Church of the Exaltation
of the Holy Cross



The Scheibler Building in Husova street, built at the initiative of Josef Scheibler in the years 1903–1904, based on Robert Hemmrich's design

The Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is located at the intersection of Novoveská and Husova streets in the town of Jablonec nad Nisou, not far from the road connecting Jablonec with the town of Tanvald. The church was declared a cultural heritage monument in 1958, and is registered in the Central Culture Heritage Register of the Czech Republic under No. 26276/5–31. The Old Catholic church building is unequivocally the purest example of the Art Nouveau style, both in the Czech lands and in Central Europe. Worth mentioning is the church's suspended concrete shell vault and the utilization of reinforced concrete framework, inspired by contemporary industrial buildings. The church is organically connected to the adjoining premises known as the Scheibler Building, as well as the nearby clergy house, built in the years 1903–1904 to complement the church. The premises, funded by Josef Scheibler, were designed by architect Robert Hemmrich. Hemmrich based his design partly on Zásche's concept, using certain style elements for the clergy house.



CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

The plan to build an Old Catholic church in Jablonec was born in 1899. Businessman and exporter Josef Scheibler donated 6,000 guildens to the cause, which were used to purchase the plot. Initial plans were for the church to have a more traditional, neo-gothic design, similar to the Church of the Ascension in the nearby town of Desná; eventually, however, the investors decided to assign the project to young Josef Zásche, perhaps thanks to his design of the new Roman Catholic church on Horní náměstí [Upper Square]. Zásche submitted his blueprints in mid-June 1900, and the foundation stone was laid on August 18th. The construction was completed two years later, and the church was officially consecrated on November 8th, 1902. The final building costs amounted to 92,000 crowns, and were mostly covered by Josef Scheibler. Construction was carried out by a local company, managed by architect and builder Emilian Herbig. By World War II, the church had undergone various partial repairs (the tower clock, electrical wiring, and the roof, among other things). No major repairs were done to the church until 1971; by that time, the building was in poor condition due to many years of neglect. Reconstruction was carried out by the Farming Cooperative in Zlatá Olešnice; the church was closed down for the duration, and used as storage space and a tinsmith's workshop. The church was re-consecrated in 1982. Unfortunately, the original decorative paintings in the presbytery were covered in blue paint. Things took turn for the better after the year 1989: the roofing and sheet metal elements were replaced in 1998–1999, and the outer façade was restored in the years 2001–2005. Reconstruction of the presbytery started in 2013, and restoration of the decorative paint on the walls of the nave commenced in 2016.⁶

Josef Zásche, church layout, a view from the south-east, 1900 (parish archive)



Main altar, old photo, Vojtěch Obereigner, 1959 (photo collection of the NHI, General Headquarters, reg. No. N084365)

HISTORY OF THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

"We, the Germans of Austria, are still burning with the sacred flame that has ignited the German courage and strength to fight for the light, for the spiritual independence of our nations against the obscurantism and oppression of the Church in Rome... As faithful guardians and protectors of the great heritage of our fathers, we will bravely join the noble fight that has erupted in Germany."

The Old Catholic Church was formed after the First Vatican Council (1869–70), in reaction to the newly proclaimed Roman Catholic dogma of papal infallibility. The idea fell on fertile ground in Germany, thanks to its long tradition of fairly autonomous dioceses, as well as in Austria-Hungary; Old Catholic congregations emerged fairly soon, especially

in the developed industrial borderlands of north Bohemia, where ethnic Germans were in the majority. The Old Catholic church in north Bohemia was established by Anton Nittel, a priest from the town of Varnsdorf; to support his endeavor, he even established an Old Catholic newspaper (Abwehr – Defence). The new church was officially recognized by the state on October 17th, 1877, and a new diocese was established, first in Vienna, and then in Varnsdorf in 1896.

The Old Catholic Church in Jablonec nad Nisou was closely connected to the nearby town of Desná; originally, the two towns formed a single parish. Crucial for the history of the Old Catholic Church was the year 1885: believers from the entire territory of the Jizera Mountains met in the Geling Hotel on Komenského street, at the initiative of Josef Mieth, the first Jablonec resident to convert to Old Catholicism. A year later, they applied for permission to establish a new, independent parish, but the request was denied. In spite of that, a local group of the Old Catholic Society was established in the town in 1887. On September 1st, 1897, the region was divided into two separate parishes (Desná and Jablonec), and a priest was permanently assigned to the Jablonec parish. Donations from members of the congregations, quite a few of whom were rich industrialists, the most prominent among them being Josef Scheibler, made it possible to start the construction of a new church. However, Jablonec was only recognized as a separate parish by a ministerial decree on March 4th, 1907.

Overall view of the church, along with the premises known as the Scheibler Buildings

