



CAPUCHIN CRYPT IN BRNO

You are standing in the monastery of **the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor**. This Christian community belonging to the Roman Catholic Church is inspired by the life of the Italian Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226). **You can find a little insight into the history of this place in the panel at the ticket office.**

The Capuchin Crypt

Nowadays, this place **serves first of all as the last rest** of those who were buried here in 1656–1784. 153 Capuchin friars and 52 benefactors of the Order lay here. The bodies of the dead that have fallen apart over the centuries are buried in a tomb you will be passing by later.

Natural mummification of the bodies was created by a sophisticated system of ventilation holes that slid over the vault of the church. Actually, the dead were gradually dried out. We can add that this **mummification was obviously not intentional during the construction of the crypt.**

The Capuchins opened the crypt to the public as **a reminder of our human transience – memento mori**. Visitors have been coming here for more than 160 years.

The Capuchin monastery in dates

- **1604** » arrival of the Capuchins in Brno; construction of the first monastery
- **1645** » monastery was demolished due to the defense of the city against Swedish troops
- **1648** » construction of the second monastery, this time inside the city walls
- **1656** » completion of the building and the ceremonial consecration of the church
- **1753** » church was enlarged by the Chapel of St. Fidel, the Capuchin Friar
- **1763** » construction of so-called Trenck's wing
- **1925** » crypt was open to the public
- **1950** » operation K, the state placed the Friars to detention camps and the monastery together with the church were confiscated
- **1990** » restoration of the Capuchin province and restitution of the property
- **1995** » commencement of the reconstruction of the complex
- **2012** » restoration of the interior of the church
- **2014–2017** » renovation of the facade of the church

TU FUI, EGO ERIS

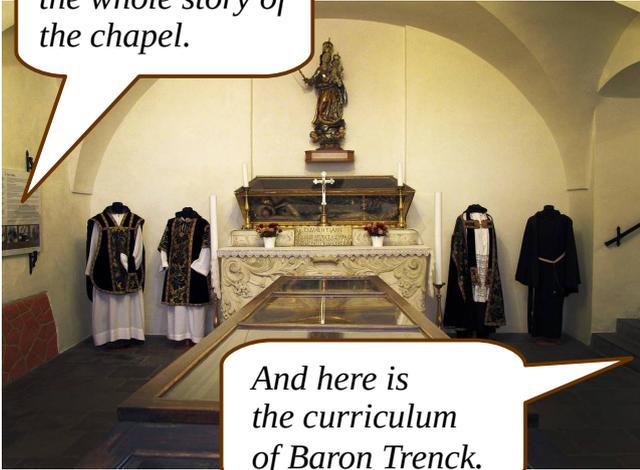
*This Latin inscription above the entrance to the chapel means **I was you, you will be me.***

It is one of many variations of the remark of definiteness of our existence in this world.



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Here you can find the whole story of the chapel.



And here is the curriculum of Baron Trenck.

CHAPEL

You have just entered the chapel that originally served as a winter choir, that is to say, for a prayer of the Capuchin Friars.

Since 1872, the coffin of **František Baron Trenck**, commander of a unit of Pandurs, has been placed here.

And in the last century, the reliquary of the Christian **Klemenciána** was moved here. You can read her remarkable history **on a label beneath the reliquary**.

František Baron Trenck

What does this warrior, emblazoned with countless legends, have in common with the Capuchins? They met at the fortress of Špilberk. **Baron Trenck as a prisoner** sentenced to life, **Capuchin Friar** as his confessor. Capuchin's Chronicle proves that the time spent in jail moved Baron's conscience and that he later **regretted his unsettled life**. He donated part of his property to charitable purposes and he wished to be buried as a penitent here, in the crypt.

Beside his body, you can see a finger that someone had stolen to the deceased, probably in 1872, this remain appeared in the museum in Špilberk. Unfortunately, we do not know the details. In 2016, Brno City Museum asked for the return of Trenck's thumb, which eventually happened on March 8, 2017. František Baron Trenck is, therefore, complete again.



On the left side there is a portrait of baron Trenck from mid-18th century...

...on the right side the portrait from 2018. This is one of the results of anthropological research.



Trenck has a gunpowder-colored skin on the face. It is a remembrance of conquest of Bavarian castle Diesenstein, in the year 1742. At that time, a barrel with gunpowder exploded into Franz's immediate vicinity.

ARS MORIENDI EXHIBITION

2 Few steps from the chapel have now taken you to Prague of the 17th century. You are surrounded by **Baroque frescoes** which were possibly created by one of the Capuchin Friars.

The panel on the left tells you the story of the creation of frescoes which can be found **in the crypt under the Church of the Nativity of the Loreto in Prague**.

Individual frescoes illustrate the **transience of human existence and our actions**. Part of the composition is also **hope**, captured in the Lazarus Resurrection scene. It shows God's love, which is stronger than death – death which was defeated and love which opened us the gate of eternity.

THE GRIMM FAMILY

This **famous family of builders and architects** are inherently part of the history of the Brno convent. They are linked to the Capuchin community not only **by working relations but before all by friendly ones**.

Their life stories could be novelized. **On the wall panel**, you will find information about their association with this Capuchin monastery.

List of benefactors who were buried here.



Among them, you can find a builder Jan Křtitel Erna or a printer Tomáš Maxmilián Svoboda.



In translation: Thus passes the glory of the world.

CRYPT OF BENEFACTORS

Around the Capuchin community, there were also **other interesting people** who wanted to follow the Friars even in death.

The spouses of Vrbno, owners of the Fulnek manor in northern Moravia are buried in this part of the tomb. Thanks to their grandfather, the Capuchins could also settle down in Fulnek.

General Zinzendorf, commander of the Špilberk fortress, or **Olomouc Leopold Sak of Bohuňovice**, **Governor** of the region of also rest here.

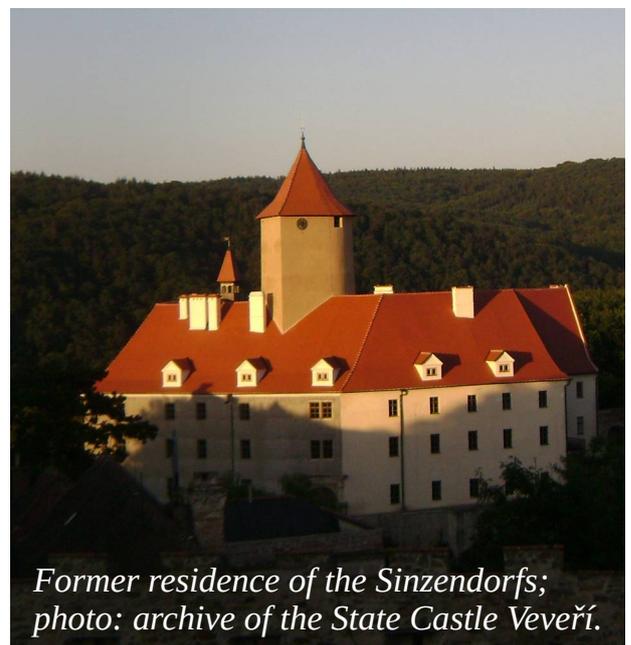
You can find more interesting things about their life on the panels **on the wall**.

The Counts of Sinzendorf

The Capuchins enjoyed the extraordinary favour of the Sinzendorf family, who owned, among other things, the castle of Veverří, located near Brno, and the surrounding manors.

In the tomb, there are also buried spouses **Isabella and Weikard** of Sinzendorf, and even two of their three children: **Marie Alžběta**, married Berchtold, after the death of her spouse Waldorf, and her younger brother, **Prosper Antonín**.

You can read more about the result of our quest for this old Lower Austrian family **on the panels**.



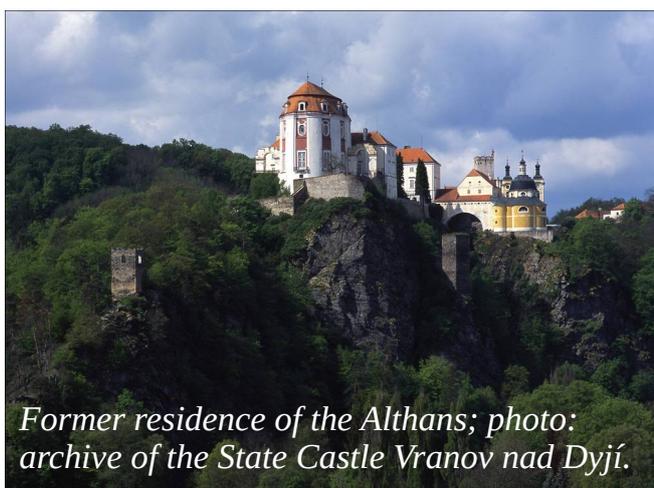
*Former residence of the Sinzendorfs;
photo: archive of the State Castle Veverří.*

BARNABÁŠ ORELLI

5 Now you are standing right **under the main aisle of the church** and you have probably noticed that the individual tombs have **different levels of height**. It is due to the fact that the church with the monastery was built on the parcels of nine houses whose cellars served to build the crypt. You have a Baroque church above your heads and the remains of Renaissance buildings under your feet.

Remains of those whose bodies have fallen apart over time are entombed in the **brick tomb**.

The most famous of the dead of this part of the tomb is undoubtedly the chimney master **Barnabáš Orelli**. You can find more information about him **on the panel on the wall**; as well as about another important benefactor, **Count of Althan**.



The reliquary donated by spouses Orelli to the local church.

CRYPT OF THE CAPUCHIN FRIARS

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The burial ground of the Capuchins is undoubtedly the most impressive place in the crypt. **This very simple way of their burying** reflects the basic charisma of the Order: poverty.

The Capuchins, like all Christians, perceive **death as the gateway** to God. Saint Francis of Assisi even calls it “his sister”.

More about the Capuchin burying can be found on the wall panel. The other panel contains **the Canticle of the Sun**, which was composed by Saint Francis just before his death. He had been expecting his last day with joyful confidence that he would finally meet his God.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your visit. We wish you **not to delay good and important things**. As the classic says, our life “already ebbing in the new-born child, disappears like a bubble, like fleeting smoke”.

P. S. Please return this guide at the ticket office. Thank you.