



ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL



PRAÇA JOSÉ MARIA DOS SANTOS, ON MARKET DAY

Photograph by Manuel Giraldes da Silva, undated
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CAPELA DE S. JOSÉ (ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL)

This chapel has a rural character and an architectural simplicity which are consistent with the size of the town at the time it was built. Erected on land given by José Maria dos Santos to the people of Pinhal Novo in 1872, it was initially consecrated to Our Lady of the Lamp (with a feast day on 2 February), and only later to Saint Joseph. Funds for its construction were raised through set contributions; the start date of the work (1872) is carved on the keystone of the arched entrance doorway.

The first mass was celebrated on 2 February, 1874, by the Palmela parish priest, Father António José da Costa. The chapel bore images which had been brought from several other chapels or churches, such as the Chapel of Lagoa da Palha, or the Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Livramento, in Setúbal. The ceiling came, according to tradition, from the Brancanes Convent in Setúbal. As for the Baroque altarpiece of the main altar, it originates from the Church of Santa Cruz do Barreiro, which was desecrated during the First Republic; it came to this temple in 1913. This example of baroque carving presents us with the template for one of the most erudite and monumental altarpieces of the Estilo Nacional: the main altar of the church of the old Marvila Convent in Lisbon, by José Rodrigues Ramalho (from around 1690) or the Church of Santo António, in Lagos (1718). The tabernacle, flanked by friezes depicting foliage, is consistent with the rest of the altarpiece.

The building housed the first Pharmacy of Pinhal Novo (called the Matos Pharmaceutical Laboratory). It belonged to pharmacist and dedicated citizen Manuel Godinho de Matos who, alongside José Lopes dos Santos and other local inhabitants, was behind the construction of the Pinhal Novo cemetery and whose civic action led to the creation of the local Parish in 1928; Lopes dos Santos would become its first President.

In 1886, the first primary school was temporarily housed in the chapel sacristy. This put pressure on the Administrator of the Setúbal Municipality (which the Palmela Municipality belonged to between 1855 and 1926) to create an Official School in Pinhal Novo. This would become a reality in 1891.

On the last Sunday of August, the procession making the pilgrimage to the Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Atalaia meets in the courtyard.

Bibliography

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