

PARISH CHURCH OF ST STEPHEN OF NOALLA



St Stephen

The church of St Stephen of Noalla is the largest in the municipality of Sanxenxo. It has a rectangular floor plan from the 13th century, a period in which the Romanesque style was still active in Galicia. During the 17th century the chancel (presbytery) was changed and covered with stone vaults. At this time, the sacristy was built on the south wall and they renovated the tympanum of the western doorway, in which the archivolt with pointed arches and the carvings, a scene of the crucifixion of Christ, stand out today. The large bell tower and the door with the image of St Stephen on the north wall were built in the 18th century.

The nave has four sections constructed in semicircular transverse arches. The first two correspond to the medieval part and are covered with cross vaults, with circular keystones without decoration; the last two sections, the Baroque part, are covered with a smooth barrel vault (no coffering). The nave is separated from the chancel by two steps.



On the north wall, under a semicircular arch, there is a small Baroque altarpiece, with four thick Solomonic columns profusely decorated with vine leaves and bunches of grapes. Some souls of great beauty are shown in the lower part. In the central niche is St Anthony with the Child (18th century). On both sides, there are two monks of the Carmelite Order: St John of the Cross and St Simon Stock, since the altarpiece is dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and not to St Anthony.



18th century door. It has upper and lower lugs and a large lintel ending in a scallop-shell niche with a slightly polychromed carving of St Stephen (Baroque). The niche is enclosed in coffered jambs and the set is completed with a large classic multi-moulded pediment.



The church does not have a main altarpiece. Instead, the central part is presided over by a large Crucified Christ (possibly from the 19th century); we see St Stephen to its right, and to its left, Our Lady of Mount Carmel; both figures date back to the 18th century.



Pointed arch doorway. It has two archivolt also pointed with decoration typical of the 13th century in Galicia. The tympanum was renovated in the 17th century. It rests on primitive capitals and on a Baroque lintel, designed to support the three figures of a Calvary: Jesus Christ, Mary the Virgin and St Mary Magdalene.



Bell tower (18th century)

Sacristy (late 17th century)

Presbytery (chancel) (17th century)

Nave (13th century)

Atrium

West portal, tympanum with the representation of the Calvary (17th - 18th centuries)

Door with the image of St Stephen (18th century)



The Parish of Noalla
 Area: 8,7 Km²
 Population: 2.299 inhabitants (2022)

The place name "Noalla" refers to a place where there are "allas", branches or dry leaves of garlic in Galician. There are over 3.770 parishes in Galicia (666 in the province of Pontevedra) of which 106 have St Stephen as their patron saint. In the ranking of most frequent dedications, St Stephen occupies eleventh place in Galicia, with St Mary occupying first place.

In the parish of Noalla, the largest in the municipality, as well as the parish church, there are two other chapels: the Chapel of St John of Aios and the Hermitage of Our Lady of A Lanzada.

Other heritage elements are the hill fort and fortress tower of A Lanzada and the manor house Pazo de Quintáns (designated Cultural Interest Asset).

On the 26th December, devotees go to the parish church to entrust themselves to St Stephen, since he is attributed healing powers over hemorrhoids. The parish of St Stephen of Noalla has 17 rural communities: A Igrexa, A Lanzada, A Revolta, Aios, Codesal, Cova de Pazos, Fonte de Ons, Mourelos, O Casal, O Pombal, O Tombelo, Os Caseiros, Quintáns, Salgueiro do Mato, Soutullo, Telleiro and Tramalleiro.

Environmentally speaking, part of Noalla's area is included in the Natura 2000 Network as Ons-O Grove Complex SAC (Special Areas of Conservation) and as Intertidal Complex SPA for birds of Umia - O Grove, A Lanzada, Punta Carreirón and Lagoa Bodeira (SPA: Special Protection Area) as well as in the international network of protected wetlands (RAMSAR).