Convento de Cristo e Castelo Templário

ABOUT

Photo: IGESPAR - Luís Pavão

Convento de Cristo e Castelo Templário

The Convent of Christ

In 1983, UNESCO awarded the classification of world heritage to the Templar Castle and the Convent of the Knights of Christ in Tomar, a unique monument in the history of the western world. Built on a site that was originally used for Roman worship, this vast monumental complex illustrates seven centuries of Portugal's history and contains several important mementoes of decisive moments in the history of the western world.

Afonso Henriques, our first king, bestowed upon the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem vast tracts of land between the Mondego and Tagus rivers. Legend has it that, on reaching this region, the Knights were inspired by favourable omens to choose a hill on which to establish a castle and the name that they were to give to it: Tomar. The year was 1160 and D. Gualdim Pais, the Provincial Master of the Order of the Temple, ordered the castle to be built and the region to be settled.

The Order of the Temple was disbanded in 1314 as a result of its persecution by the French king Philip IV, the Fair. However, at the wishes of the Portuguese king D. Dinis, the members of the order, its property and privileges were all totally integrated into a new order - the Militia of the Knights of Christ in 1319. The Templars were thus able to continue their sacred mission of Chivalry in Portugal. Outwardly, the main sign marking the change was to be seen in the Order's cross, which now had straight arms instead of the curved arms of the Templar cross.

Together with Prince Henry the Navigator, the new military Order began to prepare the Portuguese nation for the great enterprise of the maritime discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Tomar Castle was by then a Convent and the headquarters of the Order, and Prince Henry was made its governor and perpetual administrator. The lay master transformed the knights into navigators whose mission it was to expand the kingdom and spread the faith through the maritime discoveries. This was why the caravels bore the Cross of the Knights of Christ on their sails, and this sign was to be carved into various stone landmarks all around the world.

Contacts

Address:	2300 Tomar
Telephone:	+351 249 313 481
Fax:	+351 249 322 730
Website:	http://www.conventocristo.pt

Timetable

October/May: 9am-5.30pm; June/September: 9am-6.30pmClosed on 1 January, Easter Sunday, 1 May, 24 and

2013 Turismo de Portugal. All rights reserved.
info@visitportugal.com

25 December.

2013 Turismo de Portugal. All rights reserved.
info@visitportugal.com