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PRACTICAL **INFORMATION**

ST BAVO'S CATHEDRAL (Sint-Baafsplein)
Open from 8.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (1 April - 31 October)
Open from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (1 November - 31 March)

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH (Cataloniëstraat)
Open from 10.00 a.m. to 5 p.m.
(Tuesday to Sunday from 1 January to 31 December)
Open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. (every Monday)

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH (Sint-Michielsplein)
Open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
(Monday to Saturday from 1 April to 30 September)
Open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
(every Saturday from 1 October to 31 October)

ST JAMES' CHURCH (Bij Sint-Jacobs)
Open from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
(every Friday and Saturday from the first Friday of April
to the last Saturday of October)

OUR LADY OF ST PETER'S CHURCH (Sint-Pietersplein)
Open from 10.00 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. (Tuesday to Saturday)
Open on Sundays:
Open from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
and from 2.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. (from 1 April to 31 October)
Open from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
and from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. (from 1 November to 31 March)

vzw **Monumentale Kerken Gent**, Bisdomplein 1, 9000 Gent
site: www.MKGent.be - e-mail: MKG@kerknet.be

Met de steun van:

Fotografie Sint-Baafskathedraal en Sint-Michielskerk © Lukas - Art in Flanders vzw

ST JAMES' CHURCH

St James' Church has a rich history. The people used to call it "Sint-Jacobs-in-de-meerschen" or St. James in the marsh after the marshy area where the first parish church was founded in 1093.

The choice of St James was probably inspired by the growing interest in pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. As well as being the patron saint of shippers, St James also possibly suited the needs of an urban population that rapidly grew under the influence of the nearby harbour. The oldest material traces of the building date from the twelfth century. The remarkable variety in the architectural elements bears testimony to the various transformations that the church has since undergone. The interior is equally heterogeneous. As such St James' Church is a unique witness of almost 900 years of church architecture in Ghent. Besides paintings by Jan Boeckhorst and Michiel Coxcie, St James' Church also has a unique church tabernacle and two funerary monuments dedicated to Jan Palfijn.

OUR LADY OF ST PETER'S CHURCH

Our Lady of St Peter's Church has exuded tranquillity and spirituality for centuries. As a pure Baroque church its architecture also contributes to this atmosphere.

The old medieval church of St Peter's Abbey sustained significant damage during the Reformation Iconoclasm in the sixteenth century, which is why the decision was made to build a new church in the early seventeenth century, in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation. Our Lady of St Peter's Church was built by the architect Pieter Huyssens and is considered one of his masterpieces, as well as one of the best examples of Baroque architecture in the Southern Netherlands.

Although large sections of the interior were lost during the French Revolution when the abbey was abolished, Our lady of St Peter's Church is still a repository for several art treasures, including paintings by Jan Janssens and Gaspar de Craeyer, the Pierre van Peteghem organ and some unique miracle paintings associated with Our Lady ter Rive.

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INTRODUCTION - PREFACE ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

Ghent is a city of churches and their spires define the city's skyline. All these churches bear witness to the city's exceptionally rich history and its magnificent heritage. The not-for-profit association Monumentale Kerken Gent (Monumental Churches of Ghent) was established to improve access to the heritage of these five centrally located churches and ensure that the public can visit them.

1 St Bavo's Cathedral,
2 St Nicholas' Church,
3 St Michael's Church,
4 St James' Church,
5 Our Lady of St Peter's Church,

are all located in the historic city centre and are within walking distance of one another. Together these five churches paint a unique picture of the cultural history of the Southern Netherlands in general and of Ghent in particular.

Each edifice is a stunning architectural and religious-historical gem, with world-class art including *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* by the Van Eyck brothers and works by Rubens and Van Dyck. Because of their central location, these buildings also have a lasting impact on the bustling city that surrounds them.
Each of these churches invites visitors to enter and explore the building: welcome!

ST BAVO'S CATHEDRAL

St Bavo's Cathedral is Ghent's most majestic church. As the principal church of the diocese of Ghent it also serves as the seat of the cathedral chapter of canons. St Bavo's Cathedral is also Ghent's oldest parish church. The earliest mentions of this church date back to the tenth century. The present-day church was built between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century.

As Ghent developed into a city, the original Romanesque church was converted into a Gothic edifice.

St Bavo's Cathedral also has a beautiful interior and an impressive collection of religious art. Besides works by Joos van Wassenhove, Peter Paul Rubens and Hieronymus Duquesnoy the Younger the cathedral is also the repository of one of the most stunning masterpieces of Flemish painting: The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb by the Van Eyck brothers.

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

In the tenth century Ghent was already a flourishing trade post, stretching from the River Scheldt to the River Lys.

Several parishes were founded here including St. Nicholas Parish. St Nicholas' Church, which is located in the vicinity of Korenmarkt and the old harbour along Gras- en Korenlei, has always been the church of the merchants and traders, since its foundation in the thirteenth century. The building also reflects the vibrant and rich city life around it.

The church's stunning interior is the merit of the many guilds which each had a chapel in the church. You can see works by Nicolas De Liemacker and Jean-Baptiste Capronnier here as well as the prestigious Cavaillé-Coll organ and a stained glass window by the Ghent glass artist Herman Blondeel. Currently a large part of the building's restoration has been completed.

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

St Michael's has a long and interesting history. In the eleventh century St Bavo's Abbey founded a chapel here.

The foundation of the current church was probably laid in the early Gothic period. But the construction was interrupted on several occasions, meaning the church was only completed in 1672! The tower was never finished. Considering that it took more than 200 years to build, the church's form and style are remarkably homogenous. In fact, St Michael's Church is a good example of how the Gothic style continued to exist during the Renaissance and the Baroque.

Its exceptionally homogenous appearance makes this church a place where serenity reigns supreme. It truly is a beacon of peace in the city. St Michael's Church has several unique art works on display, including a sculpture by Rombaut Pauwels and paintings by Otto van Veen, Jan Boeckhorst and Anthony Van Dyck.