

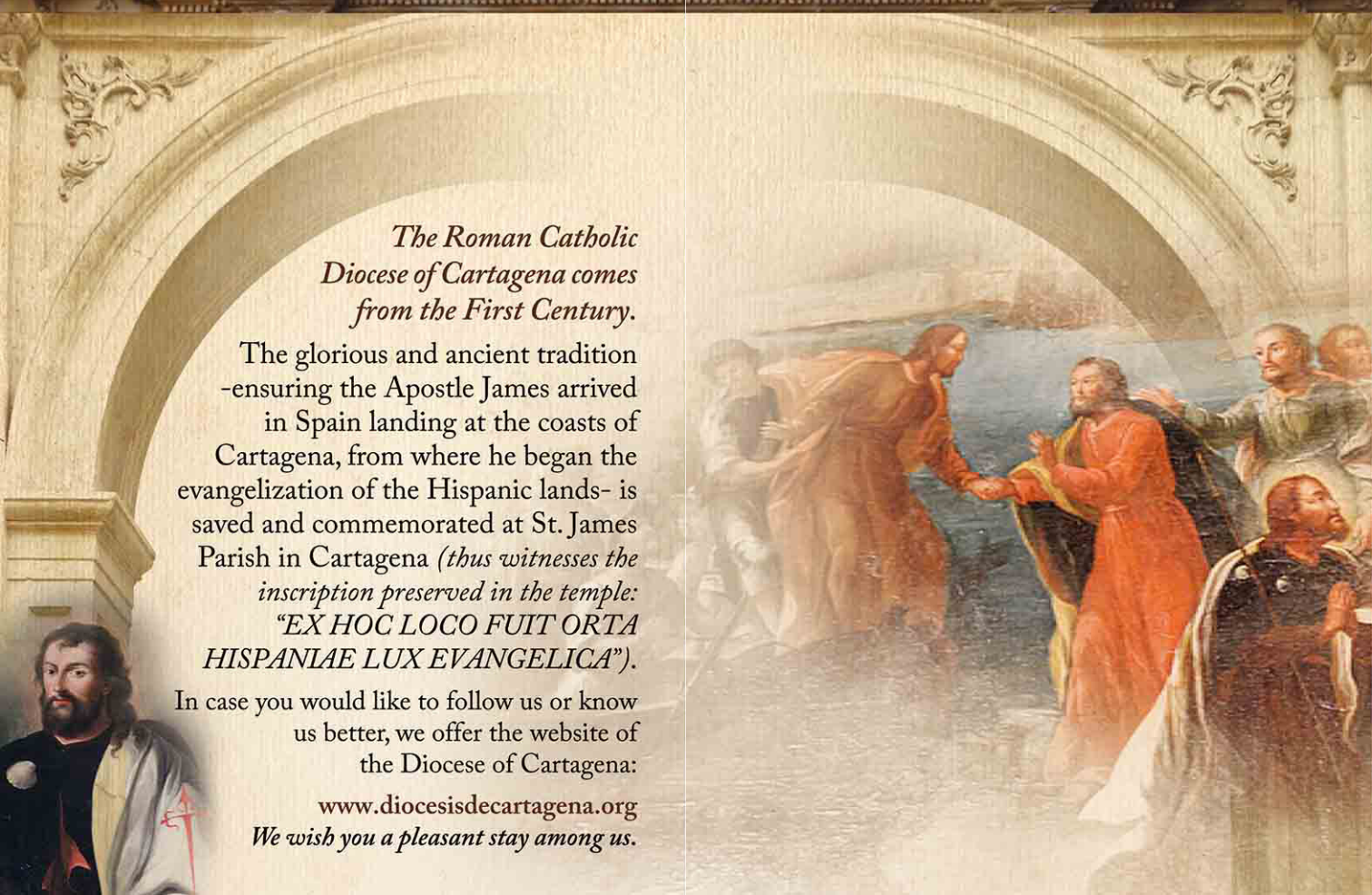
EPISCOPAL PALACE

OF MURCIA
DIÓCESIS DE CARTAGENA



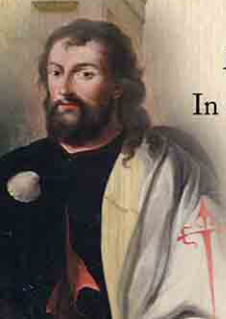
*Welcome
May God bless you*

*to the Episcopal Palace
and grant you peace*



*The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Cartagena comes
from the First Century.*

The glorious and ancient tradition
-ensuring the Apostle James arrived
in Spain landing at the coasts of
Cartagena, from where he began the
evangelization of the Hispanic lands-
is saved and commemorated at St. James
Parish in Cartagena (*thus witnesses the
inscription preserved in the temple:
"EX HOC LOCO FUIT ORTA
HISPANIAE LUX EVANGELICA"*).



In case you would like to follow us or know
us better, we offer the website of
the Diocese of Cartagena:

www.diocesisdecartagena.org

We wish you a pleasant stay among us.



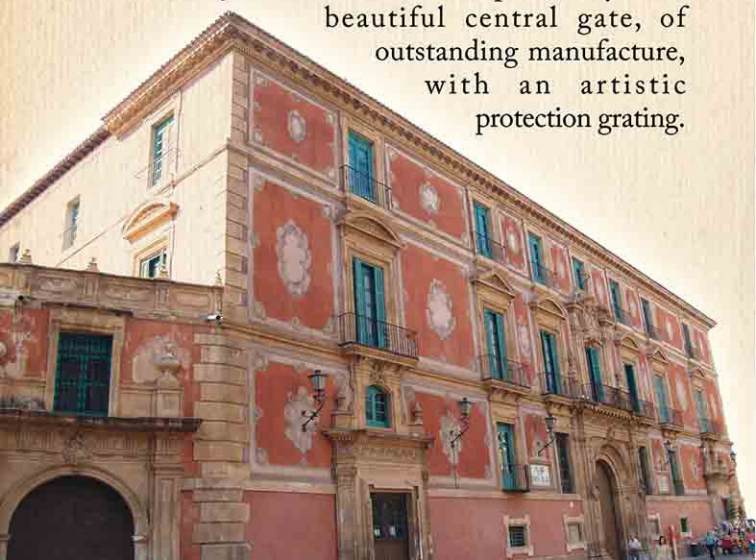


Architectural description

The **Episcopal Palace** is a building from the 18th century with a square floor plan. Its façades are organized around a central axis with porticoes of great value. There are three floors with balconies, plus a basement with horizontal windows. It has a central, richly decorated patio, rounded by the cloister. The beauty of the famous staircase stands out.

On the north façade to Cardinal Belluga Square there are three doors, the main one and two at the sides (the right side one gives access to the public chapel where perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place). It is a jewel from the transition from Baroque to Rococo.

The **south façade** (to Glorieta de España) only has a beautiful central gate, of outstanding manufacture, with an artistic protection grating.





The coat of arms of the north façade that presides over the main balcony of the Palace reminds **Bishop Rojas**, under whose mandate the building was completed.

The Palace

It stands next to the majestic façade of the Cathedral. Bishop **Juan Mateo López Sáenz** (1.742-1.752) promoted the building of this Palace. The construction was made with the collaboration of several stonemason masters who came from the works of the Cathedral and were linked to Jaime Bort, author of Cathedral's façade. Its **history** begins around 1.754. It was built next to the old **Palacio-Alcazar**, which was demolished to enhance the view of the Cathedral's façade.

Historical Origin

In 1.733, the floods of the Segura River in Murcia and its Valley caused serious losses, not only in the economy of the region, but also in the most important architectural works of the city. The old façade of the Cathedral, built by **Jerónimo Quijano**, was seriously damaged in its lowest section. After several consultations, its demolition took place.

The old Episcopal Palace stood in front of the Cathedral. We presume that its foundations were also damaged due to the changes in the clay subsoil.

So, by the midst of 1.736, **Jaime Bort**'s presence was requested in Murcia, where he moved in order to design the new project for the façade of the Cathedral, which he started building immediately with the collaboration of the military engineer **Feringan**. Obviously the new development given to the façade posed the need to extend the square in front of the Cathedral, taking the place where the old Bishop's Palace (seriously damaged by the floods) was.

The construction of a new building was then decided. It was moved to the plots of the Marquis of Los Vélez, between the newly created square and the left bank of the Segura River, in close connection with the saint Fulgencio Seminary which was opened, although unfinished, since the end of the 16th century.

The works, initiated by Bishop **Juan Mateo López Sáenz** (1.742-1.752), started precisely at the Martillo, where the residential quarters of the prelate were located, counting with a loggia and a balcony with views towards the River.

The works continued at the façade of the Glorieta and finished, after several changes in the original project, with the section of Belluga Square.

Towards 1.748 some local architects intervened in the works: **Pedro Pagán**, who was the designer of the project, and first stone master (1.748-1.757); **José López Albadalejo** (1.758-1.761) the surveyor and master of its continuation. **Baltasar Canestro**, an architect coming from Madrid, was responsible for redesigning (1.765-1.768)

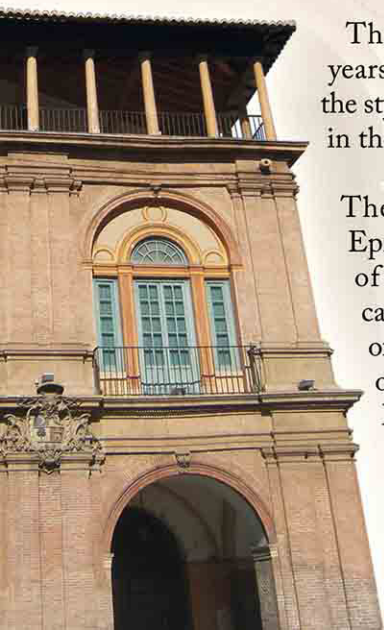


The Italian architect **Baltasar Canestro** came occasionally as a visitor of the works and inspector or accidental consultant -always after 1.755-. He was, by that time, the foreman for the works of the Royal Palace in Madrid. It is possible that the square plan of the Episcopal Palace may be due to him. In fact, there are many references to Roman style in the architectural concept even though the later details match local concepts, sometimes disagreeing with the general idea of the original project. A great part of the project and building of the Martillo may be an example of this. By the end of the works, Bishop **Diego de Rojas Contreras** (1.753-1.772) occupied the see.

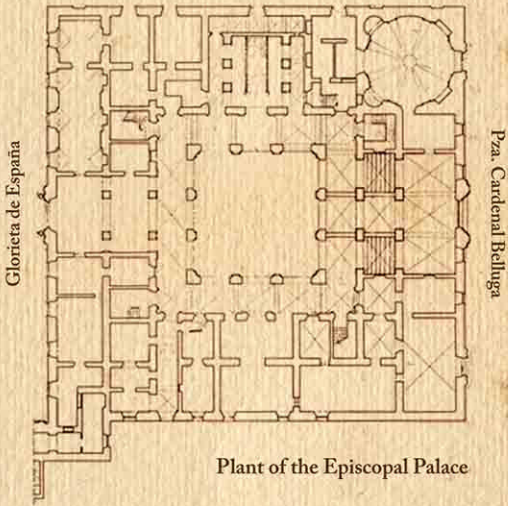


The works took nearly 30 years, what explains many of the stylistic variations that occur in the building.

The current aspect of the Episcopal Palace is the result of the restoration works carried out at the beginning of this century, being Bishop of the diocese Msgr. **Manuel Ureña Pastor** (1.998-2.005). The works made possible to host the whole Diocesan Curia in the actual buiding.



C/ Arenal



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