

Original Article

The Expression of Symbolic Ornamentation in the Architecture of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Sikka

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Abstract - This study aims to uncover the relationship between symbolic ornamentation and architecture's function, form, and meaning in Sikka's St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church building. The main focus of this research is to understand the role of symbolic ornaments in creating and reinforcing spiritual meaning and sacred presence within church architecture. This study also addresses the phenomenon in modern architecture, which often eliminates symbolic ornaments essential for representing the Christian faith. This research employs a case study approach to deeply examine the role of symbolic ornamentation in the St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Sikka. The steps taken include redrawing the church building in detail using both two-dimensional and three-dimensional modelling to obtain an accurate visual representation, followed by the description and analysis of the symbolic ornaments present in each architectural element, taking into account the principles of church architecture such as identification, balance, and orientation; and finally, interpreting these ornaments concerning function, form, and church architecture meaning. The expected results of this study include gaining an in-depth understanding of symbolic ornamentation in church architecture, which will enrich architectural theory, providing practical contributions by serving as a reference for architects and stakeholders in designing churches that not only meet physical functions but also support spiritual and symbolic meanings; and offering recommendations for the revitalization of church architecture by prioritizing symbolic ornamentation that can enhance the religious experience of the Catholic faithful.

Keywords - Church architecture, Catholic church, Spiritual meaning, Symbolic ornamentation, Sacredness.

1. Introduction

Church architecture as a liturgical space serves as a place of worship and a medium for expressing sacred meaning [1, 2]. Various studies on ornaments and symbols in church architecture have been widely conducted in this context, covering aspects such as tectonics and symbolic function. For instance, Lake et al. (2019) emphasize that symbolic ornamentation is an integral part of the architectural function of the Catholic Church [3]. Additionally, a study by Chrisylla (2016) reveals that church window elements possess deep sacred symbolism, particularly in St. Peter's Catholic Church [4]. However, a significant gap persists within the existing body of

research—the lack of in-depth exploration concerning the relationship between symbolic ornamentation and the architectural aspects of function, form, and meaning, particularly in Catholic churches in remote areas that integrate local and colonial styles. Most previous studies tend to adopt a descriptive or historical approach and have yet to develop analytical methods to comprehend the structure of meaning behind the expression of symbolic ornamentation within the broader context of church architecture. In the development of modern church architecture, there is a concerning phenomenon in which many churches are designed in plain and minimalist styles, often neglecting symbolic ornaments that bear profound spiritual meaning [5]. This phenomenon has become a



significant concern in contemporary church architecture discourse, particularly because symbolic ornaments serve as visual representations of the faith and spiritual values upheld by the Catholic community.

As the supreme leader of the Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI has addressed the importance of symbolic ornamentation in church design. In 2011, he established a new commission under the Congregation for Divine Worship to address the “deviations” in church architectural design worldwide. According to the Pope, churches should be sacred spaces that reflect the faith, and symbolic ornamentation plays a vital role in conveying essential spiritual values [5]. The absence of such ornamentation may diminish the religious experience of the congregation, which ought to be profound and transcendent [6]. In line with the issues and the symbolic ornamentation crisis in church architecture, this study focuses on the role of symbolic ornaments in church architecture, specifically in the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka, aiming to explore the relationship between symbolic ornamentation and the function, form, and meaning of church architecture. It also seeks to provide a methodological guide that can be utilized by architects and stakeholders in designing churches that not only fulfill physical functions but also support spiritual meaning. This study aims to fill the academic gap by investigating the relationship between symbolic ornamentation and the architectural dimensions of function, form, and meaning in the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka.

The St. Loyola Church in Sikka is beautiful and integrates European and local architectural styles [7]. It was built in the 19th century and named after St. Ignatius of Loyola [8]. The church exterior features a traditional

European façade. At the same time, the interior is adorned with Flores motifs, traditional carvings, and handwoven ikat textiles used to cover the altar and other parts of the church [9]. Unfortunately, existing studies on the St. Loyola Church are limited to historical exploration and cultural documentation. In architectural research, exploring the function, form, and symbolic meaning of architectural ornaments in churches is not proportional to the quantity and quality of academic publications addressing this architectural issue. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which does not merely document ornamentation as visual artefacts but also elaborates on their architectural function in shaping a profound liturgical experience. Unlike previous studies that are often partial or purely symbolic (e.g., Chrisylla, 2016; Lake et al., 2019), this study employs an integrated case study approach to examine the structure of meaning embedded in ornamentation about spatial organization, visual narrative, and the local cultural context [10]. Therefore, through a case study approach [10], this study is expected to enrich the understanding of symbolic ornamentation in church architecture and provide practical contributions. The results of this research are expected to serve as a valuable reference for architects, policymakers, and the broader community in efforts to revitalize church architecture by emphasizing symbolic ornamentation that enhances the religious experience of Catholic congregants.

2. Literature Review

This research explores the relationship between symbolic ornamental elements and the aspects of function, form, and meaning within church architecture. Among these five interrelated concepts, the term “symbolic” most frequently becomes the central focus in architectural studies of churches. However, its discussion is generally always intertwined with function, form, and meaning (see Table 1).

Table 1. Previous studies on symbolic ornamentation in church architecture

No	Title (title, author, year, type)	Issue		
		Relationship between symbolic ornament and function	Relationship between symbolic ornament and form	Relationship between symbolic ornament and meaning
1	Symbolism in the Architectural Design of St. Peter Catholic Church and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Bandung City [4] Type: National Journal		√ Sacred expression is found in symbols embedded in the window elements of Our Lady of Sorrows Church.	
2	Symbols and Decorative Motifs in the Architectural Design of Pantai Indah Kapuk's Regina Caeli Catholic Church Residential Area, Jakarta [3] Type: National Journal	√ The cross symbol signifies the church's religious function. Interior symbols and ornaments contribute to the unique character of the sacred space.		

3	Spiritual Poetic Expression Manifested in the Architectural Design of GPIB Paulus Protestant Church in Jakarta [11] Type: National Journal			√ Sacred expression at a poetic level is evoked through the properties and composition of the church massing, which stimulates spiritual imagination. The dominance of the church's roof and tower mass evokes the image of the dwelling place of God.
4	Form Follows Function in the Neo-Vernacular Architecture of Salib Suci Church, Jakarta [11] Type: International Journal		√ Aspects of form influence the sacredness of the church building.	

Previous studies summarized in Table 1 indicate that research on symbolic ornamentation and its relationship with function, form, and meaning in church architecture has predominantly focused on aspects of form and meaning. Furthermore, the review results also reveal that these studies are generally theoretical elaborations supported by studies of design principles as operational steps. These theoretical elaborations aim to describe the relationships between function, form, and meaning in church architecture; however, they do not empirically examine the interrelation with symbolic ornamentation [10].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Case Study

This research concentrates on the relationship between symbolic ornamentation and architecture's function, form, and meaning in Catholic church buildings. In line with the research objective, the criteria for selecting the case study are as follows: First, a Catholic church building that has consistently preserved its liturgical ornaments and symbols since its establishment and remains popular today. Second, the building has been designated as an element of cultural tradition site. Third, the church was designed using a composition of two architectural styles. Based on these criteria, the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka was purposively selected as the case study. Below is a brief description of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka, which serves as the case study, including photographs and architectural redrawing of the building.

The St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Sikka is a church that successfully integrates European and local architectural styles. The church's construction began in 1893 and was inaugurated on December 24, 1899. Its location is highly strategic, on Jalan Fatima Lela, Sikka Village, Lela District. Since the 19th century, the St. Ignatius Loyola Church,

commonly called the “*Gereja Tua Sikka*” (Old Sikka Church), has embodied a blend of local architectural forms with the influence of Portuguese architectural style. Its architectural character reflects openness and appeal to the Catholic faithful in the region, making it a spiritual centre and an important part of the cultural heritage [9].

In line with elements typical concerning the architectural style of Catholic churches, many Portuguese churches in Indonesia have been designated as national heritage sites and opened to tourists, including the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka, which has been officially designated as an element of cultural tradition building following the decree from the Governor of East Nusa Tenggara (SK Gubernur NTT No. 21/KEP/HK/2025).

The architectural identity of this church is further reinforced through the traditional European-style façade of its exterior. At the same time, the interior showcases Flores motifs, traditional carvings, and handwoven ikat textiles used to cover the altar and other elements within the church. Its architectural uniqueness and historical value are further accentuated during the annual Flores Island cultural festival in Sikka, strengthening its position as both a spiritual and cultural centre and a destination for religious tourism [9].

3.2. Analytical Methods

Given this methodological gap, the present study seeks to complement previous research on symbolic ornamentation in church architecture by adopting the relational approach of idea (function), medium (form), and expression (meaning), as proposed by Salura & Fauzy (2012) [11]. It is understood that the architectural medium (form) is always created to accommodate specific activities. A form that contains space for particular functions will inevitably exhibit a corresponding specific expression. In this study, architectural expression refers to the

composition's external appearance and the building's enclosing elements. Hence, the analysis is carried out in several stages. First, the case study's architectural form is empirically documented and redrawn before further analytical stages. To thoroughly understand the sacred expression of the church building, the observation is conducted with consideration of architectural anatomy analysis encompassing the surrounding context, site, enclosure, and the ornamental elements present on the church's exterior and interior.

Second, the documentation results are described by referring to theoretical elaborations on design principles, including properties and composition [12], as well as by applying the architectural anatomy dissection approach [13] (see Figure 1). Mass and spatial identification principles encompass movement, gravity, and surface quality. The principle of balance emphasizes axial clarity, supported by symmetrical composition, datum lines, and a consistent rhythm and repetition.

Meanwhile, the principle of orientation—hierarchy focuses on positional relationships (top–bottom, centre–right–left), spatial proximity (near–far), and volumetric scale (large–small) (Figure 2). Third, the interpretation stage assesses whether the architectural form of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka can represent the ideal sacred expression of a Catholic church, namely, monumentality, formality, symbolism, and contextual relevance. These four aspects are benchmarks for evaluating how architectural form can represent spiritual values within Catholic liturgy.

Several modern churches exemplify the successful integration of symbolic and architectural elements, such as the *Light Church* in Japan by Tadao Ando, which uses natural light to form a symbolic cross; the *Jubilee Church* in Rome, created by *Richard Meier*, which evokes a spiritual ark; and the *Sagrada Familia* in Spain, renowned for its rich religious iconography.

In Indonesia, churches such as *Gereja Kristus Raja* in Ungaran and *Redemptor Mundi* in Surabaya demonstrate efforts to adapt local symbols through form and ornamentation in their architectural design. Cultural variations in architectural symbolism also reflect the richness of sacred design approaches across different regions—for instance, the use of vibrant colors and organic forms in African churches or narratives of struggle expressed in Latin American churches.

From a methodological standpoint, this study employs a qualitative approach by collecting data through field observation, visual documentation, and literature review. Data analysis uses thematic coding and semiotic interpretation of symbolic architectural elements. Validation

is ensured through data triangulation involving in-depth interviews with architects, priests, and congregants, along with perception surveys to capture the sacred expressions from the perspective of direct users.

Simple descriptive statistical analysis is applied to process quantitative data from the survey results. At the same time, careful reflection is also given to potential case study biases, particularly concerning selecting the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka as the primary subject.

This study further compares its findings with practices in other religious architectures, such as mosques emphasising calligraphy as symbolic elements, pura temples representing Hindu cosmology, and synagogues highlighting orientation and spatial sanctity.

The study integrates interdisciplinary literature from anthropology and sociology to enrich its theoretical approach. Victor Turner's (1969) concept of ritual space and Clifford Geertz's (1973) notion of cultural symbols provide a foundation for understanding that architectural meaning is visually present and constructed through social practices, collective experiences, and cultural frameworks.

Accordingly, this review not only strengthens the conceptual foundation of the study but also opens up practical possibilities for designing contemporary church architecture that remains contextual, symbolic, and meaningful.

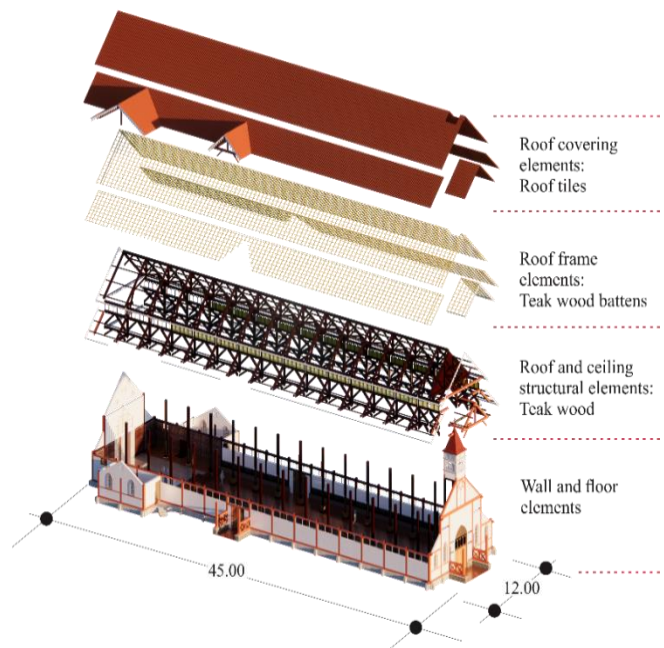


Fig. 1 The St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka was redrawn and analyzed based on architectural anatomy within the architectural scope of the building

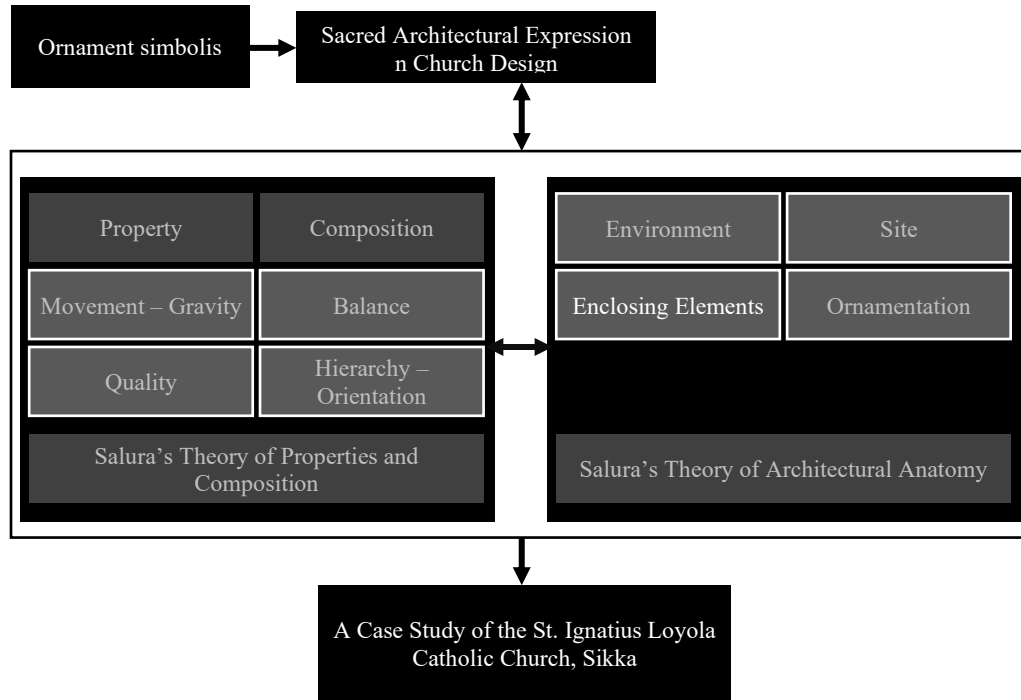


Fig. 2 Conceptual framework

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Sacred Expression of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka within Its Environmental Context

Observation of the surrounding environmental context reveals that the wall and roof massing of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka can be observed in its entirety without obstruction from other elements. Dominant architectural features, such as the soaring bell tower and symmetrical roof, reinforce the building's vertical emphasis. From a vantage point about three times the height of the building away, around 30 meters, the church's architectural form and expression can be fully perceived (Figure 3).



Fig. 3 Observation point position relative to the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church Building

Overall, the building's form resembles the Presbyterian Church in Oban, Stewart Island, New Zealand, which adopts European architectural styles rather than a local architectural icon. Its pyramidal shape creates an impression of stability and symmetry. In terms of balance, the church exhibits a

symmetrical composition that supports a strong vertical axis on the main façade. The presence of a central bell tower further accentuates this verticality.

The façade does not appear monotonous, thanks to a sequence of triangular roof compositions that help clarify the entrance's position. Concerning spatial organization principles, particularly orientation and hierarchy, it is evident that the church is built on a relatively flat site. However, the building mass rises significantly higher than the surrounding structures. Its location at the intersection of major roads allows the church to remain fully visible and reinforces its role as a dominant element within the cityscape. The site layout, positioned at a crossroads with the church as a key node, is believed to enhance the building's sacred expression (Figure 4).



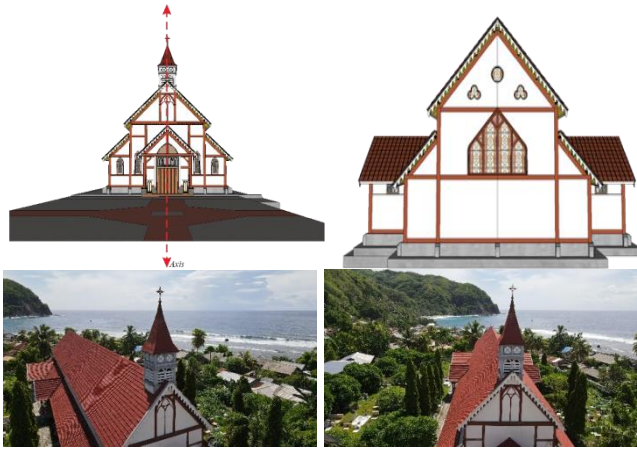


Fig. 4 Observation of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka from a vantage point about three times the height of the building away reveals several key aspects: first, the church's overall form bears resemblance to the Presbyterian Church in Oban, Stewart Island, New Zealand (top); second, a pronounced vertical axis can be seen in the alignment of the wall mass and roof structure (middle); and third, a comparison of the church's height with surrounding buildings highlights its dominant scale within the local context (bottom)

4.2. The Sacred Expression of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka within Its Environmental Context

The observation point, located at a distance equal to twice the building's height, lies within the site boundary, near the perimeter fence. From this vantage point, the overall form of the church, comprising the roof mass, walls, and podium, can be fully perceived. The wall element dominates the visual composition of the building, possessing a larger proportion than the podium and the roof, thus reinforcing its visual prominence. Regarding axial clarity, the symmetrical composition of the structure supports the formation of a continuous vertical axis extending from the podium to the peak of the bell tower. This is made possible by the consistent symmetry in the podium composition, walls, and roof.

The interpretation of the sacred expression within the site's context can be outlined as follows. A relatively large open space surrounding the building, spanning more than twice the height of the church, allows the entire mass to be visually appreciated, thereby strengthening its monumental impression. Due to its significant proportion, the wall element's dominance further reinforces the building's monumental character. The central mass consists of a reception volume with a hipped roof, while the main mass is formed by a sequence of stacked roof volumes, which clarifies the visual hierarchy of the church (see Figure 5).

From the orientation aspect, St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Sikka faces eastward, with the main entrance on the western side. This orientation symbolizes the direction in which the priest leads prayer. The eastward orientation carries profound symbolic meanings across various traditions. In Jewish tradition, the East represents the

direction facing Jerusalem, the sacred city. For the Romans, it was the direction of reverence to the sun god. In Catholic theology, St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395 CE) noted that the East symbolizes “man's original home.” Furthermore, according to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), the East is believed to be the direction from which Jesus Christ will return to judge humanity at the end of time [5].



Fig. 5 At a distance equivalent to twice the building's height, the architectural anatomy of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church becomes distinctly observable, with its structural elements clearly articulated

4.3. Sacred Expression of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church as Reflected through Its Enclosure Elements

Observations of the enclosure elements allow for a deeper analysis of the texture, pattern, and color of materials used in each part of the building. From a distance equivalent to the height of the building, the first visible sequence is the entrance area of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, which becomes increasingly identifiable. This entrance area is more prominently accentuated than the façade wall and is centrally located within the overall composition. Architectural elements in this area include part of the podium roof, supporting columns on the terrace, steps, and a decorative statue ornament.

The entrance wall features panelled doors, transparent stained glass, and Gothic-style pointed arches to complete the design. The composition of the stained glass is arranged hierarchically, beginning with four panels symbolizing the four Evangelists and culminating in a trefoil motif representing the concept of the Trinity. Overall, the entrance area conveys a sense of stability in the building, reinforced by symmetrical columns supporting the main roof. The arrangement of openings and columns on the wall mass follows the symmetry principle, thereby enhancing the formation of a clear vertical axis.

Along this vertical axis, the main entrance serves as the sole access point on the front façade, reinforcing the vertical axis formed by the door composition, which widens at the base and tapers upward, leading to the peak of the bell tower. The wall color also contributes to the impression of stability and symmetry. A dominant white hue is applied to the walls with an enormous mass, while brown is used for the columns and openings of windows and doors, which are made of solid wood with geometric ornamental motifs. The

pointed arch forms on the door and window openings emphasize vertical movement, culminating in the accentuated grey tone of the bell tower, the building's apex element (Figure 6).



Fig. 6 The door element exhibits a formal and robust character, constructed from solid wood

The second sequence is the interior space of the building, which reveals the floor plan pattern. The floor plan of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka takes the form of a cross, symbolically significant in Catholic theology. This cruciform layout is shaped by a linear spatial progression, beginning from the nave and leading to the sanctuary, with a series of tapering roof-supporting columns. This structural arrangement accentuates the vertical impression and evokes a majestic and solid architectural expression (see Figure 7).

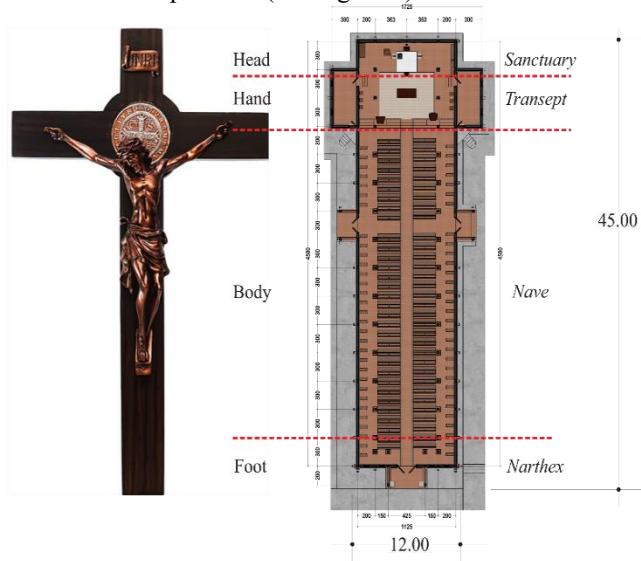


Fig. 7 Comparison of the Latin Cross with the Floor Plan of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka

The boundary elements between the exterior and interior spaces consist of the walls and roof. In this church, the walls function as the primary boundary, significantly influencing the conduct of liturgical activities. Window openings with uniform modules are positioned above human eye level [14], creating an interior atmosphere that is visually separated from the external environment. This concept reinforces the function of the church as a sacred space that supports the smooth performance of liturgy without external distractions (Figure 8).



Fig. 8 An elongated linear space without obstructive columns and the wall element as the boundary between exterior and interior spaces

Interpretation of the sacred expression within enclosing elements can be explained as follows. The dominance of wall elements in the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka is influenced by the larger volume of its mass compared to other architectural elements. The series of horizontally arranged windows creates a dynamic visual rhythm, while their pointed forms reinforce a sense of vertical movement.

In addition, the accentuated entrance, with its bold geometric shape, symbolises solidity and formality, resembling the gates found in royal buildings. This element further clarifies the understanding in Christian tradition that the church is *Domus Dei* (House of God) and reflects the concept of *Regnum Dei* (Kingdom of God).

As part of the ornamentation, stained glass dominates the glazed elements, evoking associations with European Catholic churches. Furthermore, the relationship between the form of exterior and interior spaces aligns with Catholic liturgical arrangements, which order sacred spaces based on degrees of sanctity, namely the *narthex*, *nave*, and *sanctuary*. The more sacred a space is, the higher its base and cover. This concept is also applied to the interior design of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka, where the ceiling of the *narthex* area is lower than that of the *nave*, and the *sanctuary* is higher than the *nave*.

This spatial hierarchy emphasizes that church architecture is designed to create a profound spiritual experience, enabling the faithful to sense the divine presence. The spatial design explicitly represents a spiritual hierarchy, where the altar, as the liturgical center, holds more sanctity than other parts of the church (Figure 9).

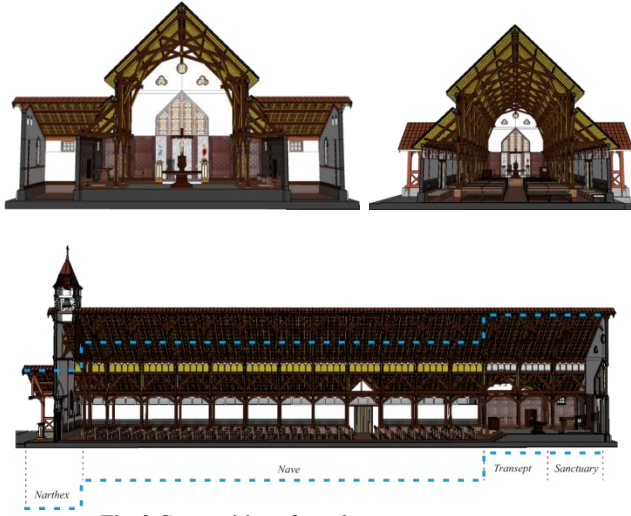


Fig. 9 Composition of narthex - nave – sanctuary

4.4. The Sacred Symbolism of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Sikka, in the Context of Ornamentation

From its initial design, the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka was intended to embody characteristic elements of European liturgy within its interior. Observations of the building reveal the presence of various symbols and icons distinctive to Catholic Church traditions. These symbols, such as the triangle emblem and floral elements, especially the three-leaf and four-leaf clovers, serve as expressions of symbolism that reinforce the church's status as *Domus Dei* (House of God) [15]. In this context, the church functions not only as a place of worship but also as a sacred space that reflects aesthetic experiences, spiritual signs, and a vision of the heavenly realm, representing the mystery and majesty of God [16].

The sanctuary wall of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka prominently displays these symbols through stained glass elements, where the motifs of the three-leaf and four-leaf clovers dominate the visual composition. These motifs are more commonly found in Catholic churches across Europe, thus affirming the influence of European liturgical architecture and symbolism in the design of this church.

One of the Christian tradition's most well-known Trinitarian symbols is the three-leaf clover (clover or shamrock). Referring to Cornelius (2013), as cited on the Lux Veritatis 7 website, this symbol possesses profound theological meaning and has long been used to represent the concept of the Holy Trinity [17].

In addition to the three-leaf clover symbol representing the Trinity, the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church walls in Sikka also display the four-leaf clover symbol or *quatrefoil*. In Christian tradition, the *quatrefoil* holds several profound theological meanings. This symbol is often associated with

balance and harmony in faith teachings. It symbolizes the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, foundational to disseminating Christ's teachings. Moreover, in the architectural context of churches, the *quatrefoil* also represents the union of earthly and heavenly elements, reflecting the relationship between humanity and God [17].

The door elements of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka are crafted from solid wood, featuring vertical groove motifs combined with centrally arranged geometric patterns within an arch. This door is adorned with the three-leaf clover symbol, the *trefoil*. Following the conventions concerning the architectural style of Catholic churches, the *trefoil* symbol is often associated with the concept of the Holy Trinity [17].

Cornelius (2013) states that mosaic windows in many Catholic churches are dominated by *trefoil* shapes, which serve as decorative elements and carry profound theological significance. In some cases, the *trefoil* form is combined with the triangle symbol, reinforcing the representation of the Triune God [17]. The presence of these symbols on the door of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka demonstrates continuity with the tradition of liturgical symbolism in Catholic church architecture while simultaneously affirming the role of the door as a gateway to the sacred space (Figure 10).



Fig. 10 The stained-glass composition on the walls of the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka is dominated by floral symbols and triangular motifs (upper section); visible are the stained-glass depictions of the three-leaf clover (Trinity) on the left and right sides, and the four-leaf clover symbolizing the Four Evangelists positioned at the uppermost section of the sanctuary wall (lower section)

5. Conclusion

The analysis results reveal several key conclusions. First, this study adopted a case study framework and applied a unique analytical method to explore sacred expression as demonstrated in a Catholic church's architecture. The applied method consists of three primary stages. The first stage involved recording the physical structure of the building based on architectural anatomy to understand the formal characteristics empirically. The second stage entailed a description of architectural elements by considering enclosure aspects and architectural arrangement principles, including identification, balance, and hierarchy. Lastly, the third stage focused on the interpretation of the building's sacred expression, aiming to assess the extent to which the church's architectural form reflects symbolic and spiritual meanings within the Catholic tradition.

Second, the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka successfully conveys sacred expression in church architecture through various aspects of its design. Monumental expression is manifested in the strategic placement of the site, located at a road junction, thereby establishing the building as a primary point of orientation within its surrounding environment. Formal expression is realized through the building's stable and symmetrical form, which creates a sense of firmness and balance. Furthermore, the church strongly represents symbolism in the Catholic tradition through its architectural elements and the ornaments employed.

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Each

element of the church, from the entrance to the altar, bears profound liturgical meaning. The church door is a symbolic boundary between the profane world and the sacred space, marking the transition from daily life into a spiritual experience. Meanwhile, the liturgical celebration centres around the altar, the site of the Eucharistic rite and constitutes the core of Catholic worship. Beyond its physical aspects, the spatial experience within the St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church is designed to guide the faithful on a spiritual journey, inviting deep participation in the mystery of faith.

Third, a comprehensive understanding of sacred expression in the architecture of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Sikka may serve as a reference for the design of future church buildings. This study affirms that sacred expression in church architecture is not merely the result of the building's physical form but is a manifestation of the complex interaction between space, symbolism, ritual, and cultural context.

The combination of these elements creates a profound spiritual experience for the faithful, rendering the church a place of worship and a space that facilitates the contemplation and celebration of faith. Thus, church architectural design must consider elements of symbolism and liturgy to effectively foster a sacred atmosphere that supports the congregation's spiritual life.

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