

Saint Peter's cathedral through the centuries

5th-6th centuries: Florus, the first apostle of the Haute-Auvergne, arrived on Mount Indiciac. After he died, a first sanctuary (or cella) was built to shelter his tomb.

11th century: Odilon de Mercoeur, abbot of Cluny, founded Saint-Flour's priory. Then a Romanesque basilica was built on the rocky outcrop of the site. Pope Urban II consecrated it in 1095.

1317: Pope John XXIInd created The Diocese of Saint-Flour. The basilica became cathedral and the priory became Chapter house.

1396: The northern part of the cathedral collapsed.

1398: In spite of the difficult period (the Plague, the Hundred Years War) Bishop Hugues de Manhac decided to have a new cathedral built. Its construction was entrusted to Hugues Joly.

1466: Bishop Antoine de Montgon consecrated the new cathedral. The main building work had then been completed. It consisted in three naves and four towers, two of them being on the side. It is of early gothic style, and made of basalt.

1793: During the Revolution, the four towers were pulled down, the bells and the statues were broken, the paintings, the sacred ornaments and the liturgical books were burnt. The building was then named «Temple of the Supreme Being».

1802: The cathedral regained its function of worship. The two western towers were rebuilt.

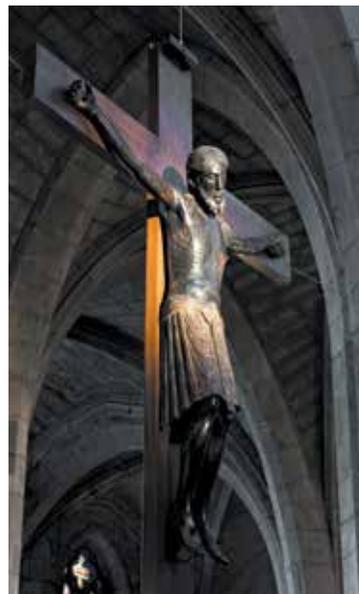
1804: Monseigneur de Belmont transferred the parish of Saint-Flour to the old Dominican Church.

1846-1856: The two side towers were pulled down.

Stacked arches above the south side aisle

1906: The cathedral was listed as a historical monument.

1919: The parish was retransferred to the cathedral by order of Monseigneur Lecoeur.



Black Christ

1966: Celebration of the fifth centenary of the cathedral, in presence of Mgr Pourchet, the papal nuncio in France, Georges Pompidou then Prime Minister, and Mgr Maziers Archbishop of Bordeaux.



Saint Peter

2004: Mgr Pourchet, emeritus bishop of Saint-Flour, was buried in the bishops' crypt.

2006: Mgr Grua was ordained in the cathedral. He then became the 45th bishop of this town. The previous ordination of a bishop in the cathedral of Saint-Flour, goes back to 1892.

2010: In the Autumn, the new furniture designed by Goudji was set up in the sanctuary. The ambo and the cathedra were blessed, the altar was consecrated, on October 24th during the celebration of the closure of the diocesan synod.

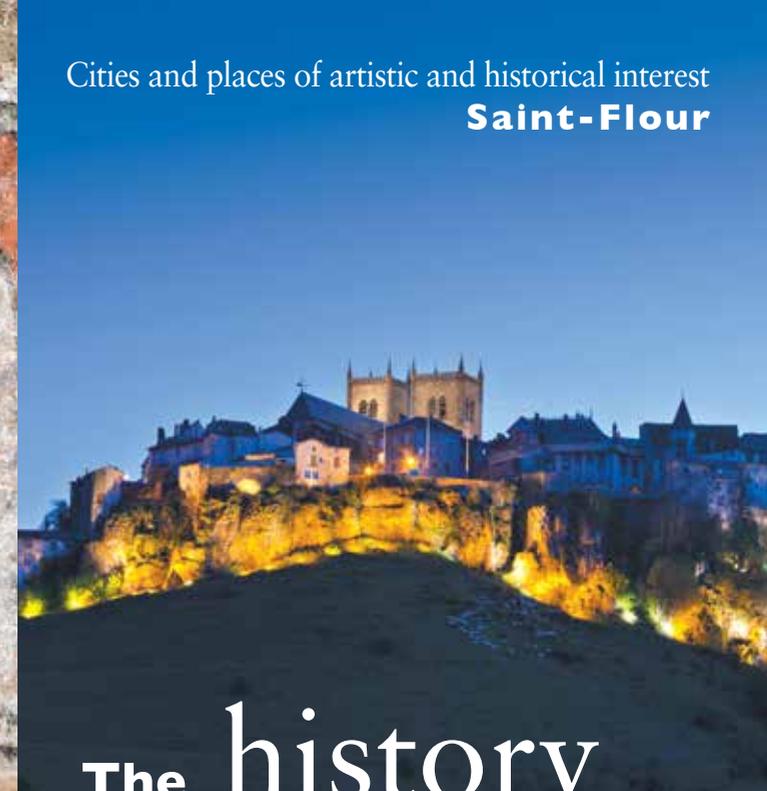


Abutment tops with their gargoyles

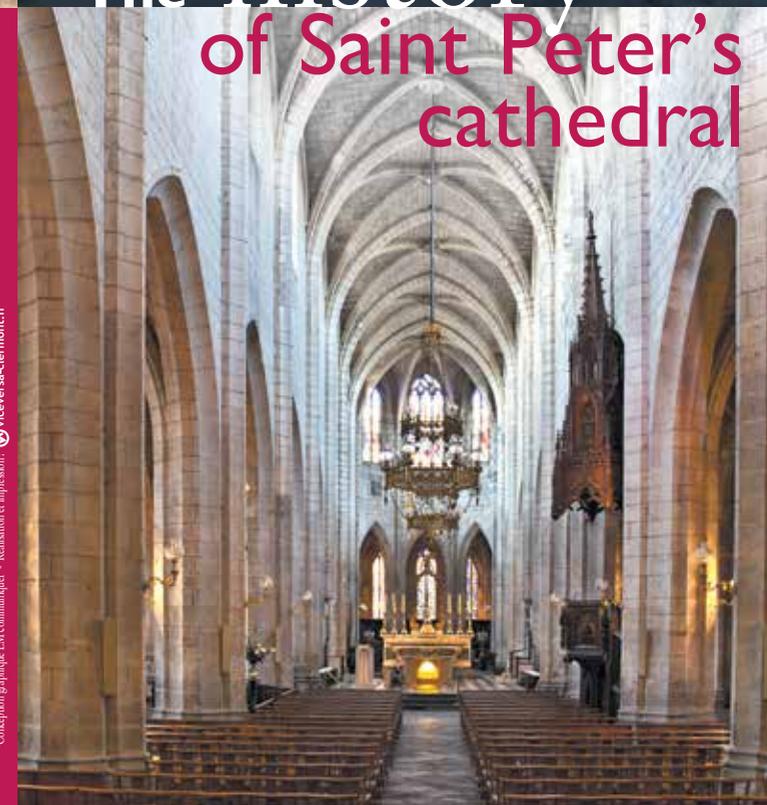


In purgatory, a wall painting on the back of the western portal

Cities and places of artistic and historical interest
Saint-Flour



The history of Saint Peter's cathedral



Useful addresses

Saint-Flour Tourist Information Centre
17 bis place d'Armes - 15100 Saint-Flour
tél. 04 71 60 22 50
www.pays-saint-flour.fr - info@pays-saint-flour.fr

Communauté de communes du Pays de Saint-Flour Margeride
Service du patrimoine, Village d'entreprises
Z.A. Rozier-Coren - 15100 Saint-Flour
tél. 04 71 60 56 88
www.cc-paysdesaintflour.fr - contact@ccpsf.fr

Les Amis de la Cathédrale
Presbytère de la Cathédrale
19 rue de la Rollandie
15100 Saint-Flour
tél. 04 71 60 06 63

Musée de la Haute-Auvergne
Palais épiscopal
1 place d'Armes
15100 Saint-Flour
tél. 04 71 60 22 32
accueilmusee@yahoo.fr



Photos: P. Séviers, J.F. Ferraton et Communauté de communes du Pays de Saint-Flour Margeride, musée de la Haute-Auvergne, - Tenes y Les Amis de la Cathédrale et Pays d'art et d'histoire du Pays de Saint-Flour. Traduction: J. Lhuissier et J. Desanti - Pays STM du Cantal. Conception graphique LM communication - Réalisation et impression: @vicove-sa-clermont.fr



Precious Furniture

The famous sculptor and goldsmith Goudji of Georgian origin was entrusted to design the new furniture for the cathedral of Saint-Flour. Goudji created three major elements: the altar, the ambo, and the cathedra. He has used contemporary style while preserving the tradition of religious art.



We can recognise his particular style in his choice of materials. We can appreciate the natural beauty and simple lines of the furniture made of "Pierre de Pontijou", red marble of the Pyrenees, alabaster of Volterra (Italy), jasper, and wrought iron. The artist has used precious metals to design the Paschal lamb located in the cove in front of the altar. Precious metals were used as well for the dove shaped incense holder.

You have just entered a religious site. Please be mindful during your visit to respect it by wearing appropriate attire. While talking is not prohibited we ask that you keep a low tone of voice. Thank you for your understanding.

Visiting the cathedral

1 The exterior

Saint Peter's cathedral was built in the 15th century on the site of a clunisian priory. Standing on a basaltic base, it is remarkable for its imposing sober lines. Inside you can admire the purity of its architecture and its rich works of art.

2 The interior

The nave and the two narrow, simple aisles stretch vertically towards the light.

3 The "black Christ"

As you come in and look up into the nave you can see a 12th century masterpiece, typical of the Romanesque period. Details of the Christ such as the stiff body with parallel legs, the lack of muscle lines, the slight inclination of the head towards the left, the hair locks covering the shoulders, and the bifid beard are typical elements found among the famous Romanesque Christs of Haute-Auvergne, Val d'Allier or Rouergue. This Christ was originally polychrome, but it has been painted in black sometime during the 19th century.

4 The Virgin Mary chapel

• The stained glass window represents the mystery of the Virgin Mary.

5 Saint-Antoine of Padoue chapel

• Two paintings: One represents the « Miraculous Draught of Fish » (1855), by Cartelier, one of Ingres' pupils; The other one is "The Transfiguration" (Anonymous).

6 Saint-Anne chapel

• Two paintings: On the left: "The arrival of saint Flour on Mount Indiciac"; On the right: "The Martyrdom of Saint-Symphorien by Daniel Halle" (1671).

7 Saint-John the Baptist chapel

• The stained-glass windows by Thibaud (1857) recall the life of Saint-John the Baptist.

• One painting: "Saint Martin Sharing his Coat" by Van Dyck; On the Altar: a pieta "The Mother of Sorrows".

8 The apsidal chapel dedicated to saint Flour

• The stained-glass windows depict the legend of saint Flour and the life of saint Odilon; They were made by the manufacture of Sèvres according to Viollet-le-Duc's sketches. Then offered to the cathedral by king Louis-Philippe; • The shrine made of bronze by the goldsmith Poussielque, shelters saint Flour's relics (1897).

9 Saint-Peter chapel

• The stained-glass windows by Thibaud (1859) depict the life of the first of the apostles; • The 17th century painting represents Saint Fulgence, Bishop of Ruspe, refusing arianism. • The statue of saint Peter in majesty was carved by Jean-Pierre Caen (2014).

10 The tomb chape

• A painting: Jesus Christ in the tomb (1842) by Fauginet; • A bas-relief representing the "Last judgement"; • A lectern from the 18th century; • A 18th century painting showing Saint Vincent de Paul preaching to the charity nuns; • Lord Bishop of Pompignac's statue (1881) made of marble by Oliva.

11 Saint-Joan of Arc chapel

• A 17th century painting representing the vocation of Agnes of Assisi, probably painted by Michel Corneille.

12 The Sacred Heart chapel

Baptismal font.

13 The choir

• The high altar: 18th century polychrome marble, crowned with a golden wood ciborium; • The altar, ambo, and cathedra, were designed by Goudji in October 2010.

14 Behind the choir

• We can see chapter stalls set up in 1852; • Stained-glass windows (1851) by Thevenot. Among the represented characters: saint Flour and saint Odilon who both founded the city; • What was formerly a credence is now used as an altar. It is supported by consoles in the form of the heads of an eagle and of a man.

15 The pulpit

Sculptured in 1868 by Jean Puech, a local cabinet-maker.

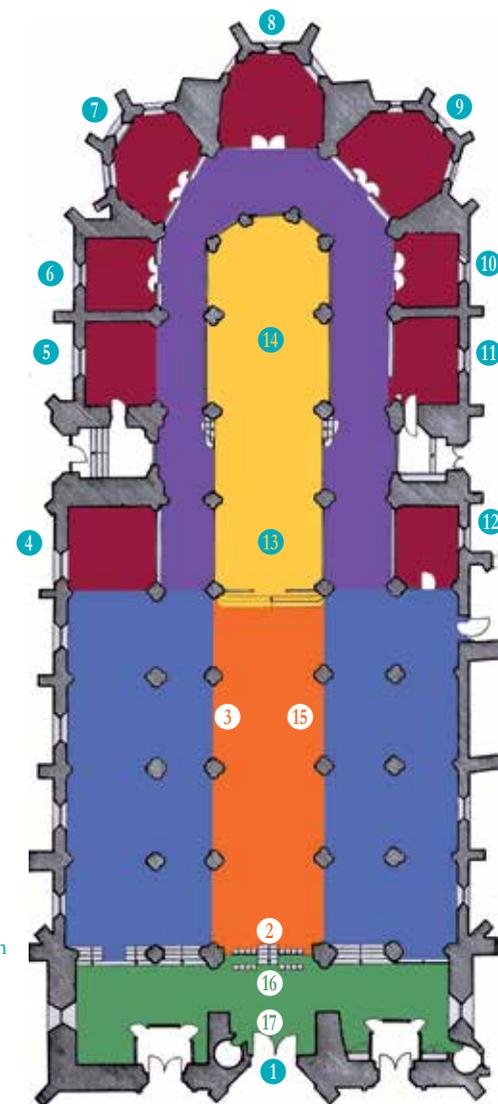
16 The great organ

It was installed in 1843. Gabriel Ventadour sculptured the case and John Abbey built the instrument. It was entirely restored in 2002 and 2008 by Bernard Hurvy and Claude Berger, both organ makers.

For more details, see the website : amisdesorgues.canalblog.com

17 Purgatory and Hell

This wall painting dates from the 15th century. On the left Purgatory is represented. There, we can see a priest celebrating mass for the liberation of the souls. On the right, Hell is depicted with the damned in the midst of fire coming out of an open monster's mouth.



Length: 65 m

Width: 24,6 m

Length of the nave: 44 m

Height of the central nave: 16,5 m

Height of the towers: 35m

Altitude of the cathedral square: 892 m

The towers of the cathedral



Knights' battle, wall painting

The west tower had both a civil and a religious function.

The north tower is the bell tower. The south tower also called Episcopal tower, used to belong to the Diocese, and protected its territory.

On the first floor, fragments of wall painting representing the beast of the Apocalypse can still be seen, as well as a knight joust scene on the second floor.

There are some stone-built fireplaces in the three rooms of that tower.

In the months of July and August, a guided visit is available. Information can be found at the tourist office.

The Episcopal Palace

In the 17th century, Charles de Noailles, bishop of Saint-Flour, decided to have an Episcopal palace built, adjoining the cathedral. The architect Jean Le Noir was entrusted to design it. The austerity of the inner courtyard sets off the two monumental doors built in Louis 13th style. Nowadays, this building is the City Hall as well as the Haute-Auvergne museum which exhibits a rich and wide collection of traditional popular art of Haute-Auvergne.



The bishops' chapel, Haute-Auvergne museum

From there, the chapter house where the cathedral treasure and all the bishops' portraits are kept, and can be seen. In the bishops' private chapel, precious items of religious art are on display. Among them, there are those coming from the ancient priory of Bredons.