THE CATHEDRAL OF FRIBOURG (SWITZERLAND)

The Cathedral of St Nicholas rises above the centre of the medieval city on a rocky spur 50 metres above the River Sarine.

The construction of the present Cathedral started in 1283, when the building was fi rst used as a church. It is built on the site of a sacred house of Romanesque style (dating before the foundation of the town in 1157. It was fi nished around 1430, the west tower was completed in 1490. The church began as a parish church and in 1512 it was elevated to the rank of collegiate church with a provost (with mitre and crozier) dean, chanter and twelve canons. In 1945, it became the Cathedral of the diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg. The building has been the property of the state of Fribourg since 1803 and has served as a crossroads for people from across the world. It is also a important centre of Fribourg life. Religious services are assured by The Roman Catholic Church.

The Cathedral of St Nicholas is a meeting point for European people and cultures. Three eras of western civilisation are represented here. From Gothic art the Cathedral has taken the edifi ce of the building itself, the stalls, the choir gate, the baptism fonts, the pulpit, the cross, 'The Burial of Christ» and two sculptured portals. From the Baroque era it has taken the chevet and the choir arch with the key stones adorned with images of people, and a coat of arms of patrician families of Fribourg, the new decoration on the aisle archways, the organ of Sebald Manderscheidt and the decoration of the six chapels between the buttresses. From modern art: the organ of Aloys Mooser (1828-1834), the stained-glass windows of Józef Mehoffer (1896-1936), the stained-glass windows of Alfred Manessier (1976-1988), the altar, ambon, the easter candlestick and the Episcopal seat of Georges Schneider (1981-1986).

The Cathedral of St Nicholas has 13 bells

IN THE WESTERN TOWER

«St Marie» 1505, 220 cm • «St Catherine», 1506, 175 cm • «St Barbe», 1367, 146 cm • «of hours», 1416, 131 cm • «of Prime»1437, 112 cm • «of Gambach» 1562, 96 cm • «of sacristin» 1569, 67 cm • «St Nicholas», 2nd half of 14th century, 65 cm • «of the dead» 1733, 57 cm • «of choralists» 1567, 29 cm • «of watch» 1554, 29 cm.

IN THE BELL TOWER OF THE CHOIR

«of the mass» 1737, 41 cm • «of the dieing» 1656, 31.5 cm

WELCOME TO ALL VISITORS TO THIS CATHEDRAL

You have crossed the threshold of a holy place, of a church, of a house of God on earth.

The place which welcomes you is neither a mere monument to admire, nor a mu-seum to visit, rather a sacred site where people come to meditate, where believers come together to pray, where Christians celebrate the Eucharist.

To be in communion with the creators of this building, with the artists who decora-ted this beautiful edifi ce, with the people who come here in search of peace, who are looking to rekindle hope, to fi nd God, with the people who fl ock here to loose themselves in works of artistic beauty to celebrate the spirit of mankind, to rejoice in front of the wonders of God, you are asked to visit this Cathedral with respect and in silence.

Opening hours of the cathedral

Mo-Sa: 7.30 am until 7 pm
Su: 9 am until 9.30 pm
Public holidays: 9 am until 7 pm

Opening hours for tourists

Mo-Fr: 9.30 am until 6 pm
Sa: 9 am until 4 pm
Su: 2 pm until 5 pm

CONTACT US TO BOOK A PRIVATE VISIT OF THE CATHEDRAL OR AN ORGAN CONCERT

Opening hours of the Cathedral's tower

1st April - 31st October:
Mo-Sa: 10 am until 5 pm
Su and public holidays: 1 pm until 5 pm
Last entrance 30 minutes before closing time.

Organ Concert

Each Wednesday of July and August between 12.30 pm and 1 pm: concert on historical organs followed by a presentation of the instruments. Free admission, (collection).

FRIBOURG TOURISME ET RÉGION

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FRIBOURG

CATHEDRAL OF ST NICHOLAS

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MONTEZ 368 MARCHES ET VOUS BÉNÉFICIEREZ D»UNE VUE IMPRENABLE SUR FRIBOURG

1] Tower, 74 metres, end of 14th century-1490; 1st floor. Treasure and rose chamber, approximately 1415,m with stained-glass window «Magnificat» by Alfred Manessier, 1988, stairs with 365 steps; platform with 13 turrets.

2] Portal; west entrance; tympan: statue «The Last Judgement», end of 14th century, statue «St Nicholas of Myre», 1767 south and north walls: statues «The Annunciation» and «The 12 Apostles», 15th century. Oak doors, 1583, bronze knockers, end of 14th century.

3] Narthex: south wall: painting «The Mystical Betrothal of St Catherine of Alexandria», beginning of 17th century; north wall; painting «St Nicholas of Myre Receives the Mariners Saved from the Shipwreck», beginning of 17th century; fonts, approximately 1680; vestibule gate, by Jost-Carl Zumbrecht, 1684-1686.

4] Principal nave with 5 bays; arches, triforium; high windows; fascicled pillars with capitals, end of 13th century - 1420.

5] South and north walls of the principal nave: paintings «The 12 Apostles» and «The first 4 Doctors of the Church», half-length portrait, and «The 18 Prophets» full-length portrait, by Claude Frechot and his collaborators.

6] High windows of the principal nave: «Pentecost» stained-glass windows, by Alfred Manessier, 1983.

7] Balustrade of the great gallery: paintings «King David with the Harp» and «14 Attributes of music and 10 Angel Musicians», by Franz-Niklaus Kessler, 1828-1831; the grand organ by Aloys Mooser, 1824-1834.

8] Confessional by Joseph Wicki, 1759-1760; statue «St Eloi», from the atelier of Hans Geiler. Around 1515.

9] Side south aisle with four chapels between the buttresses, 1749-1759, 1660-1663, 1515-1521; southern entrance in the fourth bay with the statue «Epiphany of the Saviour», 1330-1340; west wall: painting «The Descent from the Cross», by Francois Reyff, around 1645; memorial of the visit by Pope Jean-Paul II (13-6-1984), 1997.

10] Chapel of St Sepulchre, 1430-1457; altar of St Laurent in molasse, statue around 1433; group of 13 statues in molasse «The Burial of Christ» «1433; stained-glass windows, «Good Friday Night» and «Easter Morning» by Alfred Manessier 1974-1976; arches: paintings «Eight Angels with Musical Instruments» and «Four Angels with Instruments of the Passion « middle of 15th century; paintings «Christ Fallen under his Cross» by Hans Fries, between 1502 and 1515; «Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows», 1544; «St Laurent» by Johannes Koller, 1650; «St Catherine of Alexandria» by Johannes Koller, 1650; «St Veronique Cleaning the Face of Jesus» middle of 13th century.

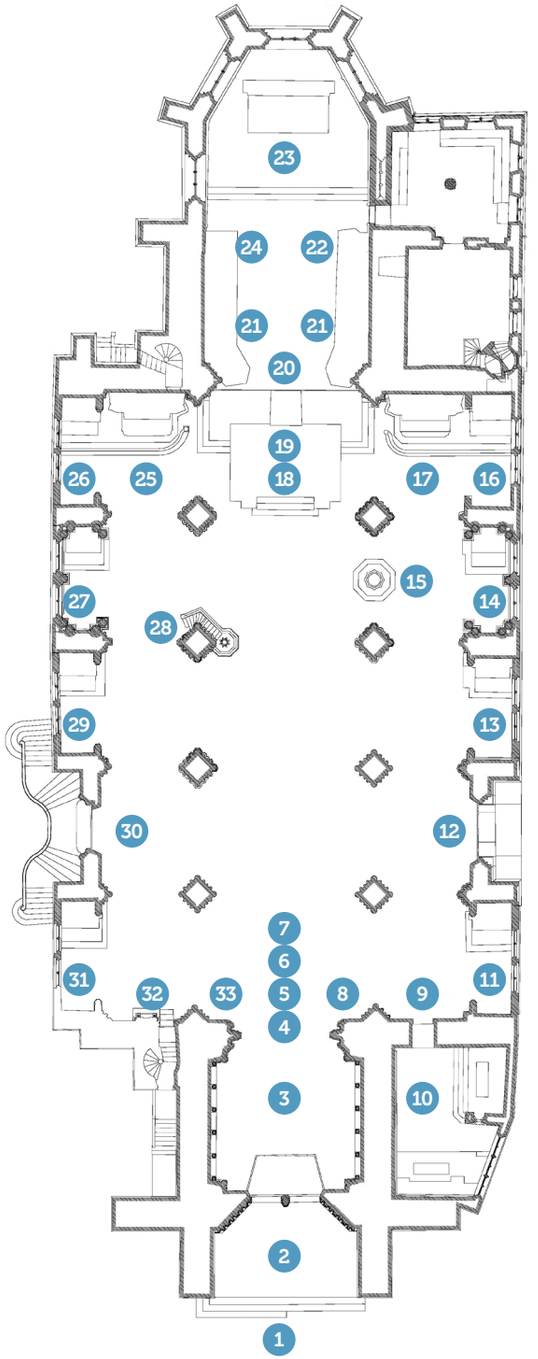
11] Altar of St Sylvestre in stucco, by Johann-Jacob and Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1752; stained-glass window «St Nicholas of Flue», by Józef Mehoffer, 1915-1919; painting «St Beat» from the atelier of Claude Fréchot, around 1651; confessional by Joseph Wicki, 1759-1760.

12] South entrance: to the left, statue «St Nicholas of Myre» by Hans Geiler, around 1520; in the middle, stained-glass window «St Pierre and St Laurent» said to be by Carignan, around 1530 (installed in 1873); to the right: statue St Nicholas of Flue», beginning of 16th Century.

13] Altar of St Anne in stucco, by Anton Pfister, 1751, canvas painting by Paul Deschwanden, 1845; stained-glass window «Knights and the Holy Women», by Józef Mehoffer, 1907-1910; painting «The Assumption», middle of 17th century.

14] Altar of «Our Lady of Divine Protection» in marble, by Jean-François Doret, 1789, canvas painting by Simon Göser, 1789; stained-glass window «Our Lady of Victory», by Józef Mehoffer, 1896-1898; statue «Our Lady Queen of the Universe» by Pancrace Reyff, 1662-1663.

15] Baptisim fonts by Hermann and Gylian Aetterli, 1498-1499; wooden cover with two statuettes «The Baptism of Jesus by Jean-Baptiste»» by Jean-Jacques Reyff, 1686.



16] Altar of the Sacred Heart in stucco, canvas painting by Paul Deschwanden, 1873; sculpture in bronze «Christ crowned with Thorns» by Clesinger, 1858; stained-glass window «The Blessed Sacrament» by Józef Mehoffer, 1898-1901.

17] Altar of the Last Supper in stucco, by Johann-Jacob et Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1753; tabernacle door in bronze «The Good Shepherd» by Georges Schneider, 1983 (altar of the Blessed Sacrament).

18] Altar of St Nicholas, ambon, Easter candlestick , Episcopal seat in bronze, by Georges Schneider, 1981-1986.

19] Choir gate, by Ulrich Wagner, 1464-1466; coat of Arms of the Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg in bronze, by Georges Schneider, 1986; on roodbeam: 3 statues «Christ on the Cross surrounded by Mary his Mother and the Apostle St Jean» around 1430.

20] Reticulated choir arch, with, in the central row, 5 keystones showing characters: «The Virgin and Child», «St Nicholas of Myre», «St Catherine of Alexandria», «St Barbe» «St Charles Borromée», the arms of the City of Fribourg and the coats of arms of» the 32 Magistrates holding office by Pierre and Joseph Winter, 1630-1631.

21] Stalls with 50 seats in oak, by Antoine and Claude de Peney, 1462-1464.

22] Choir organ by Sebald Manderscheidt, 1655-1657; chest and rostrum, from the atelier of Jean-François Reyff, 1643-1657.

23] Main altar with recumbent statue of Christ, by Franz-August and Eduard Müller, 1876-1877; stained-glass window: to the left: «The Social History of Fribourg», in the centre: «The Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost». to the right: «The Religious History of Fribourg», by Józef Mehoffer, 1918-1936; 4 monumental chandeliers in bronze, 230 cm, beginning of 16th century.

24] North wall: paintings, «Christ, the Vanquisher of Death» and «Christ appearing to Paul» by Nicholas de Hoey, 1585.

25] Altar of the Nativity in stucco by Johann-Jacob and Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1753.

26] Altar of St Barbe in stucco, by Johann-Jacob and Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1752; stained-glass window «The Apostles» by Józef Mehoffer, 1895-1896; tombstone of Petermann de Faucigny († 1513); memorial of Jacques Fegely († 1624).

27] Altar of St Josse in stucco, by Johann-Jacob and Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1751; reliquary of Jacques-François Foelech, martyr at Vevey , September 20th, 1643, by Philippe Kaeppelin, 1990; stained-glass window «The Martyrs» by Józef Mehoffer, 1898-1901; statue «St Catherine of Alexandria»», first half of 14th century.

28] Pulpit decorated with 6 statuettes with stairway, from the atelier of Hans Felder le Jeune, 1513-1516; pulpit sounding-board in wood with a statue symbolising faith by Franz-Niklaus Kessler, 1828.

29] Altar of the Three Wise Men in stucco, by Anton Pfister, 1750, canvas painting by Paul Deschwanden, 1868; stained-glass window «The Three Wise Men, by Józef Mehoffer, 1902-1905; memorial of Beat-Nicholas de Diesbach († 1657).

30] North entrance: to the right: memorial of St Pierre Canisius († 1597), by Domenico Martinetti, 1779-1780, portrait by Gottfried Locher, 1779; in the centre: stained-glass window «The Crucifix» said to be by Carignan, towards 1530 (installed in 1873); to the left: memorial of Pierre Schneuwly († 1597), by Domenico Martinetti, 1779-1780, portrait by Gottfried Locher, 1779.

31] Altar of St Sébastien in stucco, by Johann-Jacob and Franz-Joseph Moosbrugger, canvas painting by Joseph Sauter, 1752; stained-glass window «The Holy Deacons» and «The Holy Bishops» by Józef Mehoffer, 1912-1917; painting/ «Don du Rosaire at St Dominique and at St Catherine of Sienna»; confessional, by Joseph Wicki, 1759-1760.

32] Northern aisle with 4 chapels between the buttresses, 1749-1750, 1750-1751, 1751-1754; north entrance in the fourth bay with, on the exterior, sculpture «Glory» by Domenico Martinetti, 1765 west wall: monument of Aloys Mooser († 1839), by Franz-Niklaus Kessler and Johann-Jakob Oechslin, 1851.

33] Confessional, by Joseph Wicki, 1759-1760; statue «St Barbe», by Martin Gramp, beginning of 16th century.