

# Guide and visit

# SAINTE

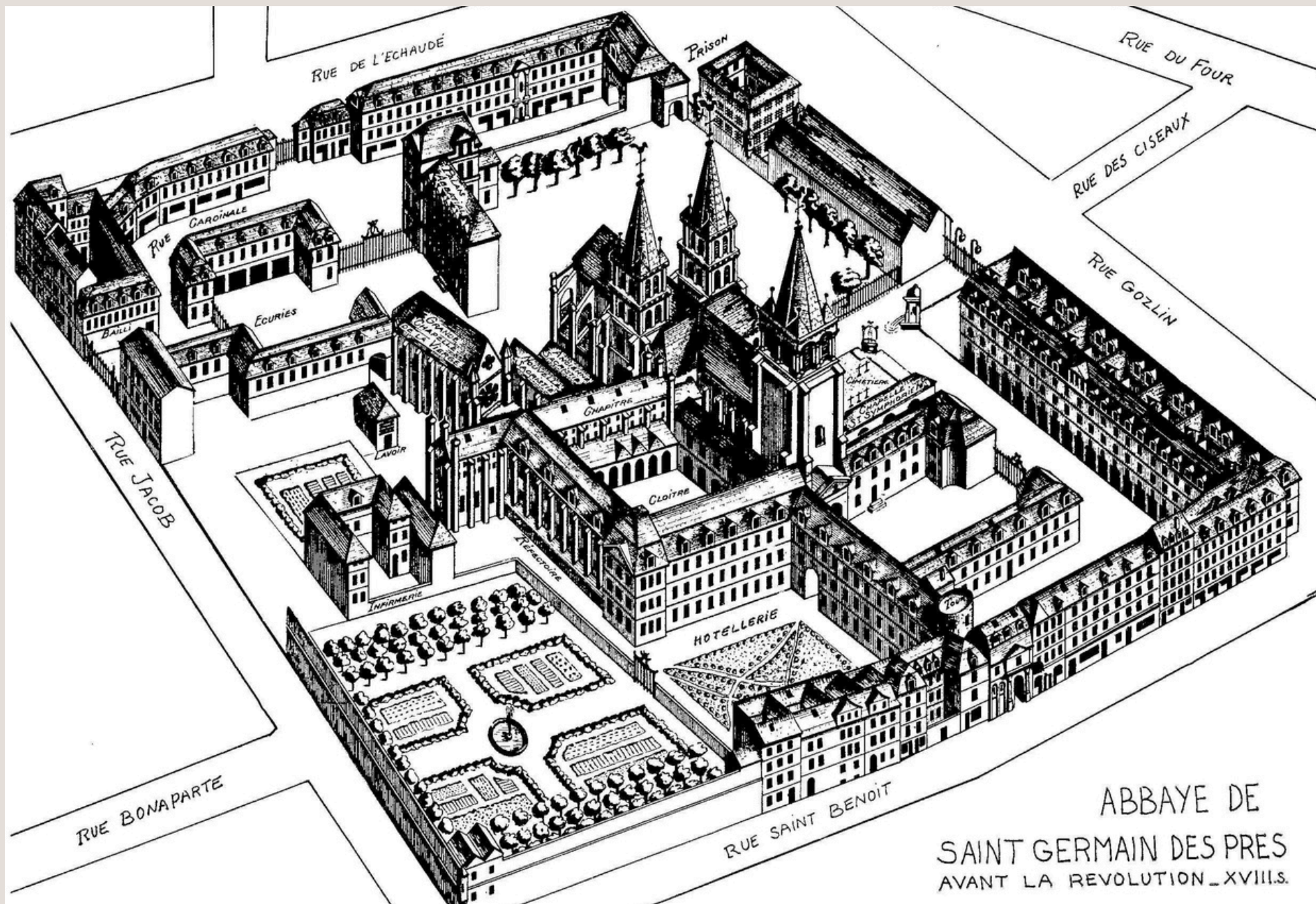
# GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS

3, place St-Germain des Prés - 75006 Paris  
[www.eglise-saintgermaindespres.fr](http://www.eglise-saintgermaindespres.fr)



## 1000 YEARS OF HISTORY

Founded in 543, Saint-Germain-des-Prés is one of the first Gothic buildings, which contributed to the spread of this new style and is of prime archaeological importance. The convent buildings were successively rebuilt during the 13th century, and an abbey chapel inspired by the Saint-Chapelle was built by the architect Pierre de Montreuil and dedicated to the Virgin... We offer you a historical retrospective to discover one of the most visited and extraordinary Parisian monuments.



**The free guided tours are organized and led by the team of volunteer guides from the Art, Culture and Faith Group of Paris, an association promoting the cultural activities of the diocese of Paris since 1989.**

They welcome visitors, they are keen to meet visitors to the church, as well as to bear witness to current parish life and their faith in the continuity of 15 centuries of religious life in St-Germain-des- Close.

Regular tourist reception:

Tuesday and Thursday at 2:30 p.m.

General visit: 1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday every month at 2:30 p.m.

For groups of more than 10 people:

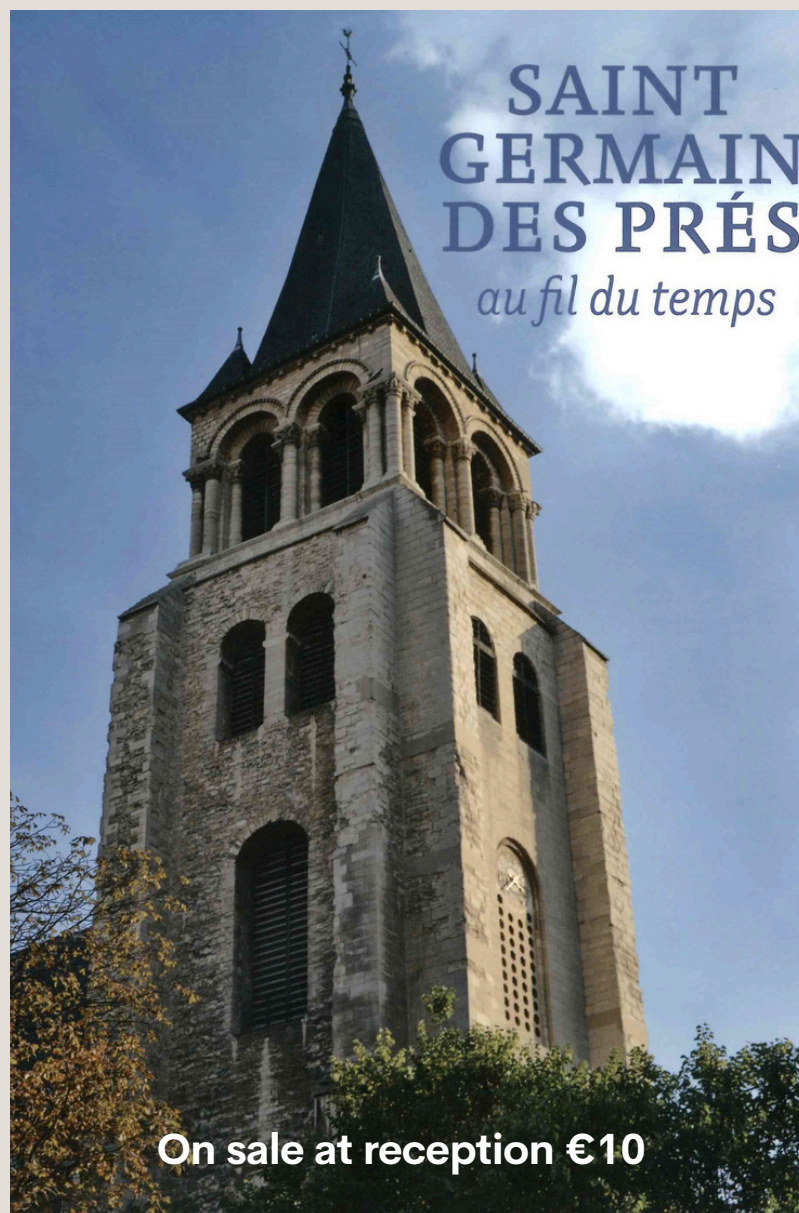
Reservation required  
from reception at 01.55.42.81.18

Visit in English possible, upon request.

Meeting place: under the organ

All visits are subject to cancellation, ask for confirmation the day before from reception.

No tourist reception during the school holiday period



**SAINT  
GERMAIN  
DES PRÉS**  
*au fil du temps*

**On sale at reception €10**

**Welcome to one of the oldest churches in Paris, a prestigious site for Romanesque art. People have been turning to God in prayer and contemplation in this place for the past fifteen centuries.**

### **FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE YEAR 1000**

- Germain was born in about 496 in Autun, where he led the St Symphorien monastery. Bishop of Paris in 555, he encouraged King Childebert to build the Basilica of Saint-Vincent-Ste-Croix. Upon the death of Childebert in 558, he was assigned the founding of the monastery. The monks, who came from Autun, followed the Rule of Saint Basil. Saint Antoine.
- In the 8th century, Charlemagne gave endowments to the abbey that had become Saint-Germain-des-Prés and imposed the Rule of St Benedict. It was one of the most important intellectual centers of Gaul.
- In the 9th century the abbey was devastated by the Norman invasions.

### **FROM ROMANESQUE TO GOTHIC**

- In 990 with the support of Robert the Pious, Abbot Morard decided to rebuild the church. He started with the tower above the porch which adjoins the nave and the Saint Symphorien chapel.
- The historiated Romanesque capitals are among the very first of the Romanesque period. In the north aisle we find David and Goliath, the Nativity, Daniel in the lions' den. To the south, the Visitation. The sculptor also drew inspiration from the Orient : various types of foliage, goat and bull heads, entwined snakes and biblical scenes. The ones in the nave, 19th century copies, are remarkable for the series of characters, Christ in majesty, lion. In the choir and under the porch, the 12th century originals portray mythical animals, sphinxes, lions and birds facing each other, plant motifs with acanthus leaves.
- There is a magnificent angel's head on the low pillar of the Saint Anne chapel. Abbot Hugues built the current gothic choir.
- In 1163, Pope Alexander III consecrated this new choir, reminding people that the abbey was under sole papal authority.



### **17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES : THE MAURISTS**

- In 1631, the Benedictines reorganized and the abbey became the center of a new community under the protection of Saint Maur. Major scholars brought the abbey enormous development and influence.
- 1789-1800, the French Revolution and urban development left the monastic buildings devastated.

### **19TH CENTURY : THE ABBEY BECOMES THE PARISH**

- The re-establishment of religious practice and the Concordat of 1802 gave the City of Paris a very significant role. Restoration work was undertaken by the architects Godde and Baltard. The furnishings were put back in place.
- Hippolyte Flandrin was assigned the decoration in 1843. The painter, one of Ingres' best pupils, did the wall paintings in four stages : the sanctuary, the choir and the nave. The transept was painting by Cornu. The two paintings of the sanctuary depict Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the Ascent to Calvary. The paintings of the choir ( the chapel of the apostles), on a gilded background, depict Christ, the Lamb of God, surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists, then the apostles. The stained glass windows were made from designs by Flandrin. The paintings of the nave offer a reading of the history of salvation, from the Creation to the Mission of the Apostles. The 24 paintings, two per bay, represent at left an essential scene from the New Testament and at right its prefiguring in the Old Testament. The cycle can be read starting from the organ, on the left, towards the altar, then from the altar to towards the organ.



### **20TH—21TH CENTURIES**

- The parish church is a place of welcome, prayer, sharing of the faith and bearing witness for the neighbourhood, students, young working people and tourists.

1. Bell tower : built starting in 990, it is the oldest one in Paris, with a belfry from the 12th century.
2. Statue de Our Lady of Consolation. 14th century.
3. Chapel of St Maur. Dissymmetric enlargement of the south arm. Cupola with dome lights, painting of J. Restout (1756) : Apotheosis of St Maur.
4. Chapel of St Margaret (statue of Fr Jacques Bourlet 1705). At the southern arm of the transept, the tomb of Olivier and Louis de Castellane, sculptures of F. Girardon : Fidelity and Piety. Large 17th century stained glass window.
5. Sanctuary, base of the two towers : wall paintings of Flandrin, The Entry into Jerusalem and The Ascent of Calvary (1846).
6. On the wall of the south tower, bas-relief of Charlier, representing the Episcopal consecration of Mgr. de Montmorency-Laval, first bishop of Quebec, beatified in 1980.
7. Chapel of Saint Theresa. Tomb of Jacques Douglas (1645) by Michel Bourdin.
8. Chapel of Saint Benedict. Funeral plaques of Descartes, Montfaucon and Mabillon. Memorial altar of the martyrs of the Abbey of September 1792.
9. Chapel of Saint Anne. Very elegant wall base with arcatures. Capital with angel head.
10. Chapel of St Genevieve. 18th century stained glass window composed of fragments of stained glass from the Chapel of the Virgin (13th century) and the monks' refectory.
11. Chapel of the Virgin (19th century). Above the altar, a statue of the Virgin holding the Infant Jesus (marble of Dupaty, 1822). On the walls, two grisailles of Heim (1828) : The Adoration of the Magi and The Presentation at the Temple.
12. Chapel of Saint Germain. Well preserved. It gives an accurate idea of the original construction of the radiating chapels.
13. Chapel of the Sacred Heart.
14. Chapel of St Peter and St Paul. Funeral plaque of Nicolas Boileau. The mission of St Peter by Etienne Jaurat (1763).
15. Chapel of St Joseph. Tomb of Guillaume Douglas (1611) attributed to Michel Bourdin father.
16. Chapel of St Francois Xavier, statue by Coustou (17th century). At the north arm of the transept, mausoleum of the heart of Jean Casimir, King of Poland then Abbé Commendataire of St Germain (1672). Sculpture of G. Marsy, bas-relief of Fr. J. Thibaud. Large 17th century stained glass window.
17. Choir. Crossing of transepts: Christ in wood - 14th century and the Virgin in the smile - 13th century.
18. Paintings « Mays de St Germain », from 1718 : The Death of Saphira by Leclerc and The Baptism of the eunuch of Queen Candace by Bertin.
19. Painting of Laurent La Hyre (17th century) : The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
20. Painting of Verdier (1677) : The resurrection of Lazarus.
21. Baptismal fonts. At right, one of the oldest capitals of the church : The combat of David and Goliath.
22. 18th century marble basin from St Landry.
23. Organ from the Abbey of Saint Victor, installed in 1813.
24. Chapel of Saint Symphorien, 11th century, attached to the south flank of the bell tower. It is considered the oldest religious edifice en Paris.

