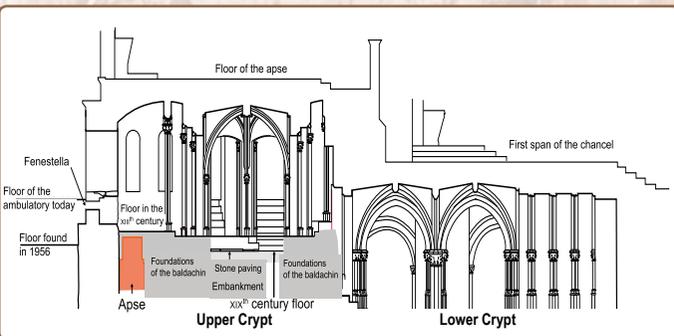


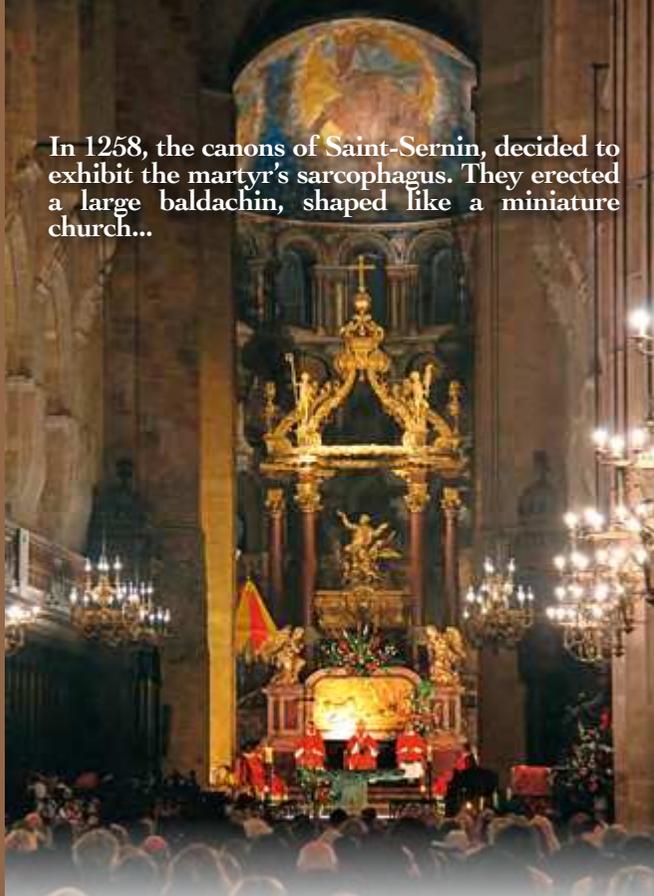
the Crowning of the Virgin. The chapel on the left is dedicated to Saint Germaine of Pibrac. It is decorated by a few fragments of XIth century paintings and a piece by Bernard Bénézet, a local painter. The North transept is richly decorated by murals dating from 1140-1180 depicting the women at the tomb at sunrise on Easter day; the Resurrection angel is a masterpiece in XIIth century mural painting. On the vault is painted the Lamb in full glory, near the chapel with an outstanding XIIth century Romanesque Christ. At the northern end of the transept the 'royal doors' through which the canons used to enter the church from their quarters were blocked by two side chapels in the early XVIIIth century.

A Pilgrimage Sanctuary for Relics ...

The AMBULATORY is made of five radiating chapels and four apsidioles. This 'circuit of the holy Relics' – around 200 relics were inventoried/listed/counted in 1246 – reveals beautiful XVIIth century reliquaries in the various chapels. Marble reliefs dating back to 1090, originally near the high altar, were embedded in the wall at the base of the apse. In the centre Christ sits in majesty, seated in a mandorla, surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists, and flanked by a cherub and a seraph singing the *Te Deum*. Bernard Gilduin, who signed the high altar, carved this beautiful Romanesque composition.



In 1258, the canons of Saint-Sernin, decided to exhibit the martyr's sarcophagus. They erected a large baldachin, shaped like a miniature church...



... inside the apse, whose base is still visible in the 'upper crypt', where the keystone of the ribbed vault depicts a magnificent Coronation of the Virgin dated 1260.

Around 1280 a lower crypt was dug to accommodate reliquary chapels. The Holy Thorn was offered in 1251 by Alphonse de Poitiers, brother of King Louis IX (who was to become Saint Louis).

Visits...

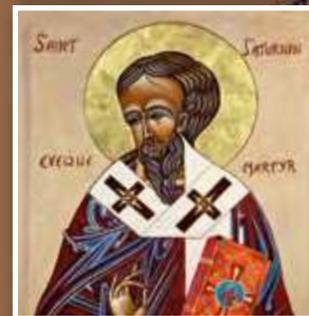
Saturdays 10:00
15:00 (16:00 in July & August)
Sundays 15:00 (16:00 in July & August)
Week days by appointment

Information / Groups :
visites@basilique-saint-sernin.fr

www.basilique-saint-sernin.fr
www.toulouse.catholique.fr

Diocèse de Toulouse

TOURISME & LOISIRS



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Basilica of Saint-Sernin

A Gem
in the Romanesque Style
in the Heart of Toulouse

Conception et création : espritCréateur.COMM' - Photos : DR

A Major Church of Pilgrimage...



The **BASILICA OF SAINT-SERNIN**, the largest Romanesque church in France, is a highly significant site in the history of Christianity in Toulouse. The basilica is closely related to *Saturninus* – Saturnin (Sarnin, in Occitan, the local dialect, then Sernin) – the first bishop of Toulouse, put to death in 250. His remains are buried here.

On the site of a former 5th century church, the present-day church of pilgrimage, large enough for processions and the worship of saints, was built around 1070. Pope Urban II consecrated the church on May 24 1096, as he was visiting Raymond IV of Saint Gilles, Count of Toulouse, to talk him into launching the First Crusade.

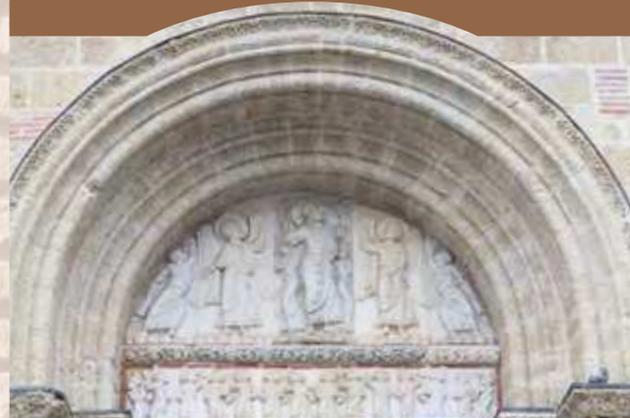


Saint-Sernin Seen from the Outside

From the **CHEVET** of the basilica the beauty and harmony of the radiating chapels can be admired, along with the transepts and the ambulatory dominated by the tower above the transept crossing.

The **PORTE DES COMTES**, which opens onto the South transept, is decorated with several capitals depicting, among others, the Rich Man and Lazarus.

The **PORTE MIÈGEVILLE** opens onto the minor southern aisle. Its tympanum features the



Ascension of Christ surrounded by angels. On the lintel below the disciples are gazing. On the right side of the doorway stands Saint Peter, holding the keys of the Kingdom, and crowned by two angels. On the left stands Saint James the Greater.

The Basilica in Figures ...

- Foundation : 5th century
- Consecration of the contemporary basilica : 1096
- Height (up to the top of the spire) : 65 m
- Height of the vault : 21.10 m
- Length of the transept : 63 m
- Width of the transept : 26 m
- Length of the nave : 115 m
- Width of the aisles : 32 m

An Architecture of Faith

The basilica was built to teach the Christian faith.

The cross-shaped plan recalls the sacrifice of Christ; the orientation towards the rising sun evokes the Resurrection while the octagonal bell tower illustrates the new law of the eight Beatitudes. The **Porte Miègeville**, decorated with the Ascension scene, opens the way to a Heaven portrayed by the basilica.

The church itself built by men reveals the Church founded by Christ.

The Largest Romanesque Building in France !

On entering through the **WEST PORTAL**, the visitor is immediately struck by the majestic vastness of the basilica. The nave, with its eleven arches rests on cross-shaped pillars; the semi-circular vault on twin arches is 21.10 m high; the nave and its side aisles are 32 m wide. In the choir the present-day stalls, where the canons used to sit, date back to 1670-1676. The late 11th century altar was placed at the transept crossing in 1952.

A baroque canopy has been poised over St Sernin's sarcophagus since 1720-1740. The dome-shaped ceiling of the apse was painted between 1536 and 1542. It is dominated by Christ in majesty surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists.



The transept is 64 m long from south to north. The Mary Chapel on the right side of the southern transept is decorated with a 14th century painting of

