

Aachen Cathedral

Aachen cathedral is the oldest cathedral of northern Europe. The oldest part, the octagon, being the palace chapel of Charles-the-Great was built about 790-800 AD in the Carolingian style. The church has been consecrated in honour of the Virgin Mary. Main attraction for pilgrims was the Miraculous Madonna "Our Lady Mary Emperor of Aachen" [6]. The statue now is positioned in the octagon right of the altar.

In a private revelation of a soul in the region of Aachen end of the 20th Century, the following prayer was given together with a promise of Jesus. The prayer itself has the authorization of the past as well as the present Bishop of Aachen [10]:

**Ave Maria, Empress,
Help of Christians
pray for the Diocese consecrated you,
especially for the bishop, all
Priests and devotees and
especially for a
Christian Europe.**

Jesus' promise to the prayer "Ave Maria, Empress, Help of Christians!":

"This prayer is precious. The more it is prayed, the more will shine my light on Aachen and Europe. This prayer is like a golden key that opens my and my mother's heart and from there the rays of My grace and Her agency can come freely to you. The more and more this prayer is prayed, the more the darkness of Europe loses ground! And that because Aachen is and remains the intellectual point, from where I will renew the world in me. And by my mother, the help of the entire Christendom, yes indeed by the heavenly empress of the world! Pray this prayer and let it all pray as often as possible! World and Church need this prayer from Aachen, the key to the light!"

The Aachen cathedral also is often called the "Imperial Cathedral" (in German: Kaiserdom). Charles-the-Great let start the octagonal chapel construction in 786 AD. When he died in 814 AD he was buried in the cathedral where his remains are still conserved. The construction of the cathedral lasted somewhat longer until 1200 AD.

The core of the Aachen cathedral is the octagonal chapel which is small compared to the later extensions of the cathedral. At the moment of its construction, however, the chapel was the biggest cathedral north of the Alps. Its fascinating Carolingian architecture in essence is a mixture of antique and Byzantine style with Franco-German elements.

Within a period of almost 600 years, between 936 and 1531 AD, the Aachen cathedral was the coronation church of more than thirty emperors of the Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation. In order to allow access to a big number of pilgrims during the Middle Age, the choir was extended by a big hall termed Vitrea Capella or Glashouse of Aachen. It was inaugurated in 1414, the 600th obit of Charles-the-Great [2]. Located in this chorus are the Shrine of Charlemagne with the bones of Charlemagne and the Marian Shrine with the relics. The honoured relics since the Middle Age are as follows:

Every seventh year a Marian pilgrimage called "Aachener Heiligtumsfahrt" takes place to honour the four relics shown to the world [5]:

- St. Mary's cloak, the robe in which "Mary has born the Son of God";
- The swaddling bands of Our Lord ;
- The waistcloth which Christ has worn at the cross;

- The kerchief of the decapitation of John the Baptist

Further three small relics are [6]:

- Belt of Jesus
- Belt of St. Mary
- The scourge cord

During the Middle Age the pilgrims arrived from a far, sometimes even from Hungary (The Hungarian Queen visited Aachen in 1337 AD with 700 cavalierists). In order to accomplish the pilgrimage to "Our Lady of Aachen" with this background the feast takes 15 days. During the "Heiligtumsfahrt" in 1937 AD, when the fascistic government tried to discredit the Catholic Church, about 800,000 pilgrims arrived within the 15 days thus demonstrating a dump protest against the fascistic regime.

Other relics that were once located in the Aachen Cathedral, are now in the small town Kornelimünster, near Aachen [8]. The relics are:

- The apron cloth of Christ (lintheum Domini) during the washing of feet before the Last Supper
- The grave cloth of Christ (sindon munda) by Joseph of Arimathea
- The shroud of Christ (sudarium Domini), which has enveloped the head of the corpse of Jesus in the grave

Another target of pilgrimage in Aachen is the Miraculous Madonna of the Aachen rose chapel (Roskapelle) in the Rosstrasse. The venerated statue of Mary in the chapel dates from around 1500 AD [9].

Bibliography

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