



Around 1500 – Under Abbot Simon von der Leyen (1491-1512), during the period of monastic humanism, the three monumental frescoes on the sides of the pillars in the entrance area were created.

17th century – Under Abbot Placidus Kessenich (1662-1698), the church received rich Baroque furnishings (altars, pulpit, choir stalls and organ) and the founder's tomb was moved to the west choir, still vaulted by the ciborium.

1802 – Secularisation led to the dissolution of the monastery and the sale of most of its inventory, leaving only the ciborium and the tomb of the Count Palatine.

1892 – The Benedictines of Beuron Archabbey in the upper Danube valley resettled Maria Laach.

1897 – With the support of Emperor Wilhelm II, mosaics were created in the apses, and new altars, choir stalls and pews were installed.

1910 – The Stahlhuth company from Aachen built a large double organ.

1926 – Pope Pius XI conferred upon Laach Minster the honorary title of Papal Basilica Minor.

1947 – The late Romanesque ciborium was transferred to the east choir and now crowns the high altar as the central point of the church.

1956 – To mark the 800th anniversary of the church, all the windows were replaced. Those in the west choir were donated by Theodor Heuss (left), Konrad Adenauer (centre) and Peter Altmeier (right).

1991 – The six-part bell ensemble from 1894 and 1899 was expanded to twelve bells.

1998 – The choir organ (also known as the swallow's nest) was built by the Klais company from Bonn. In addition, the Stahlhuth organ was rebuilt and was relocated in its entirety to the west gallery.

2023 – Final restoration of the organ system was carried out by the Mühleisen company from Leonberg, with expansion and merger of the two organs into one large organ system.



Worship times:

**Weekdays**  
5:30 Vigil and Lauds  
7:30 Holy Mass (Convent Mass)  
11:45 Midday Prayer  
17:30 Vespers  
19:45 Compline

**Sundays & Public Holidays**  
5:30 Vigil and Lauds  
7:15 Holy Mass  
9:00 Holy Mass (Convent Mass)  
11:00 Holy Mass  
17:30 Vespers  
19:45 Compline

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Tour of  
Maria  
Laach  
Basilica



Chronicle of the Abbey Church

1093 – Count Palatine Henry II of Laach founded the Benedictine monastery and commissioned a Lombard building workshop to construct the monastery and the church.

From the foundation charter: "In the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. I, Heinrich, by the grace of God, Count Palatine of the Rhine and Lord of Laach, hereby declare: As I am childless, with the consent and cooperation of my wife Adelheid, for the salvation of my soul and to attain eternal life, I founded a monastery on my paternal inheritance, namely in Laach, in honour of the Holy Mother of God Mary and St. Nicholas, as a residence for those who follow the monastic rule."

1095 – At the time of the founder's death, only the crypt had been completed; parts of the east choir and the remaining masonry had been raised to a height of 3 metres.

1100 – Death of Countess Adelheid and cessation of construction work.

1112 – Count Palatine Siegfried von Ballenstedt renewed his stepfather's foundation and called monks from Afflighem Abbey (Belgium) to Lake Laach.

1152 – Death of the first abbot, Gilbert, whose tomb was located in the crypt, which was completed during his lifetime.

1156 – Under Abbot Fulbert (1152-1177), the still unfinished church was consecrated by Archbishop Hillin of Trier.

Around 1190 – Under Abbot Konrad (1177-1194), the towers of the west side were completed.

Around 1230 – Addition of the Paradise (in front of the church) under Abbot Gregory (1217-1235) by a Burgundian builders' guild; at the same time, the wooden ceiling in the nave was replaced by a stone vault.

Around 1270 – Under Abbot Theoderich von Lehmen (1256-1295), the founder's tomb was built in the central nave, as well as the ciborium that arched over it, which was later located above the high altar.





### Paradise (front of the basilica)

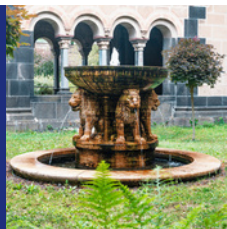
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Built around 1230, the sculptures created by the 'Laacher Samsonmeister' on the capitals of the entrance portal are particularly valuable. Among other things, we find the "Haarraufer" (hair puller) and the 'Laacher Teufelchen' (Laach devil) there.

### Lion Fountain

3

Created by Br. Radbod Commandeur and Br. Tutilo Haas in 1928, this eye-catching feature is based stylistically on the Spanish Alhambra and forms the centre of the porch of the abbey church, known as Paradise.



### Tomb of the founder, Count Palatine Heinrich II

4

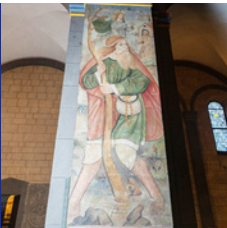
The larger-than-life reclining figure of the nobleman was carved from lime wood around 1270/1280 and is one of the most important works of its kind from the 13th century.



### Frescoes from around 1500

8

St. Christopher, St. Nicholas, second patron saint of our church, below them an image of the donor Abbot Simon von der Leyen (+1512) and St. Benedict, founder of our religious order, below them an image of the donor Father Benedikt Fabri von Münstereifel (+1517).



### Pietà Chapel

10

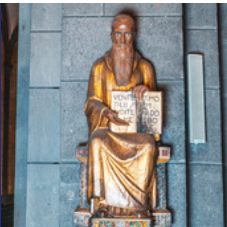
The so-called Vesperbild (a copy of the original) of the Mother of God with her dead son Jesus on her lap dates from the 15th century. In the chapel, you can entrust your prayer requests to the monks and light a candle.



### Statue of St. Benedict

17

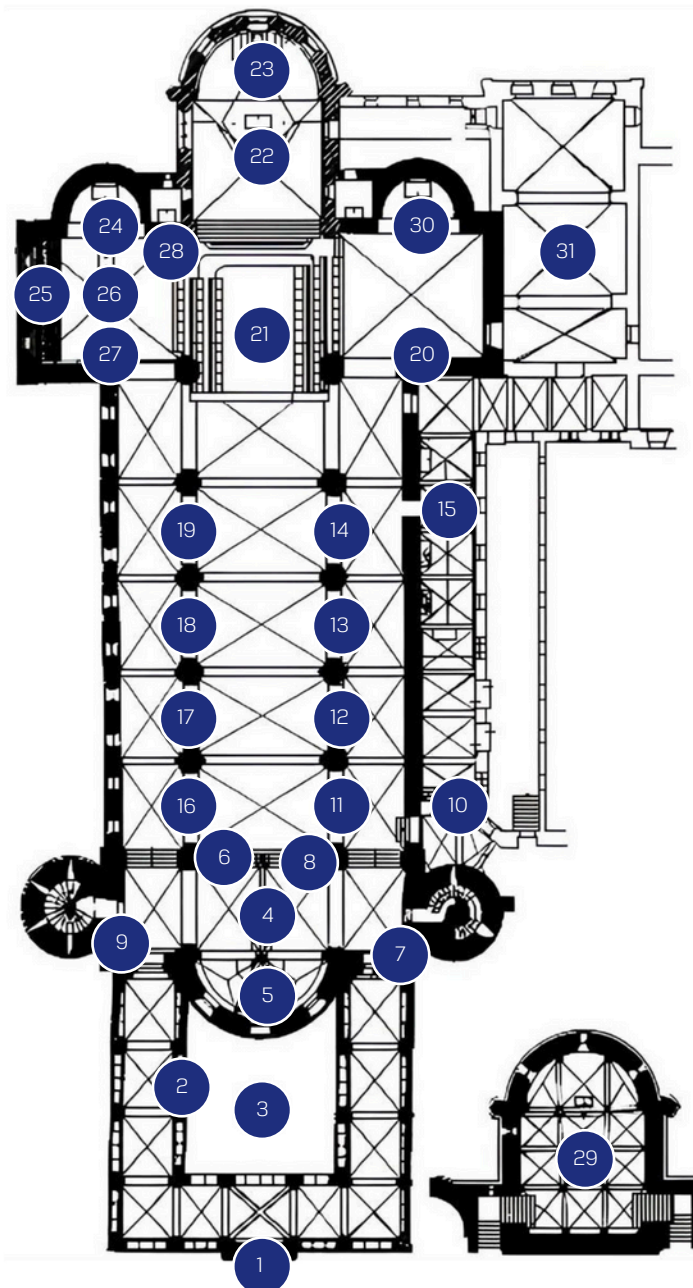
Like the other works by Br. Radbod Commandeur OSB, this statue once adorned one of the church's numerous side altars. St. Benedict of Nursia (+547) is the founder of Western monasticism and patron saint of Europe.



### Staurotheque with cross relic

19

On the outside of the double doors, two angels can be seen holding the cross. On the inside, Saint Helena and her son, Emperor Constantine, are depicted with the cross relic donated to the monastery around 1230, which is still particularly venerated today. (Br. Radbod Commandeur OSB, 1936)



## Legend of the sights

- 2 **Tomb slab** from the late 10th century, formerly covered the tomb of Abbot Gilbert in the crypt.
- 5 **Window in the west apse**  
Created in 1956 by Wilhelm Rupprecht and donated on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the church by Federal President Theodor Heuss, Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Minister President Peter Altmeier.
- 6 **West gallery**  
Main organ (Stahlhuth/Aachen) from 1910, restored in 1998 (Klais/Bonn) and 2023 (Mühleisen/Leonberg), 86 stops on 4 manuals.
- 7 **Tomb slab** of Johann Friedrich von der Leyen (+1610)
- 8 **Tomb slab** of Friedrich von Löwenstein (+1587)
- 11 **Madonna** from Burgundy (around 1400)
- 12 **Relief** of St. Martin of Tours (Elmar Hillebrand, 2002)
- 13 **Picture panel** of St. Edith Stein (Br. Lukas Ruegenberg OSB, 2011), who visited Maria Laach on 15 August 1933. A piece of barbed wire from Auschwitz concentration camp is incorporated into the panel, from which a rose blossoms.
- 14 **Retable** of the Sacred Heart Altar (1937). Crucifixion of Christ with the symbolic figure of the Church collecting the blood from Jesus' side wound with the chalice. On the left side of the pillar, a stonemason's mark in the shape of a bird can be seen.
- 15 **Confessional chapel**  
A room that invites quiet prayer, confession or confessional conversation.
- 16 **Mosaic of the Archangel Michael** (Br. Radbod Commandeur, 1939)
- 18 **Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child**  
This figure dates from the 16th century. Although such depictions are common, this one is special in its symbolism, as the rose represents the Virgin Mary and the book represents Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God.
- 20 **Swallow's nest organ** (Klais 1998) with 2 manuals and 26 stops
- 21 **Choir stalls**  
Dating from around 1905, the monastic community gathers here five times a day for communal prayer.
- 26 **Tomb of Abbot Ildefons Herwegen** OSB (1913-1946), depiction of the Good Shepherd created by Br. Radbod Commandeur (1947)
- 27 **Epitaph** of Eva von der Leyen, née Mauchenheimer, mother of Laach Abbot Simon von der Leyen
- 28 **Entrance to the crypt**



### Presbytery with main altar

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Vaulted by the hexagonal, late Romanesque ciborium, which surrounded the founder's tomb for a long time. The two front pillars are made of Roman aqueduct marble. Window of the east apse (Rupprecht 1956) with Mary, Moses (left) and Elijah (right).

### Christ mosaic in the main apse

23

Donated by Emperor Wilhelm II, designed by P. Andreas Göser OSB based on Sicilian models, completed in 1911. The Greek letters IC and XC stand for 'Jesus Christ'. The Latin inscription reads: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' (John 14:6)



### Mosaic in the Chapel of Mary

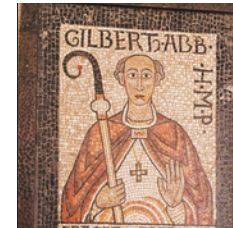
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It shows the adoration of the Magi from the East before Jesus, who is sitting on his mother's lap. Below are images of Old Testament prophets as the family tree of Jesus. Completed in 1919. Below is the altar of Mary with the Spee Cross.

### Cologne winged altar

25

It dates from the Renaissance period and depicts the crucifixion of Christ, St. Engelbert (left) and St. Christopher (right). Above it is a group of windows by Br. Notker Becker OSB with scenes from the life of Mary.



### Tomb of Abbot Gilbert

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Gilbert (1127-1152) was the first abbot of Laach and was buried in the place that had been completed first when the church was built. The mosaic slab is a copy of the original, which is kept in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn.

### Mosaic in the Sacrament Chapel

30

Depiction of the so-called Throne of Grace: God the Father, the crucified Son Jesus Christ and the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Below are the Old Testament precursors of Jesus: Adam with Abel, Melchizedek, Moses, John the Baptist, Abraham with Isaac and Noah. Below them is the tabernacle.



### Sacristy (not open to the public)

31

Completely painted, it is a masterpiece of the Beuron School of Art. The frescoes were completed in 1912 and depict scenes from the life of Jesus and the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt. It is used for preparing for worship.