

# *Saint Bartholomew's*

## Collegiate church

### Open

*Monday to Saturday from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 2 to 5 p.m.*

*Sunday 2 to 5 p.m.*

### Mass

*Tuesday to Saturday at 6 p.m.*

*Sunday at 9.30 a.m.*

## HISTORY

The former collegiate church of St Bartholomew was founded in the reign of the Prince-Bishop Balderic (1008-1018), the successor to Notger, by the grand provost of St Lambert's cathedral, Godescalc de Morialmé, and is a precious example, austere and imposing, of Romanesque architecture in the Rhine-Meuse style. It was built well outside the urban centre to its original plan of a Latin cross but went through several stages of construction. The Eastern choir with its straight chevet dates from the end of the XIth century. The transept and triple nave were added at the beginning of the XIIth century. The "Westbau", a massive edifice added to the West front, was built last, ca. 1170-1185. Restored in the XIVth and in the XVIth century, the church was modernised during the XVIIIth century. After transformation of the choir (ca. 1706), two side-aisles were constructed (1735-1748) and a monumental West door was built into the West wall to replace the original side-entrances. The building was vaulted and entirely covered on the inside with stucco and painted decoration.

At the suppression of the collegiate chapter in 1797, St Bartholomew's was converted to an arsenal and only restored to worship in 1803 as a parish church. It then acquired in its patrimony the famous font of Notre-Dame-aux-Fonts (counting among the "Seven Wonders of Belgium"; it is described in a separate leaflet) as well as the Val-St Lambert bell-chimes and a fine set of statues from the Saint Thomas parish church, demolished at the beginning of the XIXth century.

The church underwent extensive restoration work between 1999 and 2006.

## What to see in St Bartholomew's collegiate church

### Exterior

The **outer walls**, in sandstone, of the **transept** and the **central nave** have kept their original decoration of Lombardy uprights typical of Romanesque architecture in the Meuse region.

The projecting uprights, which alternate with round-arched openings, are connected at the top by an arched frieze placed under the cornice.

The **Westbau**, also sandstone, a unique specimen of XIIth century Romanesque Mosan (Meuse) style, is a rectangular tower 22 metres high, 28 metres long and 12 metres deep. Its façades are divided into three levels decorated with Lombardy uprights and blind arches resting on thin limestone columns.

Crowning this edifice are twin two-storeyed towers, almost square-based, with twin bays and again decorated with Lombardy arcatures. The triangular pediments above and the four lozenge-shaped sections of the roof are similar to the covering of several Rhineland churches (the Maria Laach abbey-church and the Holy Apostles collegiate church in Cologne).

### Interior

The Westbau, which contained the West choir or counter-choir, has preserved its two side-aisles opening onto the huge central space through arches separated by thin columns with sculpted capitals.

In the choir, the main altar (see photo), ordered by the provost of the collegiate church (1704-1721), Mathias-Josephe de Clercx d'Aigremont, is adorned with a painting representing the Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew by Englebert Fisen (1655-1733).

In the main body of the church have been assembled the master-works of St Bartholomew's artistic patrimony.

The **Exaltation of the Holy Cross** painted by the most talented of XVIIIth century Liege artists, Berthold Flémal (1614-1675) for the Croisiers church, can be admired in the right transept. Corresponding to it, in the left transept, can be seen a crucifixion painted in 1684 by Englebert Fisen for the main altar in the Saint Magdalene church and today considered not

only as the masterpiece of this highly productive Liege artist but also as the masterpiece of all XVIIth century Liege painting. Four large paintings tracing the main events of the childhood of Christ (the **Adoration of the Shepherds**, the **Adoration of the Magi**, the **Flight to Egypt** and **Jesus before the Doctors**) have been withdrawn from the Walthère Damery (1614-1678) catalogue and repositioned within the Italo-Spanish artistic milieu. The only old altar still visible in the right side-nave shows a Last Supper (1708) by Theodore-Edmund Plumier (1671-1733).

The wooden statues, white-painted in imitation marble, demonstrate the qualities of the XIIIth century Liege Schopol sculpture. Also to be admired are a **Saint Bartholomew** and a **Saint Ermelinde**; various works by Renier Panhay de Rendeux (1684-1744): a Virgin and Child (1733), a **Saint Thomas** and **Saint Roch** (1743); a **Saint John the Baptist** attributed to Guillaume Evrard (1709-1793) as well as a **Guardian Angel** by Antoine-Pierre Franck (1723-1796).

In the right side-nave, a Virgin called “of the Apocalypse” (P.N. Radino, XIXth century), with a halo of stars and dispensing grace. Restoration by Serge Creuz (1990).

The present organ, inaugurated on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1852, is the work of the great organ-builders Merklin & Schütze. This monumental organ is the oldest Romantic instrument in Belgium; it comprises 37 stops for three keyboards and a foot-pedal. The organ-case is the work of the sculptor P.N.Radino.

On the side-walls of the choir and at the end of the side-naves are panels (fruit-tree wood) of the life of Saint Bruno attributed to the Liege sculptor G. Van der Planck (1692-1750), after drawings by the artist Daniel Lesueur (1616-1655). These four panels come from the old Saint Anthony church and originally from the former church of the Carthusians (in keeping for the Museum of Religious Art and Mosan Art - MARAM).

Hanging from the vault of the choir, a sanctuary lamp (a candelabra), Liege manufacture (silver, ca.1743, in keeping for the Liege Cathedral Treasure).