

# Sacre Coeur

## Basilique du Sacre-Coeur de Montmartre

Montmartre, the “Mount of Martyrs”

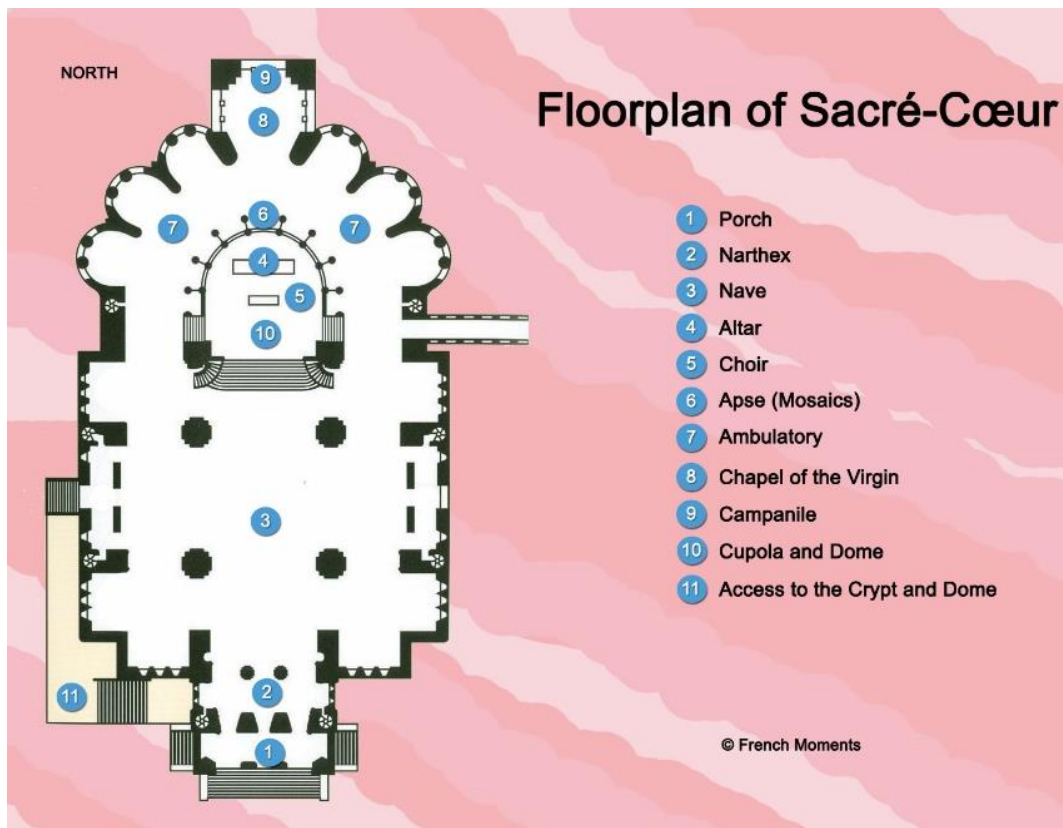
35 Rue du Chevalier de la Barre, 75018

Metro: Abbesses – Line 12 (green) + Funicular

Anvers – Line 2 (blue) + Funicular

Bus: 30 - 31 - 80 - 85 (Anvers Sacré-Coeur bus stop at foot of Montmartre)

**6 AM – 10:30 PM (Every Day)**



## **HISTORY**

From the dawn of time **Montmartre has been a place of worship** : from the **Druids of ancient Gaul**, through the **Romans** with their **temples dedicated to Mars and Mercury**, to the Church of Saint Peter, the oldest in Paris, rebuilt in the 12th century next to the Royal Abbey of Montmartre by Louis VI and his wife Adélaïde de Savoie... Finally, the Basilica of the Sacré-Cœur, erected at the end of the 19th century.

The original chapel built on the mound in honour of **Saint Denis** fell into ruin in the 9th century. It was subsequently rebuilt, as the **hill of Montmartre was a popular place of pilgrimage**. Apart from Saint Denis, the remains of a large number of anonymous Christians martyred during the persecutions were venerated, thus contributing to the hill being called the **Mount of Martyrs (Mont des Martyrs - Montmartre)**.

In 1559 a fire destroyed a large part of the abbey of the **Benedictines** of Montmartre located at the summit of the mound and from then on the misfortunes increased, until 1611 when Marie de Beauvilliers, who had governed the abbey for almost sixty years, undertook the restoration of **the Martyrium** on the side of the hill. Around this chapel a new abbey known as the lower abbey was built, which was connected to the upper abbey by a long, vaulted gallery.

During construction, in 1611, a staircase was discovered that led to an ancient crypt that was said to have been sanctified by Saint Denis. This discovery caused a sensation. **Marie de Médicis** and over sixty thousand people came to the site, setting off a new wave of devotion.

For centuries the **Abbey of Montmartre was a centre of intense religious life and a place of pilgrimage**. In 1792 the Benedictines were dispersed by the French revolutionaries and the monastery was razed. The last Abbess, Marie-Louise de Montmorency-Laval, mounted the scaffold in 1794 and her blood gave rise to the miraculous resurrection of religious life that took place eighty years later on the sacred mound. The only surviving part of the abbey of the Ladies of Montmartre is Saint Peter's church, whose choir served as a chapel for the nuns.

## **STYLE : ROMANO-BYZANTINE**

In contrast to the Gothic churches of the Middle Ages like Notre-Dame de Paris (1163-1240), the style is inspired by churches such as **Saint Sofia in Constantinople and San Marco in Venice**.

## **STONE**

The exterior travertine stone, is particular in that it is extremely hard with a fine grain and exudes calcite on contact with rainwater, making it white.

## **THE APSE MOSAIC**

Inaugurated in 1923, the 475 square metre Mosaic of Christ in Glory is one of the largest mosaics in the world. It represents the risen Christ, clothed in white and with arms extended, revealing a golden heart. Surrounding him, in various sizes, a world of adorers is represented, including the Saints who protect France: the Virgin Mary and Saint Michael, Saint Joan of Arc, as well as a personification of France offering her crown and Pope Leo XIII offering the world.

On either side, in two rows of gilded architecture, the homage of the Church (left) and France (right) to the Sacred Heart.

Homage of the Catholic Church: From the left, Pope Clement XIII who instituted the feast of the Sacred Heart, Pope Pius IX who extended it to the universal Church, Pope Leo XIII (offering the globe) consecrating the human race to the Sacred Heart. These are followed by figures symbolizing the five continents.

Homage of France: From the right, various historical events linking France to the Sacred Heart are recalled.