

*St. Mary's Chapel* with a Madonna from Mainz (around 1750) is situated in the northern transept. In the vault one can see Mary's silver lilies which became black during the course of time.

Opposite the chapel is a wall painting from the 16th century, restored by the married couple Kalchoffen/Langenbach in 1638 with a corresponding inscription. It represents the genealogical table of Jesus with twelve royal ancestors: A king will arise from the root of Jesse (Isaia, father of King David), on the sides of the painting, Moses, Aaron, Daniel and Ezechiel.

Below, the Holy clan, Jesus' family, the parents of St. John the Baptist, Elizabeth and Zachary (see Luke 1) as well as Joachim and Anne, Mary's parents, as well as the apostles as children and their parents. A fresh overpainting was made in 1880.



The memorial grave of *Count Konrad Kurzbold* stands on columns from the 11th century, the tombstone dates back to the 13th century. The count is represented as a young man and with his eyes wide open expressing belief in eternal life. The artist wanted to show him being young forever in eternity.

*St. John's Chapel* with St. John the Baptist high under the arch is located in the southern transept. Below, we see two frescoes: Christ on a tree-like cross (the tree of life) and, on the opposite side, Samson from the Old Testament as forerunner of Christ (see Judges 13-16).

*The bells of St. George's Cathedral*: The carillon consists of 9 bronze bells. Seven bells hang on steel or wooden yokes in the *south west tower* and were cast by the bell foundry Petit & Edelbrock Bros. in Westphalia in 1907 (a° and á) and in 1949 respectively. The carillon with its almost continuous Aeolian tone scale (a°, c, d, e, f g, a') is used for numerous effective combinations. The *north west tower* houses *two historical bells*: the storm bell (g' - also called "Stern") dating back to the first half of the 13th century and the bell originally indicating the time (d") from 1447 - both cast by unknown bell founders - in the wooden belfry dating back to the 19th century. The medieval sound of the storm bell calling the faithful to mass can be heard during the Holy Week whereas the bell originally indicating the time rings during the baptismal ceremony nowadays.

Southern side: The *baptismal font* dating back to the construction period of the cathedral is made of sandstone. It shows an abundance of sculptural detail. In front, one can see the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. Above, allegories of the virtues and, below, made of limestone, the vices. A fighting and a kissing couple refer to the vices of anger and lust.



The *modern bronze lid* (1967) and the little bronze grille doors imbedded into the wall behind, were created by the sculptor Karl Matthäus Winter (+2012) from Limburg. The relief and the figures on the bronze lid show the great diversity of Creation. The grilles show the anointing of Jesus (1969), the women at the grave and Pentecost (2011). The bronze grilles lock wall niches sheltering the holy oils consecrated by the bishop in the Chrism Mass.

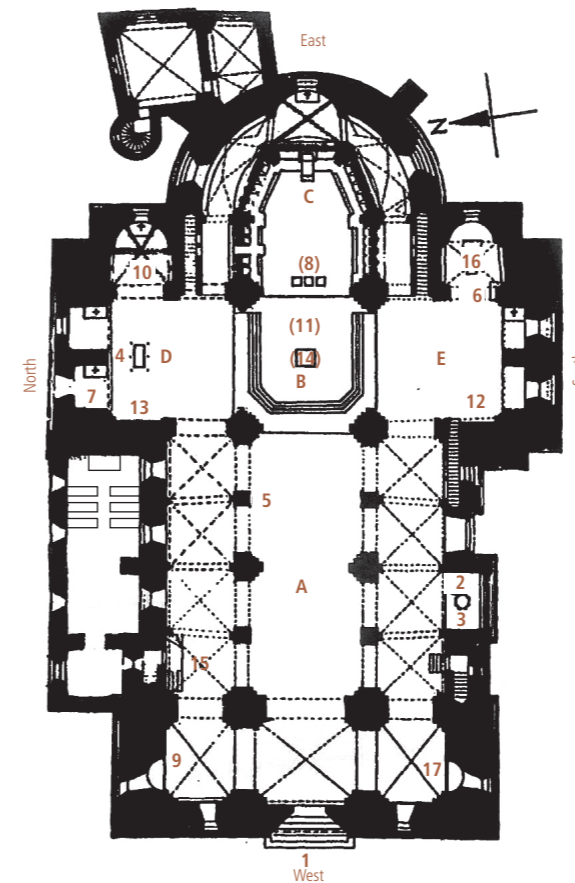
A Rhine Madonna from the High Middle Ages can be seen south of the entrance door.



Further information at : [www.bistumlimburg.de](http://www.bistumlimburg.de) or [Domfuehrungen@bistumlimburg.de](mailto:Domfuehrungen@bistumlimburg.de)  
Photos front page (above), 2. Inner page: © Marcel Schawe;  
Further photographic material: © photo studio Werner Baumann  
Design: Annika Steininger, Diocese of Limburg

Stand 06/2023

## Ground plan



Length of the cathedral: 54m, height of the nave: 21-25m, width of the nave: 35m, height of the crossing tower inside: 33m, outside: another 33m, transept: 30m.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| A Nave   | 5 Late Gothic tabernacle, 1496                               | 11 „Majestas Domini“ in the intersection of the nave, 1235 |
| B Intersection of the nave   | 6 Epitaph of the Mundersbach family, 1477                    | 12 Samson, wall painting, before 1235                      |
| C Choir  | 7 St. Anne's altar, late 15 <sup>th</sup> century.           | 13 Root of Jesse, wall painting, 17 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| D Northern transept  | 8 Copy of the Walsdorf crucifix (1200)                       | 14 Main altar  |
| E Southern transept  | 9 Epitaph of Canon J. Hepp, 1599                             | 15 Access to the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament              |
| 1 St. George and St. Nicolas, 12 <sup>th</sup> /13 <sup>th</sup> century | 10 Baroque Madonna on the crescent of the moon. Around 1750. | 16 Crypt chapel of the bishops of Limburg                  |
| 2 Baptismal font, beginning of the 13 <sup>th</sup> century              |  | 17 High Gothic Madonna, approx 14 <sup>th</sup> century    |
| 3 Bronze lid of the baptismal font, 1967                                 |  |  |
| 4 Memorial grave of Konrad Kurzbold (detail)                             |  |  |



# THE CATHEDRAL OF LIMBURG

English Edition 



## Dear visitors, welcome to St. George's Cathedral of Limburg!

*The cathedral of Limburg presents itself in a unique location on a cliff high above the Lahn river. Our cathedral with its seven towers reminds us of the heavenly Jerusalem of which is written in a church song: "A big city rises and comes down out of heaven from God" (GL 479). At the same time, the cathedral, seen from afar, gives the impression of a crown above the town and the countryside. The visitor entering the cathedral through the mighty door will be impressed by the elegance and the architectural rhythm of the church. The many art treasures awaiting you inside which give evidence of the beauty of faith and also bear witness of the faith of their contractors and the artists of their time. Our little guidebook through the cathedral will help you to understand and see so that you will remember the cathedral of Limburg after your visit as "a house made of living stones" (1st Letter of St. Peter 2:4-5).*

*The Cathedral Chapter of Limburg*

### Building History

In 910, Count Conrad Kurzbald (+948) founded a collegiate chapter on the grounds of his castle. Most likely he found remains of an 8th century church already dedicated to St. George. The church was embellished and extended in 1058. The dwelling places of the canons were spread across the whole town. As the citizens of the town, mainly merchants, became wealthy, they began to build a new, bigger church along with the inhabitants of the castle and the canons. The church of today was consecrated as collegiate church and parish church in 1235. As well as St. George it also obtained St. Nicolas as patron saint.

### Architectural style

The building is of Romanesque style typical of the Lower and Middle Rhine and the Staufian epoque of Friedrich II, taking in early Gothic elements of the Lorraine and other regions. The ground plan is a cross. The massive pillars carrying the vault and also the horizontal division into storeys are Romanesque in style. The half columns in front of the pillars, the height corresponding to the ground plan, the pointed arch vault on the galleries and the "opened" walls with their corridors and arcades are influenced by Gothic architecture. Moorish influence can be seen in the superelevated arches of the gallery.



### Building idea

The style of Gothic churches was intended to represent heaven. The vision of St. John in the Book of Revelation can be applied to this church as well. He says: "I saw the new Jerusalem, the Heavenly City come down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and based on the foundation stones of the twelve apostles." (see Book of Revelations 21)

One can indeed get the impression that this church with its seven towers is coming down out of heaven. The colored exterior facade reminds us of bridal jewellery. We rediscover the twelve apostles as the foundations of our faith in the twelve massive pillars. The numerous arcades are like the open doors of the heavenly city.

Imagine you are on the main road of this heavenly city and you are looking along the facades of the magnificent medieval buildings into the celestial mansions. This impression is also given by the galleries on three levels. Outside, there is a fourth gallery at window level. This heavenly city is inhabited: The archways of the gallery show half-length portraits of the apostles, furthermore prophets and saints: the ancestors of our faith. Christ is represented in a central position above the intersection arch as judge of the world, enthroned between the two patron saints of the church, St. George and St. Nicolas who can also be seen down in the area of the arcades at the two crossing piers.

The frescoes in the western nave bay represent the universe with two figures, Aqua (water) and Terra (earth) as well as plant life. The second vault fresco, very well preserved and located farther to the east, shows the archangels Michael and Gabriel as well as the paradise rivers Euphrates, Tigris, Geon and Phison indicating the way into church as the way into paradise.

### The cathedral in the course of time

The collegiate chapter (collegiate chapter of St. George) was dissolved after it had existed for almost 900 years in 1803. The collegiate school building (around 1820) and the refectory (in 1870), were demolished. *The diocese of Limburg* was founded in 1827. Its territory had belonged to Trier, Mainz and Cologne until that time. The collegiate church or parish church thus became an episcopal church. The first two bishops are buried in the middle of the nave, their successors found their final resting place in the crypt chapel of the southern transept.

Although the cathedral had never been destroyed, the interior has been painted over and renovated several times. During the last *restauration of the interior (1975-1991)*, more than 70% of the original colours were laid bare and left in the condition they were, of course, no longer as colourful as 800 years ago. During the Romantic Revival period of the late 19th century, as people could no longer imagine that the *exterior facade* had been colourful in the Middle Ages, the exterior plasterwork was removed. People wanted to see the rock fortress growing with the grey stone wall up to the sky. It was only during the latest restoration (1970-1973) that the exterior of the cathedral was restored to its earlier appearance i.e. the cathedral received a new, colourful plasterwork coming closest to the original colours used in the Middle Ages.

St. Valentine's Chapel situated in the north of the cathedral accomodates the *Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament* of today. It is a place of prayer and silence. The Greek words "light" and "life" as well as the walking sticks of the apostles are painted on the altar. The tabernacle and the candle holders were created and wrought by Prof. Hans Karl Burgeff (+2005).



### The interior of the cathedral

The Gothic tabernacle sculpted in whinstone dates back to the year 1496. A stairway facilitated access (ground plan No. 5).

*The round window* has glass panelling from 1882. In the centre, it shows St. George the dragon slayer, and, around him, the coats of arms of the worldly and ecclesiastical authorities of that time.

*The organ*, from the workshop of Johannes Klais, was made in 1978 and has got 60 organ stops with 4306 organ pipes.

In the apse there are *modern stained glass windows* from the year 1993, created by Hubert Spierling from Krefeld; below, the birth of Christ, on the gallery, Christ crucified in the light of the resurrection and, above, Christ with the Book of Life, who will return at the end of times.

The most precious item of the Diocesan Museum nearby is the "*Staurothek*", the cross relic dating back to the 10th century. The reliquary is part of the cathedral treasure and can be seen in the Diocesan Museum, Domstraße 12.  
Phone: 06431-58 47 200  
(Tuesday-Saturday 10am-1pm, 2pm-5pm; Sundays 11am-5pm). Closed from 4th Advent till 31st March.

A "week of the Holy Cross" is celebrated with solemn liturgies and the veneration of the relic every year around the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14th Sept).

**More information:** [www.staurothek.bistumlimburg.de](http://www.staurothek.bistumlimburg.de)



The stained glass windows in the northern and southern transept were created by Johannes Schreiter in 1977. Those in the upper choir area show the angels with the Instruments of the Passion, a work of Georg Meistermann (+1990) in the late 1980s.