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BRUSSELS : THE SAINT MICHAEL and SAINT GUDULA CATHEDRAL



This church is to be found at the **Treurenberg hill** on the edge between lower and upper town. Already at the beginning of the 11th century a church was situated here. In 1047 the Duke of Brabant, Lambert II, had the **relics of Saint Gudula** transferred from the Saint Gorik church in downtown Brussels to the new church at the Treurenberg hill. From that moment on the Saint Gudula and Saint Michael church took the lead over all the other churches in Brussels. Lambert II also gave the church a **chapter of 12 canons** (= priests who took care of the services and possessions of the church).

Because of its growing importance, the first St. Gudula church originally built in Romanesque style was transformed in gothic style as from the 13th century. Today, the foundations of the first church can still be seen under the crypt of the gothic cathedral.

The **gothic** choir was constructed between 1226 and 1276, nave and transept in the middle of the 15th century. The western facade, completed between 1450 and 1490, follows the example of the French gothic facades.

Via a large staircase (built in 1861) the three gates of the entrance can be reached. Inside, 12 pillars clearly determine the interior of the cathedral, whereas the triforia and glass-stained windows accentuate the later gothic style which allowed more light to fall in to the church. The choir is darker because of the smaller window openings. In the northern chapel on the left side of the choir, one can see the portraits of several kings and emperors who bestowed the richly decorated glass-stained windows: Joao III of Portugal, Louis of Hungary, François I of France and Ferdinand I. In the choir the windows of the following rulers can be seen: Maximilian of Austria, Philip the Beautiful, Charles V, Philip II of Spain, Philibert of Savoy with his wife Margaret of Austria.



(Above : *The baroque pulpit made by H. Verbruggen in 1699 shows Adam and Eve being chased out of the paradise*).

All through the 20th century the Cathedral has almost continuously been renovated. The renovation was completed in December 1999 when the marriage of the Belgian Crown Prince Philippe with his bride Princess Mathilda took place here, on the 4th of December.

Location

Sint Goedele voorplein / Parvis Saint Gudule

