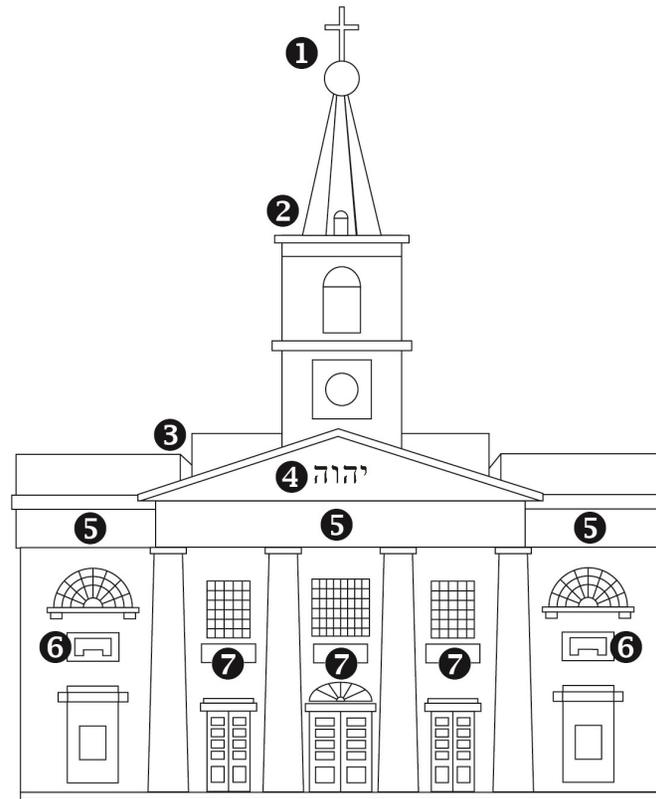


Exterior Features

The Greek Revival architectural style was in peak popularity when the Old Cathedral was designed. For the young American nation, it harkened back to the Greek roots of democracy. The façade and columns are made of limestone mined near Joliet, IL.

- 1) The gilded ball and cross represent the salvation of the world through Christ. The cross measures 12 feet tall, and the ball is 8 feet in diameter.
- 2) The octagonal steeple measures 45 feet high. In 2014, a carpenter working on the restoration in the steeple found two green glass bottles with a thick coat of dirt. The old champagne bottles were used during a ceremony marking the completion of construction of the Old Cathedral 180 years ago. The bottles date to between 1735 and 1810 France.
- 3) The roof is made of terne metal-coated copper. In 2018, high winds tore off the metal roof, looking like crumpled paper next to the church. It was promptly repaired and replaced.
- 4) The triangular pediment contains the *Tetragrammaton*, or the Hebrew name of God, in gilded Hebrew letters: "YHWH." When placed inside of a triangle in Christian art, it signifies the Trinity, the fullness of Godhead.
- 5) The gilded Latin inscription across the frieze translates: "In honor of St. Louis" on the left, and "Dedicated 1834" in Roman numerals on the right. The center reads: "To One and Triune God," which emphasizes the symbolism of the *Tetragrammaton*.
- 6) Two marble slabs on the east and west sides of the façade are inscribed in French and English with the passage: "My house will be called a house of prayer" (from Isaiah 56:7 and Matthew 21:13).
- 7) Above each of the three doors is a slab of Italian marble with the passage: "Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them" (from Revelation 21:3). It is written in French, Latin, and English. French and English were the most common languages in St. Louis when the church was being built between 1831 and 1834, and Latin is the official language of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Old Cathedral



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VISITOR'S GUIDE

Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France

(The Old Cathedral)



Mass Times

Daily Monday - Friday 7:00 AM and 12:10 PM

Saturday 7:00 AM, Sunday Vigil 5:30 PM

Sunday 8:00 AM, 10:30 AM, 12:00 PM, and 5:00 PM

Church Hours

Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 2:00 PM

Saturday 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Sunday 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM

Museum Hours

The Old Cathedral Museum is open by appointment only. Please call 314-231-3250 to schedule a tour.

The museum is located on the west side of the Cathedral.

209 Walnut Street
St. Louis, MO 63102
oldcathedralstl.org

Welcome to the Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France, fondly called the “Old Cathedral.” For nearly 200 years, the Cathedral has stood as a testament to the Catholic heritage of our city, which was dedicated to Saint Louis at its founding in 1764. We invite you to explore the Basilica with this guide.

Historical Highlights

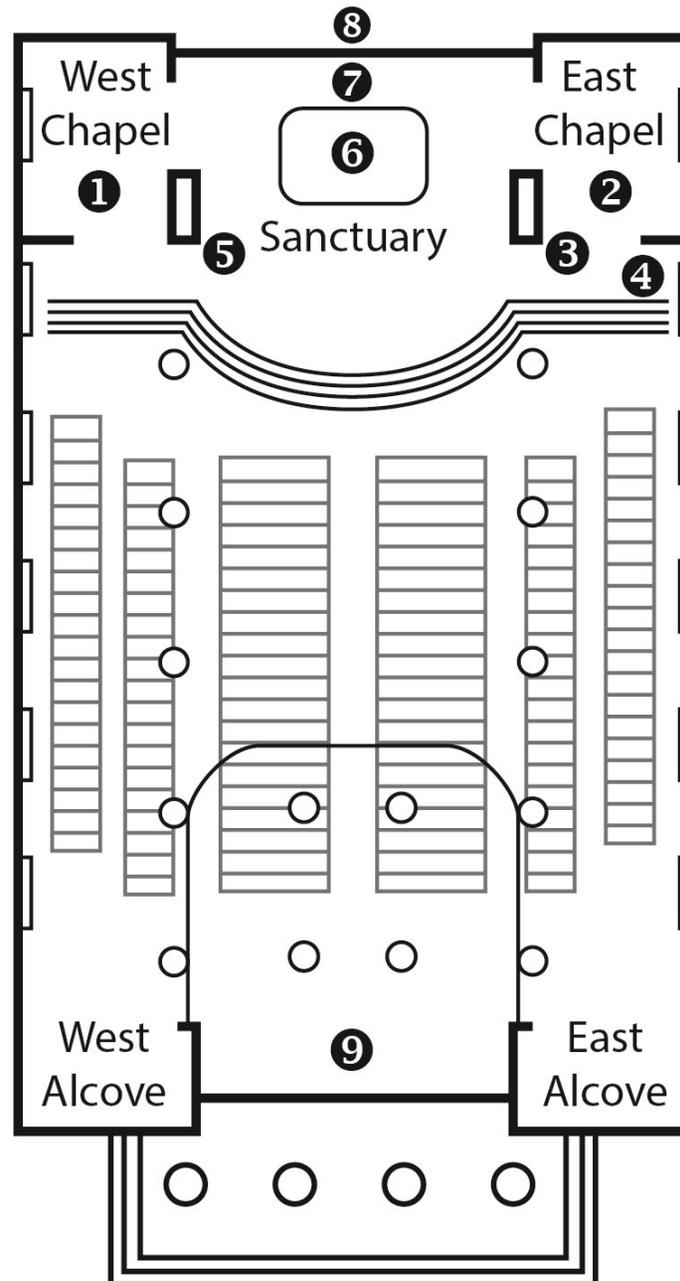
- ◆ First Cathedral west of the Mississippi
- ◆ Only structure maintained when the riverfront was cleared for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
- ◆ Only building still standing in the City of St. Louis that remains in the hands of its original owner
- ◆ Included on National Register of Historic Places
- ◆ The fourth church to be erected on this site
- ◆ Cornerstone placed in 1831, and the building dedicated in the autumn of 1834
- ◆ Visited by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla in 1969, nine years before he became Pope John Paul II (canonized in 2014)
- ◆ Restored in 2015 to its 1834 and 1880s appearance

Interior Architectural Features

- ◆ The windows, of Georgian design, originally had transparent paintings of religious scenes.
- ◆ The empire-style moldings and ceiling ornaments are original and were likely imported from France.
- ◆ The pews, floors, and communion rails were refinished in 2014. The pews date back to 1893.
- ◆ The Stations of the Cross were restored in 2015.

West Side Chapel

- 1) *The Flaying of St. Bartholomew* was one of six paintings that were gifted to Bishop Louis DuBourg in 1818 by King Louis XVIII. It was painted by Nicholas Bertin (1667-1736), who did many royal commissions for King Louis XIV. St. Bartholomew was one of the twelve apostles, and preached in India and then Greater Armenia. He was martyred there by being skinned alive, for having converted Prince Astyages’ brother, King Polymius of Armenia. His feast day is August 24.



East Side Chapel

- 2) The east side chapel contains the painting *St. Louis IX, King of France*, which was also gifted to Bishop DuBourg by King Louis XVIII in 1818. It was painted by Charles-Antoine Coypel in 1751. It depicts the saint kneeling before the crown of thorns, submitting to the authority of Christ his own royal scepter and crown. The painting was restored in 1949 and in 1999.
- 3 & 4) In the foreground are the *tintinnabulum*, or “little bell,” and the *umbraculum*, or “big umbrella.” These objects signify the Cathedral’s status as a Basilica, which is a papal honor denoting the church’s historical value and spiritual significance as a center of worship. Pope St. John XXIII granted Basilica status to the Old Cathedral in 1961. The *tintinnabulum* is only carried in processions on special occasions. The *umbraculum* is a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church and the authority of the pope.

The Sanctuary

- 5) The bishop’s chair and kneeler belonged to Bishop Joseph Rosati and dates to 1834. The episcopal throne, or *cathedra*, is used by the current archbishop while celebrating Mass. The coat of arms hanging behind it belongs to the archbishop.
- 6) The marble altar was installed in 1959 and is a duplicate of the original from 1834. The original was removed during renovations of the late 1800s.
- 7) Above the main altar is a replica of the painting *Christ Crucified* by Diego Velasquez. Painted by Charles F. Quest, it is three times larger than the original painting from 1632, which hangs in the Museo del Prado in Madrid, Spain. Cardinal Joseph Ritter commissioned the painting from Quest in 1959.
- 8) The oval window behind the altar was rediscovered during the 1959 renovations. On the sill was a pencil sketch with the inscription: “Matt Hastings put 4 lights in window, Nov. 18, 1851.” Hastings later became a noted painter. He attended St. Louis University and accompanied Jesuit missionary Father Peter J. De Smet on his travels west, establishing a reputation for his paintings of Native Americans and Western scenes.

The Organ

- 9) The organ was built by Charles Schwab in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was originally installed in 1839. Most of the present organ was rebuilt by the Wicks Organ Company of Highland, Illinois, but the exterior cabinetry and some of the pipes are original. There are close to 1,700 pipes made of metal or wood and ranging in length from 2 inches to 16 feet.