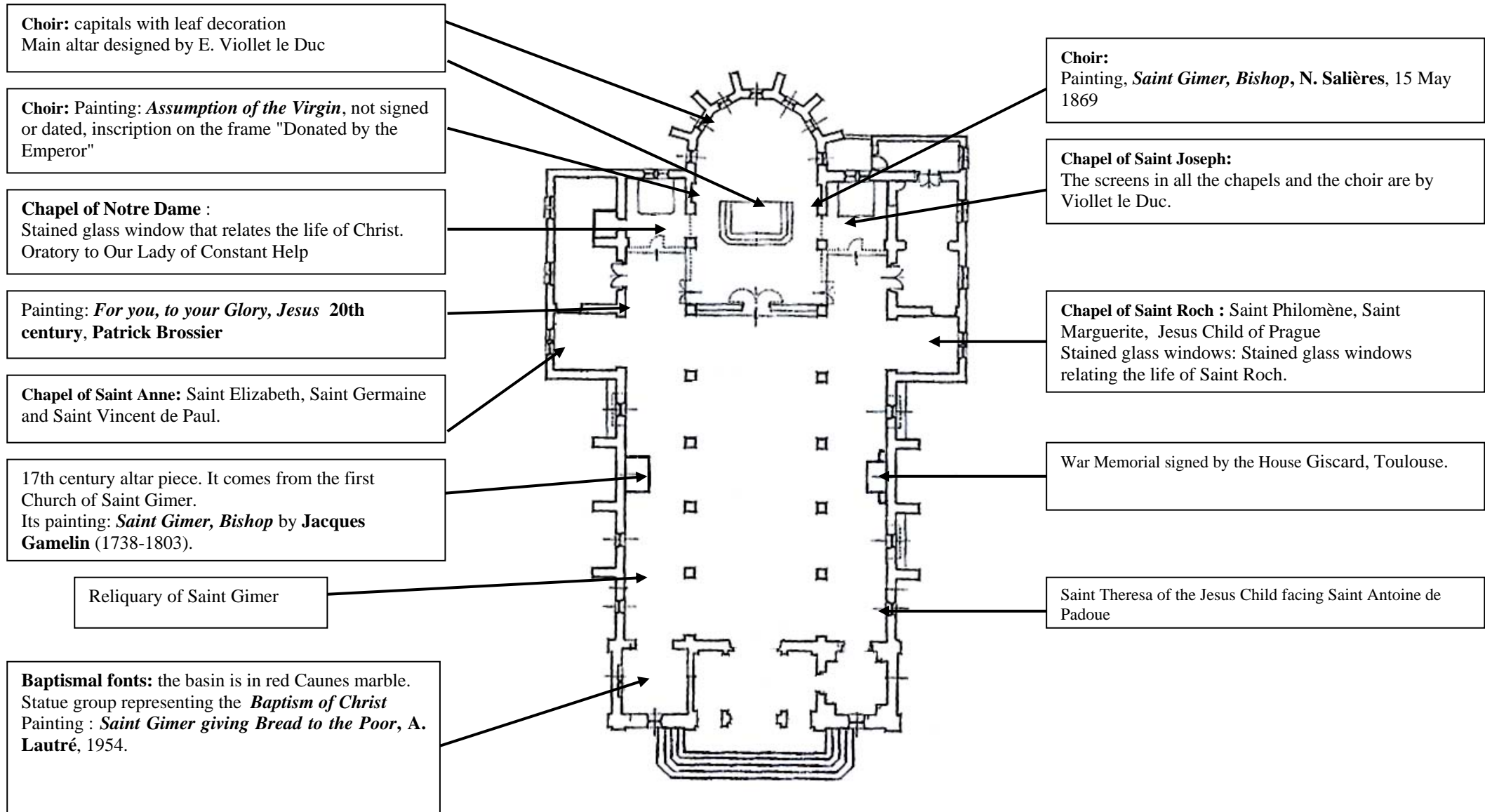


Church of Saint Gimer



CARCASSONNE

A little history

The church owes its name to Saint Gimer, the Bishop of Carcassonne between 902 and 931. He is known for his charity to the poor. He won fame in his childhood by the miracle of bread. Indeed, he had the habit of taking the bread that his mother made, making her angry until one day she saw the quantity of bread that she had just kneaded miraculously increase. It is said that he sold his entire inheritance and gave the money to the poor. He was a reforming bishop and attended the Narbonne Council that met in Barcelona in 906 and others in Saint-Thibery, Maguelone and Fontcouverte. It was Saint Gimer who transferred the Episcopal seat from the Church of Sainte Marie du Saint Sauveur to the Church of Saint Nazaire and Saint Celse. He was buried in his cathedral. The inhabitants of Carcassonne have never forgotten him and have even dedicated a song to him.

The original church

The original church, probably built towards the end of the 11th century on the site of the house where Saint Gimer was born, stood near the current church, to the south of rue Barbacane (n°58). The building, not in use today, bears, above the door, the coat of arms in white marble of Monseigneur de l'Estang from the demolition of the mausoleum erected in the Church of Saint-Nazaire.

The current church

The parish of Saint-Gimer was established in 1840 and when the succursal chapel was built it was felt that a larger building was needed. There were plans for the construction of aisles to the left and right, and to lengthen the building from 18m to 28m.

In 1848 it looked as if the chapel would collapse and in 1852 the commune and the parochial church council abandoned the reconstruction project deciding to build a new church. It was erected on the site of the ancient barbican, the remains of which can be seen behind the church. Eugène Viollet Le Duc drew the plans.

The construction began in 1852. The architect intended building a simple but functional church for 60 000 Francs. Due to the terrain major difficulties were encountered as soon as the foundations works began under the entrepreneur Magné. In 1854 Eugène Viollet-Le Duc, encountering opposition from the town, withdrew from the construction and asked Cals, the diocesan architect and his representative, to take over his plans.

In 1857 the town left the construction management to Monseigneur de la Bouillierie who, helped by the dynamic Abbot Bruel, battled to obtain funds and finish the construction.

The church was completed in 1859 under the management of its designer Eugène Viollet Le Duc and was consecrated on 9 June.

The objects from the old church were transferred to the new church.

For Eugène Viollet le Duc it represented a simple and functional example of a parish church that could serve as a model. The construction plans, that have been conserved, reveal his attention to the slightest detail, in particular the decorative part: the altar, the pulpit, the chapels, the candleholders and the screens.

Eugène Viollet Le Duc (1814-1879) is known more particularly for his restoration of the City of Carcassonne. Attached to the Historical Monuments Commission, he was appointed as the Aude diocesan architect, renovating the Cathedral of Saint Michael and building the Church of Saint Gimer. He worked on few churches, but he shows here, as in the Chapel of Petit Séminaire de Paris, a taste for architecture adapted to the place's functions, a concern for technicality and restraint in historical references. Already a modern architect, he designed buildings for less than 100 000 francs, which could be modified and used as models. His choice of architectural style is based on the same approach: « *Gothic architecture has all the advantages, both national, rational and logical* ». He blended the Gothic styles of the north and south. The northern influence is expressed by the distribution of three naves of different heights and small columns leading to the vault springers. The influence of the south can be seen in the very simple and compact exterior volumes and the light entering the nave through a series of oculi.

The church has had no resident priest since 1966 and is currently served by Abbot Vaqué.

It was restored in 1988.

It is listed, along with the City (1997) as a World Heritage of Humanity.

Description:

The church comprises a nave and two side aisles preceded by a 7-sided "chevet" (apse and ambulatory in east end of a church). Two sacristies run off the chevet. A porch occupies the west wall surmounted by a tribune with an organ. It is said to have been made by the Puget organ makers and dates from between 1860 and 1870. The neo-Gothic case is in one piece with 3 face plates. It was restored in 1999.

Song of Saint Gimer Cant dé san Gimer

Refrain: San Gimer qu'éro un sant'omé
Tretziémé abesqué dé Cioutat,
Prégo Diou per la Barbocano
E per Guillamoumé Soulairac.

Les basés qué soun al parterro
Se flouriran aquest'hiber,
Las pourtaren à la capelo
Al serbici dé san Gimer.

I- Salut, bel jour de nostro festo
Entendets bouëtots, carillou,
Cal qué cadum, à l'houro présto

Canté Gimer nostré Patrou.
Toutis anen à sas capellos
D'un cor countent et débouat
Pourten ulléts, rosos novelos
Et demândén bouno santat.

II- Gimer fousquet touto sa bido
Un boun amic d'al malhérous
Quant de cops bejet sa ma bido
D'uno pécèto, d'un pa rous ;
Mais un bel jour, jour que prégabo
Dal boun Diou entendet la bouès
A soun aouta Diou l'appelabo
Seignür farei ço que boulet.

III- Bité Gimer mounto la costo
Pér ana bésé Gisléran
Parloun, et l'abesqué riposto
A Gmer tout en l'embrasan ;
« *Es l'enfan de la proubidenço
D'intr'a l'escolo de Cioutat,
Le trabal douno la scienco
Déjà poussédès la piétat* »

IV- Gimer coupén qué Diou l'appelo
« *Adious, Parens, amics aimats,
Per bous farei loungo priéro
Stogeys per Diou toujours zélats ;
Mès Gisléran quietet la terro ;
Calget un abesqué noubel
Gimer déjà sant'omé qu'éro,*
Fousquet cargat de soun troupel.

V- Gimer coumo Jésus moudélo,
Proch'el bésio grands et pichous.
Sabio rempli tout'escarcèlo
Et caressa les maïnatchous.
Al grand disio : « *Faî pénitenço* » ;
A l'umblé : « *Sios persébèrent ;
E tu, ma filho, counfienco ;
Le cel souden le coumbattent* »

VI – Très cops hurouso Barbacano,
Ount és un templ'ancien oustal ;
Bei capelo tan pla mannado,
Hier de Gimer oustal païral.
Distren per dir'uno priéro ;
Le sant à D'ious la pourtara
Et si Satan nous fa la guerro
Nostré patrou nous défendra.

VII- Grand san Gimer fasen la festo
En té dounan tout nostr'amour ;
E dé boun cor cadun s'apresto
A t'ounoura toujours, toujours.
Oublidès pas la Barbacano
Ount as d'amics tant débouats
E qu'a la fi de cad'annado
Pousqu'en rediré tas bountats.