



Salzburg's Cathedral



Most monumental early-baroque building on this side of the alps.

Cathedral Square

Information:

Opening hours

Salzburg's Cathedral is probably the city's most significant piece of church architecture and its ecclesiastical center. With its magnificent façade and mighty dome it represents the most impressive early Baroque edifice north of the Alps. Its origin is closely connected to the ecclesiastical principality's demeanour and growth. Destroyed by fire and rebuilt, enlarged and expanded, it bears witness to the power and independence of Salzburg's archbishops.

The first cathedral was built on this site by Bishop Virgil who came to Salzburg in 767 and built a cathedral on the site of the former Roman Juvavum. On September 24, 774 the cathedral was consecrated to St. Virgil and St. Rupert. The city was set on fire in 1167 by the Counts of Plain, followers of the emperor Friedrich Barbarossa, also destroying the cathedral. The cathedral was rebuilt ten years later under the rule of Archbishop Conrad III of Wittelsbach and became more beautiful, more magnificent and more impressive than ever, making it the mightiest Romanesque cathedral north of the Alps, its size even surpassing the emperor's cathedral in Speyer.

400 years later another fire raged and destroyed large sections of the cathedral on December 11, 1598. This afforded Archbishop Wolf Dietrich the opportunity to tear down the damaged cathedral and to make plans for its reconstruction. The Salzburg residents were extremely outraged at the archbishop's ruthless actions. Not only were valuable sculptures and gravestones of the archbishops destroyed but the cathedral cemetery plowed under and the bones of the dead dumped on the debris. His quarrel with Bavaria over salt mining rights led to his arrest and imprisonment in the Hohensalzburg Fortress by his nephew and successor, Markus Sittikus von Hohenems, which put a bitter end to the various construction projects Wolf Dietrich had planned. After Wolf Dietrich's death the architect Santino Solari was commissioned by Archbishop Markus Sittikus to rebuild the Cathedral, which became the first early Baroque church north of the Alps. Markus Sittikus did not live to see the festive consecration of the Cathedral by Archbishop Paris Lodron during the chaos of the Thirty Years' War on September 25, 1628. Through Paris Lodron's clever diplomacy, the heavily fortified city escaped most of the hardships of the Thirty Years' War so that the consecration of the Cathedral became the largest and most pompous festival that Salzburg ever experienced. The centuries of sovereign rule by the Salzburg prince bishops was ended by the Napoleonic Wars. With the dethroning of the last prince bishop, Hieronymus von Colloredo, the first Habsburg, Ferdinand III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, brought Salzburg under his rule.

In 1944 the dome and part of the chancel were destroyed during a bomb attack. The necessary renovations were carried out and the Cathedral consecrated in its former magnificence in 1959. The three years found in the gates to the Cathedral are in memory of the three

consecrations: "774", "1628" and "1959". Four statues are located in front of the main façade: the apostles Peter and Paul with keys and sword as well as the two patron saints Rupert and Virgil with a salt box and a model of the church. The two escutcheons on the gable ornament refer to the two church builders, Markus Sittikus and Paris Lodron.

Among the precious objects to be found in Salzburg's Cathedral are the baptismal font in which Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was baptised, the majestic main organ, surrounded by angels playing instruments and crowned by Rupert and Virgil, as well as the magnificent Cathedral portals made by Scheider-Manzell, Mataré and Manzó. In his capacity as the court organist and concert master, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed numerous undying works of sacred music for Salzburg.

Cathedral Square is the Cathedral's courtyard. Archbishop Guidobald Thun had Giovanni Antonio Dario build the Cathedral arches in 1660. A beautiful Immaculate Column sculpted by Wolfgang and Johann Baptist Hagenauer for Archbishop Sigismund Graf Schrattenbach is located in the center of the square.

