



THE STAINED-GLASS DOORS

The stained-glass doors illustrate the theme of the crusades, and more specifically the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Two knights-in-arms with the sword and the cross are facing each other, surrounded by flames: they remind us of the judgement by King of France Philippe le Bel against the Knights of Jerusalem and the chastisement of the burning fire that they endured as heretics. The central stained-glass door evokes the portraits of Christ and the Virgin. The third one depicts a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit and a double-headed eagle.



Fréjus belongs to the French National Association of Cities and Regions with Art and History Heritage.

The Ministry of Culture, Heritage department, awards the title « Cities and Regions with Art and history Heritage » to territorial communities maintaining, valuing and sustaining their heritage. This guarantees the skills of the Architecture and Heritage facilitators and of the tour guides, as well as the quality of their services. From the ancient remains to the XXIst century architecture, these territories put the diversity of Heritage on show. Nowadays, a network of 202 cities and regions provides its expertise throughout France.

Learn about Fréjus, a city with Art and History Heritage...

The Archaeology and Heritage department coordinates the initiatives of Fréjus, a city with Art and History Heritage. Cultural programming is presented throughout the year in order to make the public discover and better understand the City heritage. They are available to teachers to build education activities. The Tourist Office guides/lecturers welcome you on many interesting visits. They know every aspect of Fréjus and invite you to « take a new look at the city » For information contact the Tourist Office.

Opening hours

- From October 1 to March 31
Tuesday through Saturday
9:30 AM – 12 and 2 - 4:30 PM
Closed on Sundays, Mondays and Bank holidays
- From April 1 to September 30
Tuesday through Sunday
9:30 AM - 12:30 and 2 – 6 PM
Closed on Mondays and Bank holidays

Rates

- Single ticket : 3 €
 - Fréjus Pass : 6 € (reduced : 4 €)
- Admission to the Amphitheatre, the Theatre, the Archaeological Museum, the local History museum and to the chapel « Notre Dame de Jérusalem »
- Free for children under 12 accompanied by an adult.
- Detail of the conditions of free and reduced to the reception.

Archaeology and Heritage department

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FOCUS

NOTRE-DAME DE JÉRUSALEM

dite Chapelle Cocteau



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Route de Cannes

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In the very late 1950's, Fréjus undertook a large development project north of the town centre, at a place named « La Tour de Mare ». Born out of a desire of Louis Martinon, a banker from Nice, this parcelling project was given the name of « Roman Cit » with different infrastructures such as a shopping centre, a swimming pool, two restaurants and a riding stable. The City became a favourite haunt for artists. In 1960, Louis Martinon persuaded Jean Cocteau to design a chapel and carry out its decoration. In 1961 the Vatican itself approached the artist but he waited until August 1962 to give a positive answer. With the help of Jean Triquenot, an architect designer in Cannes, he began his work in December and he created with the painter Raymond Moretti the prototypes of the stained glass panels for the three doors. The first foundation stone was laid on February 24th 1963 in the presence of Bishop Gilles Barthe, André Léotard Mayor of Fréjus and Princess of Bourbon-Parma, the Godmother to the chapel.

Jean Cocteau and his team were then accommodated in the « Poet's house » along the Aurélienne road and they made plenty of sketches but the poet was already very weak. Back in Paris in April, he suffered a heart attack and recovered with great difficulty. During the summer of 1963, although he was very tired, he realized several drawings of a Virgin with a rose for the central panel of the chapel. When the « Prince of poets » died in October 1963, the chapel was left incomplete. But Cocteau had left behind nearly 150 drawings and sketches.

The municipality asked Edouard Dermit, his adopted son, to decorate the interior of the chapel. This was done directly on the wall mount (cement) in charcoal and coloured oil pencils. After one year of work, the inside was almost completed. After the death of Louis Martinon in 1965, the site of the chapel was abandoned and remained unknown to the public. It was not until 1989 that the City of Fréjus, after years of negotiations, succeeded in having it added to the Communal heritage by a dation.

The chapel was eventually consecrated in September 1989. Its classification on the Historic monument list on January 20th 1989 enabled the undertaking of restoration works in 1990. In 1992, in the outdoor gallery, the mosaics desired by Cocteau were achieved by Laetitia Léotard and Henri Vermouneix and they faithfully reproduced the models provided.

Cocteau dedicated the chapel to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a military and religious Order founded by Godfrey of Bouillon, Conqueror of the first Crusade in 1099 in Jerusalem. The octagonal construction, built in local green sandstone is roofed with Provençal-style tiles topped with a crown, a globe and a red cross potent which symbolize the « five wounds of Christ ».

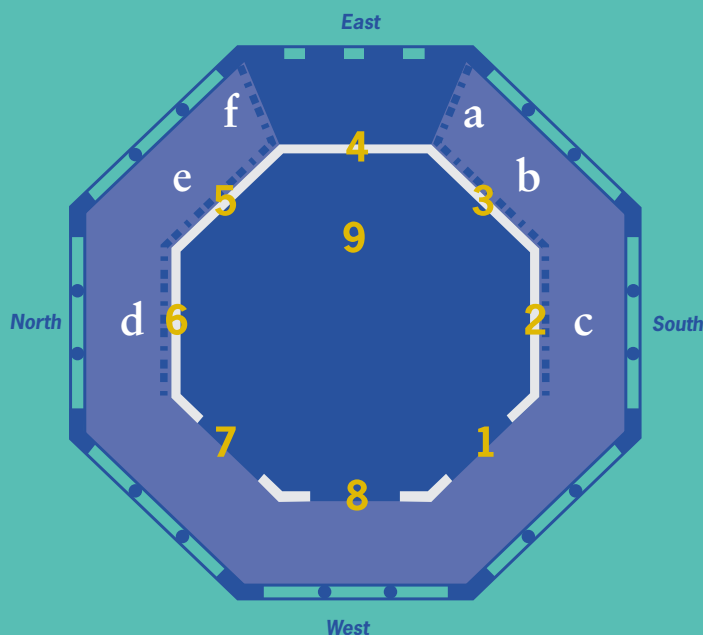
The floor is covered with ceramic tiles, inscribed with the Crusaders' motto « God wills it ». From the Southwest, the entrance is through three doors decorated with stained glass and overlooking an arcaded gallery. The ceramics and stained-glass panels are the works of Roger Pélissier, a Ceramic artist in La Tour de Mare.

Following a diagnostic study carried out in 2017, the Chapel is the subject of a multi-year conservation and enhancement plan. In 2019, a first phase focused on the complete renovation of the fluted tile roof and the summit canopy (oculus and skylight). It will be continued with the restoration of the doors and stained glass windows in 2023, then of the interior painted coatings in 2024.

THE DRAWINGS

The interior paintworks of the chapel focus on the theme of the Passion of Christ. They can be « read » from the central door to the left.

1. The last supper on which you can recognize Cocteau, Jean Marais, Coco Chanel, Raymond Radiguet, Francine and Carole Weisweiler or Max Jacob.
2. Jesus aux outrages, crowned with thorns
3. The Crucifixion is represented from below, inspired from Mantegna's Christ.
4. The Vierge à la rose
5. The Resurrection
6. The seventh angel of the Apocalypse
7. Representations related to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The charcoal drawing of Jesus's face evokes the Holy Shroud.
8. Coat of arms: the artist's interpretation of that of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.
9. On the dome, a farandole of characters represents the resurrection of the body



THE MOSAICS

In 1992, a set of six drawings by Jean Cocteau was selected by Edouard Dermit as models for mosaics created by Laetitia Léotard and Henri Vermouneix. The gloss effects are made possible by the use of Murano (Italy) glass tiles.

The themes depict scenes from the Old Testament. The capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army (a); an angel blowing his trumpet announces the liberation of the Jewish people (b); a character blowing out a candle represents the «evangelical spirit» (c); the Centaur as a symbol of evil (f); a second Angel with a trumpet announces the return to liberty and the reconstruction of the Temple (e); the Annunciation, inspired by Fra Angelico's painting (d).