

# Wonders of The World – Notre Dame

*Correct text for page 70.*

Notre Dame de Paris (French for “Our Lady of Paris”, meaning the church in Paris dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus), often known simply as Notre Dame in English, is a gothic cathedral on the eastern half of the Île de la Cité in Paris, France, with its main entrance to the west. While a major tourist destination, it is still used as a Roman Catholic cathedral (archbishop of Paris). Notre Dame de Paris is widely considered the finest example of French gothic architecture.

The Notre Dame de Paris stands on the site of Paris’ first Christian church, Saint-Étienne Basilica, which was itself built on the site of a Gallo-Roman temple to Jupiter. Notre Dame’s first version was a “magnificent church” built by Childebert I, the king of the Franks in 528, and was already the cathedral of the city of Paris in the 10th century. It constitutes the style of Gothic Architecture.

Notre Dame de Paris is 130 m (427 ft) long.

In 1160, having become the “parish church of the kings of Europe”, Bishop Maurice de Sully deemed the current Parisian cathedral unworthy of its lofty role, and had it demolished shortly after he assumed the title of Bishop of Paris. According to legend, de Sully had a vision of a glorious new cathedral for Paris, and sketched it in the dirt outside of the original church. To begin the construction, the bishop had several houses demolished and had a new road built in order to transport materials for the new church.

Construction began in 1163, during the reign of Louis VII, and opinion differs as to whether Bishop Maurice de Sully or Pope Alexander III laid the foundation stone of the cathedral. However, both were at the ceremony in question. Bishop de Sully went on to devote most of his life and wealth to the cathedral’s construction.

Construction of the west front, with its distinctive two towers, only began circa 1200, before the nave had been completed. Over the construction period, numerous architects worked on the site, as is evidenced by the differing styles at different heights of the west front and towers. Between 1210 and 1220, the fourth architect oversaw the construction of the level with the rose window and the great halls beneath the towers. The towers were completed around 1245, and the cathedral was completed around 1345.