

Letter from
CHARTRES, SANCTUAIRE DU MONDE
Association for the preservation of the cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres



Chartres, march 2008

Dear friends of Chartres Cathedral,

« A message from Chartres »

The daily life of Chartres Cathedral is always intense: sometimes festive, in accordance with the liturgy being celebrated or the great events of the religious year, such as Easter (which attracts more than 15,000 young people); sometimes more solemn and contemplative, such as the service of complines, sung every evening at seven o'clock.

Each moment spent in the Cathedral is truly a source of wonder! (A friend recently told us that often, when driving back to Paris on the neighboring highway, he leaves the road for a few contemplative moments in the Cathedral.

Each year, over a million people – tourists, pilgrims, visitors, believers, visit Chartres. They often come from the most distant parts of the world – Japan, China, Canada, the United States, as well as throughout Europe.

To inform these far-flung visitors, we have posted this letter in English on our internet site : www.chartres-csm.org and we are preparing a brochure in Japanese.

シャルトル大聖堂の修復 * You admire Chartres Cathedral,
のために御協力下さい let us help to restore it

We hope that this letter, as well as providing information on our various restoration projects, will also bring you a very special message of hope and thanks to you, our generous contributors.

For 2008, a number of projects are nearing completion

A little more patience...

« Patience » is indeed the key word to describe the progress of the Cathedral's restoration work. Starting with a first preparatory study, estimates of the costs involved, a search for necessary financing, and finally the initiation of the actual work – the time required is from eighteen months to three years. However, the result is invariably remarkable, which well justifies the delay. Each step involves a search for perfection on the part of all those involved: the representatives of the French State, the architects and curators of the Cathedral, the enterprises chosen to execute the work. But our patience as donors is amply rewarded!



© CSM 2007 - Composition from details of windows of Saint Peter, David and Ezekiel, XIII Cent.

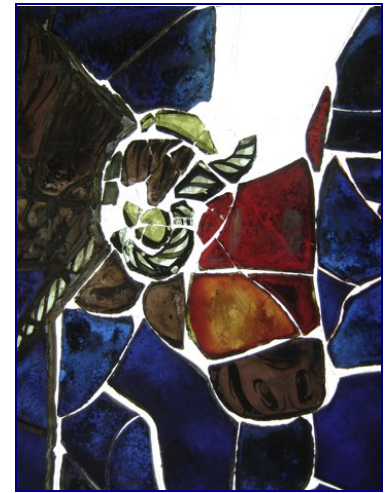
February 2008 : reinstallation of two restored upper windows



During the first quarter of 2008, the Cathedral's upper choir will welcome back two windows dating from the early 13th century, restored thanks to funds provided by individual donors and the Crédit Agricole bank :

- The Saint Peter Window,
- The David and Ezekiel Window.

Hence, with the completion of this second phase of the restoration program, this group of five large windows will regain its past splendor – dedicated to the glory of the Virgin Mary surrounded by Archangels and Saints from the Old and New Testaments.



© CSM 2007– recomposition work using detached pieces

© CSM 2007 – at the Vitrail France workshop, final retouching of the Saint Peter Window

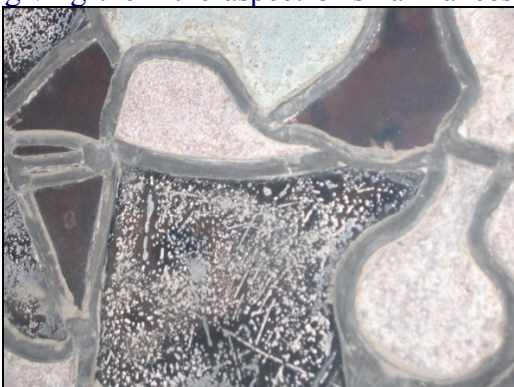
For these two windows, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs assigned the restoration work to the Vitrail France workshop in Le Mans. We were received there by Mr Alliou during the finishing touches to the restoration of the Saint Peter Window – see accompanying photos showing the work in progress.

© CSM 2007 - at the Vitrail France workshop - soldering



Restoration of the five lancet windows of the South Portal

Last year, we introduced our friends to this major restoration project initiated by the French State. This year, the South Portal, an architectural ensemble of major importance will recover its full beauty. Seen from outside, the scaffolding is impressive – including an elevator, which we took to examine the great Rose window and the five narrow lancet windows – so designated because of their high, narrow shape, giving them the aspect of small lances. Our visit gave us the opportunity to see how the glass work and sculptures, dating from the Middle Ages have suffered from the effects of corrosion, rain and wind.



Thanks to your gifts, supplemented by the contributions of our American friends, the Crédit Agricole bank, and the generosity of Father Kim En Joong, the restoration of the five lancet windows is now fully financed – to the tune of € 25,000 for each window; they should be re-installed during 2008.

© CSM 2007 – detail from the South Portal showing the corrosive effect on the glass.



© CSM 2007 – detail of the rose window of the South Portal as seen from the outside during restoration work.

Provisional schedule of the restoration projects supported by our Association

Reinstallation of the Saint Peter and the David and Ezechiel windows	February 2008
Reinstallation of the five lancets of the South Portal	Second semester 2008
Reinstallation of the window dedicated to the life of Saint Martin and the rose window of the King of Castille	End 2008 – first semester 2009
Restoration of the inner decoration of the axis chapel (see below)	Second semester 2008

Pilot restoration work of the axis chapel of the Ambulatory will start in 2008

It is thanks to your generosity that the necessary sum of € 162,000 was raised for this important project. Later this year, our Association will sign an agreement with the French State which will enable work to be started immediately. During several months, the chapel will be inaccessible to the public, but, once the restoration is completed, the full beauty of the original colors will be revealed and the chapel windows, which have already been restored, will recover their original lustre. The experience gained from these important preliminary works should enable the Monuments Historiques division of the Ministry of Culture to undertake the far more ambitious program of restoration of the vaulting of the nave.

Brief news

The Russian icon of the benediction of the Veil of the Virgin offered to the Cathedral by private donors was installed on September 8th 2007 in the Ecumenical chapel.

A creative project by artists inspired by Chartres Cathedral is currently under study and should be decided upon during 2009. It's objective is to stimulate the interest and enthusiasm of new generations in their cultural and religious heritage by defining the images and language that were contemporary to the creation of Chartres and thereby instil a link between the creations of yesteryear and those of today, thus stimulating continuity between generations.

Father Kim En Joong continues to support the restoration of the Cathedral's famous glass. An exhibition of his work is planned for June 2008 at the Yoshii gallery in Paris, with part of the proceeds being contributed to the restoration of the Cathedral Windows.

The report of the symposium « Fulbert and Medieval Europe, a precursor » will be edited by the Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, during the first half of 2008. You may order a copy by writing to our Association. Cost € 30, postage included.

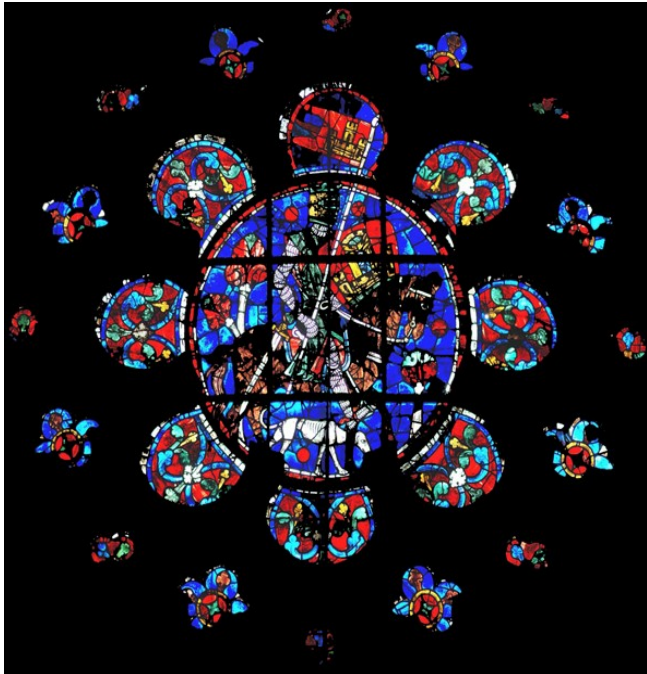
A delegation of American Friends of Chartres will visit the Cathedral in September 2008.

Our goal for 2009 Together, let us continue our restoration program!

Restoration work already completed thanks to your gifts :

The two Saint Martin Windows in the Upper Choir.

A rose for a Crusader...



We propose a new project at an estimated cost of € 50, 000 : the restoration of a small, but beautiful rose window, also located in the upper choir, dedicated to the king of Castille on the occasion of this knightly monarch's departure for the crusade against the Albigenes heretics in the 13th Century. The window illustrates three groups surrounding the Bishop of Chartres : those who pray, those who work and the warriors who follow the bidding of the church.

The rose window, a true jewel located at the very summit of the upper choir's vaulting, commemorates a monarch who supported the Bishop of Chartres in one of the major theological conflicts of the Middle Ages.

© Cabinet Patrice Calvel, chief Architect of the Monuments Historiques

Did you know? The term « rose » designating the circular windows of a cathedral is a modern appellation dating from the 19th century. What we think of as a term use by the master craftsmen of the Middle Ages is really a poetic creation of the modern world!

Preserving « Chartres Blue »

Much thought is being given to the effects of modern atmospheric conditions, notably to the potential damage to the very old 12th century windows situated above the principal « Royal » Portal and we plan to consult experts and architects on the best means of protecting them.

The traditional *bleu de Chartres* is the dominant color, it's intensity controlled by the exterior light; each medallion relates with incredible brio an episode from the life of Christ and that of the Virgin Mary as well as *The Song of Jesse*.

Should some form of exterior protection be installed? Could we not propose our contribution toward such a project?

...and the choir

The sculptures surrounding the choir are in serious need of cleaning and repair- another project toward which we could participate in the future.

The members of *Chartres, sanctuaire du Monde* are a very active team of volunteers and we send you our warmest greetings.

Servane de Layre-Mathéus

