

#### West facade exterior:

- 1. Hermann Paul Simon, Annunciation to Mary above the entrance (1936)
- 2. Mary with Child, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Benedict (1910) in the gable

#### Inside tour:

- 3. St. Thomas (17th century)
- 4. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (17th century)
- 5. Eduard Schmitz, Archangel Michael (1939)
- 6. Emil Sutor, 14 Stations of the Cross (1936/38)
- 7. Mary with Child & two martyrs (17th century)
- 8. Fritz Andre, console with four angels (1928) under the organ (1980, Klais company)
- 9. Altarpiece of the Coronation of Mary (1480); on the south chapel wall, four figures (including two angels) from the former Baroque high altar (17th century)
- 10. Ernst Riegel, reliquary of Archbishop Engelbert of Berg (†1225), (1939)
- 11. Walter v. Schlebusch, tabernacle (
- 12. Annunciation to Mary/originally on the west portal (around 1390); baptismal font around 1900
- 13. August Wittig, Entombment of Christ/relief (1858)
- 14. Eagle lectern/ambo (1449/copy)
- 15. Altenberg Madonna/double portrait (around 1530)
- 16. Triumphal cross (2nd half of the 15th century), choir stalls (14th century/copy)
- 17. Werner Franzen, St. Bernard/left (1985) and St. Ursula/right (1997)
- 18. St. Christopher (16th century)
- 19. Pulpit: Pulpit basket/St. Michael's Church/ Oberwesel (
- 20. Werner Franzen, Amplexus Christ embracing B. v. Clairvaux and Martin Luther (1986/87)



Odenthal

# The Bergisch Cathedral in Altenberg



Tourist Information i-Punkt Altenberg

Opening hours
Tue.-Sun. & public holidays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### In cooperation with:







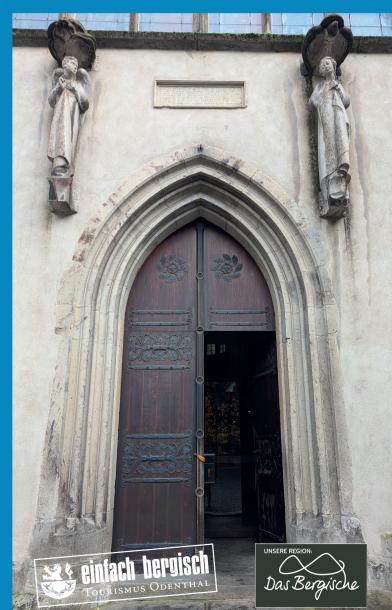
### More information:





Altenberger-Dom-Str. 31 51519 Odenthal > www.odenthal.de

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### 1133 Cistercian Abbey of Altenberg founded by monks from Morimond (Burgundy)

At the beginning of the 12th century, the Cistercians were a young reform order that sought to combine spiritual life with physical work in strict accordance with the Benedictine principle of "ora et labora" (pray and work). They engaged in agriculture and forestry, fish and livestock breeding, and were masters of hydraulic engineering. The cathedral was the burial place of the Bergisch counts and dukes.

1145 Consecration of the first *Romanesque* church It was a three-nave pillar basilica almost 50 meters long with an imposing transept and five semicircular choir chapels. To the west, a three-part hall was built in front of the church.

### 1259 Laying of the foundation stone for the *Gothic* abbey church of "St. Mary's Assumption"

The Romanesque church was initially left standing. The convent buildings to the south of the church, which had just been completed, were also to remain unchanged. As the new building was to be significantly larger than its predecessor, the new choir was built around the existing church. Only when this part of the new church came into use was the Romanesque choir complex demolished.

### Around 1300, work began on the Gothic transept and nave

The result was a Gothic, three-nave, 24-meter-high transept basilica with a five-nave choir, ambulatory, and seven chapels. Construction was completed in the 1390s despite financial constraints.

While the first Romanesque church still adhered to Cistercian principles of simplicity and functionality, such as the absence of decorative embellishments, the interior of the Gothic basilica was increasingly adapted to emphasize the visual aspect of piety. This is evidenced by the expressive west window (Heavenly Jerusalem), the richly decorated choir stalls (now replicas), the Annunciation group on the west facade (originals from 1379 now in the baptistery), the tabernacle, the eagle's pulpit (replica), and the double portrait of the Madonna in a halo.

The variety and richness of the leaf shapes decorating the keystones in the vaults and the capitals of the columns in the choir and choir ambulatory also merit special mention. Together with the various leaf motifs in the grisaille windows (French gris = gray) in the 13th-century chapel wreath, they not only contribute to the harmonious overall impression of timeless beauty but also testify to the comprehensive botanical knowledge of the architects at that time.

## During the *Baroque period* (1600 to 1750), the architectural forms of the monastery church remained unchanged

The interior was, however, completely refurbished (in keeping with the Counter-Reformation): with an almost 20-meter-high, lavishly decorated high altar, two Baroque altars in the nave, paintings and sculptures, new colors, and three organs, an interior design scheme that stood in stark contrast to the very functional, purist beginnings of Cistercian architecture.

**1803** Secularisation; the monastery and monastery church were both sold to the wine merchant J. H. Pleunissen

**1810** Prussian blue and sal ammoniac production in parts of the eastern convent buildings

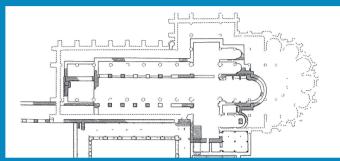
**1815** Explosion; The convent buildings to the south of the church were completely destroyed. Partial collapses (from 1821) of the church (southern transept; crossing vault and parts of the high choir) led to increasing deterioration.

**From 1835** The Prussian royal family funded comprehensive restoration of the church.

**1847** Restoration ceremony in the presence of Frederick William IV.

**1857** Regulated times established for the official simultaneous use of both parishes.

Today, Altenberg is a place of ecumenism and youth.



Map: M. Untermann

- Romanesque church (excavated parts dark gray)
- Late Romanesque cloister (gray)
- Gothic church (light gray)

#### Tombs:

In front of the north portal/Herzogenchor: see wall plaque; north choir aisle: tomb of Bruno (?), Archbishop of Cologne (14th century); tomb of Count Gerhard I (†1360) and Margarete von Berg (†1389); south choir aisle: Tomb of Count Adolf VI of Berg (†1348); choir chapels and north and south aisles: Baroque tomb slabs of Altenberg abbots; in the floor near the confessional: Gozelinus tomb and memorial plaque for the Cologne archbishops and auxiliary bishops buried in Altenberg

### Former monastery church's organ:

Built in 1980 by the Johannes Klais workshop in Bonn; with around 6,500 pipes, it is one of the largest church organs in North Rhine-Westphalia.