

Notre Dame fire. Msgr. Aupetit (Paris): “May it remain true to what it is, or it will lose its soul”

“I promised that we would rebuild Notre Dame within five years. We will do all we can to meet this deadline.” In a video message to the nation recorded today to mark the one-year- anniversary of the fire that destroyed Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, the heart of France and the soul of Europe, French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated the “promise” made and assured that he would honour it. The Coronavirus pandemic has also impacted the reconstruction and, in a quarantined France, the construction site is also currently closed. “But it will be restarted as soon as possible,” Macron promised. “I don’t believe that an attitude of anticipation or bewilderment is a response to the present challenge. Setting goals is the spiritual strength required today. There was a time for tribulation and sorrow, then came the time for reflection. Now is the time of reconstruction.”

<https://youtu.be/l7eeRKGZkqQ>



[With them were police officers, representatives of the Ministry of Culture and of the municipality of Paris, as well as the heads of the archdiocese. Together they worked through the night to evacuate the cathedral, shield the works and save what they could. In his message, the President also expressed his gratitude and extended special thanks to "340,000 world donors" who, with an extraordinary "impetus of generosity", contributed to the cathedral's reconstruction project from the very beginning. He concluded: “The restoration of Notre Dame is important for us all because it is a symbol of the resilience of our people, of their ability to overcome difficulties and to recover.” Last week, the Archdiocese of Paris presented an overview of the donations received and channelled into the "Paris Cathedral Fund" in 2019 and in the first quarter of 2020. A total of €55.8 million has been collected so far, the result of a vast and worldwide operation involving 56,000 individuals, companies, communities and foundations. The Archdiocese of Paris reports that the commitments made by major patrons, families and large companies \(such as the Axa group, Arnault and Lvmh, Pinault via Artémis, Bouygues, Baron Philippe de Rothschild Sa, Regional Council IdF 2, Decaux, Michelin Foundation, etc.. \), amounting from €500,000 up to €200 million, have all been the subject of agreements or new protected foundations under the aegis of the Notre Dame Foundation so as to ensure that the pledged donations are unambiguously disbursed.](#)
<https://twitter.com/KarineDalle/status/1248926597689810944>



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dedicates his thoughts to the role of the cathedral in the course of history, and for the future. "In the most tragic moments," he wrote, "the Cathedral is our common home where we mourn and implore. In the happiest moments, this is where we praise and celebrate our gratitude. We must guide our steps towards her, the beautiful lady of stone, to rediscover the true meaning of the city, to realize that we are not isolated individuals but a people called to communion, aware of our duties starting from the duty of being 'our brother's keeper.'" "Which cathedral for the 21st century?", asks Msgr. Aupetit. "The one that it has always been, for which it was built: to praise God and for the salvation of mankind. May it remain true to what it is, or it will lose its soul." **On Good Friday, the Archbishop had presided over a ceremony inside the cathedral, under the restrictions due to the coronavirus, and led the veneration of the crown of thorns,** the most precious relic preserved in Notre-Dame, miraculously saved from the blaze. "In this Holy Week, the whole world is affected by a pandemic that brings death and makes us paralyzed. This crown of thorns was saved on the night of the fire. It is a sign of what you have suffered for the mockery of men. But it is also a magnificent sign that you are joining us at the culmination of our suffering, that we are not alone and that you are always with us."

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