

General map of the church's stained-glass windows

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|--|---|
| 1 The Wheats or the Bread of life                      | 16 The Twilight or the Evening of Holy Thursday               |
| 3 The Announcement of the Pentecost                    | 18-19 The Laying in the tomb                                  |
| 5 The True Vine or the Eucharistic wine                | 20 The Grand night of the Holy Saturday                       |
| 7 Gethsemane   | 22 The Empty tomb or the Announcement of the Resurrection     |
| 8 The Crowing of the cock or the Denial of Saint Peter | 23 The Star of David  |
| 9 The Shadow of the Cross                              | 24-30 The Easter Joy in the early morning or The Resurrection |
| 10 Stabat Mater or Mary at the foot of the Cross       | 2-4-6-11-13-15-17-21 Rose windows of the higher nave          |
| 12 The Blood and Water                                 | 31 The Star of the Sea  |
| 14 The Chaos or the Earthquake after Jesus's death     |   |

(This numbering of the windows above is not a characteristic of the windows, they are only to be used as a caption for the tour of the church's windows)

## Alfred Manessier (1911-1993)

Native of Picardie, Alfred Manessier was considered, as soon as 1943, as a major ambassador of the abstract sacred painting. The Museum of Abbeville hosts a painting named *Saint Jérôme* illustrating his early research on light preceding the glass creation that will be, from 1948, at the heart of his concerns throughout his life. Between 1982 and 1993, the creation of the stained-glass windows of the church of the Holy Sepulchre of Abbeville, town in which he grew up, marked the conclusion of his masterpiece. Alfred Manessier created around thirty series of windows for churches and chapels from 1948 to 1993. During the 1948-1950s, he created the first French non-figurative stained-glass windows in the Eglise des Bréseux (church situated in the Doubs department in France), then in Hem in the North of France in 1957, in Germany (Cologne) in 1964 and in Bremen in 1966-1979, but also in Pontarlier, Locronan, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges in the 1970-1980s and in Berlin and Fribourg in Switzerland. Then he produced the windows of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of Abbeville which were inaugurated in 1993, two months before he died in a car accident.



A. Manessier, *Saint Jérôme*, November 1943, ©RMN-GP / Th. Olivier, coll. Boucher-de-Perthes Museum. ADAGP, Paris 2013



J.F. Bonhomme, Alfred Manessier in Emancé, photograph, 1991, © ADAGP



### Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Place du Saint-Sépulchre 80100 Abbeville  
Opening hours :April to september from tuesday to sunday, 2pm to 6pm.

### Information : Heritage Department

The Carmelite Convent (Le Carmel) – Maison du Patrimoine, 34-36 Rue des Capucins, 80100 Abbeville  
Telephone: (+33)3 22 20 27 05 – mail to: patrimoine@ville-abbeville.fr

### Information : Baie de Somme Tourist Office

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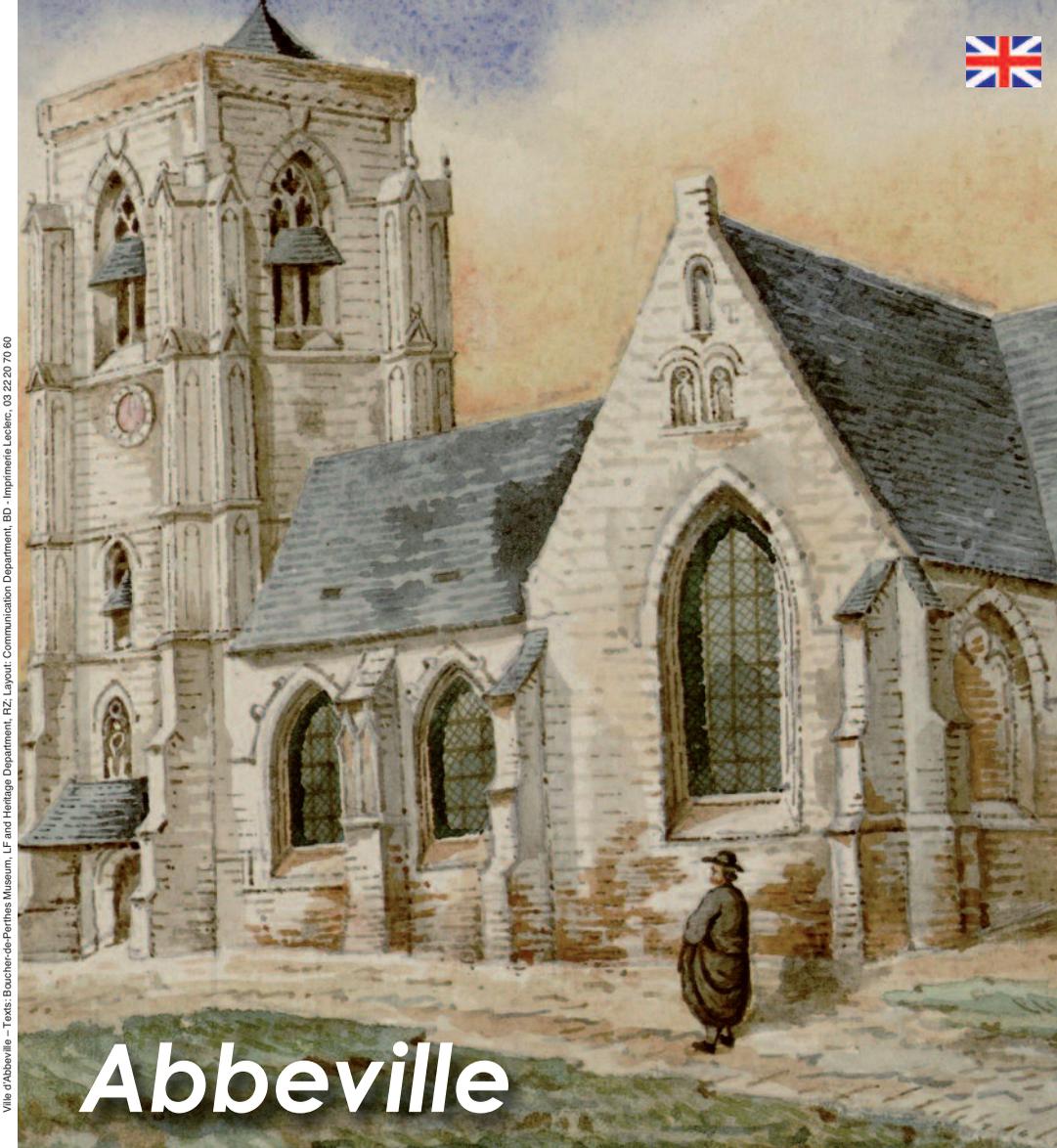
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# Abbeville

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

# Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Tradition dictates that the original church erected on this spot commemorates the beginning of the first Crusade in 1098. The troops of the Army of the North, led by Godefroy de Bouillon, gathered in Abbeville. The Crusaders intended to deliver the Christ's Sepulchre, that's why the church is named Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

There are no remains of that first church. In the 15th century, the church of the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt in stone in the architectural style of the time: Gothic.

Since then, a side-chapel hosts a remarkable statue representing Christ in the tomb. This whole, which was remodelled at the end of the 19th century, was created thanks to the donations of Jehan du Bos and is one of the major masterpieces of the church.

During the French Revolution, the spire (made of wood and lead) overhanging the



Wooden spire crowning the church's bell tower before the French Revolution, drawing, coll. Macqueron, Hist library Abbeville.

steeple was removed: it transformed considerably the appearance of the building. But it was from 1861 that the abbot Carpentier had important building work undertaken, modifying significantly the medieval church.

The Amienois architect Victor Delforterie drew up the maps of the church. After a few minor modifications made by Viollet-le-Duc (architect of the diocesan buildings), these plans were accepted. The chancel was thus demolished and changed for a new transept, side-chapels and a new larger chancel, all of it in a neo-gothic style that goes very well with the remains of the previous church.

The two World Wars didn't spare the church: during WW1, the painted church windows were blown or damaged; during WW2, the steeple was destroyed, the southern aisle was partly damaged and the church windows were blown again.



Chancel of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, condition before 1861, watercolour, coll. Macqueron, Hist library Abbeville.

Restored during the following years, the church of the Holy Sepulchre got state orders during the 1980s and the early 1990s in order to create a unique series of stained-glass windows made by the artist-painter Alfred Manessier.

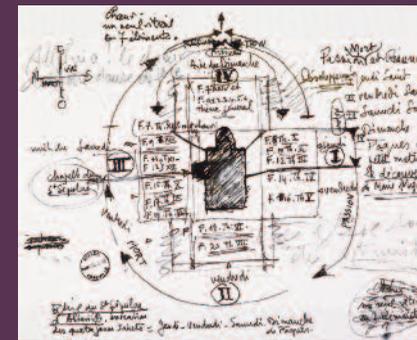
The last building work (2011-2013) gave the steeple the aspect it had since the 19th century: the tower was rebuilt exactly as it was.

As you visit the church, you will enjoy the fine pieces of furniture that decorate the church: the confessionals, the altar rails, including the chancel mainly decorated by the brothers Louis and Aimé Duthoit from Amiens. These elements also tell the age-old story of the place.



## Alfred Manessier and the stained-glass windows

After a three-days retreat in the abbey Grande Trappe de Soligny, with his poet friend Camille Boumiquel in September 1943, Alfred Manessier sensed faith as a creative inspiration. From then on a *Christian lighting* illuminated his paintings, lithographs, and his stained-glass windows. His set of fourteen canvasses around the theme of Passion and Resurrection, painted between 1960 and 1962, was showed at the Venice Biennale in 1962 where he won the International Grand Prize for Painting and the First Prize of Liturgical Art.



A. Manessier, notes and plan of the church marking the scansion of the four Days of the Passion and the themes of each window. © RMN-GP / Th. Olivier, coll. Boucher-de-Perthes Museum, ADAGP Paris 2013

In 1982, François Enaud (General Inspector of Historical Monuments) asked Alfred Manessier to realize 31 stained-glass windows for the church of the Holy Sepulchre, proposition that he gladly accepted. A 300m<sup>2</sup> creative space that the artist designed as his masterpiece, the conclusion of his stylistic and formal experiments on the theme of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

The visit tour starts in the right aisle, on the southern part of the church which is bathed in the light: *"The Wheats"*, *"The Announcement of the Pentecost"*, *"The True Vine"*, and *"Gethsemane"* are represented. These windows change from an ochre-yellow and red tonality symbolizing the Last Supper of Christ surrounded by his apostles until their arrival to the Mount



A. Manessier, map A, North - level 1: studies for the general map of the windows' lights. © RMN-GP / Th. Olivier, coll. Boucher-de-Perthes Museum, ADAGP, Paris 2013

of Olives, where the first signs of the Denial of Saint Peter become apparent with blood-red and blue tonalities.

The main façade holds three of the most evocative windows of the church: the *"Denial of Saint Peter"*, enhanced with a red scar reminding the comb of the cock which sang three times after Peter's denial. The central window, above the door, is *"The Shade of the Cross"* not the Crucifixion, since Alfred Manessier wanted to represent the fear and anguish of Christ at the foot of the cross rather than his death. Then, the *"Stabat Mater"* where the artist used the openings' architecture -

separated by three stoned mullions - to shape the bodies of the holy women bowing over the dead Christ. The openings to the North of the church recall the Christ's burial and his entombment leading to the brilliantly blue-tinted window *"The night of Holy Saturday"*. This window creates a contrast with *"The Wheats"* of the southern aisle: on one side calmness, horizontality, contemplation and sobriety of the dark blue Night; on the other, Life, motion, strength and joy. The last window before entering the chancel evokes *"The Empty tomb"* of Christ that Manessier outlines like a dawn. The seven last windows symbolise Christ's Resurrection, the *"Easter joy"* as a burst of life in a soaring movement in which all the colours and tonalities of the church's windows merge in a grand finale of lights.