



The roof was never vaulted in stone. The present wooden roof, in the shape of an upturned ship's hull was constructed between 1960 and 1965. It was donated by "Les Compagnons du Devoir and Le Tour de France".



Through the door at the end of the north transept we get the cloister which leads to the newly restored and very beautiful chapel. This is where the daily devotions of the community take place.

The Sisters of Bethlehem resided here for many years and were replaced by "Le Chemin Neuf" in January 2012.

## The Chemin Neuf Community

The Chemin Neuf Community is a Roman Catholic Community with an ecumenical vocation, which grew out of a prayer group in Lyon, France, in 1973. It currently has around 2,000 members from Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Anglican Communion, Lutheran and Evangelical Churches, in over 30 countries. Couples, families and celibates, men and women, have chosen the adventure of community life to follow Christ poor and humble, in order to serve the Church, the Gospel and the world.

**The store** is open from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. (except Tuesdays), Sundays after mass, and on request (bell).

### *Chapel's offices*

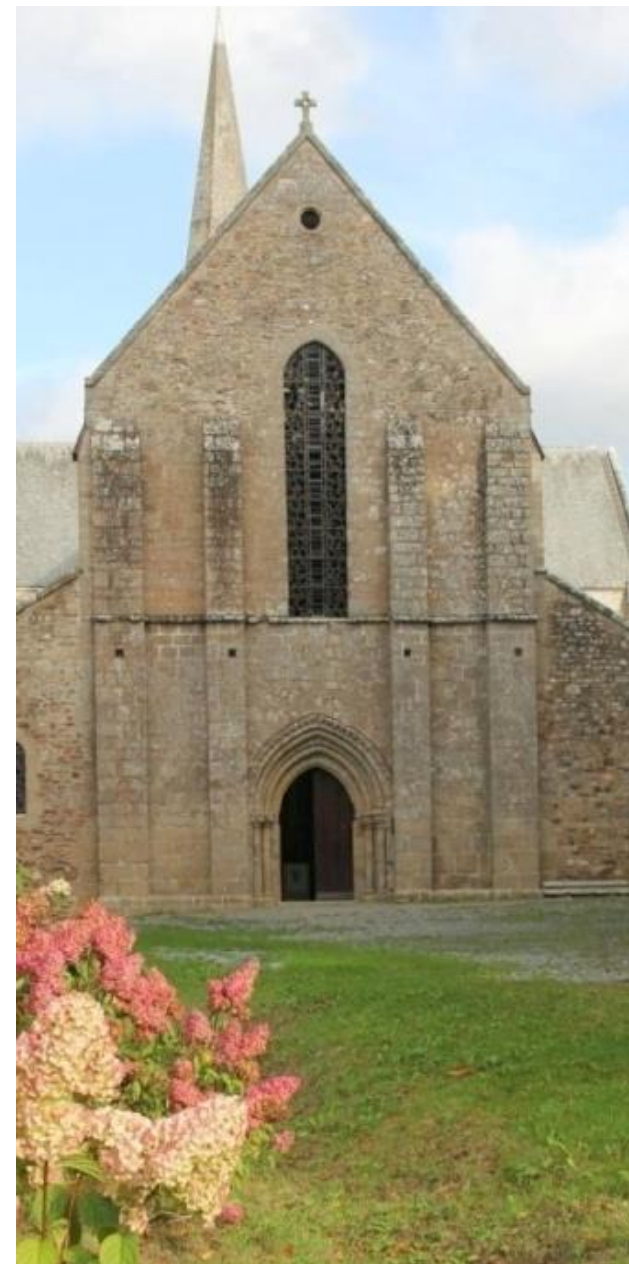
Office	at 8.30 am every day
Eucharistic	at 12 am on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 6.30 pm on Tuesday at 11.30 am on Sunday
Worship	on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm

### *Contact*

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# Boquen Abbey

## The Chemin Neuf Community



In 1936 Dom Alexis Presse left the Abbey of Tamié (another Cistercian abbey situated in Savoie) and came to live in the derelict Abbey of Boquen. He felt called to return to the purity of St Benedict's rules.

Alone and moneyless, he started to restore the ruin of Boquen, with only his faith in God for support. With the arrival of a few monks and the help of some local inhabitants the monastery began to return to life.

The consecration of the Abbey church on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1965 was the crowning achievement of a work which at the beginning seemed humanly impossible, but was realised by the faith, hard work and courage of Dom Alexis. Dom Alexis was so exhausted by his efforts that he attended the ceremony on a stretcher and died a few months later.

The reconstruction of the Abbey follows the 12<sup>th</sup> century foundations of the original. The ribbed arches and semicircular windows show the Romanesque style of the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The church is 54 meters long and the nave is 7 meters wide. It is in the form of a Latin cross facing east, the arms of which measure 30 meters.

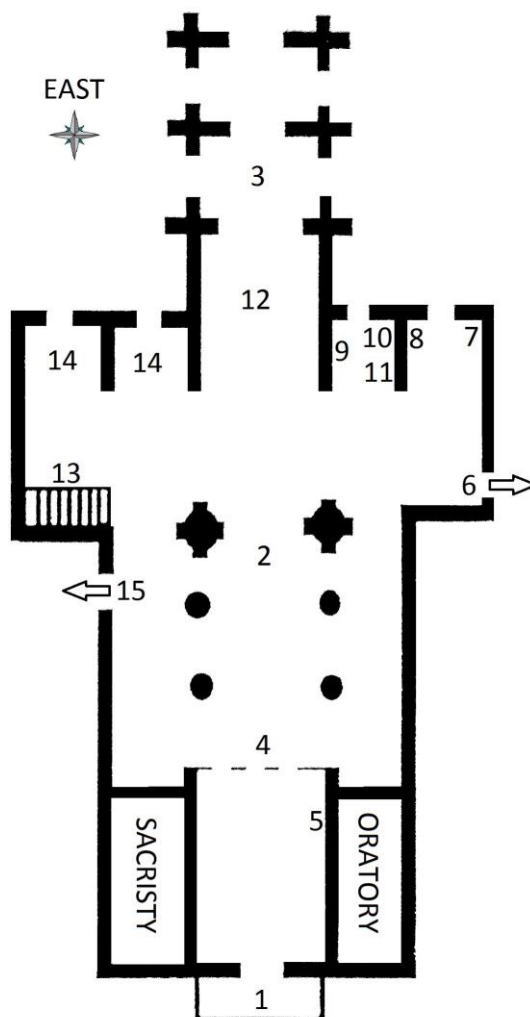
The façade of the church is sober with its vertically accentuated by the buttresses which rise from both sides of the west door.

The great arches of the nave are supported by massive columns against which the monk stalls used to lean.

In the south transept are two chapels, one dedicated to St Ann, the other to the Virgin Mary, Our lady watches over this place and was originally called "Blessed Mary of Boquen".

The two chapels in the northern transept shelter the reliquaries of the founder saints of Christian Brittany. In this area can be seen a flight of stairs which allowed the monks to go directly from their dormitory to the church. At the end of the southern transept is a door that leads to the monks' graveyard.

The choir of the church used to be square and lit by narrow windows, but it was replaced in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by a larger Gothic addition. The extra illumination floods the sanctuary. The modern glazing reproduces the geometric (grisaille) style typical of Cistercian art.



1. Former porch
2. Monks Chancel
3. Presbyterium or Sanctuary
4. Former site of the jube with two altars separating the monks from the lay
5. Lavabo
6. Access door to the monks' graveyard
7. Statue of St Ann and the Virgin Mary (14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup>)
8. Gravestone of Dom Du Verger
9. Dom Alexis's grave
10. 15<sup>th</sup> century wooden polychrome representing the Virgin and Child
11. Mgr Kervéadon's grave (bishop)
12. Gravestone of Gilles de Bretagne
13. Staircase leading to the dormitory
14. Reliquaries
15. Access door to the cloister and chapel

The "Abbaye de Boquen" was founded in 1137 by 12 Cistercian monks from Begard Abbey (diocese of Tréguier). They were looking for a secluded spot where they could be part of the revival of monastic life to its original roots in the rule of St Benedict, which was dedicated to austerity, purity, prayer and work.

The abbey was built to the traditional Cistercian pattern and a remote site was chosen so the monks could dedicate their lives to God without distractions. The name Boquen means white wood or copse.



During the medieval period the abbey prospered and housed a devoted community which became a centre or learning and teaching. They relied on gifts and donations for support as they did not own large areas of farm land.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the monastery had to submit to the "regime de la commende". This involved the king of France having the authority to choose the abbots of the monasteries. These abbots were often laymen more interested in enriching themselves than furthering the spiritual objectives of the community, which led to a spiritual decline and a neglect of the building. These lay bishops cut down the surrounding forest and let buildings fall rather than repair them.

The French revolution in the 16<sup>th</sup> century brought and end to monastic orders. By this time there were only 4 monks left and the abbey became the property of the state. It was sold and changed hands several times. Stones were taken for building work elsewhere and buildings that remained were used to house farms animals. The place became a total ruin.