

THE CHURCH OF SAINT-CÔME

Its past, its future ...



Le Blanc Moutier

*When you see
le blanc moutier,
beware of the rocks!*

This old saying brings together all the historical and etymological elements of this other name for our church. For many centuries, its bell tower was painted white and served as a landmark for sailors off our coast. Its position, on high ground, lent itself perfectly to this purpose. The rocks were the Calvados rocks or Calva Dorso ('bald backs'), of sinister

reputation and probably the origin of the name of our département. The old French word 'moutier' means 'religious building'. To this day, the church of Saint-Côme-de-Fresné is also known as le blanc moutier, a name which has become almost affectionate.



Saint-Côme & Saint-Damien martyrs

*Pontic Greek
icon of the
anargyros
Saints
Côme
and Damien*



Our church is dedicated not only to Saint-Côme, but also to his twin brother, Saint-Damien. Both brothers were born in the Roman province of Arabia in the 3rd century. Saint-Côme is the patron saint of surgeons, and his brother Saint-Damien is the patron saint of pharmacists. They were persecuted, tortured and executed under the Roman emperor. The two saints were called anargyres, which means 'without money', because, unlike doctors, they provided free treatment.

You'll find their statues in the apse of the church, on either side of the main altar, as shown in the photo. Their feast day is 27 September.

The church bells

The church has three bells: Mathilde-Marie, Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. They are not only used for religious purposes, but also to signal dangers or events coming from the sea
(see also the blue sheet on the church during the D-Day Landings).

Le Blanc Moutier, its past ...

Our church has known several periods of alterations and restorations:

12th century: This is when the church originates from. All that remains of this period are the north wall (facing the sea), the west wall (facing Arromanches) and the nave.

15th century: Construction of the bell tower, remodelling of the apse.

18th century: Reconstruction of the south-west wall (the cemetery/route de la Mer side), with its porch (the second entrance); Addition of the sacristy and most of the interior features (rood beam, high altar, lectern, etc.); Remodelling of the nave openings.

and its future ...

In order to preserve the church for future generations, restoration work has focused primarily on its foundations and structure. In 2016-2017, the church was closed for safety reasons. An operation to stabilise the pillars was carried out successfully, and the church could be opened to the public again.

The commune of St. Côme, owner of the building,

is responsible for financing most of the restoration work. This is a heavy burden for a small village like ours. At the end of 2025 - beginning of 2026, the roof, framework and panelling of the nave and south transept will be restored. **Total budget: €220,000 excl VAT, of which €55,000 provided by Le Blanc Moutier.**

Further phases of restoration will be necessary at a later date:

- ♦ *Protecting the walls against humidity*
- ♦ *Restoration of the woodwork, foundations and flooring*
- ♦ *Restoration of the sacristy, including the replacement of the openings.*



You may also be interested in:

The Fountain of St. Côme:

After your church visit, you might want to take a brief detour and have a look at the fountain, which dates from around 1890.

According to legend, the water from this fountain cured hunchbacks.

Walk up the voie Panoramique towards Arromanches. After about 75 m, cross the road again and take the side alley rising to the left - the allée de la Fontaine. At the bend, admire this beautiful fountain, which was destroyed during the D-Day landings, but was restored to its former glory in 2009.

We need your help! The information sheets available during your visit to the church are provided by the Association Le Blanc Moutier. Its aim is to bring our church to life, highlight its value and contribute to its restoration, in close collaboration with the Saint-Côme town council.

Support us, make a donation!