

## Saint-Maurice Abbey celebrates its 1500<sup>th</sup> anniversary en 2015

### The oldest monastery in the Western world!

Located in the Valais region of Switzerland Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, the abbey was founded in the year 515 over the grave of Martyrs Maurice and his companions, who, circa 290, gave their lives for their Christian faith. The monastery will celebrate its 1500th anniversary in 2015, making it the oldest living monastery in the western world!

### Who was Maurice?

Maurice was a roman officer from Egypt, who commanded a Legion from Thebes (now Luxor). Neither he nor his soldiers obeyed the imperial order to hunt down the Christians and were decimated. King Sigismund of Burgundy founded the monastery.

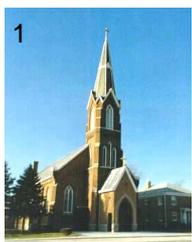
### The martyr's influence

Maurice is the patron saint of hundred of towns, parishes, churches and institutions in Europe and around the world. A series of pilgrimages will be hosted during the jubilee year.

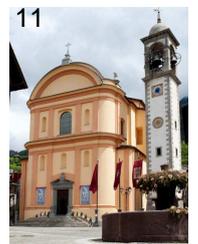
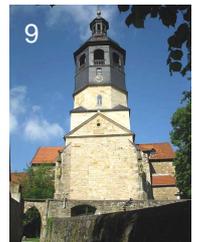
Altogether there are almost **1'100 churches** dedicated to Saint Maurice. Whether they are basilicas, cathedrals, parish churches, simple churches or modest chapels; whether in the center of towns or in villages, on the plains or in the mountains, every kind reflects the martyr's influence in the Christendom. These churches are not only Catholic, but also Coptic Orthodox, Evangelical Lutheran or Anglican, between California and New Caledonia.

Our non- exhaustive list can count these sacred places as follows:

[www.abbaye1500.ch](http://www.abbaye1500.ch)



<b>France</b>	558
<b>Germany</b>	230
<b>Italy</b>	110
<b>Switzerland</b>	100
Belgium	23
USA	17
Austria	11
Canada	10
Other Europe	25
Other	7



1 Morrissonville (USA) - 2 Appenzell (Switzerland) - 3 Angers (France) - 4 Lille (France) - 5 Plumelec (France) - 6 Reims (France)  
7 Haljala (Estonia) - 8 Berlin (D) - 9 Hildesheim (D) - 10 Magdeburg (D) - 11 Niardo (IT) - 12 Imperia (IT) - 13 St-Maurice de l'Echouerie (Canada)

The link to Saint Maurice is also evident through the **coats of arms** of municipalities and other communities. Indeed the trefoil cross, also called Cross of St. Maurice (just as the X-shaped cross is called the Cross of Saint Andrew) is incorporated into many coats of arms. For those who can see and recognize the symbol, it recalls the martyrdom of Saint Maurice and his companions. Maurice is sometimes depicted on horseback and even in portraiture! Some examples:



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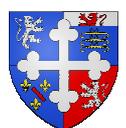
Morlens (CH)



Schötz (CH)



Cama (CH)



Ain (France)



Bourg-St-Mce (F)



Marcellaz (F)



Reyvroz (F)



Wahlbach (F)



Bg-en-Bresse (F)



Dülmen (D)



Tulbing (A)



St-Maurice (F)



S.M Canavese (I)



Rülzheim (D)



Coburg (D)



Mutzig (F)



S.M.-s/Eygues (F)



N.fischbach (D)



Houssen (F)