

Special stamps Rhine Falls

Turbulent experience in north Switzerland

Special stamps Pets

Our ever faithful companions

Special stamps 1500th anniversary of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice

A place of spirituality since antiquity

1/2015

Focus on stamps

The Collector's Magazine

SWISS POST 

Yellow in motion.

1500 years continuous presence

A historical staging post lying in the heart of the Alps at the important intersection of the Great St Bernard Pass and the Via Francigena, the Abbey of St Maurice d'Agaune is celebrating the 1500th anniversary of its founding in the year 515. A place of spirituality and artistry which deserves to be (re)discovered!

Travellers from Lake Geneva to Valais are obliged to pass through the gorge at Saint-Maurice. Hemmed in by hills and cliffs on either side, the river Rhone, a railway line and roads are squeezed into this narrow passage. Ever since ancient times, Agaune has been a staging and customs post on the journey from Rome through the alpine passes to the north. The decisive turning point in the history of the town was when troops of the Roman Emperor Maximian passed through in 300 A.D. The Theban Legion, which formed part of this army but came from Thebes/Luxor in Egypt, set up camp on

the hillsides above the gorge. As Christians, these legionaries refused to carry out the unjust commands of the pagan Emperor. As a result, they were massacred together with their leader Mauritius. Ever since this event, Saint Maurice and his martyred comrades have been commemorated at this site.

In the year 515, new kingdoms sprang up from the ashes of the old Roman Empire. Western Switzerland – and also neighbouring parts of France – came under the rule of the Burgundians. King Sigismund of Burgundy based his rule on Christian values so he founded the Abbey of Saint-Maurice, introducing the practice of “perpetual psalmody” (laus perennis), a form of which still continues to this day. The abbey suffered all the usual vicissitudes of history, experiencing periods of difficulty and impoverishment, but also more prosperous times. Since the 12th century, the canons have been members of the Order of St Augustine. Nowadays they devote themselves to serving in the communities of the surrounding parishes, running a secondary school in Valais, and teaching at Swiss universities, as well as being active in art and culture. Their lives, however, are still very much centred on prayer and their role as guardians of the relics and the remembrance of St Maurice.

As well as being a religious community around a basilica, the abbey is also an archaeological site and boasts important historical archives and a rich ecclesiastical treasury. Thanks to the latest museographic techniques, it can now be seen in an entirely new light in its jubilee year. Lovers of little nuggets of history will be well rewarded. The old walls veritably come to life, while the massive Romanesque bell tower stands eternal guard

over the beautiful artistry of the reliquaries, symbols of the wealth of previous centuries.

The Abbey of Saint-Maurice stands as an invaluable witness of European history to the present day and it is well worth making a detour to Saint-Maurice to sample the riches of its continuous presence over 1,500 years.

Guy Luisier
Abbey of Saint-Maurice

Links to further information:

abbaye1500.ch
abbaye-stmaurice.ch



Ewer known as “Charlesmagne’s ewer”, mid-9th century. Treasure of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice.
Photo: Jean-Yves Glassey et Michel Martinez



Reliquary bust of Saint Candidus, about 1165. Treasure of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice.

Photo: Jean-Yves Glassey et Michel Martinez

The cool, calm cloister is a place for contemplation. Photo: Candice Lhemanne-Hasaj



Announcement of special post office

Swiss Post will be present at the monastic market in Saint-Maurice with a special post office on 22 September 2015. Further information will be published in Focus on stamps 2/15 and at www.swisspost.ch/stamps > Agenda



The mass marking the feast of Saint Mauritius follows the procession bearing the relic of Saint Mauritius. Photo: Alexandre Schafer



The archeological site of Martolet: there have been 8 churches here since the 4th century. Photo: Thomas Jantscher



Aerial photograph of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice. Photo: Filmic & Vision Air

Special stamps 1500th anniversary of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice

Sales

Philately: From 26.2.2015 to 31.3.2016, while stocks last
Post offices: From 5.3.2015, while stocks last

Validity

Unlimited from 5.3.2015

Printing

Offset, 4-colour; Cartor Security Printing
La Loupe, France

Sizes

Stamps: 33x28 mm
Sheetlet: 192x95 mm (2 rows of 4 stamps)
2 motifs on one sheetlet

Paper

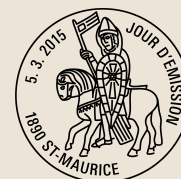
White stamp paper with optical brightener, matt gummed, 110 gm²

Perforation

13¼:13½

Design

Christian Stuker, Cully (VD)



First-day cancellation



First-day cover motif

1500th anniversary of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice

CHF 1.00 Ruin
 CHF 1.00 Reliquary
 CHF 1.00 Parchment and quill
 CHF 1.00 Church window

Special stamps
 White stamp paper, mat gummed

First day of issue 5.3.2015



Sheetlet of 8 stamps**

Ruin/Reliquary
 A023 311 ★
 A023 351 ⊙ CHF 8.00

Set*

A023 150 ★
 A023 550 ⊙ CHF 4.00

Set of blocks of four*

A023 160 ★
 A023 560 ⊙ CHF 16.00



Sheetlet of 8 stamps**

Parchment and quill/church window
 A023 312 ★
 A023 352 ⊙ CHF 8.00



Set on first day cover C6
 A023 580 ⊙ only CHF 4.90



Single stamp on first day cover C6
 (4 covers)
 A023 600 ⊙ only CHF 7.60



Block of four on first day cover C6
 (4 covers)
 A023 630 ⊙ only CHF 19.60



Sheetlet on first day cover C5
 Ruin/Reliquary
 A023 591 ⊙ only CHF 9.20



Sheetlet on first day cover C5
 Parchment and quill/church window
 A023 592 ⊙ only CHF 9.20

Set with one sheetlet each on first day cover C5
 Ruin/reliquary and parchment and quill/church window
 (2 covers)
 A023 590 ⊙ only
 CHF 18.40

Unstamped covers

C6 (162×114 mm)
 A023 700
 CHF 0.90

C5 (229×162 mm)
 A023 701
 CHF 1.20



Folder / collection sheet
 A023 640 ★
 A023 650 ⊙ CHF 4.80

*Single stamps/sets and blocks of four with the sheet's margin not available.

** The sheetlets each include 4 stamps with the motifs "Ruin" and "Reliquary" or "Parchment and quill" and "Church window"; not available separately.