



Dialogue

Newsletter of the Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal

Vol. 5 No. 16 June 2003

Web site: www.cimetierenddn.org E-mail: cimetiere@cimetierenddn.org

Third Part of Our Master Development Plan

The third part of the plan identifies provisions for the built heritage so as to guide measures designed to conserve, repair, restore and enhance our site.

I. Fabrique properties

Buildings that predate the creation of the cemetery

The oldest remaining building is, of course, the Jarry-dit-Henrichon House, which dates from the 18th century and was originally built on Côte-des-Neiges Road. In the middle of the 20th century, it was moved to the Decelles Avenue entrance. This rural house is precious because it is one of the last remaining French regime houses within the boundaries of the Montréal Urban Community. It was also classified as a historic monument by the provincial government. Our Plan thus proposes to emphasize this building by creating a small cemetery history interpretation centre in it, along with a reception and information booth.

The roadways

The layout of the roadways has acknowledged meaning for our site's development, as well as for the double nature of our cemetery. Given this, it must be preserved in its entirety, even though the routes that appear on Henri-Maurice Perrault's plans certainly have greater historical value, as does the road opened in 1878 in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste sector.

Much effort will naturally be made to keep visitors from being led into error in their appreciation of the original

forms: for example, detail will be handled so as to ensure that route segments that will from now on be reserved for pedestrians (and, if necessary, service vehicles) will quite distinct from the verdant pathways that have existed since the 19th century within some island sites, as mentioned in the section on natural heritage.

The monumental gate

Of all the site's entrances, the most important from a heritage point of view is clearly the one on Côte-des-Neiges Road, which dates from 1888-1889. It was created with contributions from two of the most important Québec architects: Victor Bourgeau and Henri-Maurice Perrault.

The sculptures (the Cross, Angels of the Resurrection, Redeemer), now placed in the elliptical island near the entrance and in front of the Saint-Claire of Assisi mausoleum, will be restored when their pedestals are eventually rebuilt. The statue of the Redeemer will be moved to a better setting, possibly at the end of the cemetery's central avenue. The little houses will be gutted and renovated so that control, reception and information services can be housed there.

The Chapel of the Resurrection and the administration building

These buildings have high historical and architectural interest in spite of the changes that have been made to their interiors. Our Plan provides for their improvement: the gutting and



repair work that is currently nearing completion on the building envelopes will be followed by redevelopment of their immediate surroundings:

- ~1~Asphalt traffic and parking surfaces will be made smaller
- ~2~Strips of grass will be once again added next to their main and lateral façades (on the northeast side)
- ~3~A more distinguished kind of material will be used to surface the area that connects them

These provisions do more than achieve the goal of enhancing our heritage. They also increase the decorum associated with funeral cortèges at the places which constitute essential moments in the ritual of burial.

Other heritage components

Other buildings also have heritage value. This is the case of the old charnel-house which has recently been transformed into the Saint-Claire of Assisi mausoleum, in an excellent state of preservation. This is also the case with the chapels next to the crematorium which, although fairly new, feature beautiful architecture which is highly representative of the period in which they were built, in 1975. Last, though of less value architecturally, the mausoleums built at the northeast boundary of the plateau have some value because they were the first to be built in Québec.

In all cases, our institution intends to maintain, repair or restore these buildings, as needed, along with the few monuments and art works that it owns (Calvary, the statue of the Virgin, high reliefs preserved from the old Stations of the Cross, stained glass and paintings).

II. Concession-holders' property

Family charnel-houses

These small buildings which, in some locations, make up a highly interesting differentiated landscape must absolutely be conserved, repaired or restored. We are working on it in conjunction with the families.

The monuments

The tens of thousands of monuments do not hold as much artistic or historical value, and it is nearly impossible to provide an equal level of conservation for all of them.

An extensive inventory is underway so as to better assess and compare all the elements that make up this whole, identify those which merit particular attention, understand the problems they pose (escheat, instability, remediation, reintegration, repairs, depletion of the surfaces available for epitaphs, for example), and recognize the priorities and means for intervention.

Even before this work has been completed — completion is scheduled for the end of 2003 or beginning of 2004 — several conservation measures have been retained:

~1~First, a moratorium on any projects for eliminating or replacing any monument. Should it appear that a monument needs to be removed, an opinion on its heritage value would then be requested. If the opinion were favourable, the monument would be preserved on site, or would be stored for a future lapidary arts museum.

~2~Next, a program to teach our personnel about the heritage value of funerary works would be initiated, along with a program to review maintenance and grave-digging methods and equipment.

~3~A restoration program would be launched for monuments that have already been identified as significant or which require emergency intervention.

~4~An epigraphic record of epitaphs carved on monuments made of marble or other brittle stone would be initiated in order to preserve the memory of these evanescent inscriptions for future generations.

In addition, other measures will be started, continued, or brought to fruition:

~1~The search for the heirs or assigns of concessions that have fallen into disuse

~2~A joint restoration program (cemetery and concession-holders) for barriers, stone borders, fences and access stairs which still exist around old concessions and add to the cemetery's historic value

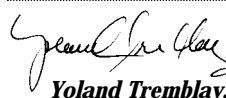
~3~Preparation of an information document in conjunction with restoration specialists intended for concession-holders to advise them on stabilization, consolidation, repair, reintegration or other work they may undertake

~4~A feasibility study on a lapidary arts museum with the goal of protecting and interpreting the most interesting of the funerary works that are too fragile to be exposed to the elements, subject to the consent of the owners involved, controlled replacement of the monument on the site, and identification of an appropriate site and form for such a museum

~5~An auxiliary study on the main designers and manufacturers who signed the cemetery's funerary works

Finally, we will develop public education and dissemination tools on the layout, architecture and arts that contribute to our site's quality.

The goal of these measures is ultimately to protect our heritage while enabling our clients to experience an outstanding site, one that attests to our society's evolution. ♦



Yolande Tremblay, General Manager

By Johanne de Montigny, psychologist, McGill University Health Centre, Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal

To die... with one's head high!

When a young, forty-five-year-old woman is admitted to palliative care with a breast cancer that has metastasized to the liver, one expects to meet a person who is ravaged by illness and threatened with the terminal phase. On this day, on the contrary, I usher into psychotherapy a glowing woman who has dressed with pride, and overflows with energy. Her face reveals neither depression, or discouragement, nor pessimism. Her hands guard a voluminous album, which she immediately begins to leaf through, page by page. With a survivor's energy, she explains her joy in life, and her journey from childhood to the present. Treasured thoughts, photos, happy memories – all are organized, classified, and framed within. Quotations from authors are included, along with symbols of the sea and its salt waters, the sky and its stars, the earth and its fruits, the child and its feats, the pink ribbon signifying the battle against breast cancer. In short, the book reflects all the beauty that dwells within her, a million miles from death. Her passion

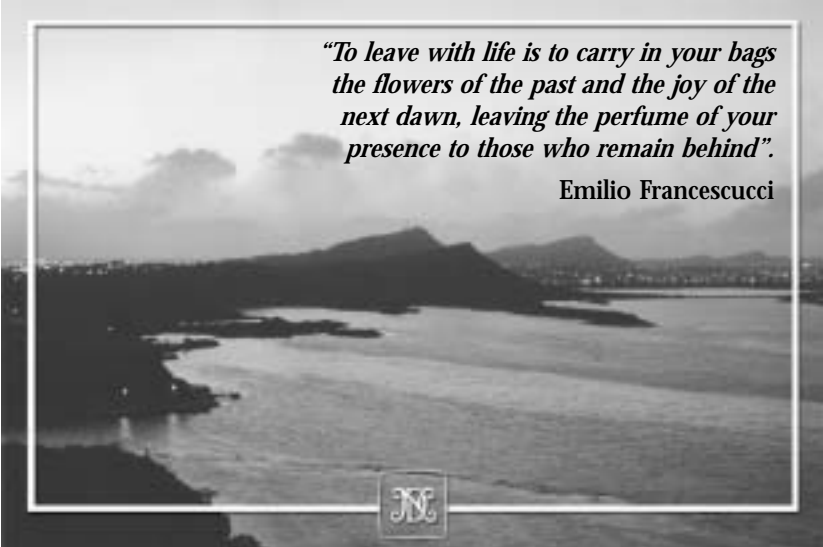
for living, her love for her husband, her attachment to her family, and her inner spirit all strike me to the core. A feeling of gratitude fills me, that of finding myself faced with an exceptional woman who emanates a love and hope that far exceed her prognosis: three weeks to live! Her words do not camouflage the fatal diagnosis, but she much prefers to savour each moment that comes; she stretches them out like filaments of eternity, she stops time and invites us into a space rarely visited – the inner firmament. She suddenly seems to me like an Olympic champion. What fuels her has sparked me and I am surprised to find myself despising death. I refuse it, thinking that here death has lost all meaning. Suzanne embodies life; she engenders it with each new second. She infuses me with the strength of Gibraltar, and a sudden belief in miracles.

Leaving my office, her energy abounds. A celebration, that which is furled in her heart, redecorates my space. I am momentarily overcome. This is

why I talk to a doctor on our team. I tell him that, in fifteen years, I have never met someone so dynamic who is three weeks from death. Even as I speak, I reject his response: "*Incredible, isn't it Johanne? But this woman is close to the end*". No! I tell myself, without him knowing. There must be a mistake. He had neither seen nor heard what just took place during an extraordinary encounter, where the soul triumphed over the body's illness, where Man became tiny, where the un hoped for, the unexpected, the reversible, the wondrous was radiant. I convince myself silently: You'll see! Suzanne will not die.

At our second meeting, I open the door to a nugget of sun, a gold mine. Suzanne radiates a core of energy. Her husband accompanies her silently. His eyes float in a salt sea. He himself vanquished cancer ten years earlier. She cites him as an example. She celebrates her husband's life as irrefutable proof of a mistaken medical prediction, made obsolete by his remission. She sees him as a role model. She drinks in love and draws from him the all-powerful effect of a painkiller. He looks at her with tenderness and at me with distress. He calls me back to the facts. I come out of my denial and perceive, in the region of her liver, that the lump has grown, I had denied this reality. I become a psychologist once more, managing to ask: And if doctor is right, will you be able to cope with dying? Suzanne does not hesitate: "*I will die in peace. But there's a lot to do before then. In fact, I read an announcement saying that you will be giving a lecture tonight, and since it is open to the public, I am going to attend, all right?*"

There she is, seated among the crowd of people battling cancer, and I broach the themes of suffering and survival, of



"To leave with life is to carry in your bags the flowers of the past and the joy of the next dawn, leaving the perfume of your presence to those who remain behind".

Emilio Francescucci

Funeral mores

In Québec, the mores surrounding funerals have changed a great deal, especially in cities such as Montréal. Traditionally, the custom involved three stages. After the death and visits to the parish rectory, the funeral director and the cemetery office (if it was not in the parish of residence), there were three days of watching and prayer over the deceased at the funeral home (or sometimes at home). Then the funeral was celebrated at the parish church, followed by interment in the cemetery.

Today, this rhythm is often broken. When the family visits the funeral director, the latter shows them all the various possibilities and the family makes a decision to the best of its ability. When it is all over, they notice that things have been left out, particularly from the religious perspective. Then they go to the church or the cemetery to have a religious memorial service. Sometimes the cinerary urn remains at the home of one of the children and, later, after the funerary event, the family goes to the cemetery to commit it to the earth, or place it in a columbarium or mausoleum.

In terms of the specifically ritual or religious dimension, the funeral home offers various options, especially since the Archdiocese of Montreal has created celebrations of the

Word to be done at the funeral home. Unfortunately, the parish church is not often used for the celebration of funerals.

We are seeing a growing concern with meeting this religious need among those who are coming to our cemetery offices. In fact, a permanent team of deacons is available to meet these needs. Placing the remains of our lost loved ones in a Catholic cemetery allows us to continue to cherish the memory of our dead, pray for them in our Christian faith, and attest to our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus in whose name we were baptized. Thus, our love for each other continues for eternity, and gives meaning to the gestures of affection we continue to make even after those we love have died.

And, when it is our turn to die, we will be happy to be surrounded by those we have loved, whom we will always love. If not, what is it all for? ♦

Msgr. Yvon Bigras, p.s.s., C.S.S.
Priest of Notre-Dame Basilica of Montreal



From page 3

hope despite the nearness of death. I recite to them the illuminating reflection of Alain Emmanuel Dhreuille, who died of AIDS. A few days before his death, the writer was interviewed by a journalist who asked: How is it that your eyes shine with such clarity on the eve of your own death? And he answered: "*The vitality you see in my eyes, Madam, is a sign that I will overcome this. Yes, dead or alive, I will overcome*". Inspired by the power of his response, I have brought it to this crowd that is able to identify with the ambivalence of the situation. For, even then seconds before his death, the dying person is a living being.

I did not see Suzanne again. I cherish the happy memory of her presence on the night of my lecture. I picture her writing a few final notes to complete her album, the story of her life. A few days before her death, she was transferred to a hospital that was more accessible to her loved ones. I tried to call her, but she was now too weak. She no longer had the strength to talk to me.

In December 2002, a letter from Suzanne's mother con-

firmed that she had died. These words delivered me to an undying commemoration, and I cherish within myself times of strength, peak moments, a morsel of hope that stimulates me again and again. For courage, determination, profound joy cannot pass away with death; they are transmitted to the people lucky enough to walk in the footsteps of the departed. Suzanne gave me the gift of her final weeks. Our only three encounters reinforced the extraordinary good fortune of our being alive; they also revealed to me the power to associate vitality and imminent death.

For, up until death arrives, and Suzanne proved this, life triumphs. That is why this woman, who died with her head high, implanted her traces of eternity in me. I already see her abroad in the heavens, on the edge of the sea, carried by the wind. And, I would like to offer her this reflection of a poet and friend, Emilio Francescucci: "*To leave with life is to carry in your bags the flowers of the past and the joy of the next dawn, leaving the perfume of your presence to those who remain behind*". ♦

by Joseph Berchoud, *Pompes Funèbres Générales, France*

Collective work:

Ultime solidarité – L'accompagnement à la mort (*The Final Solidarity – Supporting the Dying*)

Preface by Abbé Pierre



Living: a little time devoted to freedom for, "if you like," learning to love.

Dying: a "long delayed" encounter with a Friend.

Henri Grouès, known as Abbé Pierre, Founder of the Emmaus movement, Founder of the High Committee for the Logement des Plus Défavorisés (housing the neediest), Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.

So very often, when supporting one of our brothers in the delicate transition from life to the hereafter,

have I been able to see the beauty in what has seemed to be ugly. It is as if, at the moment of departure, the need for purity, the life that has been furled up in the self unfolds. It is like a testimonial by someone who is at the threshold of his own life and will soon be going to meet a Friend who has been awaited forever.

But, too often, solitude douses the light that beams within the dying one. Such solitude is unbearable!

Unbearable for the person who is departing, who is left without someone to watch over him, without reassuring words, without prayers to help him through these difficult moments.

Unbearable for the one who remains behind, because he was needed and he shrugged it off, he could also have learned to be ready — we must learn to be ready — and seen a face of purity that he could never have imagined.

I hope that these pages will help those who dare not live with those who are dying, the moment at which we have a fundamental need to feel beloved.

A blessing upon all the volunteers who face a light that sometimes blinds. A blessing upon the professionals of the last transition for their often thankless work that eases so many families. Thank you for this work that is so essential to those who must suffer solitude at that supreme moment of departure.

Abbé Pierre

Bereaved by suicide... A very different kind of mourning

For those who have been bereaved by suicide, "grief reactions can be qualitatively different in several ways from those provoked by another kind of tragic death," emphasizes the National Task Force on Suicide in a report published in 1987.

In fact, the process of mourning for a suicide is particularly painful for loved ones, who experience an intense array of emotions. Beyond the initial shock and bewilderment, those who have been bereaved by suicide also experience profound denial or a refusal to acknowledge that their loved one has died by suicide. Guilt, anger and shame, felt to varying degrees but equally ravaging, also form part of the suffering felt by loved ones.

More than ever, the bereaved person needs support during this difficult period. Unfortunately, when a person loses someone through suicide, the reactions of those around them are more reserved. Rather than providing support and comfort through our presence, as is usual when someone dies, talking about the deceased and remembering good times, friends and loved ones tend to step back. Suicide is still a taboo subject that causes uneasiness, embarrassment, and sometimes provokes blame.

Attitudes such as these increase the isolation of the family which is feeling the tragedy more deeply and slowly trying to begin the process of mourning... of a very different kind.

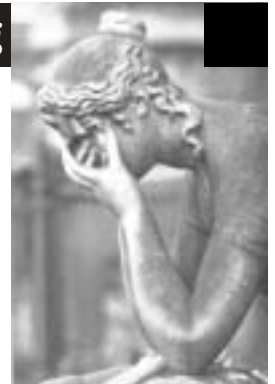
Supporting the bereaved, and meeting their needs

Those who remain behind often experience the suicide of a loved one as an attack on their own life. This is a particularly difficult crisis to face, one which requires a lot of understanding, listening, and acknowledgement of their pain.

We need to be present throughout the process, emphasizing, as much as possible, moments of discussion, while respecting their pace.

In particular, those who have been bereaved by suicide need to:

- ☉ Talk about their grief
- ☉ Talk about the details of the suicide, their reactions
- ☉ Share their fears and doubts



See page 7 >

Columbariums

“For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

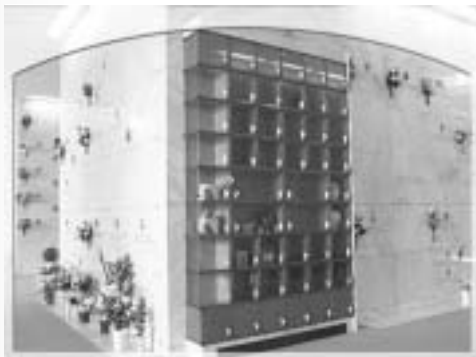
Several thousands of years before our era, the Greeks and Romans cremated their deceased for practical reasons, such as transport and conservation. Over the generations, cremation came to be associated with heroism, military glory and patriotism, until it became a privilege reserved for warriors and heroes of the battlefield. But, circa the year

100 before Christ, cremation was gradually abandoned. It was not until the 21st century that cremation would gradually become a part of our customs and mores once again.

Our cemetery has eight columbariums located in mausoleums, and two exterior columbariums, i.e., Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and Angélus. Given the cremation rate is reaching 60% of the more than 5,000 burials a year, this inhumation method will be developing more quickly in the years to come.

The columbarium offers several important advantages to grieving families: it allows them to visit their loved one at any time, and to celebrate important events such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, All Saints Day and anniversaries in an appropriate environment and atmosphere. Somewhat like a church, these locations are imbued with solemnity and respect, and commemoration here takes on its full meaning.

Columbariums with glass niches are very popular, and the demand is growing for this type of niche in our mausoleums, particularly among clients who have already acquired a crypt or niche for a loved one. Clearly, families want and prefer to be together, no matter what interment method is



chosen. The mausoleum becomes a temple, a unique place for remembering the members of a family.

Recently, in order to respond to our clients' requests, we have gone forward with the creation of eight new small glass niche columbariums within the St. Peter and St. Paul mausoleum. This addition was greeted joyfully by those who wanted to reserve one or more niches so that they could be close to their loved ones. These columbariums enhance the setting and blend beautifully with the colours of the existing marble. There are three types of glass

niches: corner niches with two glass sides which provide a magnificent setting for the cinerary urns, standard glass niches, and semi-opaque glass niches, along with a lamp and vase with a selection of flowers in bronze, if the client wishes.

If you are opting for pre-arrangements, our advisors can offer highly advantageous terms. There is a wide variety of columbariums to choose from in our eight mausoleums. They range from the avant-garde, such as the one located near the magnificent sculpture entitled "Transmutation" by master glass-maker Pierre Osterath, to a white Carrara marble cenotaph whose sculpted façades depict the four major scenes in Jesus' life, to the granite Angelus reminiscent of the ancient traditions of the call to prayer, located near the Veterans' section. They are well worth a visit!

Lastly, following requests from many Marguerite-Bourgeois mausoleum concession-holders, you can now obtain bronze lamps, and lamp and vase sets for niches. Find out more by calling one of our advisors at (514) 735-1361 or stopping by to visit the cemetery. ♦



Johanne Duchesne
Director, Marketing

The journey through Grief

The very meaning of life can be discovered in our daily relationships and what passes among us. The loss I have come to know calls out to me to live awake and alive – to risk, to push the boundaries of my potential – not to look back with regret over what might have been.

A GARDEN of memories

Pruning shrubs

To beginners, pruning shrubs may seem fairly complicated. However, following a few simple rules will make it easy for you.

First, you need to know the species and variety of the shrub to be pruned. With this information, its flowering period can be established, which is the most important piece of information to have when you want to know when to prune a shrub. For example, pruning a shrub such as a lilac in early spring would be disastrous, since lilacs bloom with buds formed the previous year. Other species with this characteristic are:

- ✿ Azalea
- ✿ Forsythia
- ✿ Caragana
- ✿ Hydrangea
- ✿ Honeysuckle
- ✿ Mock orange
- ✿ Flowering almond
- ✿ Weigela

For this group of shrubs, any necessary pruning should be done after flowers appear. The initial pruning will involve trimming branches that have flowered. Old branches will thus be reduced or eliminated, fostering the appearance of young shoots.

Another group of shrubs which flowers in the spring or fall on current season shoots must be pruned when the plant is beginning to bud. This group includes:



Tips and tricks
Trim faded blooms during the summer to increase flowering the following summer.



Tip
Using long-handled clippers or secateurs will give you more leverage for cutting large branches.

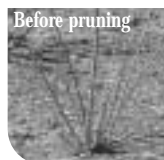
- ✿ Tree hydrangea
- ✿ Hybrid and rugosa roses
- ✿ Hydrangea paniculata
- ✿ Spirea
- ✿ Potentilla
- ✿ False spirea

Clip the ends of stems that don't have buds, cut old dried flowers, and shorten stems that are too long.

Another group joins the first two: it contains shrubs with decorative leaves or branches, such as:

- ✿ Dogwood
- ✿ Ninebark
- ✿ Dwarf willow
- ✿ Elder
- ✿ Privet

These shrubs must be pruned in spring, and require major thinning and trimming. Dead or damaged branches must be removed as soon as possible.



Before pruning

Tip
If you're not sure which branches are alive, wait until a few buds have merged before pruning.



After pruning

These basic principles should help make it easier for you to prune your shrubs. Remember: it is essential to identify your plants. If in doubt, consult a specialist.

Happy 2003 season!

Yvon Pagé

Superintendent, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery

From page 5

- ☺ Be listened to
- ☺ Be reassured
- ☺ Have their feelings validated
- ☺ Hear that their pain will gradually diminish

The Association Québécoise de Suicidologie (Québec association for the study of suicide) reminds us that “an intervention with a bereaved person focuses in particular on the expression of emotions, identifying feelings of isolation that are related to apprehension and the fear of judgement.”

In Québec, there are many competent suicide prevention resources who can provide the bereaved with the opportunity to join support groups. At any time, you can contact organizations such as Suicide Action Montréal (514) 723-3594, Tel-Aide Montréal (514) 935-1101, your CLSC or the toll-free number, 1 866 277-3553.

Robert Leblanc

Director, Côte-des-Neiges Funeral Centre

A unique chance to discover Notre-Dame Basilica and Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery

Sunday, July 6, you are cordially invited to come and discover two priceless jewels in Montreal's heritage: Notre-Dame Basilica and Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. The tour of the Basilica includes areas that are usually closed to the public: the vestry, a treasure of neo-gothic architecture from the end of the 19th century, as well as the gallery of the Great Casavant Organs. It goes without saying that you will first be introduced to the history of the parish, the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, the stained glass, the altarpiece and the pulpit.

The tour of the cemetery will, of course, include a few monuments to famous people such as Maurice Richard, Jean Drapeau and Louis Fréchette, along with the Saint Claire of Assisi Mausoleum, an old converted charnel-house. You will also discover the cemetery's architecture, and a little of its fauna and flora.



The tour starts at the Basilica at 2 p.m., at the reception centre near the main door. After the tour of the church, the guide will accompany visitors to the cemetery gates on mass transit. A map will be provided to those who prefer to take their cars. The tour will continue at the cemetery, ending at about 4:30 p.m. You can continue your tour on your own using the various documents that you will receive, which include a map of the cemetery and a complete list of the celebrities buried here.

Space is limited, so make a reservation with Mireille Desrochers at (514) 842-2925, ext. 259. The visit costs \$12 per person, excluding transport.

An event not to be missed!

Mireille Desrochers
Assistant tourism activities

A new DVD in four languages (French, English, Spanish and Japanese) is available at the parvis boutique for \$25 (taxes included).

It is available in VHS format, in French and English, for \$22 (taxes included).



The guides at Notre Dame Basilica offer daily twenty-minute tours, in French and English. With a reservation, we schedule group tours at a time convenient to you. For people who want to learn more, two-hour conference tours are available. Please contact us at (514) 842-2925



Monthly Masses

These masses are celebrated on the first Saturday of every month, June 7, July 5, August 2 and September 6 and take place at 10 A.M. at the Chapel of the Resurrection.

For Father's Day, Commemorative mass on June 15th at 11:00 am, at the Chapelle de la Résurrection.

FREE PARKING

