



## The St-Martin-du-Canigou Abbey – A thousand years of History...

### A Benedictine Abbey

High perched on a mountainous rock in the Eastern Pyrenees, the Saint-Martin-du Canigou Abbey is a jewel of Roman architecture.

The Benedictine abbey was founded at the end of the tenth century by Guifred II and was consecrated in 1009. It knew glorious times but also difficult ones. In 1428, a terrible earthquake, which caused so much damage in Catalonia, seriously damaged the monastery.

Benedictine monks lived there for eight centuries. Their lives were dedicated to God, by praying. In 1779, one of them wrote a letter saying that only five remained, very old, and they had barely enough to live on. He asked to be allowed to leave the abbey. They left in 1783 and the abbey was abandoned. It was confiscated during the French Revolution.,,



### A momentum of restoration

Fortunately, life came back at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1902, "The Canigou bishop" bought the ruins and called for help to rebuild the abbey. About two thousand people came from the Roussillon department and from Spain to participate. All of them wanted a prayer to go up again to heaven. It took thirty years to reach the goal. They managed thanks to a lot of help.

In 1952, Father Bernard de Chabannes, a Benedictine monk came to live there re-giving to the place its original spirit, with the help of a fraternity and a lot of volunteers, sharing their devotion to God.



## *“Still standing in the heart of Canigou”*

Finally, in the 80's, the Beatitude community was chosen to look after the abbey, with the mission of welcoming, prayer and spiritual tourism. The monks spent three years with them before leaving. At the moment, there are seventeen people to take care of the place. There are families, singles but also clerics and nuns, all engaged in a movement of faith.

All through the year, the Abbey welcomes tourists and pilgrims to make guided tours. Some of them may spend two or six days there for a spiritual retreat.



It is not easy for tourists to reach the place but it is worth doing it! From the village Casteil, they have to walk on foot for about forty minutes along a sloping path in a wood. At the end, the building appears, at an altitude of 1090 metres. Those who want to find peace may spend two or six days there. They will participate in the spiritual life and spend time in meditation and silence.



### **Open**

- From 01/02 to 31/05 – 10 :00/12 :00 and 14 :00/16 :00 – Closed on Mondays
- From 01/06 to 30/09 – 10:00/12:00 and 14:00/17:00
- From 01/10 to 31/12 – 10:00/12:00 and 14:00/16:00 – Closed on Mondays

