

# The History of Cologne Cathedral

Due to its Roman past, Cologne was a prosperous and rich city in the early Middle Ages. The Rhine River, being a major transportation route, served as a guarantee for wealth and Cologne's leaders, the busy citizens and archbishops made the city a major center of trade and culture. In 1164, one of these leaders, archbishop Rainald von Dassel, brought what was believed to be the remains of the Three Magi to Cologne and the city soon became a frequently visited place by religious pilgrims. The church – in which the relics were kept – became too small and plans for a huge new cathedral were made.

Construction for Cologne Cathedral began in 1248 but stopped after 200 years. The cathedral was not finished at all, but the city ran out of money and most people believed that the once modern gothic style was outdated. One story of the nave and two stories of the south tower were complete.

Another 300 years later, in 1842, the people of Cologne finally decided to continue the construction of their cathedral. Supported by many national and international contributions, Cologne Cathedral was finished in 1880. Though badly damaged during World War II and rebuild afterwards, it remains one of Germany's most impressive landmarks.



Cologne Cathedral, 1248



Cologne Cathedral, 1864



Cologne Cathedral, today