

Historical marks

In the 10th century took place a new blossoming of monasteries. To Cluny, founded in 910, are linked the houses of Romainmôtier (928) and Payerne (ca 965).

Around 1146, at the time of the foundation of the Carthusian Monastery of Oujon (Arzier), the high woodlands of Jura were held only by the Clunisiens of Romainmôtier and by other monks of Lac de Joux.

At the foot of the Dôle Mountain, the Cistercians of Bonmont (1123) completed the monastic groups.

Today no document can explain the exact origin of the Priory of Bassins, nor the period when it was attached to Payerne, because the deeds concerning this small Priory, in the Archives of Payerne, were burnt in the fire of the convent about 1235. So there is no written testimony for the period preceding this sad event.

From outside sources it would appear that, already in the 11th century, the Priory depended on the Convent of Payerne, probably following a donation by Humbert I, Sire of Cossonay and Prangins, before 1164, when the name of the first known prior, Girold, appears as witness in an Act of donation, from Guichard d'Ornay, to the Cistercian Abbey of Bonmont.



According to historian Germain Hausmann, one can consider that, some time between 1123 and 1148, the Church was donated to Payerne, which is the foundation of its affiliation to the Abbey of Cluny (see *Helvetia Sacra* III/2, p. 461 sq.).

The first recorded name of a monk in Bassins Priory is that of Nicolas de Joulens in 1336, at the occasion of a deal with Aymon de Montagny, Prior of Payerne, granting him the right to enjoy the Priory in peace.

At the beginning of the 16th century, the monks of Payerne were still ignorant of the origin of the ties between Bassins Priory and their own. They only claimed that Bassins had depended on Payerne since time immemorial!

At the Reformation, the parish church, under the name of Our Lady, became dependent on Arzier, then on Burtigny from 1667.

Nowadays it is part of the parish of Begnins-Burtigny-Bassins-Le Vaud.

The origin of the Priory of Bassins is yet to be discovered and published!

*Text: Gilbert Auberson – Pictures: Jeanne-Françoise Auberson
– Drawings: Ric Berger (with permission of Editions Cabédita) –
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Bassins

Church Notre-Dame

The services are held according to the Protestant (Presbyterian) form in this church, passed on to us by the previous generations.

We, the people of Bassins, wish this church to remain open every day for all the faithful, whatever their creed or their links with the institution, and also for those who wish to see it for art's or history's sake.

Whoever you are, we are happy to welcome you. You are now in a church, a place of prayer and silence, which you are expected to respect. Through your eyes and your heart, look at the beauty of the work of men.

Visitor, friend, come inside, you are here in your home!

Seek the discreet presence of God.
May this visit remain in your heart like a moment of peace . . .



The building

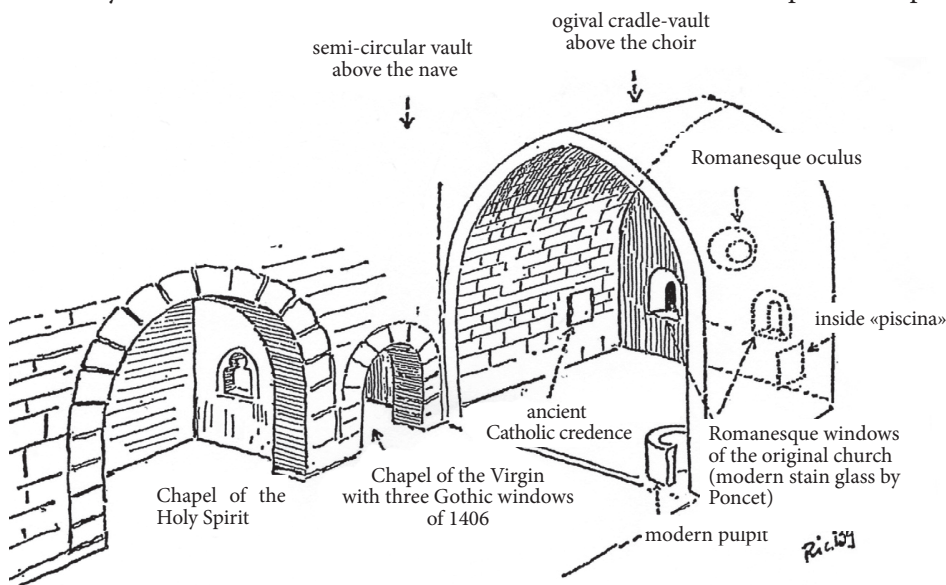
From the original rural priory, only the church, probably of the 12th century, has survived. Its most ancient part is the choir.

It is said that parts of the foundations of the original building had been uncovered in what is today's graveyard. However, as far as we know, no excavations have ever been carried out on the site of the church in Bassins.

The church of Bassins had been built to serve the needs of a Roman Catholic parish and convent, but since the Reformation of 1536, it has been dedicated to Protestant parish activities.

The «credence» and the «piscina» were eliminated, but thanks to archeologists and historians they were set back early in the 20th century, without being used as formerly.

After various adjunctions in the 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th centuries, the church underwent a first restoration in 1878, then another in 1934, when the gallery was destroyed, and one also in 1962.



Visiting the church

Before entering, you will have noticed the tower with the steeple, its twinned windows with ornamental moulding, which completed the building around 1480-1481.

Having passed the porch, you are in the rectangular nave.

On your left is a fairly large side chapel named **Chapel of the Holy Spirit** (XVth c.) created by the Holy Ghost Brotherhood. It was blocked up by the Bernese and used as corn-loft, but it was re-opened at the restoration of 1934. In 1984 the organ was placed there.

Contiguous to it is the small chapel, named **Chapel of the Virgin**, created in 1406 by Gérard de Penezat, from Bassins, who endowed it with gifts in money, land and vineyards, on condition that «three masses per week be celebrated there for ever».

The graves which were uncovered there indicate that the graveyard stretched as far as this, and confirm that this part of the church was a later extension of the church. This also explains the presence of a three-foiled bay in the wall separating the two chapels - a bay which was re-opened during the restoration of 1934.

The stained glass windows of the Chapel of the Virgin, representing Isaiah and King David, were donated by the Mrs Marie and Fanny Genevay.

The three stained glass windows at the back of the choir, under an ogival vault in tufa, are the work of Marcel Poncet (1894-1953). They symbolize corn and grapes with Alpha and Omega. These are a donation from the school children of Bassins.

On the left-hand side of the choir, an ancient Catholic «credence».

On the right, a recess with a liturgical «piscina».

The painting on the back wall of the choir, on bluish-grey background, restored in 1962, is the work of Alfred Ramseier. It portrays «A shepherd worshipping the star heralding the Messiah» (Luke 2, 8-9).1

The Communion Table was set up in 1872.

Walking back, on your left, there are two large stained glass windows with «cabochon», donated by Mrs Dupont-Bosson.

The painting above the door is also by Alfred Ramseier. It shows «Jesus walking on the sea» (St. Matthew, 14, 25).

The church is listed as a historical monument.

