



Master Opportunity, *'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'*



Subject:
Master Opportunity, 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'

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Author: The Leisure Brains Agency (Thijs Vossen)

Editor: Jossie Design

Translations: VERA Business Partner Vertalingen

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We have enjoyed producing this book and have paid meticulous attention to the details. Should you find a typo or flaw, be assured it has been unintentional and view it kindly.





Master Opportunity,
‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’







“A pilgrimage is a way of praying with your feet.”

(Source: unknown)

Euregio Center

Informally, a ‘Euregional’ association already existed at a time when the current countries of Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany did not yet exist, let alone the Euregio. For instance, in the 15th century, it was possible to earn a ‘plenary indulgence’ by taking part in the pilgrimage to Aachen where relics were displayed, visiting seven churches there and completing seven stations (i.e., specific events) of one’s choice from a number of towns around Aachen, including Aldeneik (later Maaseik), Liège, Huy, Roermond, Rolduc, Sint-Truiden, Susteren, Tongeren and Maastricht. In 1982, the idea arose for cooperation between the committees organizing the seven-yearly festivals: Liège, Aachen, Hasselt, Tongeren, Maastricht, Kornelimünster and Susteren. From 1988 onwards, this idea was put into practice. The city organizing the next seven-yearly festival assumes the chairmanship. We wish to position Maastricht as a pilgrimage city within this Euregio context.

About the current Chapter of Saint Servatius

‘Het Kapittel van Sint Servaas B.V. is the client commissioning the drafting of this Master Opportunity. This is an independent private company and is not affiliated with the Diocese of Roermond, the Parish of Saint Servatius or the Roman Catholic Church. Where the title Grand Provost is used, it refers to a ceremonial, non-ecclesiastical title.’ The company is registered in the commercial register of the Chamber of Commerce at the address Henric van Veldekeplein 29 in Maastricht (the Netherlands).

The current Chapter of Saint Servatius has a modern mission and vision that focuses on preserving, promoting and making accessible the historical and cultural heritage of Saint Servatius and the basilica. This makes The Chapter of Saint Servatius a contemporary organization that connects the past, present and future.

The name of the current Chapter of Saint Servatius is a reference to the historic, secular Chapter of Saint Servatius, which was responsible for managing the pilgrimage to Saint Servatius until 1797.



Foreword

“For centuries, the key has held special significance for people. This everyday tool can symbolize access to prosperity, love and a home. You can protect everything you hold dear with a lock, but the key also has the symbolic power to unlock secrets and solve riddles.”



This text is taken from the Bonnefanten Museum website where an exhibition was organized in 2025 with the following theme: The Key to Saint Servatius. We hope that Master Opportunity, ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ will also be seen as a key by both the Church and the local municipality.

For some, as an opportunity to pass on the faith and, for others, to keep the city vibrant. They do not need to be at odds with each other; on the contrary, they can complement each another.

The Key to Saint Servatius is therefore not merely an object or a symbol, but an invitation. An invitation to build together a future in which the past remains alive and in which every resident, visitor and pilgrim leaves a piece of themselves behind and finds inspiration.

This invitation is expressly intended for everyone: for believers of all traditions – Jewish, Christian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Islamic – as well as for people who are not or are no longer religious. Let us seize this opportunity to build a community together in Maastricht in which connection, meaning making and beauty take center stage.

The joint stakeholders hold the key. Now it is up to us to open the door.



The door to a city with at least 1,600 years of hospitality for soul and spirit.

Ever since the 4th century, Maastricht has been a place where people come to be closer to God. Pilgrims from all corners of the world have come and continue to come to the city to pray at the grave of Saint Servatius, to draw strength from Mary’s intercession in the Basilica of Our Lady and to immerse themselves in a city where faith is literally carved in stone. Churches, monasteries, convents, processions, chapels and quiet spots – they all tell a story that remains relevant to this day.

You who live in this city
You who are a pilgrim from distant lands,
in search of peace and beauty...
Here you can find a moment of quiet,
at the deepest source
of all beauty and all life
with that God
who is an abundance of love
for you
A God who waits restlessly
for you.

(Basilica of Our Lady, Tongeren)





Even in our time, there are people who seek meaning and Maastricht can serve as a compass for modern pilgrims. A city where religious heritage and pilgrimage are not confined to museums, but are brought to life. Here, the beautiful, the true and the good come together: prayer and meeting, silence and music, reflection and hospitality, simplicity and beauty.

Master Opportunity, 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' aims to:

- Keep the city's centuries-old religious heritage visible and tangible.
- To link pilgrimage in the broadest sense with the Euregio where centuries-old pilgrimage routes, abbeys and pilgrimage sites tell their stories.
- Create a sustainable selection that is available 365 days a year and not just during the Pilgrimage of Relics and on Christian holidays.
- Not only to inform visitors and residents, but also to move them: through stories, encounters, art, liturgy, silence, music and beauty.
- Enabling those interested to discover that pilgrimages are not a relic of the past.
- Acting as an important nexus where communities and people come together.

All the ingredients to help this Master Opportunity flourish are in place. The key now lies with the stakeholders. Let us give this meaning TOGETHER. The story of the pilgrim and the soup stone in the appendix illustrates this beautifully: everyone contributes something and it is precisely this that creates a whole that is greater and more valuable than the sum of its parts. Now is the time to demonstrate the power of cooperating and to translate opportunities for the greater good.

+May God always be with you+



Thijs Hendrix
The Chapter of Saint Servatius



"Everyone should go on a pilgrimage for one month a year. If, however, you're busy, you should go for two months." (Stakeholder response)

Management summary

“Sometimes a pilgrim simply has to walk in order to take new steps.”

(Source: unknown)

Pilgrimage is an age-old, resurgent practice that combines physical travel with an inner quest, often in times of change or crisis. Whereas in the past the focus was on the miracle upon arrival, the emphasis is now often on the journey itself: learning, reflecting, contemplating and growing, sometimes with unexpected religious dimensions. For Maastricht, which is situated on historic routes and has a rich religious heritage, this offers opportunities to continue to welcome and inspire many types of pilgrims and therefore become part of their journey.

The soul of Maastricht as a pilgrimage city remains inextricably linked to its patron saint: Saint Servatius. His grave in the Basilica of Saint Servatius bears witness to the power of the Christian heritage that has shaped Maastricht. Nor should the Basilica of Our Lady be forgotten in relation to the veneration of Mary.

In this Master Opportunity, the concept of pilgrimage is interpreted in a broader sense. One of the stakeholders, however, points out that pilgrimage is not, in fact, about broadening one's horizons or the journey itself, but solely about reaching the religious goal: drawing closer to the relics and the divine. Another stakeholder emphasizes that a pilgrim is not on their way to a church or city, but specifically to a holy place; in the case of Maastricht, for example, the grave of Saint Servatius or the Star of the Sea Basilica. At the same time, other stakeholders encourage a broader interpretation of the concept.

The aim of this Master Opportunity is to make 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' not just a destination but also a movement. It is neither a campaign (to promote tourism or otherwise), nor a one-off project. It is a living story about a contemporary city of pilgrimage, embedded in the rich culture of the Euregio, which continually invites people to meet and connect, to experience and find meaning, and to genuinely enjoy the beauty of the city and within ourselves.

The core of the conclusions and recommendations is that 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' can only succeed in the long term if it is supported by a broad, intrinsically committed network of stakeholders with a shared mission, vision and core values. Based on the discussions we have held, we are very confident that this will succeed.

We believe that stakeholders are more than willing to work towards a shared ambition to develop 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' into a vibrant, Euregional movement between 2025 and 2032 that will connect religion, spirituality and culture.

Based on seven pillars, that is, propagating, uniting, enriching, connecting, charming, growing and broadening, a network of people, organizations and places are emerging that makes pilgrimage accessible and meaningful.

Through inspiring stories, shared rituals, educational programs, art projects, music, international routes, and strong partnerships, Maastricht is developing into a crossroads where centuries-old traditions and contemporary meaning making reinforce one another, guaranteeing a broad social, cultural and economic impact.





Key points in brief:

From plan to movement	Not a top-down project, but one driven from within by a community in which co-creation, engagement and shared ownership are given center stage.
From a shared foundation	Anchoring and promoting the mission, vision, core values, and pilgrim promises (authenticity, connection, meaning making, beauty and devotion).
Balance between tradition and innovation	Preserving historical and religious depth, but with contemporary forms and activities that also appeal to new target groups.
Social added value	To offer a sense of community, opportunities for meeting others, accessibility, sanctuaries and meaning making, including as a response to loneliness and fragmentation.
Education and knowledge sharing	For example, are guided tours, exhibitions and programs that provide a deeper understanding of religion and heritage.
Physical and symbolic places	Think of a logical structure starting with a pilgrims' home, pilgrim quarter, a pilgrim town and, finally, the link to the Euregio.
Collaboration and repurposing	Joining forces, including for the preservation and reuse of the religious heritage and the strategic repurposing of churches.

In short, creating an authentic and future-proof pilgrim town, where past and present reinforce one another and where the journey is just as important as the destination. 'The Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius' could be used as a potential future pilgrims' home. The owner is willing to invest in this, provided he can count on the support of the stakeholders. It will soon be more than just an information point. Above all, it will be an open and welcoming meeting place where pilgrims, residents, guides, cultural institutions, religious communities and partners can come together. The pilgrims' home will fulfil, for example, the following functions:

- A meeting hub for stakeholders. This includes space for holding meetings, vision development and collaboration between all those involved.
- The start and end point of the Camino Maastricht. This includes a welcome ceremony with a ritual or blessing. It may be possible to set up a simple pilgrim lunch café.
- An interactive museum, where visitors experience the world of pilgrimage through stories, rituals, objects and modern presentations.
- A guide center as a starting point for guided tours of Maastricht from the perspective of the pilgrimage city.
- A volunteer portal as a physical and digital hub for the recruitment, coordination and support of volunteers from home and abroad.
- A living archive. This involves the collection and accessibility of documents, maps, stories and objects relating to the pilgrimage tradition.

This Master Opportunity outlines five types of pilgrims as examples, which fit within the 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' theme. Attention is paid to the stages the pilgrim goes through: From inspiration and awareness, through consideration and preparation, arrival and experience, attaining depth and connection, and, finally, aftercare and lasting commitment.

This Master Opportunity also sets out a proposed organizational structure and a phased approach. The organization we envisage embodies all the characteristics of constant growth and change. There is a strong focus on developing a long-term strategy, implementing an orderly structure, having a positive culture, deploying the best people and appropriate resources, and, ultimately, making every effort to achieve the desired results.

Finally, this Master Opportunity is richly illustrated with appendixes that support the mission and vision in various ways and provide further insight to help interpret the principles, conclusions and recommendations.

This Master Opportunity came about through discussions with a large group of stakeholders (including those who challenge the status quo) to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their openness and fruitful conversations. The term 'stakeholders'

means both those with a vested interest and those involved. Their contributions were sometimes based on a personal perspective and sometimes on a position or role within an organization. Information from other sources has often been enriched or supplemented by valuable input from these discussions.

In listing all these points, we do not claim to be exhaustive. Nor is that necessary. This Master Opportunity is a living document to which everyone is invited to further contribute.



*“Walking is beneficial; so much is resolved while walking.
Think of it as spiritual wellness.”*



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1. Introduction

***“A pilgrim travels to a holy place,
but returns changed to their own soul.”***

(13th century, Source: unknown)

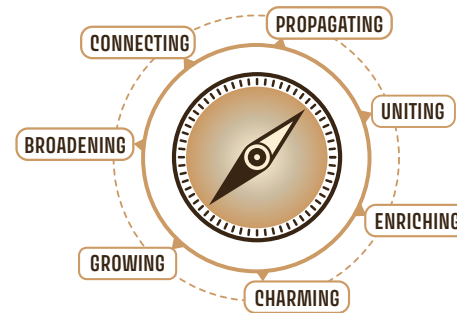
Maastricht, a city where ancient paths converge. Where stones whisper stories and people from all corners of the world are on the move, sometimes literally, but also sometimes figuratively. Where pilgrimage means not only walking, but also listening, searching, connecting and slowing down. At a time when many long for peace, direction and meaning making, Maastricht offers something unique: a place to catch one’s breath and set off again. Pilgrimage in a broader context.

The soul of Maastricht as a pilgrimage city remains inextricably linked to its patron saint: Saint Servatius. As the first bishop of the Low Countries and a bridge-builder between East and West, he brought not only the Christian faith from Armenia to this region, but also enduring values of mercy, love, justice, hope and faithfulness.

His grave in the Basilica of Saint Servatius became an important pilgrimage site where for centuries people flocked to find comfort and healing and to make meaning. To this day, this place bears witness to the power of the Christian heritage that has shaped Maastricht. A heritage that invites pilgrims not only to reflect, but also to develop a community spirit and solidarity.

Based on this Master Opportunity, we see ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ not only as a destination, but also as a movement. It is neither a campaign (to promote tourism or otherwise), nor a one-off project. It is a living narrative about a contemporary city of pilgrimage, embedded in the rich culture of the Euregio, which invites people to meet, reflect, deepen their understanding and build a community.

The propagating, uniting, enriching, charming, growing, broadening and connecting themes are our compass that we use to build a powerful community, supported by people from both within and outside the city. May this perspective be the roadmap for that journey. Be inspired!



***Will you become part of this community?
Will you join us?***

**Life is about being on a path,
climbing mountains, wading through rivers,
picking flowers by the moonlight,
wandering through deserts and the wilderness,
holding a candle against the storm,
walking alongside others or carrying them,
sharing bread and celebrating in the night.**

**Life is a pilgrimage,
working on the path for a while
building a bridge over the water,
driving away thieves and devils,
keeping vigil and praying with the sick,
burying the dead by the chapel.**

**But the pilgrims never settle down:
'strangers' do not settle.
When they finally arrive,
they know what they suspected:
The journey is the goal.**

(Source: Jan de Jongh)





2. Transforming Maastricht into a pilgrimage

“It is better to walk alone than with a crowd that is going in the wrong direction.”

(Source: Diane Grant)



In 2025, the book **Pilgrimage to Maastricht** was published that describes an adventurous pilgrimage undertaken by Arent Willemsz of Delft to the Holy Land in 1525. It also highlights the significance of the grave of Saint Servatius for Maastricht as a pilgrimage city at that time and shows how medieval pilgrim souvenirs spread throughout Europe.

Even afterwards, right up to the present day, Maastricht has remained a city of pilgrimage, although this has taken on a different form over the centuries. Discussions with those involved reveal an area of conflict: some wish to hold on to traditions and rituals, while others are seeking a broader, more contemporary interpretation. With this Master Opportunity, we aim to bridge those differences.



“For me, pilgrimage, both personally and professionally, has always been linked to faith and religion. A pilgrimage is a quest to find God. There are all sorts of possible variations on travelling to religious or spiritual places, but if you do not approach it from a religious perspective, it is really more of an ordinary hiking tour, a tourist visit or a sporting challenge. It is a different matter when a journey starts out ‘neutral’ and gradually turns into a pilgrimage. This actually happens quite a lot.” (Stakeholder response)



“Focusing on the pilgrimage theme. There is certainly an opportunity there, but for me personally, pilgrimage is not the journey, but the goal. The connection with God, forgiveness and the remission of my sins.” (Stakeholder response)

Pilgrimage, a familiar practice for centuries, is currently experiencing a remarkable revival. It is not merely about following a route, but about a quest with contemporary significance. The Swiss professor of practical theology, Ralph Kunz, emphasizes that pilgrimage is valuable not only for the traveler themselves, but also for faith communities. The modern-day pilgrim is often not a regular churchgoer, but someone who, while on a journey, searches for a sense of meaning, connection or a spiritual experience, without this necessarily taking place within a church setting.

Whereas pilgrims used to hope primarily for a miracle, healing or an intense religious experience upon arrival, the emphasis today lies much more on the journey itself: learning about oneself, the people around you, the world and sometimes, unexpectedly, about God. A pilgrimage is both a physical journey and an inner path, in which joy, experiencing a challenge and perseverance go hand in hand. The journey is often undertaken in times of change or crisis, when seeking direction, recovery or a new beginning.

According to Ralph Kunz, this also presents an opportunity for faith communities. Not by claiming pilgrimage as their own or imposing strict ecclesiastical frameworks, but by supporting it, valuing it and learning from it themselves. He describes pilgrimage as a form of religious experience reminiscent of ‘praying with one’s feet’: gradually becoming less self-centered and more attuned to God, as the theologian Eberhard Jüngel also characterizes prayer.



“For me, pilgrimage is: travelling on foot with a specific destination in mind, but with your eyes open along the way so that you, as a person, integrate with the constantly changing surroundings, and this makes you wiser and more fulfilled as a person. In fact, Neanderthals were already doing this in the Meuse Valley. Nowadays, there are people who follow ancient Celtic and Roman roads on foot or who follow pilgrimage routes. People do this for the challenge, but above all, for themselves.” (Stakeholder response)

In the footsteps of the pilgrim, an ancient and universal longing resonates: being on the way to a destination, while the journey itself transforms you. For Maastricht, with

its rich religious heritage and location at the crossroads of historic pilgrimage routes, this offers a unique opportunity. By accompanying pilgrims on their journey, welcoming them on arrival and giving space for their stories, the city can not only be a welcoming stopover but also a source of inspiration. In this way, Maastricht itself becomes part of the pilgrimage path – a place where centuries-old tradition and contemporary spirituality meet and enrich one another.



“Pilgrimage in Maastricht need not be understood solely as a journey to a pilgrimage site. It can also be seen as an invitation to meet: a tapestry of stories, places and people who find and connect with one another. Something emerges that reaches beyond physical travel in this interplay. It leads to moments of reflection, to slowing one’s pace and open-mindedness. Here, in the silence between steps and words, insight can grow: not as a sudden revelation, but as a slow awakening to what has always been there. In this way, the city becomes not only a destination, but also a living landscape in which the pilgrim gets to know themselves and others anew.” (Stakeholder response)

During a conversation with Mr. Klaas Koelewijn (Chairman of the Stichting Waalse Kerk Maastricht), we were introduced to the ideas of Johannes Hartl. He is a German Catholic theologian, philosopher, author and speaker. He connects people across denominational boundaries and knows how to make themes of faith relevant and understandable to people of our time. Hartl argues that, in a contemporary context, three fundamental elements are crucial for a sustainably enriching life: connection, meaning and beauty.

His reflections resonate with modern pilgrimage. After all, pilgrimage is much more than a physical journey or merely a religious expression. It is an inner movement, a quest for direction, depth and renewal.



In our age of continuous rush, fragmentation and overstimulation, there is a growing need for places that offer space for transformation. Maastricht can be such a place. A nourishing haven in the midst of the world that offers food for the soul in abundance. These elements, as described by Hartl, could well be the values that will continue to unite stakeholders in the future.



“Those who believe are never alone.”
(Stakeholder response).

Connection

Connection in the sense of living together, breathing together, travelling together and coming together. Maastricht is, par excellence, a city of connection and togetherness. For centuries, Maastricht has been a place of passage: examples include the Roman trade routes, medieval pilgrimages and European treaties. People have been meeting here across borders for centuries. However, also in the sense of social cohesion. The planned pilgrim home, pilgrim quarter and pilgrim city will create space to come together and share stories. Consider too, the cohesion with the (Eu)region. The Meuse and the surrounding area remind us of the natural setting in which the city is located. Finally, there is the historical cohesion. Maastricht exudes a layered history, from Roman castellum to modern university city. The pilgrim becomes part of this larger narrative. This multifaceted connection makes Maastricht a city that brings people together, connects them and invites them to experience a profound sense of belonging.



“For a Catholic, and therefore for me personally, a pilgrimage is the spiritual journey during earthly life towards heaven. A pilgrimage can, for example, also be that for a Muslim. This involves a certain personal and religious development and a life lived virtuously. I call this the inner pilgrimage. From time to time, this may also include a physical pilgrimage, that is to say, a journey or visit to a sanctuary or pilgrimage site and the performance of associated rituals to honor God, to seek the intercession of a saint or the comfort of Mary, and/or to draw inspiration for the inner pilgrimage. For people in a broader sense, which may include non-believers or those who are





uncertain, a pilgrimage is a way to make meaning. I certainly do not regard people who go to an Andre Rieu concert or come to Maastricht to celebrate Carnival as pilgrims. To me, a pilgrimage without faith is not a pilgrimage. People wishing to make meaning are borderline cases, but because they too walk the Camino, for example, and are likely to have at least some interest in the Catholic heritage or faith (cultural Catholics), I have no objection to including them in the 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' project." (Stakeholder response)

Meaning

This in the sense of re-evaluating what is valuable. The pilgrim comes not only to look, but also to seek. Not just for the experience, but above all for the deeper meaning. In a society where the meaning making is under pressure, Maastricht offers pilgrims space to rediscover what really matters in our lives. Religious and spiritual significance: the city, after all, boasts a rich heritage of synagogues, churches, monasteries, convents and pilgrimage routes that invite contemplation and reflection. It may also concern the philosophical and academic significance of Maastricht. With its university and international character, the city is a place of reflection and dialogue on the future, society and the perception of mankind. It could also concern the personal significance of the pilgrim where the city invites you to focus, to give voice to life's questions and to find direction anew. In this way, Maastricht becomes a place where meaning is not only sought, but also shared through rituals, conversations and meeting others.



"It would be wonderful if this Master Opportunity could connect the pilgrim's journey of transformation and reflection to the physical space in Maastricht." (Stakeholder response)



"Maastricht is already the 'City for the Pilgrim'. Here we are reminded that, like Augustine, we are citizens of two cities: the earthly and the heavenly one. Amidst change and uncertainty, we continue to be called to live by our faith, hope and love so that, here and now, we may be signs of the City of God." (Stakeholder response)

Beauty

Maastricht exudes aesthetics: in its Romanesque churches and Gothic towers, in its Baroque squares and modern art, in its music, gastronomy and festivals. Art and culture open windows onto a deeper reality and inspire wonder. Architecture and heritage show that generations before us saw beauty as a path to what is good and true. The rolling hills, the Meuse Valley and the quiet areas surrounding the city are also a source of beauty. Also, however, consider beauty as a countermovement to the cold and harsh world full of conflicts, wars and polarization. For the pilgrim, beauty is an important path to healing and inspiration. Maastricht and its surroundings offer beauty in abundance



"As a pilgrim, I recognize within myself the greater concepts: connection with myself, others and God, making meaning by becoming silent, feeling what truly touches me and letting go of what no longer serves me, and beauty by being receptive to the wonder of the everyday in which every step is an invitation to be amazed." (Stakeholder response)



"The idea ties in with the Catholic heritage, traditions and culture of Maastricht and the surrounding area. It strengthens the identity of its residents. They can be proud to count something as special as a centuries-old pilgrimage city among what defines their identity. It can empower and inspire them to make something beautiful of their life's journey, their inner pilgrimage." (Stakeholder response)

Located in the heart of a vibrant student city, Conservatorium Maastricht places you at the center of cultural life. You are surrounded by a variety of events, festivals and activities, and you are just a stone's throw away from Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and France.

Conservatorium Maastricht is Europe's most international conservatoire with over 75% of students coming from abroad. All projects, masterclasses and programs are borderless and offer a global perspective.

By transforming Maastricht in this way as a pilgrimage city, we draw on broad insights from religion, psychology, philosophy, sociology and art history. People flourish when they feel connected, experience meaning and encounter beauty. These three elements are not mere extras to enhance the city's identity, but the very essence of what makes Maastricht future-proof and human.



"For the Dutch, Maastricht has a special appeal as a city in a region that is 'different'. The city's Catholic heritage is immediately apparent to visitors. This also applies (or perhaps particularly applies) to the devotion to the Star of the Sea and Saint Servatius, and to the sacred treasures linked to the basilicas. Intangible heritage such as the city procession, pilgrimages and the seven-yearly Pilgrimage of Relics also contribute to Maastricht's recognition as a city with a Catholic heritage. The surrounding hilly countryside and Maasland are also richly endowed with Catholic heritage. However, it is somewhat contrived to regard tourists who occasionally visit a church in Maastricht or stand along the route of a procession or pageant as pilgrims. After all, they usually have not come to Maastricht specifically to visit a treasury or basilica. There are likely to be very few pilgrims who come to Maastricht to seek healing at the grave of Saint Servatius, Saint Gerlach or at the Star of the Sea. Nevertheless, Maastricht, with its Catholic heritage and its remarkable past, is well-suited to developing as a pilgrimage city with potential target groups including the devout Catholic pilgrim, the meaning making/walking (Saint James') pilgrim and the tourist interested in the Catholic heritage. Such a hiking pilgrim might, for example, be a hiker on the Pieterpad trail, who finds a resting place for the soul in Maastricht. If Maastricht can sufficiently promote its shrines and, in doing so, establish cooperation with other well-known

pilgrimage sites abroad, then, in my opinion, Maastricht can gain recognition as a pilgrimage city not only within the Netherlands, but also beyond its borders. As the city's most important shrines are linked to Saint Servatius, it stands to reason that devotion to Saint Servatius must be central to this, but from Maastricht, pilgrimages to other shrines are also possible within hiking or cycling distance, such as to the grave of Saint Gerlach in Houthem, to the pilgrimage site of Saint Gerard in Wittem, to Cornelius in Kornelimünster, to the Basilica of the Holy Sacrament in Meerssen, to the Cavalry in Moresnet or, for example, to the shrines in Aachen, Visé and Liège, and to the Saint Benedictusberg Abbey in Vaals. A little further afield: Echternach, Trier, Banneux, Kevelaer, Scherpenheuvel, etc." (Stakeholder response)





Maastricht as a travelling companion

A pilgrim does not seek an endpoint, but a path that gives life. Maastricht can distinguish itself here as a 'fellow traveler'. A city that supports people through connection, meaning and beauty. Not as a closed destination, but as an open space where the past, present and future meet. In this way, Maastricht becomes a living pilgrimage site where every person, every resident, visitor or person who passes through for some reason, can take a step towards a deeper, richer and fuller life. This Master Opportunity is therefore much more than a project: it is a movement that is being deployed. Every movement requires a deeper driving force, a shared spirit. This could be:

In a world where everything is being accelerated, fragmented and individualized, 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' offers space for connection, meaning making and beauty. Drawing on the age-old power of religion, the personal quest for spirituality and the unifying beauty of culture, we are building a community in which every person can and may discover their own pilgrimage route, alone, but preferably together with others.

We see many points of convergence between 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' and contributing to a solution for the social problems facing Maastricht, including poverty, loneliness and the integration of new population groups such as students and

migrants into the city's identity. The appendixes explore in further detail the connections between 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' and aspects of comprehensive well-being and social cohesion among the city's various population groups and neighborhoods.



"In the past, people had three places: home, work and a third place (such as a church, temple or meeting hall) for reflection. During the pandemic, work fell away as a firm structure, leaving only home. However, even at home we get distracted: because of our telephones and our virtual lives, we lose the chance to truly reflect or be present. Without spiritual practice and without such a 'third place', we can no longer automatically create a space for peace and reflection, even at home. This reflection is from Madonna in the podcast On Purpose with Jay Shetty." (Stakeholder response)



"The Bonbonnière is being restored to its former glory. The Maastricht City municipality has set aside up to 30 million euros for this. The building is seen as a pearl and a unifying element. This Master Opportunity is about a string of pearls linked to its religious heritage that binds the city together. That sounds really promising." (Stakeholder response)



3. A Master Opportunity for many crossroads

“The first regeneration we must seek is that of ourselves.”

(Source: unknown)

This Master Opportunity unfolds at several fundamental crossroads that profoundly shape the identity of Maastricht and the Meuse-Rhine Euregio. At each of these intersections, tensions and differences arise, but so do new opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Church and State

The relationship between the church and state in Maastricht and the Euregio is historically determined yet forward-looking. The many parishes, dioceses (Roermond, Liège and Aachen) and ecclesiastical institutions are in direct contact with local authorities, provinces and Euregio partners. While one emphasizes spirituality and ritual, the other focuses on policy, the economy, culture and tourism. Nevertheless, based on discussions with stakeholders, it appears that there is a highly fertile middle ground in which both worlds can reinforce one another. Religious buildings are simultaneously cultural venues, tourist attractions and economic drivers. Processions and pilgrimages are not only spiritual rituals, but also socio-cultural events that connect urban communities. People of faith are also known to make a significant contribution to voluntary work, poverty alleviation and other charitable causes, and therefore to the cohesion of our society. ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ can, through this interaction, develop into a testing ground for living as a community, where sacred and secular values meet.



“Where once two lords ruled, Maastricht learned that true strength lies in shared authority, in listening, connecting and going on a pilgrimage together.”
(Stakeholder response)

The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany

The other nexus is geographical. Maastricht lies literally at the crossroads of three countries and forms the heart of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. Cities such as Aachen, Liège, Hasselt, Tongeren, Heerlen, Düren, Verviers and Maastricht are, at first glance, natural neighbors: connected by proximity, trade and a shared history. In practice, however, language, bureaucracy, forms of interaction and cultural codes differ greatly. This Master Opportunity is not about emphasizing borders or identifying obstacles, but about making the most of the soft transitions. It is precisely these areas where cultural, religious and social energy is released and where, with three countries, diverse cultures and three languages, there is a unique space for experimentation, innovation and meeting other people. Where borders separate elsewhere, here they function as windows: they open up views of other ways of living and working. For Maastricht, this means it can position itself as a gateway to the Euregio, where pilgrims, visitors and residents learn to cross over both literally and figuratively.



“Here, in Maastricht, where the Meuse and Jeker rivers converge, Charlemagne’s dream was revived in 1992. What was once the emperor’s empire is now the Europe of the citizen. It was not power that was born in Maastricht but meaning: the spirit of a united, peaceful and just Europe.”
(Stakeholder response)

Rich and poor, old and new, young and old

Many different population groups live together in Maastricht. Thanks to the large student population, there are many young people, but, due to an ageing population, there are also many older people. There are neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and fewer opportunities for those growing up there and neighborhoods where wealth is concentrated. There are people who identify as ‘Mestrechteneers’ (local dialect word for residents of Maastricht) and people who, as migrants, must still find their place in Maastricht. However, all of them, regardless of their background or origin, can be connected through pilgrimage. The ‘old’ Maastricht resident recognizes the





Pilgrimage of Relics, the city procession, the Sint Servaaskermis (Saint Servatius Fair) and the devotion to Saint Servatius and the Star of the Sea.

The new Maastricht resident finds in 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' a resting place for the soul where there is also room for pilgrimages familiar to the new Maastricht resident from their country of origin, such as, for example, the pilgrimage sites of Eastern Christianity and Islam for migrants, and (Catholic) pilgrimage sites in Southern Europe or Latin America for students.

They can meet one another and the modern meaning maker through pilgrimage as this is also part of their identity and heritage. From there they can also contribute to the DNA of 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'. Consider, for example, the monument to the Armenian Christians between the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church).



"As the Euregional Ecumenical Working Group, we are currently preparing for a conference in March 2026, this time at the Episcopal Academy in Aachen. The theme is "Treaty or conflict? Generations on the way to the future. The working group was established in 1992 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and organizes an annual conference on a topic relevant to all three regions. The working languages are German and Dutch. The working group consists of six members, two from each region, with one representing the Roman Catholic Church and one representing the Protestant Church."
(Stakeholder response)

Religion, culture, economy and tourism

A further crossroads concerns the interweaving of different domains. Religion, culture, economy and tourism are often seen as separate worlds, but in the context of Maastricht and the Euregio they converge. Art, culture, music, religion and rituals form the common language. They create spaces where values and traditions engage in dialogue. This does not result in a melting pot, but rather a fabric of soft connections between parishes and municipalities and local customs and European perspectives.

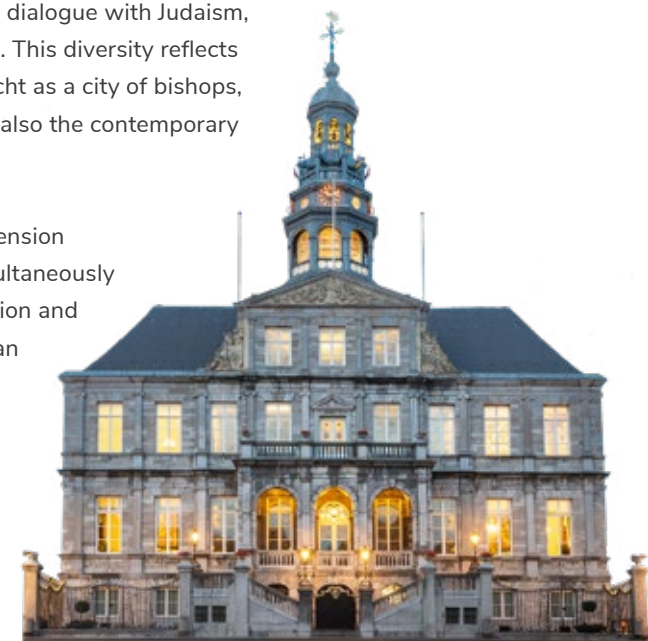
Economy and innovation are firmly rooted in the Euregio. Consider, for example, the infrastructure, industry and knowledge institutions. Tourism and heritage play a crucial role in this whole. The Euregio is strongly committed to sustainable tourism, with a focus on infrastructure, awareness and heritage. For Maastricht, this means that pilgrimage tourism can be developed in the broadest sense. It is not just about religious significance but also about economic vitality, cultural visibility and an international profile.

Where faiths come together, dialogue arises

In addition to the interplay between church and state, between countries and languages, and between religion, culture, economy and tourism, there is another intersection that is deeply interwoven with the identity of Maastricht and the Euregio: the nexus between faiths.

In the region, Christian denominations (all stemming from the same original source) meet while engaging in dialogue with Judaism, Islam and other philosophical traditions. This diversity reflects not only the historical layers of Maastricht as a city of bishops, pilgrims and religious communities but also the contemporary reality of a pluralistic society.

Where differences sometimes lead to tension or misunderstanding, space is also simultaneously created for meeting, dialogue, cooperation and reconciliation. Religious communities can make each other's stories visible, share rituals and build bridges between generations and cultures. For Maastricht and the Euregio, this opens up an opportunity to develop into a testing ground for interfaith dialogue where



spirituality and pluralism enrich one another. From this perspective, pilgrimage tourism can take on a new dimension: not merely as a journey within a single tradition but as a quest for connection across the boundaries of faith and culture. This creates an inviting and forward-looking identity in which Maastricht presents itself as a city to meet others, to understand and to coexist.



"It would be wonderful if this plan could also make room for the story of the synagogue in Maastricht. It is located just a few minutes' walk from the proposed pilgrim quarter. Jews have lived in Maastricht and the surrounding area since as early as the 13th century. Incorporating Jewish philosophy into the project would certainly enrich it." (Stakeholder response)



"In the recent past, the Stedelijk Humaniora in Dilsen-Stokkem (Belgium) organized an annual trip to Maastricht with groups of students. The students were divided between three locations: Sint-Janskerk, Saint Servatius and the synagogue. Each group was accompanied by two teachers. Following a system of rotation, the groups visited the places of worship simultaneously. After a general introduction and a short guided tour, the students were given the opportunity to ask questions about the different religions. In this way, they were able to compare the three places of worship and their religious traditions. The activity was particularly valuable because the students themselves came from a multicultural background, which enriched the discussions and insights. Unfortunately, this initiative has been discontinued. This was due to the rising costs of coach transport and the multicultural tensions present in Flemish schools with a diverse population. It may be possible to revive this project in the future, for example within this Master Opportunity." (Stakeholder response)

This nexus also includes people who say they are not religious. This Master Opportunity gives just as much space to people who do not (or no longer) travel for religious reasons, but who are nonetheless meaning making and seeking silence, reflection, deeper understanding or a connection. Pilgrimage is therefore viewed more broadly in this Master Opportunity. It is not about 'having to believe', but about the experience of the journey and the meaning that each individual attaches to it. 'Maastricht, City

for the Pilgrim' offers no ready-made answers, but an invitation to a personal quest. What it may bring about is what it will bring about. God works in mysterious ways.

Past, present and future

The city reflects how, throughout the centuries, people have made meaning and found peace and connection. The historic routes and monuments are tangible reminders of a time when pilgrims were literally and figuratively on the move. Today, Maastricht is a vibrant blend of urban dynamism, cultural activities and spiritual reflection. The city invites pilgrims to experience a connection with themselves, the community and their surroundings, right in the midst of everyday city life. Modern initiatives, walking routes past historic sites and local pilgrim stories make the present feel like a space for discovery and meeting. The city offers opportunities for new forms of pilgrimage: digital routes, art projects, educational programs and sustainable meeting places. In this way, Maastricht can become an inspiring destination for pilgrims seeking connection, making meaning and seeking beauty in an ever-changing world.

The connecting role of Saint Servatius

Within this context, The Chapter of Saint Servatius occupies a special position. It stands, both literally and figuratively, between church and state and can act as a bridge between worlds that are often seen as separate. By approaching the identified



intersections not as dividing lines but as transitions, a sustainable and unifying perspective emerges. Maastricht therefore becomes a city that is not merely carried by its history, but which, precisely because of its position in the Euregio, opens itself even further to the future.





Robert Schuman: From war language to peace – Inspiration for 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'

During a visit to the Diocese of Liège, a discussion took place with Chancellor Jean-Pierre Deleersnijder regarding the legacy of Robert Schuman (1886-1963). He was a German-French Catholic politician and one of the architects of the European Union. He lives on as an example of reconciliation, commitment to the common good and belief in cross-border cooperation.



Just after the Second World War, Schuman saw the devastation, the division between countries, particularly France and Germany, but also the fear of future conflicts. He decided that the causes of war – such as competition over coal and steel – had to be removed by managing them jointly rather than laying exclusive claim to them. This led to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) being established in 1950. Schuman used natural resources (coal and steel), which had previously been primarily resources used for waging war, as building blocks of peace and cooperation. In doing so, he effectively removed the sting from border conflicts and rivalry. His Catholic faith and the social teachings of the Church were important sources of inspiration. Integrity, service and the ideal of bringing people together – friend and foe alike – were central to his political actions. Schuman's ideas remain relevant today. In times of polarization, migration crises, climate change and geopolitical uncertainty, his approach, tackling problems at their root, solidarity and dialogue in diversity, still offers inspiration. Not by giving up, but by seeking solutions together.



As a city of pilgrimage, Maastricht has traditionally served as a meeting place for people, faith, culture and history. Schuman's life journey can serve as a source of spiritual and social inspiration. Think of pilgrimage as a symbol of reconciliation. Just as pilgrims are on their journeys, so too was Schuman on a journey, not merely travelling, but on a constant quest for peace and connection. Pilgrims cross borders, geographical, cultural, and sometimes even those of faith or conviction. Schuman was committed to transcending national borders, enmity and mistrust. Maastricht, located close to many borders and with an international outlook, can serve as a living example of this. Maastricht is ideally placed to advocate for policies and initiatives that are significant not only locally but also internationally. Examples include sustainability, the reception of refugees and ecological cooperation, always as signs of solidarity and rooted in connecting, meaning making and beauty.



4. 4. The archetype of the Maastricht pilgrim

“Every crossroads is a choice between faith, doubt or losing one’s way.”

(Source: 15th century sermon in Trier Cathedral)

Based on discussions with stakeholders and the analysis of pilgrimage (see the appendix), five elaborated pilgrim profiles that fit within the ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ theme are specified below. Each pilgrim profile represents a distinct type of pilgrim and is embedded in the broader goal of making Maastricht the ‘City for the Pilgrim’.



“A religious pilgrim might simply be a resident of Maastricht who lights a candle at Our Lady’s with their grandchild.” (Stakeholder response)



“Pilgrimage always involves, in one way or another, a search for meaning making and contemplation. To put it simply: there must always be a ‘connection to the higher power’. It may well be a tenuous connection, but it must never be severed.” (Stakeholder response)

THE RELIGIOUS PILGRIM	
Name	María García
Age	62
Origin	Seville, Spain
Occupation	Retired religious education teacher
Motivation	A deeper connection with her faith and the search for forgiveness
Characteristics	Faith, devotion, community, ritual and forgiveness



María travels to Maastricht to rediscover the ancient pilgrimage town, culminating in the annual Saint Servatius Day. For her, this journey is an act of devotion and spiritual renewal. She visits holy sites, lights candles in the Basilica of Saint Servatius and takes part in rituals. She experiences Maastricht as a city where her faith is not only celebrated but also shared with

others who understand her quest. After a walk through the Geuldal (Geul Valley), she visits the unique shrine of the holy hermit Saint Gerlach, just a stone’s throw from Maastricht. María did not know that there were hermits in Northern Europe too, just as there were in her homeland. There she speaks with the hermit Brother Simon, who spends the winter months at the hermitage at this shrine. She can talk to him about anything. She learns that in 2027, to mark the 300th anniversary of the Sint Gerlachuskerk (parish church), there will be a gathering of hermits in Saint Gerlach. Might hermits from Spain also come to Maastricht then?





THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIM	
Name	Thomas de Ridder
Age	38
Origin	Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Occupation	IT consultant on sabbatical
Motivation	To find inner peace and rediscover oneself
Keywords	Self-reflection, meaning making, peace, openness, personal development.



Following a period of burnout, Thomas is seeking tranquility and meaning making. In Maastricht, he finds places for reflection, spiritual walks along the Meuse river, and workshops on mindfulness and silence. In the city, he finds like-minded people with whom he can discuss questions of identity, direction and meaning. He appreciates the broad and open approach to spirituality here.



"It is important to take a critical look at everything that is sold under the guise of spirituality. The wheat must be separated from the chaff within the project. Be wary of too much woolly thinking." (Stakeholder response)

THE SPORTY PILGRIM	
Name	Lotte Maes
Age	28
Origin	Leuven, Belgium
Occupation	Physiotherapist and trail runner
Motivation	Linking a physical challenge to mental clarity
Keywords	Movement, balance, adventure, nature, performance as a pilgrimage

Lotte travels through both Belgian and Dutch Limburg on foot and cycles down routes once travelled by pilgrims. For her, physical exertion is a form of meditation. She is seeking space and freedom. She appreciates that Maastricht and the neighboring Heuvelland offer her both physical challenges and moments of tranquility. A perfect combination of city and the surrounding area.



Cycling past the Flemish Masters in Turnhout and the surrounding area

Eindhovens Dagblad, August 1, 2025, by Simone Vos

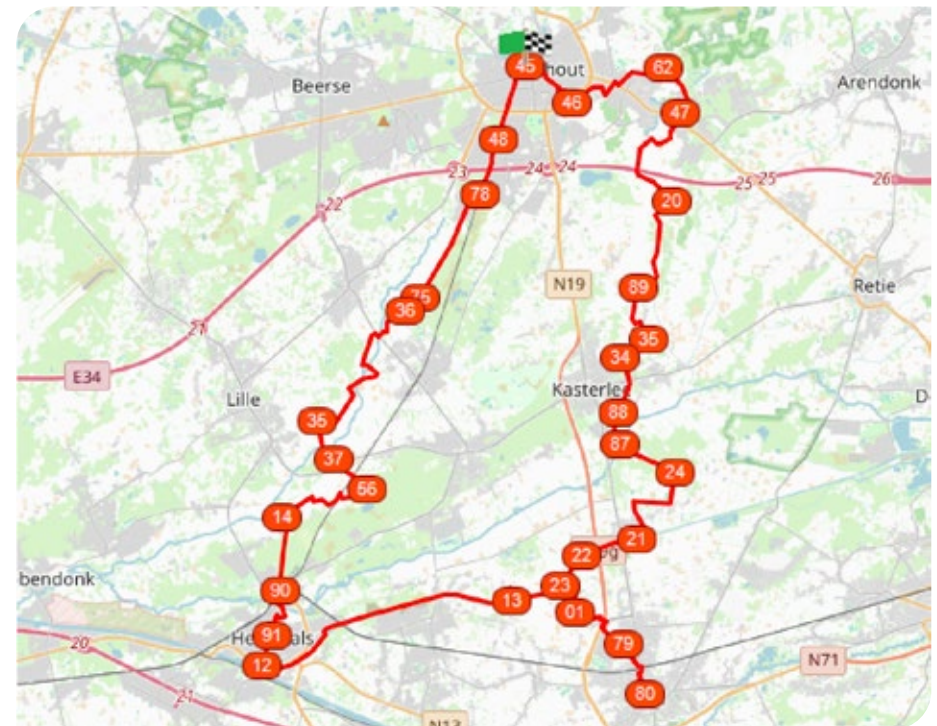
Five churches in and around Turnhout guard their Flemish Masters like relics. Between Geel and Herentals, via winding roads to Oud-Turnhout, a 75-kilometer cycle route winds its way past the historic works of art. An ideal summer outing.

The singing of a male choir resounds from the speakers, just as the church bells begin to toll. In the Sint-Antonius Abtkerk (Parish Church of Saint Anthony Abbot) in Oud-Turnhout, a calm prevails that suits the first work of art: Sint-Anna-ten-Drieën (Saint Anne Trinity), an altarpiece – a liturgical painting or sculpture on the altar – dating from the early 16th century. You can see Mary, her daughter, and the infant Jesus on Mary’s lap. The infant is reaching for the grapes held by Saint Anne. Note the unusually long arm. From here, it is a ten-minute cycle ride to the Sint-Bavokerk (Saint Bavo’s Church), also in Oud-Turnhout. Here you can admire Het Laatste Avondmaal (The Last Supper; 1696) by Jan Erasmus Quellinus. The church is dedicated to Saint Bavo, the patron saint of falconry. Quellinus probably painted the canvas on commission from the Augustinian Priory of Corsendonk. These ‘Flemish Masters in their original locations’, such as Het Laatste Avondmaal (The Last Supper) and Sint-Anna-ten-Drieën (Saint Anne Trinity), have put the whole of Flanders and Brussels on the map. The idea behind it: to show the exact reason for which the Flemish Masters created their pieces. To make it easy to visit these places, a number of ‘Master Tours’ have been mapped out. In the Turnhout region, it is a do-it-yourself route that can be done on a bicycle (based on the cycling network). In every church that is part of the project, there is a pink box containing further information. From the Sint-Bavokerk (Saint Bavo’s Church), the tour heads to Turnhout to the Sint-Pieterskerk (Saint Peter’s Church), about a ten-minute cycle. Here stands a life-size pulpit featuring De Roeping van Petrus en Andreas (The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew; 1862), by sculptor Hendrik Peeters-Divoort. The whole church is impressive; from the stained-glass windows to the gigantic paintings on the walls. From Turnhout, the route continues to Geel, about 23 kilometers away on a bicycle. Geel is best known for the fact that host families here have traditionally taken in psychiatric patients.

This is rooted in the devotion to Saint Dymphna. An altarpiece dedicated to this saint can be found in the Sint-Dimpnakerk (Church of St Dymphna). This work consists of more than two

hundred oak figurines that tell the story of Saint Dymphna: from her life and martyrdom to how she was venerated. Two further altarpieces can be admired in the church. The final stop is the Sint-Waldetrudiskerk (Saint Waldetrud’s Church) in Herentals, about fourteen kilometers cycling away from Geel. Here you can see the altarpiece of Saint Crispinus and Saint Crispinianus, also known as the shoemakers’ altarpiece, by Passier Borreman. Once back in Turnhout, a visit to the Beguinage (Beguinage) makes for a lovely closing event. Although not officially part of the Flemish Masters in their places, the Heilige Kruiskerk (Church of the Holy Cross) is tucked away here. A serene final destination. Cycling?

Follow these intersections starting from Turnhout: 45-46-62-47-20-89-35-34-88-87- 24-21-22-23-1-79-80-80-79-1-13-12-91-90 -14-56-37-35-36-75-78-48-45.



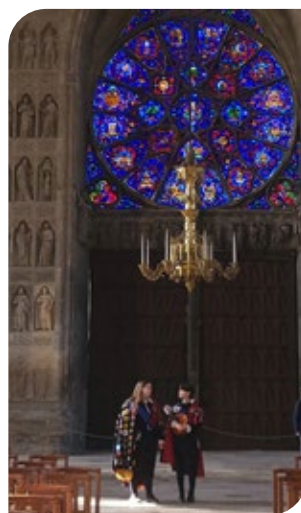
“Scouting Sint Gerlach has been active in the Sint-Pieter district of Maastricht since 1938. We may be able to give them an important role in relation to pilgrimage in Maastricht.” (Stakeholder response)





THE ADVENTUROUS PILGRIM	
Name	Naila Benali
Age	24
Origin	Marrakesh, Morocco
Occupation	Cultural anthropology student
Motivation	Discovering new traditions, stories and world views
Keywords	Exploration, intercultural dialogue, curiosity, connection

Naila is curious about how spirituality is experienced in Europe. She chose Maastricht because of its rich religious and cultural heritage. She immerses herself in local stories, gets to know different philosophies of life and shares her own experiences. She sees Maastricht as a meeting place for various pilgrim paths, both literally and figuratively. On Sunday afternoon, she attends the student mass at the Sint-Matthiaskerk (St. Matthias Church) on Boschstraat. Afterwards, she strikes up a conversation with some students from Spain, who have come to experience their faith in Maastricht in a completely different way. They invite her to join them that evening to listen to the Tuna Femenina de Maastricht (<https://tunafemaas.com>) in a Maastricht café..



“Places with human stories, where the landscape or monuments can visually evoke these stories and also invite contemplation. Many places in Maastricht are visited by tourists from all over the world, but what do they take away from their experience mentally? Could the university or an archive open its doors to certain seminars or presentations? Could hospitality venues offer a pilgrim’s menu or visualize historical stories?” (Stakeholder response)

THE CULTURAL PILGRIM	
Name	Hugo and Elise Francot
Age	55 and 53
Origin	Lille, France
Occupation	History teacher and museum curator
Motivation	A deeper experience of European history and spirituality
Keywords	Culture, education, history, aesthetics, in-depth study

During a cultural tour of the Euregio, Hugo and Elise visit Maastricht as the highlight of their trip. They explore churches and museums and take part in a guided tour at the pilgrim’s house museum, learning about the pilgrimage routes of the past. For them, pilgrimage is not only spiritual but also intellectual: it connects the past and the present through meaningful stories. In the evening, in the quadrangle of a basilica, they attend the Servatius Musical Play, a light show performed there every Thursday evening for pilgrims, in which a narrator uses projected images to explain the life of Saint Servatius and the origins of Christianity in the Netherlands.

The following morning, they book a guided tour of the Basilica of Saint Servatius, where they visit the grave of Saint Servatius, and, in the afternoon, they set off for Tongeren, the town where Saint Servatius was bishop. They are moved by the enthusiasm with which the story of Saint Servatius is told during the tour. It is just a shame that the crypt was closed, meaning they could not see the ancient Christian graves mentioned during the tour. They decide to return in the autumn with friends, but for a slightly longer weekend and to visit Liège and Aachen as well.





“It is an important role for the Maastricht municipality not to focus on ‘faith’, but rather to help maintain the built heritage appropriately. This can be achieved by preserving the distinctive architecture that makes Maastricht so attractive to tourists. Imagine if the various church towers were gone. What would be left? Or what about the squares if the church buildings eventually disappear behind temporary fencing due to overdue maintenance.”
(Stakeholder response)

The stakeholders interviewed also indicate that there are many more types of pilgrims to consider. What about the culinary pilgrim in search of the much-praised Servaas wine, whose grapes come from land near the Moselle and whose vineyard was once owned by the historic Chapter of Saint Servatius? Be sure to read the appendix about the pilgrim with the soup stone, which was mentioned during one of the discussions.

There are plenty of locations in Maastricht for a contemporary pilgrimage soup. Or the musical pilgrim who dreams of a performance by Rowwen Hèze in the Basilica of Saint Servatius, where they will perform their new song about Saint Servatius together with Gé Reinders..



“Questions regarding meaning making are just as relevant today as they were 100 or 500 years ago. It is just that we phrase them differently. A tourist can become a pilgrim if they are offered the right story. It must be possible to provide appropriate answers to questions regarding meaning making using modern means and contemporary terminology, where the religious element is not hidden away but is addressed in an appealing way. There is nothing wrong with combining visits to religious heritage sites, moments of reflection and good food and beverages.” (Stakeholder response)





5. From customer journey to ‘pilgrimage’

“Pilgrimage was a physical metaphor for inner purification: the harder the journey, the greater the grace.”

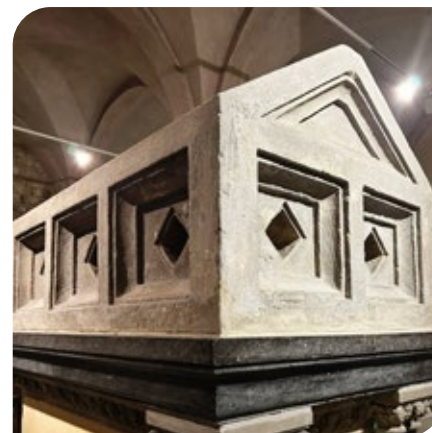
(Source: Johan Huizinga, Autumn of the Middle Ages)

In the context of ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ the term ‘customer journey’ translates to the pilgrimage as a symbolic and practical route that the pilgrim travels from initial interest to long-term commitment to the community. This journey has recognizable stages that we concretize in this section by type of pilgrim to inspire. We identify the following stages:

- Inspiration and awareness
- Consideration and preparation
- Arrival and experience
- Attaining depth and connection
- Aftercare and ongoing commitment

For each stage, suggestions are provided below on how the pilgrim can be involved in the community to be established.

THE RELIGIOUS PILGRIM	
Inspiration and awareness	Compelling stories and images about, for example, the Pilgrimage of Relics, pilgrimage routes and religious heritage in Maastricht and the surrounding area. Spiritual testimonies via religious media and church networks.
Consideration and preparation	Practical information on pilgrimage routes, times of prayer, accommodation at monasteries/convents and church services. Digital guides featuring theological reflections and a liturgical calendar.
Arrival and experience	Being welcomed with a blessing or pilgrim ritual. Participation in processions, vespers or guided tours with religious significance.
Attaining depth and connection	Organized discussions with clergy or fellow religious pilgrims. Workshops on forgiveness, silence and healing.
Aftercare and ongoing commitment	Online community of like-minded people. Newsletter offering spiritual enrichment and an invitation to return. Opportunity to return as a volunteer.





THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIM	
Inspiration and awareness	Podcasts, blogs, stories and articles on inner peace, recovery from burnout and quiet places in Maastricht. Visual content featuring serene buildings, cityscapes and nature.
Consideration and preparation	Offer of retreats, silent hikes and individual contemplation processes. Information about spiritual programs.
Arrival and experience	A warm welcome at the sanctuary, monastery or convent. Drop-in sessions for meditation, mindfulness, reflection or one-to-one conversations.
Attaining depth and connection	Participation in rituals, creative workshops or spiritual journeys. Community moments with other spiritual seekers.
Aftercare and ongoing commitment	Follow-up in the form of an online reflection group or a 40-day program. Digital cards or apps with daily inspiration. An invitation to become a pilgrim guide yourself.



Nederlands Dagblad, August 27, 2025, by Jort van Slooten

Faith is back at the Venice Film Festival: many films about religion are premiering here

An above-average number of films at this year's Venice Film Festival are about faith. From a 'punk rock' film about Mother Teresa, a series about Etty Hillesum, to a musical about a Christian end-times cult; religion plays a prominent role at this year's Film Festival.

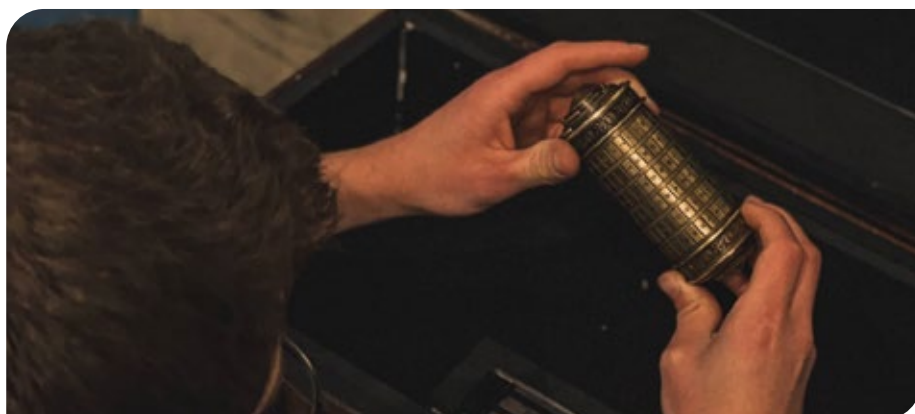
THE SPORTY PILGRIM	
Inspiration and awareness	Promotion of pilgrimage walking routes, trail events and spiritual sports retreats. Videos that combine nature, exercise and reflection.
Consideration and preparation	Maps, stages, rest stops and meeting points in the city and along the routes. Information on accommodation and sporting challenges with a sense of purpose.
Arrival and experience	Starting point with a symbolic departure ritual. A warm welcome with stamp points and short meditations along the way.
Attaining depth and connection	Evening conversation with other sporting pilgrims. Sharing experiences about the connection between body and soul.
Aftercare and ongoing commitment	Reports and presentations of routes (digital pilgrim's diary). Invitation to repeat routes or train as a buddy for new pilgrims.





“Let’s use this Master Opportunity to mobilize all places of hope and peace together in Maastricht.” (Stakeholder response)

THE ADVENTUROUS PILGRIM	
Inspiration and awareness	Cultural stories on TikTok, WeChat, Instagram or podcasts. Visuals of Maastricht as a spiritual crossroads of Europe. Images of the Heuvelland. Historical stories and discoveries.
Consideration and preparation	Practical information in multiple languages, intercultural orientation. A range of festivals and rituals from different traditions.
Arrival and experience	Intercultural meeting place (for example, a pilgrim café or cohousing). Welcome pack with local stories and cultural background.
Attaining depth and connection	Participation in storytelling events and interactive city walks. Workshops regarding meaning making in other cultures.
Aftercare and ongoing commitment	International network communities sharing exchange experiences. Online platform for intercultural pilgrimage.



In the sacred treasures of the former seven collegiate churches in Liège, innovative ways are being sought to reach young people. They are experimenting there with escape routes – interactive games in which participants, often in small groups, solve tasks and puzzles to find their way through the church and its treasures. This playful approach stimulates young people’s curiosity and invites them to look at religious heritage with fresh eyes. While engaged in the game, they simultaneously become acquainted with the works of art, the symbolism and the stories associated with the Christian tradition. This creates a bridge between culture and faith: young people are not only engaged through their sense of adventure and teamwork, but also gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance preserved within the churches.

THE CULTURAL PILGRIM	
Inspiration and awareness	Historical stories, monuments and UNESCO status. Tours focusing on religious art, architecture and the history of pilgrimage.
Consideration and preparation	Clear overview of cultural routes and events. Information on museums, religious heritage and themed city walks.
Arrival and experience	Cultural welcome with a guide, historical commentary. Access to temporary and special exhibitions.
Attaining depth and connection	Lectures, themed days or public talks on religion and culture. Opportunities to engage in conversation with local historians or theologians.
Aftercare and ongoing commitment	Membership of cultural associations in ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’. Digital pilgrim library or podcast series. Invitations to cultural events or exhibitions.





Part of the Church of Our Lady in Diest will become a hiker's cabin for pilgrims on the way to Compostela

VRT News, June 19, 2024, by Willy Vanthienen

The town of Diest wants to repurpose three churches within its boundaries. The Church of Our Lady is to be used as an overnight accommodation hub. In addition, the Church of the Holy Family in Vleugt and Saint Trudo's Church in Webbekom will also be given a new function.

"We have completed a very positive participatory process," says Monique De Dobbeleer (DDS), alderwoman for Worship Services. "Together with residents of the various villages, the Diocese and the central church council, we have undertaken a comprehensive exercise regarding the future of our churches. This has resulted in several options."

We want to make the Church of Our Lady, a 13th century church, available as an overnight hub, as we are located on the route to Compostela. However, this is a secondary use. That means the building can still be used as a place of quiet reflection or for holding services. "You should think of an overnight hub as a sort of hiker's cabin that accommodates you

inside the church. There are already a few examples of this in Flanders and also in the Netherlands. As an individual, you can stay there overnight, but within a sheltered cocoon. The architectural details are still being worked out. We have also brought in an architectural firm for this," says the alderwoman.

Two other churches are also being repurposed.

"The Holy Family Church in Schaffen Vleugt is to be converted into housing. We are looking primarily at social housing or housing in general. We will, however, try to incorporate some architectural memories. For example, stained-glass windows will be preserved and the street façade will remain unchanged. This has been included in the conditions."

"The Saint Trudo's Church in Webbekom is close to the Webbekoms Broek nature reserve and we want to use it for creativity and inspiration. People will be able to submit proposals, which will then be reviewed together with the committee appointed for this purpose. There are also three churches left, but what we will do with them will be considered at a later date," concludes alderwoman Monique De Dobbeleer.



6. A promising prospect for 2032

***“Hospes venit, Christus venit.”
“When a guest comes, Christ himself comes.”***

(Source: Axiom of Saint Benedict)

The year 2032 was not chosen as a promising prospect by chance. It is the year in which the 57th Pilgrimage of Relics will take place. This year's theme could well be 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'. It is also the year in which Saint John's Church celebrates 400 years as a Protestant church, and it marks 80 years since the re-opening of the Jewish Synagogue in Maastricht (1952). It is also worth noting that, the following year (2033), will see another Holy Year celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church. This too could offer all sorts of opportunities.

In 2032, how do we hope to look back on the movement that was set in motion on the basis of this Master Opportunity?

In 2025, the Master Opportunity, 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' was launched. From then on, a group of enthusiastic and passionate people continued to build bridges (the theme of the Pilgrimage of Relics in 2025). Between 2025 and 2032, a community emerged in which 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' continued to grow as an inspiring, religious, spiritual and cultural network in the Euregio. Since 2025, based on the seven themes below, stakeholders enthusiastically worked together, sharing a vision; a resilient and meaningful movement emerged, connecting the right people and organizations.



(The 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' community)

PROPAGATING - The power of the story

At the heart of the community, lies the 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' story. It has now become a powerful narrative that inspires, connects and provides direction. It is becoming increasingly clear why Maastricht, in terms of its identity, which is rooted in religious, spiritual and cultural contexts, is the pilgrimage city of the Netherlands. On the terraces in the pilgrim quarter, pilgrims, residents and visitors share their personal travel stories. This fosters a growing sense of recognition and deeper understanding. There has been a notable increase in videos, podcasts, blogs, exhibitions and lectures focusing on Maastricht's religious heritage and pilgrimage in particular. There is a sense of familiarity through the use not only of the same rituals, but also of recurring icons. Think of the shields on buildings throughout the city (including affiliated restaurants and hotels), route signs, pilgrim passports ('credencial') and souvenirs. Over the years, the story becomes increasingly tangible. Since 2025, the story has been continuously told, depth has been added and it has been adapted so that it lives on forever both within and outside the community. When we speak of the importance of propagating, we certainly also mean the importance of spreading the story. After all, that is where it all began.

Sometime in the year 2032.

Maria (67), a former teacher and now a volunteer city guide, begins the day with a story at the recently opened pilgrim house. She talks about how Maastricht was a crossroads for pilgrims for centuries, a place of comfort, rest and where to meet, and that, since 2025, Maastricht has increasingly been fulfilling that role once more. Once outside, she stops at the new artwork next to the Basilica of Saint Servatius: 'Why I Come', which symbolizes the collective motivations for choosing to visit a church. She reads an excerpt from her own diary, written during her pilgrimage to Kevelaer, which can also be read on the recently launched Euregional pilgrimage app, full of routes, activities, information and, of course, diary entries. She also talks about the 'Path of the Soul', a new Euregional route that starts in Liège, passes through Maastricht and ends in Aachen. Her voice touches people. Some even wipe away a tear.



“Stories are more important than ever. It is crucial that we find good story-tellers who can truly captivate people. In any case, we have a lot to share together.” (Stakeholder response)



UNITING – Creating a shared identity

The strength of the community lies in its shared values, goals, rituals and symbols. At its core, it is about lovingly bringing people together. In recent years, there have been an increasing number of physical gatherings, pilgrimages, festivals and symposia in Maastricht. The Pilgrimage of Relics, held every seven years, remains very important, but over the years the festivities have not ceased. Nor has this been a Maastricht-only story for a long time. There is significant Euregional representation. Cities such as Aachen and Liège are following developments, and it is increasingly becoming a unified, Euregional narrative. Everyone is welcome, from religious pilgrims to secular hikers, from young to old. For some time now, there has even been talk of the 'Maastricht Pilgrim' as an archetype: a symbol with which people can identify. It evokes a sense of belonging and cohesion.

Sometime in the year 2032.

Dozens of groups are gathering on the Vrijthof. Many places in the Euregio now have their own pilgrim association with distinctive flags and colors. Youssef (28) from Weert, a young Christian who became fascinated by the concept of spiritual journeys, guides his multi-cultural pilgrim group. "It is not about where you come from, but where you are walking to together." He is one of the 1.2 million Christian refugees now living in the Netherlands. The participants all carry their pilgrim passports (credencial) with stamps and stories from previous journeys.



"The Maastricht Catholic Student Chaplaincy (MCSC) is a student chaplaincy in Maastricht, intended for both Dutch and international students and young professionals who wish to deepen their Catholic faith. The organization was founded in 2016 on the initiative of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Sittard and various parishes in Maastricht, including Saint Servatius, Saint Matthias, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Sterre der Zee (Our Lady Star of the Sea) and Saint Martin. It also organizes, among other things, retreats and pilgrimages." (Stakeholder response)



ENRICHING - In-depth study and education

This vibrant and thriving community offers its members (pilgrims) opportunities for personal intellectual, spiritual and cultural growth. This includes a wide range of lectures, courses, workshops and even international study trips. The focus is on theology, history, meaning making and pilgrimage in the 21st century. There is close collaboration with educational institutions: Maastricht University, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, secondary schools, primary schools, libraries and cultural institutions. There is an increase in publications and knowledge sharing: articles, books and podcasts. This enriched range fosters depth and commitment, which in turn strengthens the community.

Sometime in the year 2032.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Annelies Gruber (45), a theologian and pilgrim, gives a lecture on pilgrimage in the 21st century with a focus on the social living heart. She links ancient spiritual traditions to new questions. Young people from Euregio College listen with rapt attention and then take part in a workshop: Write your own pilgrim manifesto. The lecture can be followed live via the community platform that has existed since 2026 and now has more than 50,000 active members. What nobody had expected, is now actually happening. The idea of Servaas offline, which for several years has symbolized evenings of silence without phones in the Basilica, has been adopted worldwide. People feel a sense of connection across great distances by disconnecting from social media for longer periods at specific times. They are learning to feel again and to connect as individuals to a greater whole.

CONNECTING – Building bridges between people and initiatives

The theme of the 2025 Pilgrimage to Maastricht was 'Be a Bridge-builder!' This has remained at the heart of actively fostering connections between individuals, groups, organizations and ideas. This leads to the formation of networks, including high-quality tourism. Significant investment has been made in a digital platform. This includes a community website, an interactive map showing the religious heritage of the Euregio, social media and forums. For several years now, a working group has been active to introduce mentorship and buddy systems: experienced pilgrims are paired with newbies. Over the years, this has given rise to a vibrant and constantly evolving network, in which intrinsic cooperation driven by a shared desire is the norm.

Sometime in the year 2032.

Luc (52), the local baker in Bisschopsmolen, expanded his business in 2028 to include a 'Pilgrim's Spot', a resting place offering stories, local produce and a special book table. Today he is attending the kick-off meeting about a network of 400 pilgrim's spots in the Euregio. He meets Franziska (35) from Aachen, who is working on a route guidebook about pilgrims' memories. They decide to explore their further mutual collaboration. At the special pilgrim network café, where the meeting is being held, business people, artists and route developers come together. There, they devise new initiatives and concepts. For example, the idea: 'Believing in the public space'. At Luc's, visitors therefore receive a Solace box. Filled with positive words and surrounded by beautiful images that offer support and strength when you need it, helping the reader realize that they are not alone.



"In my experience, pilgrims are mainly individuals and find it difficult to connect with one another. If this project succeeds in that regard, it would be a success." (Stakeholder response)



CHARMING – Creating appeal

The pilgrim community is engaging, welcoming and reflective. By maintaining dialogue with one another and, above all, with many pilgrims, they always know what resonates with people. Such as the right balance of meaning making, peace, adventure and reflection. There is a professional visual appeal. Beautiful, recognizable and consistent design in logos, signage and merchandise are examples of this. Recently, there has been a greater focus on inspiring ambassadors: well-known pilgrims, artists and writers. In 'The Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius', a writer's room has been set up which is made available free of charge, for extended periods, to well-known writers. There is an increasing number of compelling events, routes with thematic highlights and special pilgrim meals at various affiliated restaurants. The community encourages people to rediscover their curiosity and, when in doubt, invites them to take the plunge. More and more people are rediscovering the pilgrim within themselves.





“In both the religious and secular worlds, the trick lies in connecting like-minded people with those who think differently. In doing so, I express the hope that any feelings of fear among all stakeholders can be transformed into a shared desire to roll up our sleeves and get to work.”

(Stakeholder response)

Sometime in the year 2032.

In the evening, hundreds of candles are lit along Lichtweg – a temporary art installation that winds its way through the city. Liam (19), a student from Armenia, is here for the first time. He first heard about Maastricht when a Saint Servatius monument was unveiled in Yerevan in 2027. Later, he will also visit the exhibition: Echo of The Chapter of Saint Servatius. A stylish ensemble in the Basilica of Saint Servatius that uses light projections and soundscapes to



present the good message in a new form. Liam was not raised in a religious household, but feels drawn to the tranquility, the beauty and the idea of being on a meaningful journey. He joins Youssef’s group for a two-day trek. “I don’t know why,” he says softly, “but this feels like coming home.” That night they sleep in one of the Pilgrim Pods, which have been successfully operated for several years on the grounds of the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen). Ten percent of the proceeds go towards the preservation of religious heritage in Maastricht.



“Maastricht as a pilgrimage city is a theme that resonates and attracts people. This can be further developed as part of the city’s identity in combination with other ongoing initiatives.” (Included on page 47 of Future Exploration of Places of Worship in Maastricht)

GROWING – Growth and scaling up

The strength of the community lies in its ability to spread organically. Following its establishment, the community is therefore expanding steadily. Local initiatives are being scaled up. What works in Maastricht can be replicated elsewhere in the Euregio. This avoids concentrations and prevents unwanted pressure on the city at peak times. Intensive partnerships have been established with existing pilgrimage routes and destinations. Agendas are being aligned. New target groups are also being increasingly targeted, such as young people and schools. Recently, a company in Maastricht has introduced pilgrimage as a team-building exercise.

Sometime in the year 2032.

By 2030, three new pilgrimage routes have already been established in the Euregio, partly inspired by Maastricht. In Eupen, Heerlen and Tongeren, young pioneers are organizing local pilgrimage weeks. Marijke (39), a mother of three, is involved in the ‘Kinderen op Pad’ initiatives, in which primary schools go on short walks incorporating stories, games and reflection. What once began as a single Master Opportunity in Maastricht has now become a vibrant movement, supported by hundreds of people who strengthen one another.



“The Passion is an annual Dutch musical-biblical event that tells the story of Jesus’s Passion in a contemporary way and is broadcast live every year on Maundy Thursday by KRO-NCRV. How wonderful it would be if we could organize something like that in Maastricht too. I can already picture Huub Stapel, André Rieu, Beppie Kraft and Vincent Kusters taking to the stage.”
(Stakeholder response)

BROADENING – Horizontal integration

The community is strengthened by opening up to other sectors. Consider collaboration with local businesses, accommodation providers and the hospitality sector, but also the arts and culture sector that include art projects, music and poetry in the city and along pilgrimage routes beyond. There is a focus on sustainability and even the vitality of nature along the routes. Notable are the stories about social cohesion and well-being where the central theme is ‘Pilgrimage as a remedy for loneliness or stress’. The reported, increasing spiritual poverty from 2025 is visibly diminishing. The community is becoming more relevant in several areas with each passing year and therefore increases its social impact, including in the field of positive health

Sometime in 2032

In his speech at the close of the 2032 Pilgrimage of Relics, the organization’s chair highlights the broad impact of the pilgrimage project: “What began in 2025 as a spiritual journey has now become a social, cultural and even economic fabric. We see how tourism is changing sustainably, how art is flourishing, how people are finding one another. The pilgrim is not just someone who walks, but a bridge-builder. I once thought that pilgrimage was an inward journey, but now I know: it is also a journey towards one another. Maastricht is not a destination, it is a crossroads. We are all on the move, together.”

Applause echoes beneath the arches of the old Basilica of Saint Servatius.



“Through this Master Opportunity, museum infrastructure can connect much more closely with the city and create a richer experience. Let us create a living city and a living museum.” (Stakeholder response)



NOS News, August 3, 2025

A million believers attend the closing ceremony of the first World Youth Day with Pope Leo

In Rome, around a million young Catholics attended the closing Mass of World Youth Day. For Pope Leo XIV, it was the largest gathering since he took office three months ago. Pope Leo, who was greeted with loud cheers, called on the young people not to focus on material possessions and to spread their enthusiasm for the faith. “You are the sign that a different world is possible”, said the Pope, “a world of fraternity and friendship, where conflicts are not resolved with weapons, but with dialogue.” The Pope also drew attention to the various wars currently being fought. “We are with the young people of Gaza. We are with the young people of Ukraine.”

According to the Vatican, the audience present came from more than 150 different countries. They had gathered in a large field just outside Rome. Most of them had attended the evening service the night before, which was also led by Pope Leo.

Young believers hold hands during the closing Mass of World Youth Day. They spent the night in tents at the site to attend today’s closing ceremony. After a rainy and cold night, the Mass began extra early this morning due to the high temperatures expected in Rome.

Since 1985, the Roman Catholic Church has held World Youth Days every two or three years, each time in a different major city. This year is also a Jubilee Year, dedicated to hope.

Normally, a Jubilee Year is held every 25 years, but popes regularly proclaim ‘extra’ Holy Years. This Jubilee Year was proclaimed ten years ago by the then Pope Francis. The next World Youth Day will be held in Seoul in 2027.



“Perhaps we could introduce a modern indulgence within the framework of ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’. Not as in the Middle Ages, but it could take on a contemporary, symbolic and spiritual interpretation that ties in with the works of mercy.” (Stakeholder response)





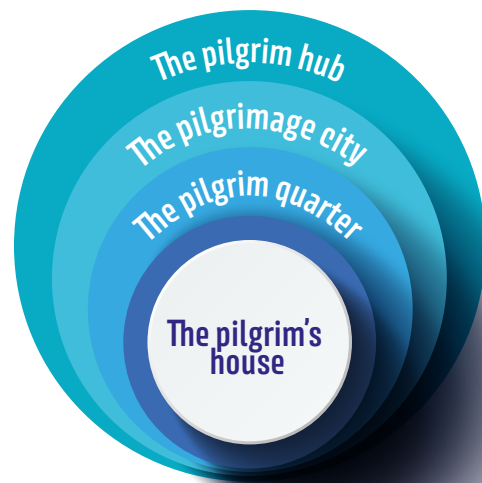
7. Structure based on a layered model

“Peregrinus est homo qui est in hoc mundo tamquam in alieno.”

“A pilgrim is a man who is in this world as if in a foreign land.”

(Source: Anselm of Canterbury, around 1100)

Based on discussions with stakeholders, we have arrived at a logical layered structure that aligns with the development and expansion of the concept ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’.



The pilgrim house

At its heart lies ‘The Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius’, which serves as a pilgrim house. Its doors are always open and stakeholders, members, pilgrims, guides and volunteers meet there to ensure the community grows further. Parties relevant to contributing to the mission and vision of the ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ concept are invited to establish their offices here. The concept is elaborated further in the next chapter.

The pilgrim quarter

It is a logical next step to develop the immediate surroundings into a themed pilgrims’ quarter. At its heart, this would include Henric van Veldekeplein with the ‘Palace of the Grand Provost’, the Basilica of Saint Servatius, the Sint Janskerk and the surrounding buildings. In the long term, there may be opportunities around the grounds of the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen) and the Maastricht University area at Minderbroedersberg 4. Within the pilgrim quarter, a clear link must be established with the Basilica of Our Lady. Together with the Basilica of Saint Servatius, these are the key pillars of the whole. Physical markers and information points could be included within the pilgrim quarter that may possibly be supported by a digital tool: The Maastricht or, in due course, Euregional pilgrim app. In the pilgrim quarter, pilgrims can meet one another and others, and from there they can undertake (pilgrim) activities. To make the quarter the center of ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ pilgrim hostels should ideally also be established, for example, in the partly vacant monastery and convent buildings in or around Veldekeplein or further towards Grote Gracht and Brusselsestraat.





“An open, peaceful space with plenty of greenery, symbolic markers, ancient texts, poems, seating areas and a route that connects religious, historical and contemporary sites of significance.”

(Stakeholder response)



One of the stakeholders cites the Center Charlemagne app and the Route Charlemagne as inspiring examples. Furthermore, or perhaps especially, for people who wish to put their smartphones aside for a while, there are interactive walks. You can get the information on paper or take a guided tour. This thematic environment will soon offer a mix of experiences but, above all, deeper meaning. It must never be, or become, ‘shallow’. Think of it as ‘a physical traffic island and meeting place in a hectic and fragmented society’ (Source: Musica Sacra). Later, it will especially be the cohesion that strengthens the pilgrim quarter as a whole.

Musica Sacra is a festival deeply entrenched in Maastricht with a national reach. The festival’s activities take place in historic churches and places of worship, sororities, fraternities and castles, theatres and cinemas, and academies and museums. Suitable venues are sought for each program. The festival provides a platform for music in which the sacred resonates: the overwhelmingly beautiful, the incomprehensibly intimate or the awe-inspiring sublime. Thanks to the broad range of musical styles, the audience can experience how the sacred manifests itself in both sacred and secular music. Furthermore, listening to different types of music can in itself have a broadening effect on musical awareness. The choice of a thematic program stems from the intention to link the spirit of the times to universal and interfaith themes concerning the way we live, whether on our own or as a community, and meaning making. This appeals to the desire of many visitors to reflect on timeless themes. In this way, Musica Sacra serves as a sanctuary and meeting place in a hectic and fragmented society.



“Use the space. Leave it in its original, undisturbed state. The Vrijthof, with its view of the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Sint Janskerk, could acquire the status of the Plaza del Obradoiro in Santiago de Compostela. However, from the Vrijthof, they see the rear of these churches. The Veldekeplein is more interesting as an endpoint, but then we must have access to the park. Perhaps this area should also be made traffic-free (the streets of Vagevuur and Sint-Servaasklooster).” (Stakeholder response)

The pilgrimage town

Maastricht, with its centuries-old pilgrimage tradition and its churches, relics and living heritage, forms the natural heart and starting point of a new pilgrimage: both an inner and outer journey, rich in religion, spirituality, culture, history and meaning making. This theme will soon become one of the new overarching identity defining aspects for Maastricht. It therefore makes sense to integrate it with city marketing, the tourism policy, the cultural policy and Maastricht’s religious communities. Business people are also being challenged to capitalize on the theme. Consider, for example, a pilgrim classification for hotels and restaurants where they, in turn, voluntarily donate a portion of the charge towards the preservation of the city’s religious heritage. There are themed walking and cycling routes to and from other locations in Limburg and the Euregio. In consultation with the municipality of Maastricht, a network of physical markers is being rolled out at relevant locations in the city. There is scope for walking events, silent weekends, pilgrimage days and themed exhibitions.

On a pilgrimage by train, in 2028, with a day trip from the NS Spoordeelwinkel (Rail Discount Shop)

Let yourself be carried away to the heart of Zuid-Limburg with a day trip to Maastricht by train – for a fantastic price through the NS Spoordeelwinkel. Wander through centuries-old streets, visit the impressive Basilica of Saint Servatius, discover holy relics in the Treasury and walk the serene Star of the Sea route. Whether you are religious or simply love culture or history: Maastricht offers a spiritual journey full of wonder. Book your pilgrimage day now and feed both your soul and feet!





“The worship of Mary is just as important as the pilgrimage to Saint Servatius. Mary is approachable and deeply appealing (Candle Chapel). Along the path, beautifully located on the hill, you will also find the oldest Lourdes Grotto in the Netherlands, a lovely, intimate open-air chapel, featuring flint from the region and old marble memorial stones: ex-votos. You can light a candle here too.” (Stakeholder response)

Maastricht as a pilgrimage hub

In our vision, Maastricht is not only a destination, but also a source and a gateway. A pilgrimage hub that invites visitors to travel further along a network of iconic sites in Limburg and the Euregio. Locations that are not always well-known, but which resonate deeply on the level of religion, spirituality, silence, wonder and meaning. We therefore see the city of Saint Servatius as a historical anchor and crossroads of European pilgrimage routes.



“In my view, it is not so much about Limburg as about the surrounding Heuvelland and Maasland, which also include parts of Belgian Limburg and Germany (Aachen and the surrounding area). The Catholic heritage of Zuid-Limburg is part of that of the Maasland and the Heuvelland, and can be better understood in that context. It therefore seems obvious to me to not just present ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ from Maastricht’s perspective, but also within a Euregional context.” (Stakeholder response)

Maastricht not only tells its own story, but links it to the broader Limburg pilgrimage narratives. There are too many to list and we believe this will also become a growth model. Bear in mind the rest of the province of Limburg and certainly also the connection with the Euregio.



“Start from the historical depth associated with the (pilgrim) churches and devotional objects linked to those locations and the rituals they evoke combined with the spiritual quest of the contemporary pilgrim. Dynamic devotion as the key to unlocking contemporary sites; the pure pilgrim does not exist, but is always searching and on their way.” (Stakeholder response)



8. Further elaboration of the pilgrim house

*“Just as dawn dispels the night,
so does the pilgrimage dispel the darkness of the heart.”*

(Source: Bernard of Clairvaux)

The pilgrim's house will soon have its place right in the center of Maastricht in “The Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius”. This central building is not merely an information point, but the beating heart of the pilgrimage movement in the city. The door of the pilgrim house is always open – literally and figuratively. It is the meeting place for pilgrims, guides, residents, cultural institutions, religious communities and other stakeholders. Together, they will continue to build the community around the concept of ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’.



“Perhaps it should be called the ‘House of spirits’. In any case, it is important that we appeal to the target group and preferably young people.”

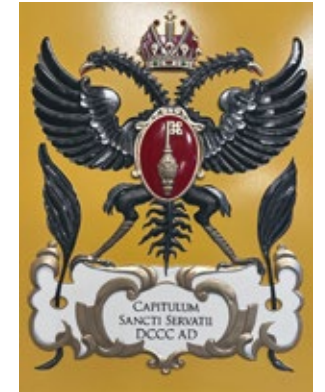
(Stakeholder response)



The pilgrim house embodies the ancient tradition of pilgrimage in a new guise. It is a place where people can meet, experience and be inspired rooted in the city of Maastricht, yet also connected to a global community of pilgrims. In our view, the pilgrim house will soon be a multifunctional space, an inspiring center where meeting, reflecting, culture and heritage come together. It fulfils various functions that reinforce one another. This can take place both in the visible part of the building and in the beautiful 250 m² basement with direct access to Henric van Veldekeplein.

A meeting place for stakeholders

The pilgrim house serves as a dynamic hub for partners, organizations and individuals who contribute to Maastricht's mission as a city of pilgrimage. Here, thinkers, doers and dreamers are invited to establish themselves, exchange ideas and work together on the development of a vision and specific projects. The house offers space for meetings, brainstorming sessions, lectures and networking events. The project manager, who is linked to the Master Opportunity in question, also has an office there.



Start and end point of the Camino Maastricht

Newly developed pilgrimage routes will begin and end at the pilgrim house. Pilgrims will be warmly welcomed here with a symbolic ritual or a simple blessing. Upon their return, the café that caters for meals at lunch time offers a welcoming space for meeting people, reflecting and recovering with simple, wholesome meals inspired by pilgrimage routes from across Europe.

Museum space: a sensory, modern museum

The pilgrim house houses a contemporary museum in which the world of the pilgrim comes to life. Through interactive exhibitions, personal stories, rituals and historical objects, visitors are immersed in the religious, spiritual and cultural dimensions of pilgrimage, past and present.

Guide Center

City guides set off from the pilgrim house for guided tours of Maastricht for pilgrims. The pilgrim house serves as both a departure point and a meeting place where pilgrims and other interested visitors can obtain background information about the city as a historic pilgrimage site.



*"Problem = Loneliness and Solution = new spirituality."
(Stakeholder response)*

Volunteer portal

The pilgrim house in Maastricht has a physical and digital volunteer room that serves as a hub for the recruitment, coordination and support of volunteers. From this location, both on-site and online, volunteers from all over the world are involved in a wide range of projects at the intersection of religion, spirituality and culture. Volunteers are deployed for pilgrimages, cultural events, spiritual retreats and educational programs, as well as for the maintenance of church buildings, including cleaning and minor repair work.



"In this new digital age, the world has become a small community. Perhaps it is less about managing the physical environment and more about fostering genuine connections across the globe." (Stakeholder response)

Archive

The pilgrim house also manages a growing archive of documents, stories, maps and artefacts that record the history and development of pilgrimage in Maastricht and the surrounding area. The archive is accessible to pilgrims, researchers, students and other interested parties. This archive can also be accessed digitally, for example, via the Stichting Katholiek Erfgoed. Also consider the Bibliothèque nationale de France where most of the surviving charters of The Chapter of Saint Servatius are preserved.





On a sunny morning in Maastricht at the Vrijthof, two young people stand out in striking jackets emblazoned with the words 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'. They immediately catch the eye of passersby. Tom, an energetic student from Heerlen, raises his hand to a couple of tourists looking around somewhat lost. "Welcome to Maastricht! Looking for the pilgrim house? Walk down this street and you will see the flags at the pilgrim house." The visitors thank him enthusiastically. Meanwhile, Ana, an international volunteer from Sweden, bends down calmly a little further on. Using a litter picker, she picks up a cigarette butt that was wedged between the paving stones. She does it almost without thinking but while concentrating fully. A few cigarette butts quickly disappear into the trash bag she carries on her hip. A woman with a rucksack – clearly a pilgrim – pauses for a moment and looks at her admiringly. "Thank you. It is nice to see someone also looking after the city," she says in English. Ana smiles warmly and replies: "Every little action counts. We are all just passing through – so let's leave the place better than we found it." Milan, who hears this, nods in agreement. "That is what being a pilgrim is all about these days, isn't it? Not just walking, but also contributing." The woman nods, clearly moved, and continues on her way. Milan and Ana exchange a quick glance and a smile. It may be a small contribution they are making, but in this place, at this moment, it feels significant. Each in their own way therefore show pilgrims and visitors the way – not just to the city center, but also to the heart of what hospitality and care mean.



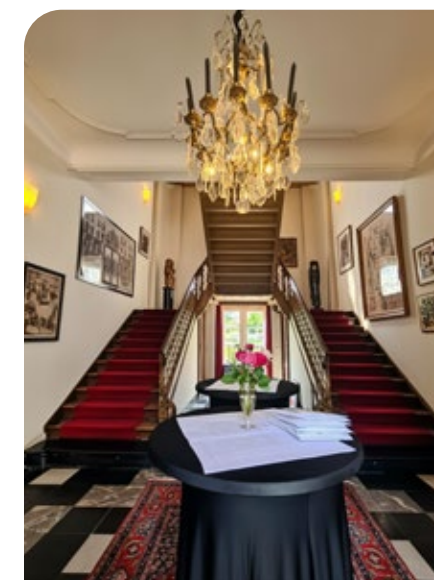
Musica Capitulum Sancti Servatii

Inspired by the missionary spirit of Servatius, Musica Capitulum Sancti Servatii has been organizing both chamber music concerts and larger musical productions and masterclasses in the 'Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius' since 2025. The music transcends cultural divides and builds bridges between people, traditions and languages. The concerts and other musical activities organized in this spirit reflect Maastricht's rich religious, spiritual and cultural past and the role that The Chapter of Saint Servatius has played over the centuries as a patron and benefactor of the arts and culture. For larger productions, we work in partnership with Vincent Kusters (<https://www.vincent-kusters.com/>) and the J.M. Vogl Stichting for the art of singing zangkunst (<https://www.voordezangkunst.nl/>).

Several stakeholders have indicated that the redevelopment of Henric van Veldekeplein should be given priority, as should the reopening of the Bergportaal of the Basilica of Saint Servatius. This square has the potential to become the pilgrim quarter of the city of Maastricht.



"If I may dream, there will soon be a lift on the grounds of the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen) that leads to the Keizerzaal. It is a shame that this is not accessible to those interested."
(Stakeholder response)



9. Conclusions and recommendations

***“Relics are silent preachers;
they do what words cannot.”***

(Source: Huizinga, *Autumntide of the Middle Ages (Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen)*)

This chapter summarizes the key conclusions and recommendations arising from discussions with stakeholders and the appendixes studied.

One of the stakeholders put it aptly: “This Master Opportunity has a 100% chance of success, provided the stakeholders collectively choose to support it and actively rally behind it.” We wholeheartedly endorse this statement.

The proportion of the population in the Netherlands that identifies with a religious denomination or philosophical group has stabilized. At the same time, interest in faith and religion is growing worldwide. The younger generation in particular showing increasing interest in faith, spirituality and meaning making.



The starting point must be: fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church. This ensures respectful interaction. Let us exclude no one on the basis of their background, faith, race or gender, provided that everyone shows a high degree of respect for the Catholic faith and the Church. So, for example, no parties or similar events in a consecrated church.” (Stakeholder response)

As a city, Maastricht offers an excellent medium for the proposed positioning. It fits seamlessly with the city’s identity and chosen branding: not competitive, but rather complementary.

The proposed values give the theme of pilgrimage a deeper meaning and create opportunities to further enhance the Maastricht brand. Maastricht Marketing sees clear opportunities to reach the defined target groups, which align perfectly with, for example, Inzichtzoeker in the Leefstijlvinder model.





Existing initiatives such as the pilgrim hotel in Maastricht, can easily be integrated into this perspective. Previously suggested concepts (see the appendix) relating to the Basilica of Saint Servatius also fit in well with this.



“Based on the principles of walking and silence: leave no trace, stay on a small scale, carry little luggage and make few demands. Share philosophical experiences online.” (Stakeholder response)

What is particularly striking is the high level of commitment, enthusiasm and shared values among the stakeholders. For the implementation of the Master Opportunity ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’, it is therefore essential that ‘the path’ remains aligned with these shared values and objectives..

Commitment and co-creation

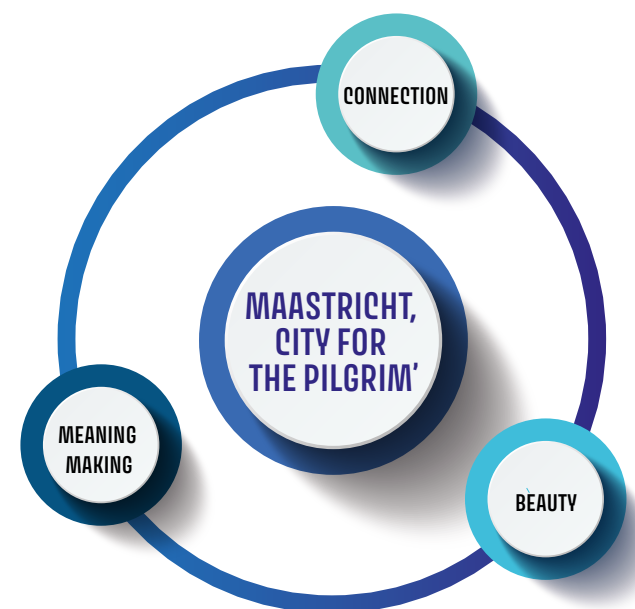
The discussions show that there is not only interest, but also a genuine willingness to invest; in terms of time, energy and conviction. The Master Opportunity offers direction, but the people and organizations that commit to it give it life and soul.



“Keep the final plan under wraps for a while until there is consensus. View it as a Master Opportunity on the way to becoming a Master Plan. Give it time. Emerge in full force in 2026.” (Stakeholder response)

To embed this commitment, a solid shared foundation is crucial. Commitment is the key word here. We recommend bringing key stakeholders together early on and repeatedly – both physically and substantively – and not only introducing them to this Master Opportunity, but above all aligning them on the shared values, the promising outlook, the core message and the power of the seven themes: **propagating, uniting, enriching, connecting, charming, growing and broadening.**

True commitment only arises when people identify with a shared goal and help shape that goal. That is why we recommend establishing a widely supported mission, vision and core values through co-creation. This fosters collective ownership and intrinsic motivation.



Mission

We endorse the conclusions and recommendations from the Master Opportunity, ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’. Together, we are building a vibrant community at the nexus of culture, spirituality and faith. A community that connects people with one another, with their surroundings and with themselves, and therefore contributes to a meaningful and resilient movement.

Vision

In 2032, Maastricht will celebrate the 57th Pilgrimage of Relics. By then, inspired by the bridge builders theme of 2025, the city will have grown into more than just a pilgrimage city: an internationally recognized hub for reflection, Attaining depth and connection. A place where past, present and future meet in stories, rituals and community spirit. A 'City for the Pilgrim' – in the broadest sense of the word.

Core values

1. Connection
2. Meaning making
3. Beauty
4. Devotion
5. Authenticity



Authentic and future-focused

For Maastricht, this project could add a new dimension to the city's identity. While the focus of tourism is often on quantity, stakeholders are strongly advocating for quality. This is a direction that better aligns with the character and capacity of the city. It is a direction that holds value for both residents and visitors to the city.



“Churches and church towers are landmarks in the Limburg landscape; church squares are, or were, truly the ‘center’. For Maastricht, they remain the nation’s architectural masterpieces.” (Stakeholder response)

Authenticity forms the foundation of this. Every initiative under the umbrella of 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' must be firmly rooted in the city's religious traditions. This ensures that visitors gain not only a cultural but also a spiritual experience.



“Authenticity must be the starting point. Modernization can serve to enhance the experience (for example, digital tools or experience routes), but modernization also means broadening the pilgrimage to include reflection and accessible spirituality for everyone, regardless of faith, tradition or country. This is how you boost the original story rooted in Christianity.” (Stakeholder response)

Modernization can and must support the experience, for example, through digital tools or experience routes but always within the context of the original message. Broadening the concept of pilgrimage to include reflection and accessible spirituality for everyone, regardless of faith or background, strengthens this foundation.

The challenge lies in finding the right balance between tradition and innovation: a perspective that cherishes historical value, yet responds to contemporary needs. In doing so, the sacred and solemn atmosphere of religious heritage always takes precedence.

Connecting and strengthening

The concept must be connective and contribute to a sense of community, accessibility and quality of life. It should bring residents, volunteers, pilgrims and visitors closer together without causing conflict.

Education plays a key role in this. Guided tours, exhibitions and programs can raise awareness among residents, of course including many young people and visitors, of Maastricht's rich religious and historical traditions.



“It would be wonderful if the Noodkist (Servatius Shrine) were freely accessible to the public. It is understandable that a different approach must be taken for this, including in relation to the revenue and costs, but there lies a great opportunity.” (Stakeholder response)





Stakeholders emphasize that collaboration with local and regional partners who endorse the Master Opportunity's principles is essential.

Silence, experience and payback

The vision must facilitate moments of silence, reflection and peace. Physical spaces where people can reflect even in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the city. Opening up monastery and convent gardens, meditation rooms, prayerful processions or silent walks are examples that deepen the experience and make spirituality tangible.



“Make room for the experience: quiet places, pilgrims’ stories, symbolism along the route. Do not just share facts, but also appeal to emotions and meaning making. You can do this, for example, by opening up monastic and convent life and a monastery or convent garden to the public and making them fully accessible. An example is having a Sunday brunch after Mass together with the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo. A day in the life of..., locations where you can meditate, silent walks, nature rituals, etc. Experiencing nature can be an accessible form of pilgrimage, which ties in with mindfulness, mindful walking, ecology or inner peace.”
(Stakeholder response)

Economic viability is important, but must never compromise the religious essence. Activities that generate income must be carefully weighed against the spiritual core.

Seizing the momentum

Now is the time to join forces. In the coming years, more church buildings will close their doors. This Master Opportunity offers the chance to shape repurposing and repositioning in a coordinated manner so that Maastricht's religious heritage, both tangible and intangible, continues to exist as a unifying factor.



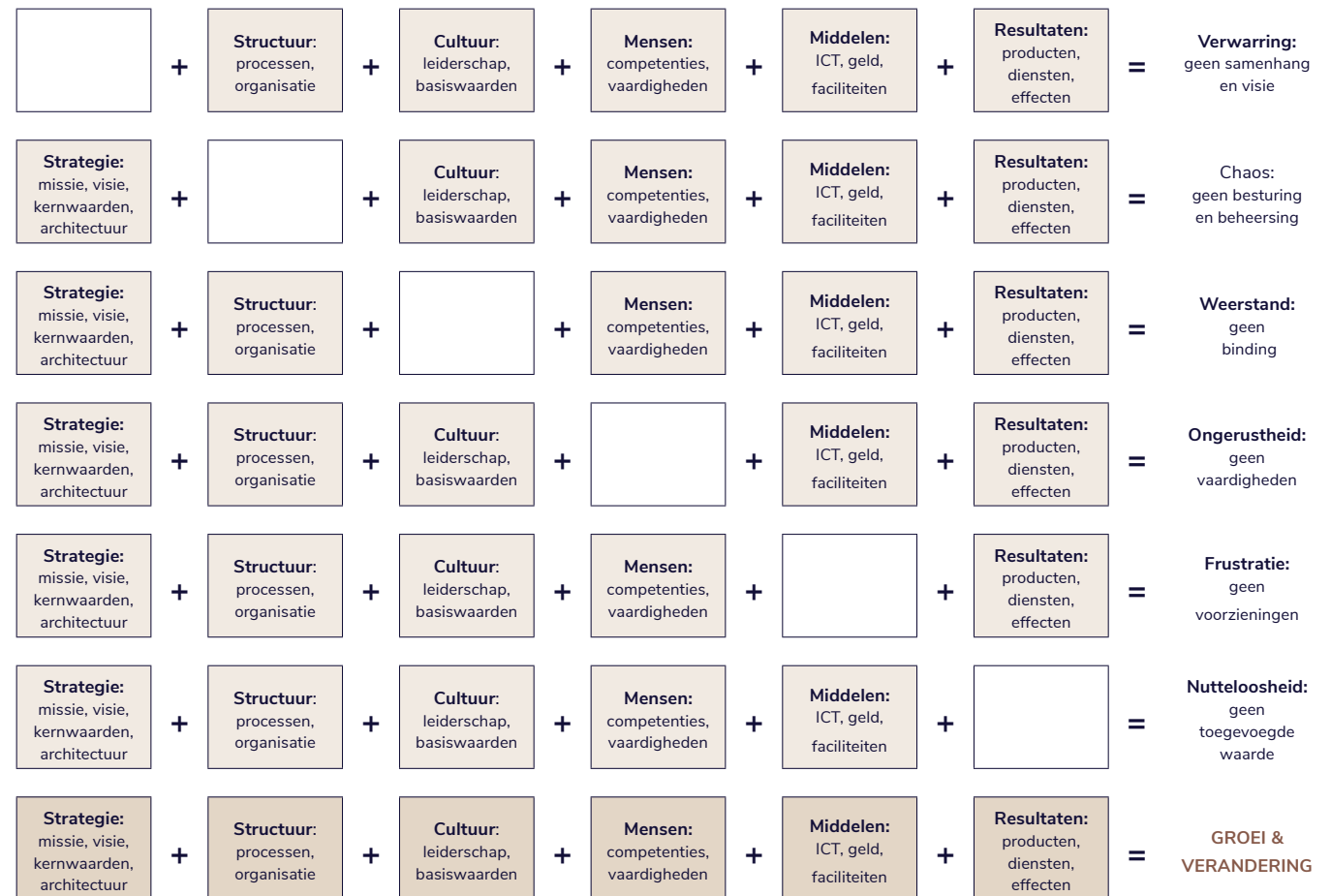
Stakeholders see it as their shared task to once again make this heritage visible and experienceable for visitors and residents alike. Only by joining forces can Maastricht continue to profile itself as the 'City for the Pilgrim': a spiritual, cultural and historical beacon that inspires and connects.

10. Impetus by the implementation organization

*“The pilgrim was in no hurry: his journey was a prayer,
his destination a promise.”*

(Source: Régine Pernoud, Lumière du Moyen Âge)

A sound implementing organization embodies all the characteristics of constant growth and change. There is a strong focus on developing a long-term strategy, implementing an orderly structure, having a positive culture, deploying the best people and appropriate resources, and, ultimately, making every effort to achieve the desired results. The model by Knoster illustrates these insights, accompanied by the results.



In this chapter, we test what has been written in the previous chapters and supplement it with proposals for achieving an organization of sustained growth and change.





Strategy

A vibrant implementing organization has a clear mission and vision, core values, guest promises (that is: pilgrim promises) and a clear strategy that is recognizable to everyone who contributes to it. If these are lacking, confusion arises and there is a lack of coherence in the implementation. If an implementing organization wishes to continue to grow and change, this is therefore the minimum required foundation.

This Master Opportunity presents various ideas. It is important that, if a steering group is established, there is consensus on this among the key stakeholders.



“The outlined vision has a 100% chance of success, but do we, as joint stakeholders, dare to choose it?” (Stakeholder response)

For inspiration: Let's build a cathedral together

Years ago, Daan Quakernaat (professional speaker/motivational speaker) stood gazing up at Reims Cathedral. How on earth did they manage to erect this phenomenal structure in the Middle Ages? The people of the Middle Ages had nothing, yet they could do anything. What about us, in our time? We only get started once we have eliminated all risks in advance. We are preoccupied with forms, lists, procedures and permits. All too often, we get bogged down in reasons not to do it, not to get started.

Cathedrals symbolize a zest for life, courage, creativity, innovation, craftsmanship, love, inspiration and much more. Daan Quakernaat carried out a thorough study of the cathedral builders, their legacy, their motivations and their working methods.

The key of his argument is this: if you want to get something off the ground, you simply have to trust like-minded people and start building together.



Structure

This includes the tasks, competences and responsibilities of everyone involved in the Master Opportunity. If there is no structure within an implementing organization, there can be no control or management. Everything then happens on an ad hoc and chaotic basis.

This Master Opportunity also provides a starting point for this. Ultimately, however, it is the sum of many organizations, each with their own mission and vision. The implementing organization acts as a connector. It might be an idea to set up a foundation or cooperative around the theme with the structure clearly defined from the outset.

Cultuur

This aspect concerns respect, trust, appreciation, cooperation and engaging all partners involved in the implementation. If no attention is paid to these aspects, we see resistance and a lack of cohesion. Growth and change will then stagnate.

We recommend forming a team right from the start comprising of intrinsically committed stakeholders who embark on this journey together and also seek guidance on this aspect. As the saying goes: 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast.' If a group of stakeholders genuinely believes in this Master Opportunity and trusts one another, the rest will follow naturally.



“Key conditions for the success of this project are clear agreements and expectations to and fro, regular consultation, collaboration on specific aspects and working according to pre-determined principles. Shared ownership sounds good, but, in practice, someone will have to take the lead. In my view, this should be a legal entity that manages and (largely) finances the ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’ project, that establishes the formula in consultation and holds the rights to the name, and which can issue (free) licenses (and revoke them if necessary) to anyone wishing to participate under that name. The project will not succeed if we are too stingy with each other, work against one another, fail to engage in transparent and honest cooperation, constantly seek to take the credit or deviate from the formula.” (Stakeholder response)

People

Here, a dynamic implementing organization always makes the difference. The right people with the right attitude and the necessary skills.

To ensure the implementation of the Master Opportunity is robust and widely supported, we recommend setting up a dynamic organization comprising, for example, three central components:

- Steering group
- Project manager
- Thematic working groups



STEERING GROUP

We recommend starting with a quartermaster who will assemble the steering group. The steering group should be made up of the stakeholders (key ones or otherwise) and would form the strategic heart of the organization. This steering group would safeguard the mission, vision and core values and ensure all activities remain aligned with these. Tasks and responsibilities:

- Sets out the broad outlines, priorities and frameworks.
- Assesses progress against the mission and vision.
- Encourages broad involvement from an increasing number of social partners.
- Connects the project with administrative and external networks (local, national and international).
- Acts as the link between church and state.
- Evaluates the overall impact of the movement.

COMPOSITION:

- Representatives of religious, spiritual, cultural and social organizations.
- Municipality of Maastricht/Visit Maastricht.
- External experts in the fields of religion, spirituality, culture, tourism and pilgrimage.
- A number of citizens/business people who are supported in the city.

The steering group meets periodically (for example, once a quarter) and acts as a sounding board and guiding body for the project manager and working groups.



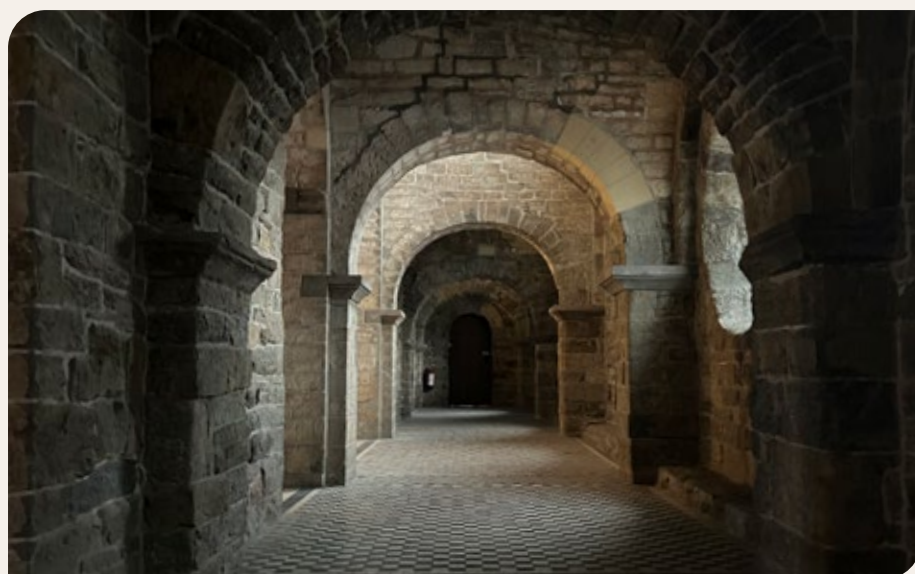


PROJECT MANAGER

The project manager is the day-to-day driving force behind the organization. This person is responsible for coordinating implementation, linking initiatives and driving new developments. Tasks and responsibilities:

- Connects the working groups with each other and with the steering group.
- Monitors progress, quality and coherence.
- Guarantees clear communication and reporting.
- Identifies opportunities, threats and bottlenecks.
- Encourages innovation and co-creation within and outside the organization.

The project manager is visible in the city and region, approachable to stakeholders and acts as the linchpin between policy and practice.



WORKING GROUPS

Logical working groups will be formed around, for example, the seven themes from this Master Opportunity (propagating, uniting, enriching, connecting, charming, growing and broadening). The steering group may decide on a different logical structure.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop and implement projects within their theme.
- Collaborate with residents, institutions, business people and visitors.
- Identify new initiatives and needs in the city.
- Reflect on social impact and make adjustments where necessary, following consultation with the core group.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORKING GROUPS:

- Multidisciplinary: people from the worlds of religion, spirituality, culture, heritage, meaning making, education, tourism, etc.
- Open structure: room for new participants.
- Flexible: focused on experimentation, innovation and growth.
- Ownership: working groups determine their own actions within the strategic framework.
- Working groups work closely with the project manager and report regularly on their progress and impact.

This organization does not operate according to a traditional hierarchical top-down structure, but primarily as a dynamic network organization. Trust, collaboration and shared ambition form the basis. The steering group sets the strategic direction and safeguards the core values. The project manager acts as a bridge builder and catalyst. The working groups bring it all to life: they give substance to the described vision through the energy and ideas they contribute. Regular meetings, peer supervision and inspiration sessions ensure continuous momentum and input. They encourage knowledge sharing between the groups, reflection and take the time to celebrate successes.

Resources

Examples include the right facilities and sufficient funding. Also consider energy and willpower. Are the right priorities being set? Without the right resources, there can be no effective implementation.

We are convinced that if the stakeholders (key ones or otherwise) embrace this Master Opportunity, the resources will be available to take on its implementation.

From the Euregional Strategy 2030 for the Future (Euregio Meuse-Rhine)

It is very important to showcase the richness and diversity of the Euregional cultural and creative landscape to the residents and visitors to the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, but also to the international cultural scene, the economy and tourism. Cultural events must be organized and made accessible beyond borders in order to regard the Euregio as a living space full of passion and enrichment, to strengthen the sense of belonging within the Euregio, to position and open up the Euregio's cultural sector internationally, particularly for tourism, and to recognize that this sector creates local employment.

Sustainable cultural tourism is an essential component of regional and macroregional development strategies. In this regard, culture is both a driving force and a facilitator of sustainable development. Sustainable cultural tourism offers a new perspective since cultural heritage and local communities are central to decision-making processes. Involving local communities and other stakeholders in decision-making is essential to ensure the results benefit both cultural heritage and the local population. The aim of sustainable cultural tourism is to ensure good preservation practices combined with an authentic interpretation that supports the local economy.

Stakeholders have, however, indicated that applying for grants must not lead to delays.



Results

In organizations, the focus area of results often concerns the (financial) return on activities. In this case, however, it may well concern entirely different matters. Consider the seven themes identified in the Promising prospect for 2032. From the church's perspective, it may concern evangelism. From the local authority's perspective, it may concern the contribution to quality of life in the local area.

The organization's starting point: from thinking to doing

A vital implementing organization therefore always starts with a mission and vision. Only then do the partners know what they are working towards and can they see whether they are successful in achieving the results. A strong vision and clear mission form the foundation of every ambition. They provide direction, inspire and outline a vision of the future towards which stakeholders wish to work towards together. However, without specific steps, that future remains an idea on paper. After thinking comes doing. That is where the implementation agenda comes into play.

An implementation agenda translates abstract ambitions into achievable actions with clear responsibilities, timelines and measurable results. It is the compass that ensures that not only is it known where all stakeholders want to go together, but also how they will actually get there.

From the discussions with stakeholders and the follow-up steps based on these, the following action points have already emerged.



1. STAKEHOLDERS

Determine which stakeholders (key ones or otherwise) will be involved in the implementation and appoint a quartermaster.

2. BUILD COMMITMENT

Organize a kick-off meeting with these stakeholders (key ones or otherwise). Consider taking this group to Santiago de Compostela, for example, to gather ideas on what you would and would not like to see in Maastricht. After all, setting out together fosters a sense of connection.

3. MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

Establish these during the kick-off meeting.

4. STEERING GROUP

After the kick-off meeting, determine which stakeholders (key ones or otherwise) should logically be represented on this committee.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

During the first meeting with the steering group, decide on the organizational structure. The core of the community could potentially be formed by a foundation or a cooperative.

6. PROJECT MANAGER

During the first meeting with the steering group, determine whether it is advisable to appoint a chairperson and whether this is financially feasible. If applicable, draw up a job profile and begin the recruitment and selection process.

7. WORKING GROUPS

During the kick-off meeting and/or the first meeting with the steering group, decide which working groups will be formed. Interim assessments after the first year are important in this regard.

8. BUSINESS MODEL

Develop the foundations of a business model for the first year, incorporating insights into the value proposition, target groups, channels, relationship management, revenue streams, core activities, resources, strategic partners and cost structure.

9. START-UP GRANT

Engage in discussions with the municipality of Maastricht, the Province of Limburg and LIOF to explore the possibilities of qualifying for a start-up grant.

10. PILGRIM HOUSE

As stakeholders, express your commitment to this idea. Consider which organizations might soon be able to maintain a physical office in 'The Palace of the Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius'. Initiate discussions with them on the basis of the Master Opportunity in front of you.

11 PHASING

Aachen and Cologne were not built in a day. To ensure the development of Maastricht as a significant pilgrimage city is accomplished in a structured manner, phasing is required.

STAGE 0

PREPARATION

Period: up to and including November 2025.

Key activities:

- Mapping the context and relevant networks.
- Conducting a stakeholder analysis to identify the parties involved and their interests.
- Drafting the Master Opportunity with starting points, opportunities and preconditions.
- Coordinating with relevant partners to build support for the next steps.
- Delivering and presenting the Master Opportunity concept.
- GO/NO GO.
- Appointing a quartermaster.

STAGE 1

DEFINE THE MASTER PLAN (BASED ON THE MASTER OPPORTUNITY)

Period: December 2025.

Key activities:

- Formal adoption of the Master Plan as a common basis for all parties.
- Establishing a core identity and substantive structure.
- Definition of a provisional mission and vision including core values and the deeper significance of Maastricht as a pilgrimage city. Also consider the division of the Master Plan into main themes:
 1. Pilgrim house.
 2. Pilgrim's quarter.
 3. Maastricht as a pilgrimage city.
 4. Maastricht as a pilgrimage hub.
- Formal endorsement by the partners involved.

STAGE 2

ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION FOR ACTION

Period: spring 2026.

Key activities:

- Establishing the implementation structure and filling the necessary roles.
- Preparing specific actions and projects.
- Establishment of a legal entity to implement the Master Plan.
- Formation of a steering group and various working groups for each theme.
- Appointing a project manager as the central point of contact.
- Organizing brainstorming sessions to translate ideas from the Master Plan into actionable steps

STAGE 3

IMPLEMENTATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Period: from March 2026

Key activities:

- Commencement of the implementation of key projects.
- Ongoing monitoring and improvement, for example via a PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.
- Further development of the pilgrim house – implementation is primarily the responsibility of the property owner, provided there is sufficient commitment from the stakeholders.
- Launch of the annual Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle with the project manager, working groups and steering group.
- Incorporating regular evaluation points to ensure progress and quality.





An inspiring example elsewhere

The British Pilgrimage Trust is dedicated to modernizing the centuries-old practice of pilgrimage. It aims to connect people of all faiths and those without faith with the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Great Britain. From cathedrals, ancient trees, river sources, holy springs, and standing stones, everyone is invited to embark on a personal journey that promotes holistic wellbeing by following in the footsteps of the country's ancestors.

"A pilgrimage heals our mind, body and soul and connects us with places, communities, history and landscapes, enriching our lives through the feelings they evoke. People can bring their own beliefs and undertake their journey for personal reasons."

Since our foundation was established in 2014, we have seen and heard how this ancient rite offers powerful solutions to the challenges of modern life, by promoting personal growth and mental wellbeing through a deeper connection with nature and our heritage.

www.britishpilgrimage.org/



11. Possible follow-up actions and ideas

“The pilgrim is a bridge between heaven and humanity.”

(Source: Jacques Le Goff, La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval)

Discussions with stakeholders reveal an unprecedented number of initiatives, ideas and connections that already exist around the theme of pilgrimage. In terms of implementation, the task will therefore partly involve taking stock, prioritizing and connecting. It is too much to tackle everything at once.

Impact analysis

To maintain direction and make good use of the available energy, we recommend conducting an impact analysis. This will help the steering group and working groups to make choices, set priorities and stay focused, without losing sight of the bigger picture. We have placed this advice at the beginning of this chapter because the sheer number of ideas mentioned is overwhelming. Just taking them all in makes it overwhelming.

High impact	2	1
Low impact	3	4
	Difficult	Easy

- 1. These are the ideas offering the best combination of impact and ease. The focus here is on implementation.
- 2. It is important to explore these ideas. If the level of difficulty decreases later on, they may still be implemented in the long run.
- 3. It is illogical to include ideas for bottlenecks in an implementation program that have a very low impact and/or are difficult to implement.
- 4. During implementation, we will assess whether these ideas can be directly translated into tangible results. No implementation plan is required for this.



“Young people, in particular, with more and more free time, who have gone too far with individualization, who are in contact with the rest of the world via their mobile phones, creating more and more work for psychologists, need to return to doing things together, working together, resolving conflicts, making meaning, and going on pilgrimages. The search for oneself is a search for one’s origins. Where you come from largely determines who you are.”
(Stakeholder response)

Analysis of what is on offer

Identify and analyze what is on offer from a religious, spiritual and cultural perspective in Maastricht and the Euregio that fit the theme of pilgrimage. Link this to the Future Exploration of Places of Worship in Maastricht and previous studies on contemplative tourism. See also the list of some lesser-known churches in the appendix entitled Local Council of Churches of Maastricht. Enlist students to carry out this research. This is also a way for young people to become acquainted with this theme.

Analysis of questions

Gain insight into the types and numbers of pilgrims who visit Maastricht each year. Enlist students for this too. Conduct both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative aspect can be measured annually. The qualitative research is valuable for gathering motivations and stories to be used in the collective narrative.



“Getting to know new people is a very important part of pilgrimage. Can we create conditions to bring people into contact with one another? Experiencing silence together, meditating together, walking together, eating together, etc.”
(Stakeholder response)





Future Exploration of Places of Worship in Maastricht

Work towards a pooling of resources and a coordinated approach regarding (to be repurposed) church buildings and properties, and, through the steering group, align with the next steps following the future exploration. In addition to a city archaeologist, a ‘municipal custodian’ could be appointed to formulate the specific policy in this area. Stakeholders cite the Koepelkerk as an excellent building in which to launch a pilot project on repurposing.



“It is a Master Opportunity to turn the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Basilica of Our Lady into co-cathedrals. Naturally, this is a matter for the Diocese of Roermond.” (Stakeholder response)

Build a compelling pilgrimage narrative

- Develop a central website as a digital platform for routes, stories and events.
- Integrate an interactive map with highlights and QR codes.
- Use social media actively with short stories, images and events.
- Hashtags such as #PilgrimInMaastricht promote recognition.
- Collect and publish stories from pilgrims, residents, guides and priests. In text, images and audio.
- Encourage propagating through the media and schools.
- Develop engaging content: documentaries, vlogs, podcasts and blogs that capture pilgrims’ experiences.
- Design souvenirs that reinforce the story (for example, stamp cards, candles or quotes on cards).
- Opt for a poetic, accessible visual language in all communications: logo, corporate identity and slogans.



“The Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (The conservation institute of Limburg) has also previously identified the issue of church inventories that need to be accommodated, whether temporarily or permanently, when churches close. For example, in a church that has been deconsecrated and/or in a viewing repository.” (Stakeholder response)

Make pilgrimage an experience in the city

- Develop sensory trails incorporating light, sound, scent and poetry, such as A ‘Path of Silence’, ‘Route of Hope’, prayer trails or augmented reality trails.
- Create spaces of tranquility and symbolism in the city: pilgrim benches, candle corners, quiet spots and viewpoints.
- Organize events such as pilgrim evenings, exhibitions, lectures and festivals where old and new spirituality come together.
- Design a contemporary pilgrimage route between Maastricht, Aachen and Liège featuring stamps, stories and symbolism.
- Show the Servatius Play in the open air (Pandhof) in summer and in a theatre (Cellebroederskapel or Bonbonnière) in winter, combined with an introductory film about ‘Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim’.
- Let visitors be pilgrims for a day through mini-pilgrimages.

Pilgrimage as a path of learning and meaning making

- Develop educational programs for schools, young people, parishes and adults (for example, retreats, silent walks and theological cafés).
- Design themed pilgrimage routes with reflection exercises, historical context and questions along the way.
- Link the theme of pilgrimage to social issues such as sustainability and the grieving process.
- Establish a 'Pilgrimage Academy': a knowledge center offering symposia, study days and interdisciplinary exchange.
- Make learning methods tangible through teaching boxes, podcasts or digital tools.



"What about a pass, a pilgrim's passport and a joint admission ticket for the various churches? This should certainly include Sint-Matthiaskerk (Saint Matthew's Church), whose fine furnishings and church treasures remain largely inaccessible. Consider, for example, a museum style exhibition within the Matthijkskerk, partly in the form of temporary exhibitions or viewing galleries." (Stakeholder response)

Connect people, sectors and initiatives

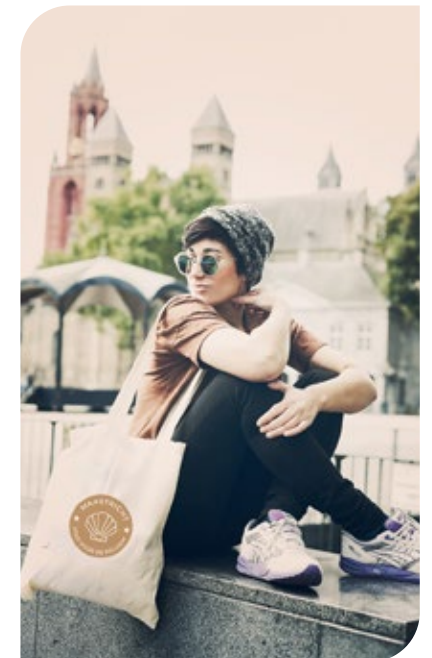
- Map out existing initiatives relating to religion, spirituality, culture and hospitality.
- Organize networking events between churches, museums, the hospitality sector, healthcare, education and tourism.
- Work on cross-sectoral projects, such as a pilgrimage with clients, a city festival or a 'pilgrimage day at school' as part of the educational program.
- Set up a digital pilgrimage hub: an online space for meeting and connecting.
- Work with ambassadors and key figures in each sector to keep the theme alive.



"In our discussion, we talked about appointing a city treasurer, analogous to the city archaeologist, whose core task would be to pass on the religious heritage (including the intangible heritage) to future generations. Given Maastricht's continuity as a pilgrimage destination since the 6th century, this would be a logical step." (Stakeholder response)

Develop Maastricht into a 'City for the Pilgrim'

- Develop a recognizable brand: logo, slogan, symbols and rituals that invite and connect.
- Introduce 'the Maastricht Pilgrim' as a unifying figure or concept (for example, via a pin, scarf and greeting).
- Connect the past and the future: relics and processions alongside new forms such as light installations and podcasts.
- Make pilgrimage an urban principle: a mindset of slowness, wonder and connectedness, visible in the streetscape and in policy.
- Use pilgrimage as an overarching narrative that connects different domains: heritage, wellbeing, tourism, education and sustainability.
- Consider the use of accessible transport in the city, aimed at pilgrims with reduced mobility, building on the existing tourist train in Maastricht.
- Consider purchasing a passe-partout (pilgrim day ticket) for entry to the Basilica of Saint Servatius, the Basilica of Our Lady and, for example, Sint-Matthiaskerk (Saint Matthew's Church).





“Internationally, much can be learnt from the approach taken by other pilgrimage destinations with significant religious museums and treasures, although in most other countries the dioceses have greater influence than they do here and the government there also provides financial support more frequently. The partnership Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kirchlicher Museen und Schatzkammern im deutschsprachigen Raum, of which the Treasury of the Basilica of Saint Servatius is a member, offers an excellent perspective beyond our borders.” (Stakeholder response)

Other sources of inspiration and ideas mentioned by stakeholders

INTERACTIVE WEB ENVIRONMENT

To mark Amsterdam’s 750th anniversary (2025), an interactive web environment was launched, providing access to the city’s religious heritage. ‘The other map of Amsterdam tells the story of all the religious communities in the city, past and present: <https://deanderekaart.amsterdam/en> www.deanderekaart.amsterdam/. In this context, consider, for example, an interactive map featuring the pilgrimage/Judeo-Christian highlights of Maastricht and the surrounding area. This could perhaps be combined with the QR code system also used for the façade stones in Maastricht. In this context, also consult the following sources: www.protestantsamsterdam.nl/hermine-pool/ and www.at5.nl/artikelen/231457/al-het-religieus-erfgoed-van-de-stad-op-de-kaart-gezet-een-gratis-openluchtmuseum.



“In Magdeburg (Saxony), where Otto the Great is buried in Magdeburg Cathedral, we can also find plenty of inspiration. You can get a good idea of what it looks like online: www.pano.erlebnisland.de/player/?pano_dir=magdeburg/dom_tvsa. Opposite this lies the beautiful Ottonianum. www.dommuseum-ottonianum.de/ You might also be interested in the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Treasury.” (Stakeholder response)

A ‘MICHELIN STAR’ FOR EXCEPTIONAL PLACES OF WORSHIP

Museum Catharijneconvent is the proud initiator of the Largest Museum in the Netherlands. As the national museum for Christian art and heritage, it works with partners to highlight the religious heritage of the Netherlands, both within and beyond the museum’s walls. Together with the churches, synagogues, temples and mosques of the Largest Museum in the Netherlands, they tell multi-voiced stories about the remarkable history, architecture and artefacts to be found in our country. From a Turkish village mosque with an enchanting interior to a Moluccan church designed by Aldo and Hannie van Eyck, and from a Buddhist temple to a Greek Orthodox church painted from top to bottom. The range of remarkable places of worship in the Netherlands is far greater than we realize. They are all actively used religious buildings that, in our opinion, deserve a ‘Michelin star’ and are well worth a visit.

Abroad, it is quite normal to visit impressive synagogues, cathedrals, centuries-old temple complexes or grand mosques. Yet, in the Netherlands, many people walk past them without really noticing them. This despite the fact that they can be found throughout the country and Dutch places of worship are breathtakingly beautiful. They house the most beautiful artefacts in magnificent settings. Together, they form the Largest Museum in the Netherlands and their doors are wide open. The hidden beauty of Dutch churches, synagogues, temples and mosques is therefore made accessible to everyone.



“The rich collection in Maastricht, much of which falls under the Dutch Heritage Act (that is, designated by the state as being of national importance, irreplaceable and indispensable), has a very diverse provenance. Silk fabrics from the Far East, the Middle East, Egypt and Byzantium, and ivory objects from Arab workshops. These objects, as well as the phenomenon of relic veneration and pilgrimage, offer opportunities to draw connections with other religions and cultures, both past and present. An inspiring example is the Dommuseum Hildesheim (Hildesheim Cathedral Museum) <https://www.dommuseum-hildesheim.de>.” (Stakeholder response)

SACRE COEUR GUEST HOUSE, PARIS

The guesthouse (formerly Ephrem House) adjoins the basilica where Jesus Christ is worshipped day and night. It welcomes everyone, individuals, families and groups alike, who come to pray, undertake a pilgrimage and wish to participate in the liturgical celebrations (Eucharist, Divine Office). Every evening, the guesthouse also welcomes those taking part in the Eucharistic adoration. The guesthouse is a Catholic establishment. The priests and Benedictine nuns of the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre (Sacred Heart of Montmartre) are on hand for prayer and spiritual guidance. The guesthouse has 170 beds (single to triple rooms and dormitories), meeting rooms and a dining room.



“Maastricht has always been a city for the pilgrim. For centuries, they were not only welcomed at the grave of Saint Servatius, but also accommodated in the Sint-Servaasgasthuis located directly next to the Basilica within the cloistered enclosure of The Chapter of Saint Servatius. From the 11th–12th centuries, this hospital provided accommodation for pilgrims from home and abroad, offering three days’ free lodging, bread, beer and pea soup. This hospitality had a deep spiritual significance: those seeking God were not only nourished spiritually, but also cared for physically. The hospital also served as a refuge for the sick and infirm and was run by a hospital master and nuns who experienced this diaconal mission based on their faith. This tradition of hospitality, linked to the religious heart of the city, is an essential part of Maastricht’s pilgrim DNA. At the site where this tradition is embedded — now largely used by the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen), the former Chapter grounds from around 800 to 1797 — this hospitable role may well be revived. This would continue a centuries-old tradition with a contemporary twist, literally a stone’s throw from the grave of Saint Servatius.” (Stakeholder response)

STICHTING PEELGRIJN

The Stichting Peelgrijn focuses on young people aged between 15 and 27. These are young people who wish to take a temporary break from their immediate surroundings. Peelgrijn offers young people educational backpacking when they feel displaced, with follow-up support in the form of education, work placements, employment, and so on. The foundation organizes trips both at home and abroad. These are individual hiking tours although a volunteer guide goes with the group. All tours are based on pilgrimage routes. The foundation works within a European partnership: <https://peelgrijn.nl>. The foundation has conducted research into the claimed pilgrimage route that Saint Servatius is said to have walked from the source of the Jeker/Geer to the confluence with the Meuse. There are plans to reactivate this pilgrimage route, which is also in keeping with Maastricht’s role as an international hub for long-distance hikes to destinations such as Canterbury, Santiago and Rome.

MONASTERY/CONVENT TRAIL

Our Monastery/Convent Trail is a 330-kilometer hiking route passing around fifty (former) monasteries/convents and abbeys in Central and East Brabant. The route can be walked in fifteen stages, ranging from 16.5 to 28 kilometers. A guidebook is available to help walkers on Our Monastery/Convent Trail. This guide connects the pilgrim with stories, images, reflections and memories of the special places along Our Monastery/Convent Trail. The book describes the stages. It is also intended to be a source of inspiration, featuring interesting facts, striking art photographs and special interviews with people who live and work in the monasteries/convents.



Our Monastery/Convent Trail offers the opportunity to discover the diversity of monastic/convent life. For although monasteries and convents share similarities, there are also significant differences. Some monasteries and convents focus strongly on contemplation and are more oriented towards silence and seclusion. Other monasteries and convents, by contrast, are very active and have always focused on work outside the monastery or convent walls. This diversity is still evident today. Some monasteries/convents welcome visitors and have close contact with the outside world. In other monasteries/convents, seclusion is the defining factor. What there is to see and experience varies depending on the one that is visited. The following applies to all





monasteries/convents: please respect the silence and the rhythm of the life in the monasteries/convents and do not enter private areas. It is possible to stay overnight at a number of monasteries/convents along the route. Artists have created fifteen designs for postcards and portable souvenirs, especially for walkers on the Ons Kloosterpad. They form fifteen tangible mementos of the places the pilgrim visits along the way. Together, the souvenirs tell the story of life at a monastery or convent in Brabant. They are on sale at or near the monastery and convent sites. The proceeds go towards the preservation of the monastic communities: www.onskloosterpad.nl/ons-kloosterpad/. Messrs. Elshout and Oostwegel, who have been named as stakeholders, are currently exploring the possibilities for Limburg.



“Maastricht is the first Christian place of worship in the Netherlands with all the associated intangible heritage of pilgrimages and processions. Our museums could align themselves even more closely with this. A fine example to draw inspiration from is the Stifftsmuseum Xanten <https://www.stiftsmuseum-xanten.de/> www.stiftsmuseum-xanten.de/, where the guiding principle is ‘Museum as a Place of Proclamation’. Another good example is the Teseum in Tongeren www.teseum.be/.” (Stakeholder response)

ARCHEO ROUTE LIMBURG

The Limburg Archaeology Trail lets you experience archaeological stories at over 100 locations. Large spears mark the sites where exciting archaeological finds were once made or where significant events took place. Using the app, you can collect unique archaeological symbols at each location, which figuratively rise from the ground at the end of the story. The Timebox puts finds in their historical context and makes the experience even more educational. On site, you step into the past via a 360-degree environment and discover how people lived in those days. You watch a short video, hear a story and discover extra details via interactive objects.



“There are towns abroad that use the addition ‘Wallfahrtsort’ (Place of Pilgrimage) or ‘Wallfahrtsstadt’ (City of Pilgrimage) in all their communications and even in their names. Examples: www.werl.de/; www.kevelaer.de/; www.wallduern.de (Wallfahrts- und Erholungsort);); visit-burystedmunds.co.uk.” (Stakeholder response)

PLACES OF HAPPINESS IN ROERDALEN

True happiness is usually found in small things. In Roerdalen, they are working under the banner of ‘Klein Geluk uit Roerdalen’ to increase that happiness. In doing so, they draw on the ten pillars of happiness.

- Dreams
- Relationships
- Openness and meaning making
- Awareness and values
- Being yourself
- Giving
- Emotions
- Physical health
- Experimenting and strength



It all began years ago, primarily in the fields of tourism and recreation. Since then, the Happiness philosophy has given rise to an increasing number of wonderful social and community initiatives and connections. Realizing that you can contribute to someone else’s happiness is central to this. People want to inspire residents and visitors with this ideal. This project is guided by Leo Bormans, ambassador for happiness and quality of life.

POSITIVE HEALTH FOR EVERYONE

Positive Health is a broader view of health that is broken down into six dimensions. With this broader approach, you contribute to people’s ability to cope with the physical, emotional and social challenges of life. It also encourages people to take as much control of their own lives as possible.

- Physical health functions
- Mental wellbeing
- Meaning making
- Quality of life
- Participation
- Day-to-day functioning

Cycle ride from the Saint Servatius Chapel to the Basilica of Saint Servatius

Under the motto 'Van Servoas nao Servoas' (From Servatius to Servatius), a cycle tour will be held on Sunday, August 18, 2024 from Saint Servatius Chapel in Nunhem to the Basilica of Saint Servatius in Maastricht. The proceeds from the tour will go towards the restoration of the chapel. The entire route from Nunhem to Maastricht and back is 125 kilometers long. There is also the option of cycling a shorter 75-kilometer route, which turns back halfway through. There are also shorter cycling routes such as ones suitable for families. The event is organized by the group 'Same fietse vää oos kepèl' (Cycling together for our chapel) in collaboration with Wielerevenementen Leudal (Leudal Cycling Events). Former cycling legends Frans Maassen and Roy Curvers, who live in the municipality of Leudal, are the ambassadors for this event.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Throughout the Netherlands, you will find community centers run by and for the local community. Here, neighbors meet, look out for one another and help each other out. The Salvation Army's community centers are places where everyone is welcome. Whether you are young or old, sick or healthy, a staff member, volunteer or visitor: you belong here. You will not be overlooked. Feel at home!

Local residents are welcome to drop in for a (free) cup of coffee, a meal and a good chat. Sometimes it is hard to find somewhere to turn to when you need help or have problems. For example, if you are feeling lonely or if you do not understand letters from the Dutch Internal Revenue Service. You are welcome at the community center in those situations too. The community centers help to bring people out of social isolation or to prevent them from ending up there.

In this context, another stakeholder mentioned the drop-in centers run by the Kansfonds. Drop-in centers are places where you do not have to do anything, but where you receive genuine attention. People meet through accessible (creative) activities, such as games, language lessons and cultural evenings. Visitors cook and eat together, making a healthy, sociable and affordable meal possible. Volunteers are on hand to provide practical help, assistance with paperwork or, for example, advice on legal matters. These are places where anyone can drop in during the day. That is incredibly valuable when no one else is looking out for you.

MAASTRICHT CRUISES

Organize your own pilgrimage cruise that also visits, for example, Roermond or Liège. Make sure it is listed on the website www.maastrichtexcursies.nl/vaararrangementen.

JOIN MAASTRICHT, CITY OF WELL-BEING

Maastricht, a resilient, healthy and vibrant city where people from within and outside the city meet as equals. A city where life and work are in balance and where there are opportunities for everyone to participate in social life. A city that dares to learn through trial and error, where successes are celebrated and disappointments are turned into improvements. www.maastricht-vitalestad.nl/onze-droom



DUTCH MOUNTAIN TRAIL

The Seven Summits, the highest mountain tops on each continent, has become a concept among mountaineers. After Zuid-Limburg having been the backdrop for the Dutch Mountain Film Festival (DMFF), the Dutch version of the Seven Summits was conceived in 2019: seven circular walks that take in the highest peaks of Zuid-Limburg.

A year later, these walks were linked together to form the Dutch Mountain Trail. You tackle seven 'summits', climbing and descending 1,500 meters, all in a stunning route that runs through the border region from Kerkrade to Maastricht. The Dutch Mountain Trail covers 101 kilometers and is divided into four stages. Expect stunning views, steep climbs, fast-flowing streams, rock faces and (Alpine) meadows. You will feel as though you are in the mountains during the toughest hiking trail in the Netherlands www.wandel.nl/routes/dutch-mountain-trail/.

Consult with the organizers and try to have the Dutch Mountain Trail finish at the Basilica of Saint Servatius (currently still Central Station).





JEZUÏETENPAD

The Jezuietenberg, near Maastricht, is a fascinating place that combines both nature and culture. Around 1880, marl extraction ceased and the Jesuits discovered the abandoned quarry. They decided to turn this into a unique location in their spare time, one where art, science and spirituality came together. Connect this site via the Jezuietenpad to the former Jesuit monastery on Tongerseweg in Maastricht and then on to the pilgrims' quarter in Maastricht: www.limburgslandschap.nl/natuurgebied/jezuietenberg. Here, a connection can also be made with the former Jesuit residence on Mergelweg: Maastricht, monument in 'De Scharck' quarry.

WALK OF WISDOM

On the path to wisdom. Switch your phone to Do Not Disturb and set off. The Walk of Wisdom aims to connect old questions of life with modern themes: the quest for authenticity and the challenge of living together with billions of people on a single planet. The choices each of us makes individually influence the whole and the whole influences each of us individually. The Walk of Wisdom was created out of a love for nature. Humans descend from nature; we are part of nature. Nature offers comfort and tranquility. Its creativity is a great source of inspiration and vitality. Out of that love, we wish to create space for reflection and to convey that people are deeply connected to one another and the world. We do this through a pilgrimage route that has the potential to span the entire globe and via a few rituals and symbols. www.walkofwisdom.org/



GREGORIAN VESPERS IN MOKUM

A moment of contemplation and meeting as the weekend approaches. In the center of Amsterdam, young monastics and conventuals, and international conservatoire students herald the start of the weekend each month with the liturgical, Gregorian-chanted services of Friday afternoon – including reflection and meditation – followed by a get-together over drinks afterwards. Intended for the general public, with a focus on students and young professionals. Others are also very welcome, such as local residents, passersby, expats and lovers of Gregorian chants.

See also the appendix containing the ideas already presented by The Chapter of Saint Servatius to the board of the Basilica of Saint Servatius.

THE JEWISH CULTURAL QUARTER IN AMSTERDAM

There is always something going on at the Jewish Cultural Quarter. Book a guided tour, attend a candlelit concert or take part in a workshop. It is a combination of a knowledge center, a library, collections and historic artefacts www.jck.nl/ Guided tours and lectures are organized as well as concerts and workshops.

THE SONG OF THE SUN PILGRIMAGE

The Song of the Sun Pilgrimage is a relay pilgrimage. Anyone who wishes to can sign up for a number of (or all) stages and walk right across the country. Each day of hiking begins with a blessing followed by a stretch of hiking in silence and concludes with a prayer. In between, all sorts of things can happen depending on what arises and what a local community is willing and able to organize. We try as much as possible to make the Canticum of the Sun and the Laudato Si' encyclical as the subject of conversation. The pilgrimage consists of several stages with a total length of approximately 400 kilometers. <https://www.franciscaansebeweging.nl/activiteiten/pelgrimstocht-het-zonneliiedpad>



CITY OF AACHEN

Included as an example of how Aachen presents itself. Charlemagne Route: "Discover Aachen in the footsteps of Charlemagne. Welcome to the Charlemagne Route. This route takes you past important sites in Aachen and tells the story of Aachen as a European city and a city of science. The route is named after Charlemagne, who established his favorite seat of power in Aachen around 800 – the center of an empire that stretched across large parts of the European continent." www.route-charlemagne.eu/



MINDERBROEDERSKLOOSTER (FRANCISCAN MONASTERY) IN MAASTRICHT

In 2025, following the retirement of Truus Roks (archivist), an exhibition was held here regarding a hitherto unknown episode in the history of Maastricht. Between 1801 and 1830, no fewer than 654 children were abandoned. Many of them died young, but some (57) went on to have descendants. The exhibition was entitled *Deze droevige offerande* (This sad offering).

DRAGERSGILDE ANTONIUS VAN PADUA

Founded in 1998, the guild from Scharn takes part in processions such as the annual city procession by carrying the 17th century statue of their patron saint, Saint Anthony of Padua. The Maastricht Saint Anthony's Guild has an exchange program with the Italian guild from Padua. In 2008 and 2015, the Maastricht Saint Anthony's Guild, together with the Arciconfraternita (archconfraternity), took part in the annual procession in honor of Saint Anthony in Padua.

ROLDUC ABBEY

A special place that can serve as a source of inspiration. Consider not only its functions as a hotel, restaurant and conference venue, but also the possibility of booking guided tours: <https://www.bcrolduc.nl/rondleidingen/>.

MAASTRICHT WANTS TO PUT TOURISTS TO WORK

In the motion 'Put tourists to work, just like in Copenhagen!', one of the political parties is asking the council to investigate how Maastricht can encourage tourists to actively contribute to sustainability and quality of life. The Danish example, CopenPay, rewards visitors who choose sustainable options such as cycling instead of driving, using public transport, plant-based meals, longer stays and helping to keep the city clean in exchange for benefits at attractions and in the hospitality sector. Ortjens wants Maastricht to develop a similar system so that residents benefit directly from the arrival of tourists and the pressure on public spaces is reduced.

BROTHERHOODS

The appendix on religious heritage in the city of Maastricht includes a section on the Brotherhood of Saint Barbara. However, there are many more brotherhoods active in and around Maastricht. Consider, for example, the Broederschap van Onze Lieve

Vrouw Sterre der Zee in Maastricht or the Broederschap van het Allerheiligst Sacrament in Meerssen. In the 19th century, there were more than 4,000 brotherhoods in the Netherlands. [Roman Catholic religious brotherhoods in the Netherlands in the 19th century](#)

ALMIGHTY INTELLIGENCE JESUS

It may be possible to set up a working group focusing on youth and education. The use of AI could increasingly be applied in this context. Technology, not as a replacement, but as a bridge.

OASES OF HOPE

The Heuvelland region of Zuid-Limburg is home to countless beautiful church buildings. They are defining features of the landscape and places of hope for villagers and passersby. They have been made digitally accessible via this website www.oasenvanhoop.nl

SINT SERVAAS COLLEGE, MAASTRICHT

A quiet spot could be sought near the pilgrims' quarter where students could live and study as in an English college. For example, at the site near the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen). The college offers students with broad interests a wide-ranging program focused on religion (including the social teachings of the Catholic Church), literature, art, culture and music. In doing so, the college complements the courses offered by Maastricht University and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. The students live together, eat in a communal dining hall, read in the library and find silence in the chapel. Some receive a grant so that students with fewer means or refugees can also live there. In this way, the college continues a long tradition: as far back as the Middle Ages, The Chapter of Saint Servatius ran a school where the seven liberal arts were taught. The new college aims to revive that spirit of broad-based education. *brede vorming opnieuw tot leven brengen.*



Master Opportunity *'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'*

Appendix

Appendix: Comprehensive pilgrim analysis

This appendix is a target group analysis focusing on pilgrims and their diverse motivations, values and lifestyle characteristics inspired by scientific studies and theoretical insights. It was largely compiled by Nina Hendrix (October 2024) on behalf of The Chapter of Saint Servatius.

By identifying different types of pilgrims and highlighting their characteristics, a clear picture of their needs and motivations is outlined.

In the study of historical Christianity, 'pilgrimage' often refers to a physical journey to a holy place, such as a church or resting place for relics associated with the life of Christ, saints or martyrs.

However, pilgrimage can also be an inner experience in which one meets God. Essentially, pilgrimage stems from a biblical theme: followers of God are strangers or passersby on earth focused on an eternal, heavenly Kingdom. Christian pilgrimage can therefore be described as a spiritual journey (Bellefeuille-Frost, 2024).

Although pilgrimage has a rich tradition within religions, in recent years this phenomenon has also extended into the secular sphere (Liutikas, 2021). This means that pilgrimages are no longer driven solely by religious or spiritual motives, but are also undertaken for non-religious reasons.

Pilgrimage as a concept has evolved and become more accessible to a wider audience with the emphasis on various goals rather than solely on religious experiences.

Spiritual versus secular

The traditional dividing line between 'pilgrim' and 'tourist' is becoming increasingly blurred, which has led to the introduction of the term 'pilgrim-tourist' as Smith (1992) notes. Today, travelers can broadly distinguish between two approaches: a spiritual and a secular path.

- The spiritual path focuses on personal, spiritual or religious growth with the journey becoming a means to achieve a deeper sense of meaning and inner development.
- The secular path, on the other hand, revolves around the acquisition of knowledge and cultural or educational experiences with the journey serving primarily as a means of discovery and learning.

Both routes reflect a changing culture of travel in which the search for meaning making is no longer strictly religious, but rather encompasses a broad spectrum of spiritual and intellectual motivators.

Types of pilgrims

Within the group of pilgrims who can appreciate both tourist and spiritual elements, various subgroups can be identified. Gamper and Reuter (2012) distinguish five types of pilgrims.





TYPES OF PILGRIMS	
The religious pilgrim	The religious pilgrim is someone who undertakes a journey driven by a clear religious motivation often focused on seeking spiritual depth, healing, forgiveness and a connection with the divine. This pilgrim views the journey not merely as a physical journey, but as a symbolic act deeply rooted in faith and devotion. Rather than simply seeking a cultural experience or personal challenge, the religious pilgrim sees the journey as a means of drawing closer to God, saints or holy places, and of achieving spiritual goals. The motivators of the religious pilgrim are often: healing and forgiveness, the fulfilment of vows and acts of devotion, a connection to holy places and rituals, sacrifice and trial, a sense of community and belonging, spiritual renewal and transformation, and enlightenment and transcendence.
The spiritual pilgrim	The spiritual pilgrim seeks inner peace, self-transformation and meaning making. Often driven by personal values and a quest for insight and authenticity.
The athletic pilgrim	The athletic pilgrim uses pilgrimage as a physical challenge and combines spirituality with physical achievement and adventure.
The adventurous pilgrim	The adventurous pilgrim is motivated by curiosity and the desire to discover new cultures and landscapes.
The cultural pilgrim	The cultural pilgrim is primarily focused on the cultural and educational experience of the journey.

Motivation

Pilgrims often have multifaceted motivations that overlap and may change during their journey. For many pilgrims, there is a religious motivation such as seeking divine favor or participating in religious rituals. Others are driven by a spiritual motivation while seeking personal transformation and inner peace without any explicit religious commitment.

In addition, personal motivation plays a role for many pilgrims; they see the journey as an opportunity for self-reflection, personal growth and self-realization. For some, there is also a cultural motivation: the desire to discover new cultures and develop new perspectives on life.

Some pilgrims feel an inner urge or calling, sometimes an unconscious compulsion to answer life's questions or pursue important goals.

Finally, pilgrims often seek social connection; the journey offers them the chance to strengthen relationships and build a shared group identity and values.



Values and lifestyle

Pilgrims' values are multifaceted and profound, reflecting their quest for authenticity, meaning making and a balance between tradition and personal interpretation.

Dedication is a core value; pilgrims feel a deep sense of commitment to their journey, which they see as a spiritual and personal goal. Authenticity is essential in this regard: pilgrims seek sincere and unforgettable experiences that help shape their identity. To distance themselves from the superficialities of everyday life, they often opt for simplicity and austerity with ritual experience playing an important role.

The search for a sense of community and connection with others is also valuable to many pilgrims. They experience the pilgrimage as a symbolic transitional phase in which identity is rediscovered or strengthened when a shared identity within the pilgrim community serves as a unifying element. Self-discovery plays an important role in this; the journey offers the opportunity to explore and deepen their own identity and values.

Ritual involvement forms an essential part of the pilgrim lifestyle. Performing rituals, such as attending mass, touching relics and participating in processions, contributes to the spiritual experience. At the same time, modern pilgrims often seek flexibility so that they can adapt rituals to their personal spirituality and needs.

Inner peace is a value that many pilgrims seek; the journey helps them to find mental and spiritual balance. Gratitude is also important since pilgrims show appreciation for the blessings or new experiences they encounter along the way. In addition, they seek transcendence, the desire to rise above the everyday and feel a connection to something greater.

For many pilgrims, the physical location, regarded as a sacred place, forms an essential link in this transcendent experience, and the pilgrimage offers a spiritual dimension that goes beyond the personal.



Needs

Many pilgrims hope that their journey will bring about personal change. This desire for change is often a driving force with the journey seen as a means to spiritual or emotional renewal (Greenia, 2018).

There is a strong need for a sense of community, which is reinforced by shared rituals and group activities. Pilgrims find support in the social connections they build along the way and often find that their journey is enriched by sharing stories and experiences (Mehmetoglu et al., 2010).

Pilgrims are willing to take on physical and mental challenges such as walking long distances or fasting. These sacrifices are seen as valuable and essential to achieving their goals (Chemin, 2011; Mehmetoglu et al., 2010).

Modern pilgrims value flexibility and want to shape their own experience. This means that traditional rituals are not always followed to the letter, but are sometimes adapted to personal preferences and spiritual needs (Post, 2011).





External influences on pilgrimage

External influences such as cultural and social traditions play an important role in shaping the pilgrimage experience. Pilgrims often feel social pressure to have a convincing reason for their pilgrimage. This may lead them to only articulate their motives during the journey or when discussing their experiences (Chemin, 2011).

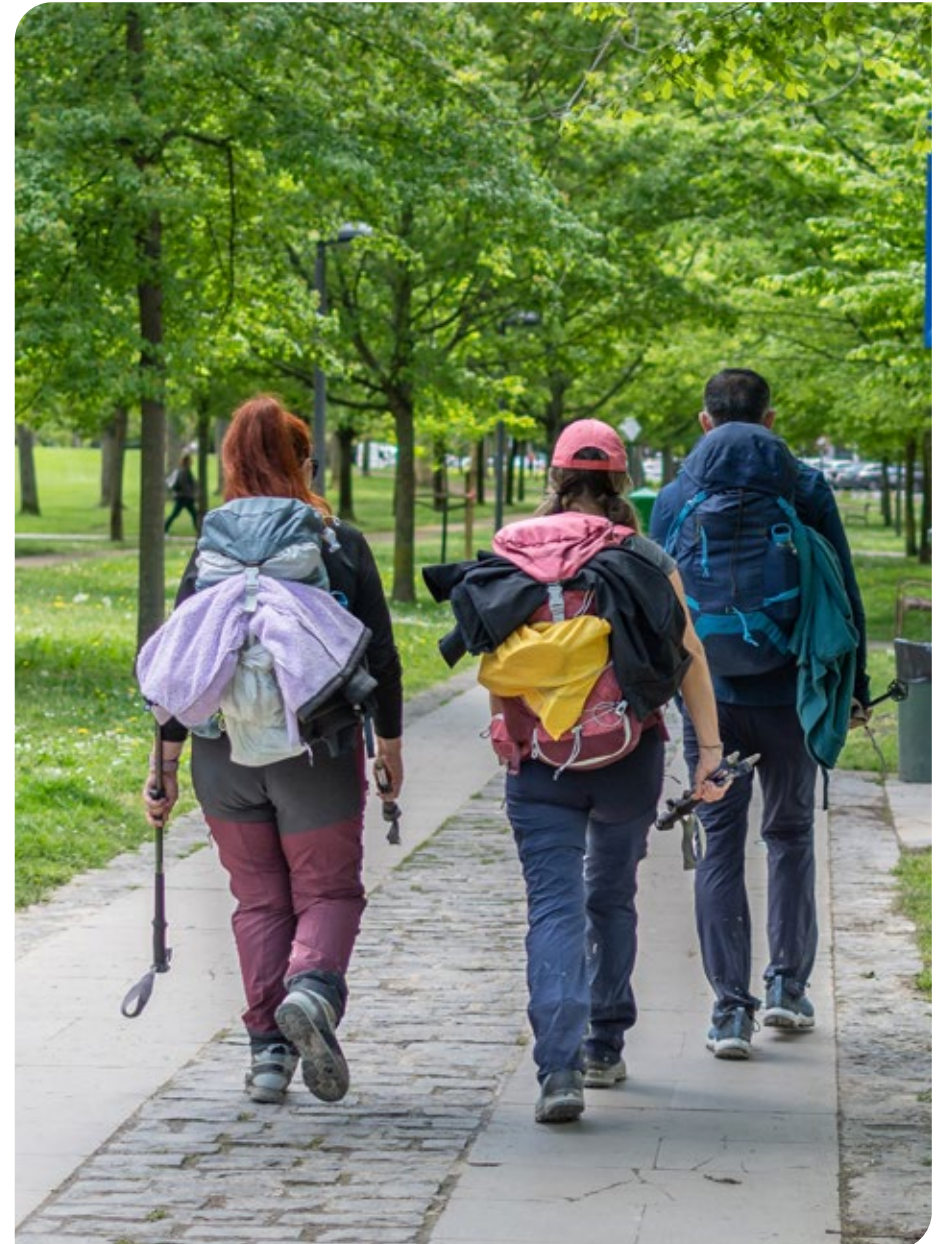
An increasing number of organizations are using technology and social media to make pilgrimage accessible to a wider audience. This reflects a modern approach in which pilgrimage is made attractive even outside traditional religious frameworks (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000).

Segmentation based on demographic factors

Pilgrims can be categorized based on socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, social status and financial means. This can lead to different interpretations and experiences.

Young people, for example, are often more interested in adventure and self-expression. They see pilgrimage as a way to gain new experiences and explore their personal values.

Older pilgrims often place greater value on traditional rituals and religious experience. Their motivation is often linked to a search for meaning making in later life (Riveiro García, Gamper & Reuter, 2012).



Conclusions

The pilgrim group of 2025 consists of a highly diverse target group with variable and multidimensional motivations ranging from religious and spiritual to personal and cultural reasons. They seek authenticity, community and personal growth within an environment that combines both traditional and contemporary influences (Smith, 1992; Kim et al., 2019).

This analysis highlights how pilgrimage increasingly accommodates individual experience and the connection between tourist and spiritual elements, resulting in a flexible and rich travel experience for modern pilgrims.

When developing new concepts for pilgrims, it is essential to understand that pilgrimage offers a unique experience that can combine both traditional and modern elements.

When developing a concept, it is important to take all motivations and needs into account.

It is important to provide space for different intentions and perspectives.

For religious pilgrims, for example, there must be scope for traditional practices such as prayer, attending mass and access to relics or sacred spaces.

For spiritual pilgrims, the opportunity for introspection, personal growth, meditation and self-reflection is important.

Pilgrims often seek authenticity and simplicity in order to break away from their daily routine and modern luxuries. An overly commercial concept can alienate them. A concept must feel authentic, without too many commercial offerings. Simplicity and austerity can be key elements. It is important to offer pilgrims opportunities to connect with the historical roots of the destination. Information and historical markers are important.

Modern pilgrims value flexibility. Allowing room for personal interpretation of rituals means that a concept must accommodate both traditional and personal ritual experiences. There may be a need to offer various programs centered on specific themes such as forgiveness or gratitude.

Pilgrimage is often experienced as a social journey centered on connection with others and with oneself. Facilitating a sense of community can further strengthen a future concept.

When developing a concept, the following are important: space for socializing, sharing stories, reflection, eating together and, where appropriate, undertaking activities together. It is important to foster a sense of community within a future concept. Pilgrims value a sense of solidarity, equality and being together.

Pilgrimage is seen by some pilgrims as a ritual act, while others regard it as a modern quest for meaning making. It is therefore important to strike a balance between preserving traditions and allowing room for innovation.

Respecting religious traditions is essential; a concept must not alienate religious pilgrims through an overly modern approach. It is important to integrate traditional elements, such as sacred objects, processions and ritual guidance by a spiritual leader.

At the same time, modern pilgrims often have a need for personal interpretation in which alternative spirituality and self-development play a role. Providing spaces for meditation, reflection exercises or yoga can help these pilgrims shape their own spiritual experience.

The pilgrim group is therefore broad and diverse with different backgrounds and religious beliefs.





To reach a broad audience, the concept must be open to diverse spiritual and cultural perspectives. Accessibility for everyone is essential here; an experience that is open to people from diverse backgrounds and with different ritual preferences creates a welcoming atmosphere.

By providing information in multiple languages and demonstrating cultural sensitivity in the development of rituals and programs, a wide range of visitors is appealed to and appreciated.

The KRO-NVRC has published a comprehensive list of the various types of pilgrimage, part of which is reproduced below. At its core, pilgrimage is seen as a journey to a holy place. The phenomenon is also known as a pilgrimage and always retains a spiritual character. Sometimes the pilgrimage is undertaken on one's own initiative, sometimes it is the fulfilment of a religious duty. In all the world's religions, pilgrimage is an important part of religious practice. A well-known example in Christianity is the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In Islam, the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, is perhaps the best known.

The word 'pilgrimage' comes from Latin. In Latin, a pilgrim is called a peregrinus, a word composed of per (through, beyond) and ager (field, land). A pilgrim is therefore someone who travels through or past the fields. In Middle Dutch, a pilgrim was also known as a pellegrijm.

Pilgrimage is as old as humanity itself. Archaeologists have shown that the megalithic monument of Stonehenge served as a place of pilgrimage. The phenomenon was also known in classical antiquity. Believers made pilgrimages to temples, oracles or other holy places. Pilgrimages occur in Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, as well as in other, smaller, religions such as the Bahá'í Faith.

Much has been written about the reasons behind pilgrimage. A large number of religious scholars believe that travelling to a holy place strengthens the feeling of coming closer to the divine. Some claim that the journey itself is more important than the destination, because being on the road can have a purifying effect.

Judaism

Until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, Judaism also practiced pilgrimages. These took place three times a year and were known as the three pilgrimage festivals (Shalosh Regalim). Their origin lay in the Torah, where Exodus 23:17 commands that "three times a year all your men (must) appear before the Lord God".

This commandment is repeated in Deuteronomy 16. These were the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Pesach, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt), Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks, celebrated seven weeks after Pesach) and Sukkot (or the Feast of Tabernacles, which still exists today). During these festivals, pilgrims would journey to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple. Judaism still has many pilgrimages to graves and shrines.



Christianity

In Christianity, pilgrimage was initially associated exclusively with the places where Jesus had lived and worked. The earliest accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land and Jerusalem date from the fourth century. This form of pilgrimage was promoted by Saint Jerome in particular. He was the great Church Father of the fourth century.

Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great and known as Helena of Constantinople, undertook a remarkable pilgrimage. Around the year 325, she is said to have had a vision in which she was instructed to travel to Jerusalem to seek out the cross on which Christ had died. According to the early Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea, she did indeed find the cross. She took relics back with her to Constantinople and Rome.

In the Middle Ages, the Holy Land was the principal place of pilgrimage. From the sixth century onwards, Rome with the grave of Saint Peter, also became an important destination for pilgrims. From the eleventh century onwards, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela became a major destination, particularly for penitents. There, pilgrims visited the grave of the apostle James. In addition, smaller places of pilgrimage also emerged, such as shrines housing the relics of certain saints or icons or statues to which miraculous powers were attributed. In the Netherlands alone, there were hundreds of such places in the Middle Ages.

The completion of certain pilgrimages was linked to the granting of indulgences. This applied, for example, to pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Pilgrims who visited the seven major churches in Rome in a single day could also earn an indulgence.

After the Middle Ages, Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago remained popular pilgrimage destinations. In modern times, many more have been added. For instance, Our Lady of Guadalupe now attracts millions of pilgrims. Consider also the Marian apparitions in Lourdes (France, 1858) and Fátima (Portugal, 1917). Both places attract many pilgrims.

In the Netherlands, the Meertens Institute has documented more than six hundred places of pilgrimage. Among the best known are Heiloo, Schiedam, Amsterdam, Saint Gerlach, Maastricht and 's-Hertogenbosch. In Heiloo, Our Lady of Distress is venerated and the well located there (the Runxputte) is said to contain healing water. Schiedam is home to the grave of Saint Lidwina of Schiedam. Many pilgrims make their way to Our Sweet Lady of 's-Hertogenbosch or to Our Lady, Star of the Sea in Maastricht. Just across the Dutch-German border lies Kavelaer and just across the Belgian border lies Scherpenheuvel. The miraculous image of Mary preserved there attracted many Dutch pilgrims every year until the Second World War.





Buddhism

The most famous Buddhist pilgrimage sites are located in India, but also in other countries where Buddhism has followers. The most important sites are four places associated with the life of the Buddha: Lumbini (Buddha's birthplace), Bodhgaya (the site of Buddha's enlightenment), Sarnath (the site of the first sermon) and Kushinagara (where Buddha passed away). China and Tibet also have their own sacred sites. These are often temples, but sometimes also mountains such as Wutai Shan in China. Various devotional activities can be undertaken at these pilgrimage sites. These include bowing to the Buddha, offering candles, incense or flowers, or reflecting on the Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha. Making good resolutions can also form part of a Buddhist pilgrimage.



Islam

The pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj) is considered one of the five pillars of Islam. This pilgrimage must be undertaken in Dhul Hijja, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Every Muslim who can afford it is obliged to undertake this pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. The Hajj itself is surrounded by various prescribed rituals. This involves walking around the Ka'aba (Islam's central sanctuary) seven times. One always prays in the direction of the Ka'aba or, when not in Mecca, in the direction of Mecca.



Secular pilgrimages

In the secularized world, pilgrimage can also have a non-religious significance. For instance, it is a well-known fact that many travelers to Santiago de Compostela have no religious motives, but are driven by a 'search for the self'. People even speak of a pilgrimage when they set off for places associated with their idol, such as a pop star. The best-known example of this is Graceland in Memphis (Tennessee, USA), the estate of Elvis Presley. Some of the stakeholders interviewed have serious reservations about this.



Pilgrimage in the distant past

During the discussions with stakeholders, we received information about pilgrimages to Maastricht in the distant past.

Maastricht has been a leading pilgrimage city for centuries, where the Pilgrimage attracts more than 150,000 visitors every seven years. The veneration of Saint Servatius, the sacred treasures of the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Basilica of Our Lady, and the four special City Devotions give Maastricht a unique place within a centuries-old pilgrimage tradition. Pilgrimage to Maastricht brings the city's rich religious history to life through stories and illustrated articles by acclaimed authors and specialists. The book highlights the adventurous pilgrimage of Arent Willemsz from Delft to the Holy Land in 1525, the significance of the grave of Saint Servatius for Maastricht as a pilgrimage city and the pilgrim souvenirs that spread throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. In addition, the authors delve deeper into Maastricht's two treasuries as repositories of precious relics, the iconography of Saint Servatius's key in regional sculpture, and the significance of medieval charters for pilgrims. The book concludes with the story of the four 'City Devotions': the four major devotional statues that reflect the city's turbulent history with its many changes of power. This book demonstrates how deeply the traditions of the veneration of Saint Servatius and the Pilgrimage are rooted in Maastricht. Pilgrimage to Maastricht is an inspiring guide for anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of the city's religious heritage and traditions through modern narratives.

◀ *Pilgrimage to Maastricht, Jos Koldeweij, Sandra Langereis, Pietermel Coenen, Régis de La Haye, Miriam Paloni, Peter Te Poel, Jip van Reijen | Book | 9789462626256 | ReadShop*





Bonaventura, Bishop of Ceos, suffragan bishop to John (IV of Flanders), Bishop of Liège, informs the Provost, dean and The Chapter of Saint Servatius in Maastricht that he grants a one-year indulgence to those who, having confessed and received communion, visit Saint Servatius Church on the feasts of Saint Servatius, Monulfus and Gondulfus, on the consecration of the church and the transfer of the relics of Saint Servatius.

<https://waarvanakte.eu/oorkonden/nummer-60-sint-servaas>

Bedevoarten in de Middeleeuwen – Heilige en schijnheilige pelgrims onderweg by Johan H. Winkelman, October 24, 2023.

<https://historiek.net/bedevoarten-in-de-middeleeuwen-heilige-en-schijnheilige-pelgrims-onderweg/159717/>

The Maastricht Pilgrimage, which takes place every seven years, is a tradition dating back to the High Middle Ages. After a hiatus during the early modern period, the tradition was revived in 1874.

[\(PDF\) Geschiedenis van de Maastrichtse Heiligdomsvaart](#)

An overview of all pilgrimage locations in the Netherlands.

[All places of pilgrimage \(Dutch only\)](#)



Appendix: Religious commitment in the Netherlands

Statistics Netherlands April 18, 2025

Decline in proportion of people identifying as religious has levelled off

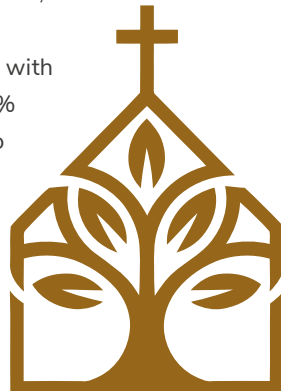
The proportion of the population stating that they belong to a religious denomination or philosophical group has not fallen further. In 2024, 44% said they belonged to a church, mosque or synagogue, a slight increase from the 42% recorded a year earlier. In 2010, 55% said they belonged to a church or religious group. This is according to the latest figures from Statistics Netherlands.

In 2024, 17% of the population aged 15 or over described themselves as Roman Catholic, followed by Protestant (14%) and Muslim (6%). Seven percent belonged to another faith. In 2010, 27% still identified as Roman Catholic and 18% as Protestant. Five percent identified as Muslim.

Only among those aged 65 and over does the majority belong to a church or religious community

In 2024, women (46%) were more likely than men (42%) to say they belonged to a religious community. Women were more likely to be Catholic (18%) or Protestant (15%) than men (16% and 13%). Of the men, 7% were Muslim, compared with 6% of the women.

The proportion of the population who say they are involved with a church or religious group increases with age. In 2024, 32% of young people aged 18 to 25 said they were least likely to belong to a church or religious group. Among those aged 75 and over, this figure was over 60%. Among 15- to 18-year-olds, over 40% stated that they belonged to a religious group.



Attendance at religious services remains virtually stable

In 2024, 13% of the population aged 15 and over attended a religious service regularly (at least once a month). This figure has hardly changed in recent years. In 2010, 18% regularly attended a church service or a gathering at a mosque, synagogue or other religious community.

In 2024, 12% of Catholics regularly attended church. Among Protestants, this figure was just over half. Half of Muslims attended the mosque at least once a month. Regular attendance at religious services varies by level of education. A quarter of people with only primary education attended a service at least once a month; among those with a completed higher professional education or a university degree, this figure was 10%.

Of those who attend services weekly, 40% also follow services weekly via the media

In 2024, 16% of the population aged 15 or over said they sometimes followed religious services via radio, TV or the internet. This is roughly the same as in previous years. Of the group that goes to church, a mosque or a synagogue on a weekly basis, 76% sometimes follow a service via the media, and 40% do so weekly. Of those who rarely or never attend a physical gathering, 6% occasionally follow a service via the media.





Appendix: The evolution of the religious landscape

This inspiring article appeared in the *Katholiek Nieuwsblad* on July 9, 2025. It was written by Nikolaas Sintobin; Jesuit, internet pastor and writer.

The evolution of the religious landscape calls for a Church that dares to enter areas of tension

We cannot ignore it: more and more young people are becoming interested in the Catholic faith. That good news also presents a major challenge: how does the Church connect with these new seekers?

Ever since I was young, I have never known anything other than that young people are less religious than older people. The steadily advancing secularization was, particularly in the Christian West, taken for granted. It seemed normal that the number of people who “still” attended Sunday Mass was steadily declining. For a number of years now, a new trend has been emerging among older teenagers and those in their twenties. In countries such as France and the United Kingdom, this is becoming so evident that sociologists of religion can no longer ignore it. Even in the Low Countries, despite their secular nature, it is becoming apparent, slowly but surely. The number of infant baptisms continues to decline. On the other hand, a striking number of young people are asking to be baptized or confirmed. Church attendance among the youngest generation, particularly in the Catholic Church, is on the rise. There is a clear upward trend in Bible sales. Contrary to what was customary, this trend involves more young men than young women.

Could it be that the myth of self-making has had its heyday? Is the elusiveness of mystery regaining relevance? It is a fact that the Christian faith is exerting a renewed appeal. A growing group of young people are fascinated by Jesus. Other Christian churches and religions are also noticing a similar trend.

As a Jesuit writer, I am, of course, delighted with this development. It presents me and the team I work with at the Ignatiushuis in Amsterdam with fascinating challenges.

Like other Christians, these young people need to develop their faith. Becoming a Christian is a lifelong process. Enthusiasm and good will are valuable, but they are not enough. A long-term and sometimes demanding initiation is necessary. A majority of newcomers say they rely primarily on influencers via Instagram and TikTok for this. I am so glad that more and more Christian influencers are so active on those platforms. They often do this with great creativity and authenticity. At the same time, it is clear that social media content does not always excel in subtlety, depth and coherence.

There is a rapidly growing interest in tradition and rituals. Incidentally, these prove to be meaningful not only for young people. The Catholic Church has a wealth of resources to offer access to the mystery. It is therefore no surprise that it holds such appeal. The flip side of the coin is that people are sometimes all too quick to resort to language and practices which, whilst mysterious and therefore appealing, are at the same time difficult to reconcile with the everyday lives of those newly seeking. They hark back to a view of humanity and a culture from times long past. There is a real risk that this will ultimately lead to the newly awakened interest being dismissed as irrelevant. It may also make a divide emerge between the religious experience embraced and the other areas of these young people's lives.

In summary, the great challenge is to stand at the center of the sometimes complex tensions within our culture: tradition and contemporary culture, mystery and inculturation, heart and mind, a clear identity, and openness to the other.

This challenge is, of course, not new. It is timeless. From the very beginning of the Church, Christians have wrestled with this. Sometimes, even in the early Church, this was coupled with great unrest and even bitter struggle. Perhaps it is characteristic of our times that there is such a wide variety of sensibilities in this regard. What is delightful to one person meets with strong resistance and sometimes even aversion in another. This applies between generations and also within generations. No one has a monopoly on the whole truth here. Everyone can learn from everyone else.

We are heading into an exciting time.

Appendix: Meaning making in the Netherlands

This appendix is a summary of: Zingeving in Nederland (Meaning making in the Netherlands) – Ipsos I&O Report commissioned by Trouw, November 2024.

Meaning making plays a role for three in four Dutch people

A small proportion (4%) of Dutch people consider meaning making to be the most important thing in their lives. For one in three, meaning making is important (33%). For a roughly equal proportion (36%), it plays a role, while 14% say they do not find it very important and 7% say it plays no role at all. Overall, we can say that for seven in ten (73%) Dutch people, meaning making plays a role: more than ten million adults.

SIMILARITIES

When Dutch people then explain in their own words what meaning making means to them, there are many similarities between the groups. The following aspects are frequently mentioned::

CONNECTION: Across the board, people indicate that a sense of connection with others is an important factor. This can take the form of family, friends or the wider community. People find meaning in caring for others, sharing experiences and contributing to a greater whole.

“Meaning something to someone.

Social connections, nature and the world. Being able to do your bit.”

“If I can give my loved ones a good life.”

MEANINGFUL ACTION: Dutch people find a sense of meaning in activities they perceive as meaningful. This can range from work and hobbies to volunteering and raising children. It is about the feeling that you are doing something that matters, something that has a positive impact on yourself or others.

“Being able to do something for society:

volunteering, earning money that I can give away or invest in start-ups for a better climate or other global issues.”

“Despite my age, still having a “small” sense of purpose in this society.”

VALUES AND IDEALS: Meaning making is often linked to personal values and ideals. People find meaning in life by acting in accordance with their beliefs, whether these are religious, moral or socially oriented. It is about pursuing something you consider important, something that gives you a sense of direction and purpose.

“If what I do is in line with my ideals, then I believe I am making meaning.”

“There is a purpose to our lives and I felt it was important to live my life in accordance with that purpose, namely glorifying God by living to please Him.”

Even in the groups where a sense of purpose is less important, we see these elements reflected, albeit in a less explicit form. The need for connection, meaningful action and living according to one's values seem to be universal human needs that are expressed in varying degrees and in different ways in the experience of meaning making.





DIFFERENCES

Nevertheless, there are also clear differences when we compare the responses of the various groups (groups are defined here according to the importance they attach to meaning making).

The (small) group that sees meaning making as something essential is relatively often religious. They try to pursue a higher purpose. Often this higher purpose has a religious connotation, but that is certainly not always the case. Non-religious people, for whom meaning making is essential, also live with a mission. They strive for a better world. For themselves and for others.

Dutch people who regard meaning making as important (but not essential) often view it in terms of making a contribution to society and the people around them. They, too, consider having a purpose important. They are more concerned with personal development than the first group.

For the approximately five million Dutch people for whom a sense of meaning making plays a role (though not a significant one), the approach to meaning making is more pragmatic. They seek meaning making in everyday life. They find meaning in activities that give them satisfaction, such as work, hobbies and social contacts. They like to lead a useful life and want to make a difference to others, but this is not their primary focus.

The group for whom meaning making is not so important focuses mainly on the here and now. They are content with a 'simple' life and attach less value to higher goals or making a difference.

The small group of Dutch people (around one million) for whom meaning making plays no role say they find the concept of meaning making rather vague. They take life as it comes and are not particularly concerned with finding meaning.

SIX TYPES OF MEANING MAKINGS

This study includes six of these types.

- **The artistic meaning maker** (people who make meaning in experiencing and creating beauty).
- **The rational meaning maker** (people who make meaning through thinking).
- **The practical meaning maker** (people who make meaning by doing things).
- **The moral meaning maker** (people who make meaning by striving for what is morally right).
- **The spiritual meaning maker** (people who make meaning by seeking 'the higher power').
- **The emotional meaning maker** (people who make meaning through relationships with others).

Some Dutch people score highly on multiple types of meaning making and therefore belong to multiple groups. Four in ten do not score particularly highly on any of the types.



THE ARTISTIC MEANING MAKER



Artistic meaning makers find meaning in beauty, creativity and artistic expression, particularly in art forms such as art, music, film, literature and cultural heritage. They appreciate beauty in various forms and enjoy expressing themselves creatively.

Artistic meaning makers are more often women than men and are relatively older. They tend to favor left-wing progressive parties. In fact, nearly half (46%) of these meaning makers would now vote for left-wing progressive parties (the average is 36%).

Artistic meaning makers also have relatively frequent contact with their fellow human beings. This mainly concerns friends and acquaintances, but also people on the internet. Artistic meaning makers read the NRC and de Volkskrant more often than others.

THE RATIONAL MEANING MAKER



Rational meaning makers find meaning in the continuous acquisition of knowledge. They enjoy sharing their insights with others, strive to excel in their field and seek a deeper sense of self-awareness.

Rational meaning makers are more often male (57%) than female (43%) and relatively young. The vast majority of this group are also highly educated (62% have a higher education qualification).

The rational meaning maker likes to read the NRC, Volkskrant or Trouw and has left-wing progressive political leanings. Rational meaning makers are relatively likely to be in paid employment (69% compared to 60% on average), have no children (55% compared to 42% on average) and earn a good income (25% earn twice the median income or more, compared to 19% on average).

THE PRACTICAL MEANING MAKER



Practical meaning makers find meaning in action and independence, and are driven by tangible achievements, financial security and adventure. Hard work is a means to achieve their goals.

They are mostly male (61%). They are also relatively young (36% are under 35, compared to an average of 26%). In terms of educational attainment, they do not differ greatly from the average, although the proportion of those with lower educational attainment is relatively low (11% compared to an average of 19%).

Practical meaning makers prefer to read De Telegraaf. They also vote for right-wing parties relatively often. One in three (31%) practical meaning makers currently favors the PVV (the average is 24%). Practical meaning makers are more likely to be in paid employment than the average Dutch person and have frequent contact with family, friends and acquaintances.

They are the most affluent meaning makers. Around 19% have a household income of less than 36,000 euros (the average is 28%) and just over a quarter (27%) earn twice the national average (73,000) or more (the average is 19%).

Practical meaning makers rate their own lives highest (7.8 on average), but the difference compared to other groups and the average Dutch person (7.5) is very small.





THE MORAL MEANING MAKER



Moral meaning makers find a sense of meaning in the pursuit of honesty, the fight against injustice and the promotion of peace.

They are evenly distributed across society. We see no outliers in terms of gender, age or educational level. Moral meaning makers vote slightly more often for left-wing progressive parties (45%) than the average (36%), but the PVV is also the most popular party among this group (20%).

In terms of behavior, moral meaning makers do not differ either from the average Dutch person.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING MAKER



Spiritual meaning makers search for a sense of meaning beyond the material world and seek a connection with something greater than themselves.

Spiritual meaning makers are more often women (57%) than men (47%). In terms of age and education, they do not differ from the overall picture. They are more likely to be religious than the average. For instance, 44% consider themselves active Christians (compared to 32% on average). Spiritual meaning makers relatively often have a non-Western migrant background and are more likely than average to vote for the ChristenUnie (10%), DENK (8%) and SGP (6%).

This type of meaning maker also says much more often (63%) than average that making meaning is important in their lives. Half (48%) of those making spiritual meaning is in daily contact with family (43% on average).

THE EMOTIONAL MEANING MAKER



Emotional meaning makers find meaning in relationships with those around them. They prioritize personal well-being over possessions and their career.

The emotional meaning maker is slightly more likely to have a lower level of education than average (25% compared to 19%). Otherwise, this type of seeker does not differ demographically from the average Dutch person.

This type of meaning maker also leans slightly further to the right than average. Three in ten (29%) would currently vote for the PVV. They do not consider meaning making to be as important as the other types do and are slightly more likely than average to have daily contact with family, friends, neighbors and people on the internet.

NO SPECIFIC MEANING MAKER

Four in ten Dutch people (38%) cannot be classified into one of the meaning maker types. This group often consists of Dutch people aged between 25 and 34 relatively speaking (21% of Dutch people who do not belong to a specific type are aged between 25 and 34, compared to an average of 16%). In addition, they are more likely to have lower or intermediate levels of education (67% in total, compared to an average of 58%).

This group is more likely than average to have children, but has relatively little contact with the people around them, such as family, friends, acquaintances and neighbors. They are also much less likely than average to say that making meaning in life is important to them (19% do say this). They read regional newspapers relatively often (37%). They vote for right-wing parties slightly more often than average. The PVV is the most popular (28%).

Appendix: Religious heritage in the city of Maastricht

In this appendix, we explore the theme of religious heritage in Maastricht. It is intended as inspiration and not to be exhaustive. In discussions with stakeholders, the locations listed below were identified as relevant. Pilgrimage is inextricably linked to religious heritage as the foundation of the whole.

We recommend conducting a comprehensive identification and analysis of the religious, spiritual and cultural offerings in Maastricht, Zuid-Limburg, the rest of the province and the Euregio, in line with the theme of pilgrimage. We recommend involving students to carry out this research. This is also a way for young people to become acquainted with this theme.

Introduction

There are many religious sites to be found in Maastricht. That is hardly surprising when you consider that the city used to be one of the major religious centers of Europe. On the site where the Basilica of Our Lady now stands, there was already a small church in the 5th century. This was probably the oldest Christian church in the Netherlands and may have been built on top of the remains of a Roman temple. Two enormous stones from the Roman fort can still be found in the base of the westwork.

Maastricht is therefore no mere coincidence on the global pilgrimage map; it is a city where history, faith and community converge. Thanks to the memory of Saint Servatius, the role of the Chapter and the vibrant Pilgrimage of Relics, the city is a spiritual anchor, deeply rooted in the past yet vibrant in the present. For the modern pilgrim, Maastricht is a destination where meaning making, culture and faith come together in a unique way.

The grave of Saint Servatius beneath Basilica of Saint Servatius attracted millions of pilgrims to Maastricht in the Middle Ages. The city walls also made Maastricht a popular refuge for monks seeking a safe place to settle. In the city's many monasteries and churches, you can still sense the medieval atmosphere of days gone by. Visitors and residents of Maastricht still light candles every day in the Basilica of Our Lady, in the chapel in front of the statue of Mary, Star of the Sea.

Below, we focus primarily on locations that will soon be important to include explicitly in the described pilgrim quarter. However, we also pay attention to other locations and, for example, the Pilgrimage of Relics. The latter is to demonstrate that faith is not only visible and tangible in ancient stones, but also connects with contemporary themes. Finally, we mention (again, without claiming to be exhaustive) a few other relevant collections of movable religious heritage in Maastricht, which were raised in discussions with stakeholders.





Basilica of Saint Servatius

Central to Maastricht's pilgrimage tradition is Saint Servatius, the first bishop of Maastricht and, according to legend, even of the Netherlands. His grave in the Basilica of Saint Servatius on the Vrijthof has been an important pilgrimage destination for centuries.

HISTORY

Basilica of Saint Servatius in Maastricht is one of the oldest places of pilgrimage in the Netherlands and has played an important role in religious and cultural history over the centuries. The grave of Saint Servatius, who died in 384 as the first bishop of Maastricht, attracted pilgrims from all over Europe as early as the sixth century.

The Basilica houses the 'Noodkist' (Shrine of Saint Servatius) containing the relics of Saint Servatius, which is carried through the city during the seven-yearly Pilgrimage, a tradition that has continued since 1391 and attracts pilgrims and visitors from home and abroad.

The legend surrounding Servatius tells that he received the key to the gates of heaven from the Apostle Peter, a symbol now kept in the treasury. The Basilica therefore serves not only as a pilgrimage church, but also as a repository of sacred objects, reinforcing its status as a religious and cultural anchor in Maastricht. The Basilica of Saint Servatius therefore forms a living link between past and present, where faith, heritage and community come together.

Basilica of Saint Servatius in Maastricht has remarkably managed to retain its historic role as a spiritual and cultural center throughout the centuries. The Treasury, which still houses relics, forms a continuous link with the past. With the famous 'Noodkist' (Shrine of Saint Servatius) and other religious artefacts, the Treasury bears witness to centuries of devotion to Saint Servatius. The use of the Treasury and the many guided tours that give visitors an insight into these historical collections demonstrate how the Basilica continues to share its heritage with a wide audience to this day.

MUSA

The annual Servatius Week, which includes the Bronk procession, the deanery celebration and the city procession, bears witness to an enduring parish commitment to the city's sacred heritage.

Music also has a historic place in the Basilica of Saint Servatius, where liturgical music enhances the experience of faith and the use of the organ and traditional church music is maintained. Concerts, such as the annual Christmas concert and the Pro Organo program, emphasize the importance of music in the Basilica's historical identity.

In addition, the Musica Sacra Arts Festival, which has been held for several decades and explores the theme of art and spirituality, reflects the long-standing tradition of religious celebration in a modern context. This festival, which brings Maastricht's city center to life every September, is a contemporary expression of the long-standing bond between the city, its residents and the spiritual legacy of Saint Servatius.

These enduring traditions make it clear that Basilica of Saint Servatius is not merely a historic building, but a living link between the past and the present. Its rituals, celebrations and cultural events demonstrate how the Basilica plays an enduring, dynamic role in preserving and promoting Maastricht's religious and cultural history.

CULTURE

The corporate culture within the Basilica's organization is rooted in both historical and religious traditions. The character of the organization reflects a combination of solemnity and accessibility with a constant search for balance between spirituality and professionalism.

Internally, the culture is characterized by close collaboration between a core of permanent staff and a large group of dedicated volunteers. These volunteers form the heart of the organization, and their dedication is fueled by personal commitment and a shared sense of responsibility for the preservation and appearance of the Basilica. A key feature of the organizational culture is the duality between tradition and modernization.

Although the Basilica is a place with centuries-old rituals and customs, there is an ever-increasing need to keep pace with the demands of the times and the expectations of a modern visitor. This is reflected in a gradual professionalization of the organization without losing the atmosphere.

The culture emphasizes respect for the past and the sacred values of the church while also leaving room for new ideas. The internal culture is strongly focused on collaboration and commitment. Decision-making is characterized by a careful balancing of tradition against modernity with the input of various stakeholders being valued.

There is a strong emphasis on the common goal: preserving the Basilica as a place of contemplation, faith and hospitality. This shared goal fosters a sense of unity and commitment among staff and volunteers regardless of their specific roles. Externally, the organization is presented as an impressive and solemn monument that is open to visitors from diverse backgrounds.

The challenge is to combine this impression of grandeur and solemnity with a welcoming and accessible atmosphere so that both religious visitors and tourists feel welcome. The aim is to position the church not only as a tourist attraction but also as a spiritual center where visitors can experience something profound.

Another important aspect of the culture is the realization that the Basilica is much more than a place for religious celebrations; it is also a key cultural and social player in the community. This presents challenges, such as dealing with external pressures and requests that go beyond the church's core mission.

The organization must constantly strike a balance in this regard and guard against a focus that leans too heavily towards entertainment or commercial activities in order to remain true to the core values of faith and spirituality.

The Basilica's corporate culture is therefore a rich blend of tradition and progress, and formal and informal, aimed at preserving a place where faith takes center stage. All of this is fueled by a deep-rooted sense of responsibility and commitment with the spiritual mission remaining paramount supported by professional dedication and ongoing collaboration.





VISION

The Basilica aims to preserve its historical and religious significance while developing into a prominent place of pilgrimage with international appeal that is comparable to Santiago de Compostela.

This means that it does not wish to be a tourist attraction, but above all a place where visitors can have a profound spiritual experience. The focus is on creating an experience that goes beyond simply obtaining a stamp; visitors should be given the opportunity to reflect and receive personal guidance from clergy.

The Basilica's identity is characterized by a duality: the aspiration to be impressive and elegant while remaining accessible and welcoming to local parishioners and worshippers. Preserving authenticity is essential while the church opens itself up to a wider community of pilgrims and tourists. Great importance is attached to visitors being moved emotionally during their visit and feeling that they have experienced a special place. Moments of silence and contemplation, particularly in places such as the crypt, are cherished to deepen the spiritual experience even amidst the hustle and bustle.

The Basilica's administration wishes to further professionalize its operations while retaining the character of a community of volunteers. The organization's growth is essential to support the increasing numbers of visitors and the church's religious mission. This requires committed volunteers who understand and support the church's values. Collaboration is essential in this regard. The administration seeks partnerships with both religious and secular organizations, and particularly with the local municipality and cultural institutions, to strengthen the church's role and embed it within the wider context of Maastricht.

The church understands that economic sustainability is crucial to continuing its mission, although the emphasis will always remain on spirituality. Maintaining the Treasury as a cultural attraction and striking a balance between economic activities and core religious values are of great importance.

The Basilica aims to be a place where everyone is welcome, from devoted believers to curious visitors open to spiritual influences. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop initiatives that welcome and guide people during their visit, both physically and spiritually.

The Basilica's long-term vision extends beyond the purely religious aspect. Work needs to be done on a strategy to position the church as a key part of the pilgrimage routes in Europe with a focus on targeted marketing and public relations. This should help to promote the concept of pilgrimage and raise awareness of the significance and potential of the Basilica.

Essentially while preserving its rich heritage, the Basilica aims to remain a meaningful place, both for local worshippers and for international pilgrims. The aim is to place faith and spirituality at the heart of every experience so that the Basilica is not only worth visiting, but also offers an experience that leaves a deep and lasting impression.

MISSION

The mission of the Basilica of Saint Servatius is to preserve and expand its historical and religious heritage as a prominent place of pilgrimage. The aim is to affect visitors and leave a lasting impression by developing programs that offer spiritual experiences such as blessing ceremonies and moments of prayer. The Basilica aims to make physical improvements to foster a sense of peace and contemplation, and is committed to raising its profile as a pilgrimage destination. Collaboration with the local municipality and partners reinforces this aim as does training staff and volunteers to promote the mission. The balance between spirituality and tourism is carefully maintained, ensuring that the Basilica remains a place where faith is central and visitors are deeply moved.

VALUES

The core values of the Basilica of Saint Servatius, which are essential for concept development, revolve around spirituality and faith as the key of everything that takes place.

Concepts must be aimed at enhancing visitors' spiritual experience and contributing to the mission of keeping faith central. In addition, preserving authenticity and history is of great importance; every concept must respect the rich heritage and preserve the unique character of the Basilica with its centuries-old traditions and architecture. Accessibility and hospitality are also fundamental values.

The Basilica aims to be a place that welcomes both devout worshippers and curious visitors. Consequently, the design must strike a balance between the church's impressive, solemn character and an open, welcoming atmosphere. Connection and a sense of community also play a major role; the Basilica functions as a center of faith where people feel connected and part of a wider whole. Concepts must reflect this and contribute to strengthening that sense of community.

Another key value is providing moments of contemplation and tranquility. Concepts must create spaces or experiences that encourage visitors to reflect and find inner peace. Quality and integrity also form an important foundation: all ideas must safeguard the integrity of the Basilica and not rely too heavily on commercial or entertainment elements. The focus must be on activities that are substantively valuable and respect the religious essence of the Basilica.

Finally, participation is of great importance. Involving volunteers and staff is essential to maintaining a positive atmosphere in which everyone can get involved and contribute to the Basilica's mission. Concepts must therefore provide opportunities for this involvement and create an environment in which collaboration and active participation are central. These values form the guiding principles for developing concepts that respect the Basilica's heritage while contributing to its future as a vibrant and meaningful place of pilgrimage.

POSITIONING

Basilica of Saint Servatius positions itself as one of the oldest and most respected religious monuments in the Netherlands with a unique blend of historical and spiritual significance. The Basilica aims to become a major pilgrimage site that is comparable to Santiago de Compostela, but with its own identity that is deeply interwoven with Maastricht's heritage. Unlike other churches that focus on tourism, the Basilica remains true to its core as a center of faith and contemplation, where visitors are moved and experience a lasting impression. The Basilica stands out by striking a balance between monumental splendor and hospitality with a focus on authentic, faith-based experiences. It works with key partners to remain a relevant religious and cultural landmark in the city. While other venues may lean more towards commercialism, the Basilica maintains its focus on spirituality and profound meaning, making it a special destination for visitors seeking spiritual enrichment.





THE SAINT SERVATIUS COMMUNITY

Just as important as the liturgy is the parish community. In addition to the pastoral team and the church administration, various organizations, foundations, associations and individuals are closely involved with the Basilica of Saint Servatius. These are listed below.



STICHTING SCHATKAMER SINT SERVAAS

The foundation's objective is:

- To maintain, manage, preserve on site, restore and enrich the art treasures owned by the parish of Saint Servatius and located in the Treasury or in the Basilica, or in the Basilica's appurtenances.
- To carry out all further actions that are related to the above in the broadest sense or that may be conducive to this.

GRAVE OF SAINT SERVATIUS ASSOCIATION

The Association of the 'Tomb of Saint Servatius' was founded in 1937 and aims to promote the character of the city of Maastricht as a place of pilgrimage and a Catholic center. It seeks to achieve this objective by disseminating knowledge about the city of Maastricht and by organizing and supporting initiatives that benefit Maastricht in this regard. For example, the Association is responsible for organizing and running the seven-yearly Pilgrimages of Relics in Maastricht. The Association has around 50 members drawn from various sections of society within the Maastricht and Limburg communities. In recent years, the Association has implemented a number of innovations to keep up with the times. In addition to the religious nature of the Pilgrimages of Relics, promoting the Pilgrimage of Relics as cultural heritage is increasingly coming to the fore. The Pilgrimages of Relics convey the signs of the times in an original, creative and authentic way with associations from Maastricht, Limburg and the Euregio making an active contribution every seven years. Culturally, the Pilgrimage has been attracting ever-larger groups of people for many editions now. In this way, the Association takes on a significant responsibility to proactively contribute to a future for all residents of Maastricht. During the preparation, implementation and assessment of the Pilgrimages of Relics, everyone is offered an opportunity for contemplation and contemplation. The Association enjoys a particularly respected standing in the city of Maastricht.



GUILD OF SAINT SERVATIUS

Objective: To support a range of activities for Basilica of Saint Servatius, including the maintenance of the Treasury and the carrying of the Bust in processions. In the 1960s, the then Procession Committee was looking for bearers for the Bust of Saint Servatius. The Broeders van De Beyart (Brothers of De Beyart), who had carried Maastricht's 'Devotia' for decades, were no longer able to do so due to circumstances. During a meeting of the procession committee in 1971, the male youth society on Capucijnengang, known as 'de Ierewach', was discussed in this context. Eight to ten of its members were willing to carry the Bust during the procession. With the 1976 Pilgrimage of Relics approaching, the group of bearers was asked to assist with other activities as well. Over the years, alongside its activities, interest in joining the guild also grew, prompting the church administration to commission the production of uniforms. The Guild of Saint Servatius is involved in various activities:

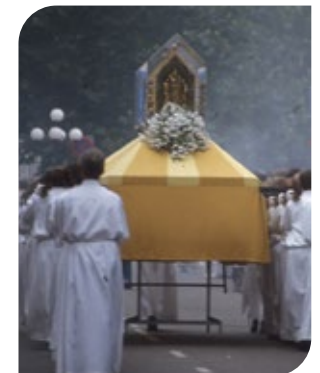
- The monthly upkeep of the Treasury.
- Participation in the procession and the entry and exit of the guild during High Mass on Easter Sunday.
- Participation in the Bronk procession on the Sunday before May 13.
- Participation in the entry and exit of the guild during the Servatius Masses during Servatius Week.
- Carrying the bust of Saint Servatius in the city procession, in processions during the Pilgrimage of Relics and in processions outside the deanery, such as at the Pilgrimage of Relics in Susteren and at the Ommegang during the Coronation Festivities in Tongeren.

BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT SERVATIUS

Objective: To promote devotion to Saint Servatius as a bridge between the Church and society, and to serve the Catholic liturgy. The Brotherhood is an Association dating back more than a century, which was revived in 1979 by a number of enthusiastic parishioners. The Brotherhood is a lively, diverse Association of around 55 (male) members of varying ages, who wish to act as a bridge between the Church and society to promote devotion to Saint Servatius.

The Brotherhood has the following responsibilities:

- Carrying the Noodkist (Shrine of Saint Servatius) during the seven-yearly Pilgrimage of Relics and during processions in times of need.
- Attending Holy Masses. The Brotherhood takes part in the entry and carries the poles or staves.
- Collecting during Holy Masses.
- Maintaining order in the Basilica, particularly during major celebrations such as Christmas and Easter.
- Organizing various activities such as cultural trips and hikes for its own members and other organizations, foundations and associations affiliated with the Saint Servatius Community. The families of the Brotherhood Masters are also involved in this. www.broederschapsintservaas.nl





GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

Objective: To make sure the Grameer bell is rung on major church feast days. During the New Year's reception in 1959, hosted by Deacan Monsignor P.J.M. Jenneskens, the idea arose to establish a dedicated bell ringers' guild for Saint Servatius. This was partly with a view to reducing costs as people had to be hired to ring the Grameer. The guild, which bears the name Sint Monulf en Gondulf, currently has around forty men who ring the Grameer on major church holidays. The bell of the Basilica of Saint Servatius has a long history. On June 21, 1515, Henric van Veldekeplein was teeming with people: the new large bell of Saint Servatius was cast and hung in the central tower, built specifically for this purpose, in the westwork of Saint Servatius Church. It was quite a task, as the bell weighed no less than 6,600 kilos. More than four and a half centuries later, the Servatius bell was retired, as a crack that had developed in 1850 had broken its voice and tone. The people of Maastricht affectionately nicknamed her 'Grameer' (grandmother). Her 'successor' was made possible thanks to the people of Maastricht and the proceeds from the Preuvenemint in 1983. The 'Grameer 2.0' still hangs in the south tower of the Westwerk to this day. The bell is rung only a few times a year by the guild, including on May 13 (Saint Servatius' Day), July 16 (the feast day of Monulfus and Gondulfus) and on special ecclesiastical occasions such as following the death of a pope. The ringing of the bell is preceded by a prayer written especially for the occasion.

SINT VINCENTIUSVERENIGING

This foundation is dedicated, on the basis of Christian solidarity, to helping people in spiritual and social need. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul was founded in 1833 by students at the Sorbonne University in Paris. The initiative was taken by the twenty-year-old student Frédéric Ozanam, who was beatified in 1998. In Maastricht, the Vincentiusvereniging was established in 1848 with a branch in the Saint Servatius parish from 1923 onwards. To this day, drawing on the legacy of Vincent de Paul, this local society of volunteers works tirelessly to stand up for the weak and vulnerable in our society. The Sint Vincentiusvereniging cares for everyone in need and is committed to tackling hidden poverty in the various neighborhoods of the parish.

Due to various changes and improvements, poverty is no longer visible today. The Sint Vincentiusvereniging continues to strive to help these people while respecting their privacy. <https://www.vincentiusmaastricht.nl>

BROEDERSCHAP HEILIGE BARBARA

Aim of the brotherhood: To deepen and strengthen their faith through a number of annual gatherings. Although the date of its foundation remains unknown to this day, the very first mention of the existence of the Broederschap Heilige Barbara can be found in the booklet by the Franciscan friar Henricus Sedulius, 'Diva Virgo Mosae Trajentis', published in Antwerp in 1609. Statutes dating from 1740 tell us that the purpose of the Brotherhood is: 'The veneration of Saint Barbara, as patroness of a blessed death, and the development of religious or philosophical activities for the inspiration and encouragement of the members of the Brotherhood.' The regulations place the Brotherhood and its members under the watchful eye and guidance of the parish priest of the Basilica of Saint Servatius. The Brotherhood consists of no more than 35 male members, who meet a few times a year to strengthen their bonds and deepen their faith. It is not possible to be a member unless one resides in the Maastricht region or has close ties to Maastricht. However, membership does not need to be terminated upon leaving the region.

PROCESSION COMMITTEE

The committee organizes the annual city procession through the center of Maastricht. On the first Sunday after May 13, the feast day of Saint Servatius, the procession traditionally winds its way through the city center of Maastricht. The procession symbolizes the journey of our lives in which it is Jesus who walks alongside us. Numerous other organizations and associations from the church community also take part in the procession. The procession starts at Basilica of Saint Servatius and ends at Our Lady 'Star of the Sea' Basilica.

VISITORS' GROUP (DEKEN HANNEMAN STICHTING)

The Deken Hanneman Stichting in Maastricht aims to encourage 'caring for one another' and matches reliable volunteers with people (young and old) who could use some extra support in their home situation. This could include hanging a painting, transport to the GP, hospital or church, going for a short walk together, having a cup of coffee, doing the shopping, and more. Precisely those things that home care or family members may not be able to do. www.dekenhannemanstichting.nl

HEAD VERGER

The head verger manages the day-to-day affairs in and around the church. On behalf of the church administration, he coordinates the liturgical use of the buildings, assisted in this by volunteers (including assistant vergers) and other organizations within the church community.

ALTAR SERVERS, ACOLYTES AND LECTORS (I.E., READERS)

Assisting with liturgical ceremonies: One of the oldest roles within Christian liturgy is that of the altar server. During services, the priest is assisted by altar servers, acolytes and lectors in the liturgy, including tasks such as preparing and clearing the altar and reading the first reading and the intercessions. Altar servers have traditionally been called altar boys. Altar boys are between eight and twelve years old. Acolytes range in age from thirteen to twenty-five and assist the younger altar servers. Basilica of Saint Servatius has a particularly large group of altar servers and acolytes: over twenty girls and boys fulfil this supporting role. Once a year they go on a joint outing and various group activities take place in between.

A number of ladies and gentlemen assist the priest as lectors by reading the first reading and the intercessions during weekend Holy Masses.

CHOIRS CAPPELLA SANCTI SERVATII AND SCHOLA GREGORIANA

Cappella Sancti Servatii and Schola Gregoriana enrich the liturgical ceremonies in the Basilica of Saint Servatius with their singing. The ecclesiastical and secular ceremonies in the Basilica of Saint Servatius are beautifully enhanced by the choirs Cappella Sancti Servatii or Schola Gregoriana (funeral Masses) with or without orchestral accompaniment and the participation of both instrumental and vocal soloists. Cappella Sancti Servatii is a mixed choir with a long tradition; the earliest records date back to 1808. The choir sings every Sunday during High Mass, at solemn celebrations and on major church feast days in the Basilica of Saint Servatius. They also perform regularly both at home and abroad. Their repertoire is extensive; it spans a period of five centuries and also includes the major works of well-known composers. As well as the quality of the music, they also attach great importance to a good atmosphere and conviviality. Schola Gregoriana is a male choir that performs Gregorian chants during funeral masses. In addition, they showcase their vocal talent every first Friday of the month during the 9:00 a.m. Mass.





The Chapter of Saint Servatius

The historic Chapter of Saint Servatius, associated with the basilica of the same name, was an influential college of secular clergy, founded as a monastery around 800 AD under the leadership of an abbot. This influential college has played a prominent role in Maastricht since the early Middle Ages.

This religious community has contributed not only to the preservation of the liturgical tradition, but also to the architectural and cultural wealth of the city. For pilgrims, this means that they enter Maastricht not only as a tourist destination, but as a place where spiritual life is still tangibly present.

During the Middle Ages, the Chapter enjoyed its heyday and was known as the most powerful and wealthiest religious institution in the region.

From 1200 onwards, the monastic order, now under the influence of the Duke of Brabant, was transformed into an enterprise in which ownership was divided among the 40 canons. The proof of ownership was known as a prebend.

After 1632, The Chapter of Saint Servatius came under the rule of the States-General of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands.

The administration and activities of the Chapter came to an abrupt end in 1797 when the French occupied Maastricht and the Chapter's assets were nationalized. The Chapter of Saint Servatius remained forgotten until its recent ceremonial re-establishment on October 12, 2023.

'Palace of the Grand Provost', an 18th century city palace with a rich Rococo façade and historical value, is a tangible reminder of the Chapter's heyday and now serves as a center that breathes new life into its historical legacy.

CULTURAL HEART

'Palace of the Grand Provost' is located on Henric van Veldekeplein. This square and its immediate surroundings form the cultural heart of Maastricht where history and faith converge. This area, rich in medieval architecture and religious significance, is a gathering place for historical heritage sites, including Basilica of Saint Servatius and Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church). One should certainly also consider the many Canons' Houses, stretching from the Spanish Government building to the present-day Toon Hermans House and further northwards. It is highly recommended that this area be designated a protected cityscape.

The cultural influences in this area range from the religious and spiritual to the secular, and include art, music and traditions that stem from centuries of having had a Catholic presence.

The corporate culture of the current Chapter of Saint Servatius is characterized by an open and collaborative attitude in which new ideas and partnerships are embraced. 'The Palace of the Grand Provost' aims to act as a partner in the organization of activities and is exploring how its own cellar and other spaces can contribute to cultural and educational initiatives. In this way, the palace serves as a bridge between culture and spirituality and as a platform for community events.

MISSION

The mission of 'The Grand Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius' is to preserve, promote and make accessible to a wide audience the historical and cultural heritage of the Chapter and Basilica of Saint Servatius. This means that they are committed to spreading the Good News, continuing the missionary work begun by Saint Servatius, preserving the intangible and tangible architectural heritage, promoting education and research into the Roman Catholic



history of Maastricht, and strengthening the bond between fellow Christians and the community, culture and religion based on age-old values: Justice, Temperance, Wisdom, Fortitude, Piety, Faith, Hope and Love. The aim is to keep this unique heritage alive as a source of inspiration, education and connection for both the local community and visitors from afar.

'Het Kapittel van Sint Servaas B.V. is an independent private company and is not affiliated with the Diocese of Roermond, the Parish of Saint Servatius or the Roman Catholic Church. Where the title Grand Provost is used, it refers to a ceremonial, non-ecclesiastical title.'

VISION:

To be a dynamic center for cultural, educational and spiritual activities, rooted in the rich history of The Chapter of Saint Servatius. By (co-)managing a wide range of facilities, including a museum, an art gallery and an experience center, and by organizing events, excursions and guided tours, they aim to create a vibrant meeting place at 29 Henric van Veldekeplein. They will implement innovative ways to share and celebrate heritage while respecting the traditions that form its foundation. Through collaboration with other organizations and bodies, and by promoting the arts (including singing) and fostering communities of friends, they strive to fulfil the mission of the Chapter and build a bridge between the past, the present and the future. In close collaboration, where possible with all local residents, organizations and bodies in and around Henric van Veldekeplein, in particular the (church) administrations of the Saint Servatius parish and St John's, the Saint Servatius Treasury, the Association of the Grave of Saint Servatius, Capella Sancti Servatii, the Guild of Saint Servatius, and the Brotherhood of Saint Servatius, Schola Maastricht, the Mission Sisters of St. Peter Claver and the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen).

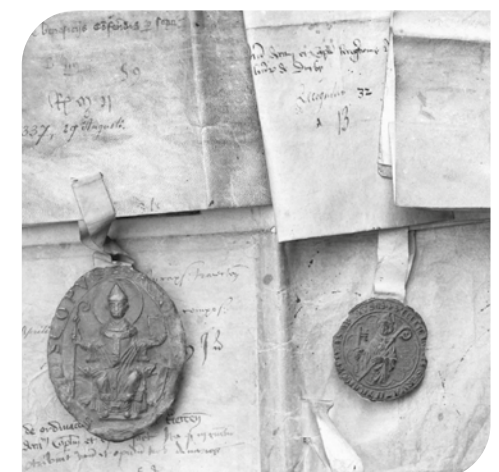


VALUES

The core values of The Chapter of Saint Servatius stem from the Christian tradition and form the basis for all activities and initiatives. Christian values are of great importance to The Chapter of Saint Servatius. Key principles include charity, care, love for others, forgiveness, faith, compassion, and showing kindness. These principles form the basis of our identity. Peace, harmony, helping others, gratitude, joy and holiness complement these values, which together guide the activities and initiatives of The Chapter.

Compassion and mercy are central; The Chapter is committed to caring for our fellow human beings and fostering a close-knit community. Education and knowledge-sharing play an important role with an emphasis on encouraging education and research into Maastricht's rich Roman Catholic history. This is done with great respect for tradition while preserving and celebrating religious and cultural rituals and music.

The value of community spirit and togetherness is evident in the way The Chapter brings people together through shared experiences, which helps to strengthen local ties. Accessibility is a key priority; The Chapter strives to make its heritage and activities accessible to a wide audience, regardless of background or beliefs.





Sint Janskerk (Saint John's Church)

The Gothic Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church; also known as Sint Jan van Maastricht) stands side by side with the Basilica of Saint Servatius and was originally intended as a parish church for The Chapter of



Saint Servatius, thereby relieving the Basilica of some of the pressure as a place of pilgrimage. The red tower is a striking feature of Maastricht's skyline. In 1632, Stadtholder Frederick Henry led the Dutch forces during the Campaign along the Meuse in the Eighty Years' War, successfully capturing the towns of Roermond, Sittard and Venlo and began a long, bloody siege of Maastricht, which led to the city's surrender in August 1632; Sint-Janskerk became Protestant and, in December 1633, came into the ownership of the then-established Dutch Reformed Church. A tour of the church reveals that the first impression – a rather austere space – is merely an illusion. Historically speaking, the church contains many features that are well worth seeing.

The tower can be climbed up to the first gallery (43 m). From there, there is a magnificent view of the Vrijthof, the city and its surroundings.

The church's builders, the Canons of Saint Servatius, used red as a kind of trademark for all their possessions. The paint was made from pieces of marl found in the marl caves, which were saturated with iron ore. After grinding and firing, the basis of the paint was created: an ox-blood-colored powder. The original color can still be seen on parts of Saint Servatius' Church. During the last restoration in 2006, following an investigation by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, the tower was repainted red. Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church) is therefore a historical and architectural gem in Maastricht with a rich past and a contemporary function. In addition to regular church services and tourist visits, the church is extensively used as a stage and event venue. Thanks to its location and facilities, the church is ideally suited to a wide range of business and cultural activities. The church and tower are open to visitors every day. A Protestant service takes place every Sunday morning.

Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters Onder de Bogen)

The Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo, also known as the Zusters onder de Bogen, is a Roman Catholic religious congregation founded in 1837 in Maastricht by Elisabeth Gruyters, assisted by Deacan P.A. van Baer. This congregation is named after Saint Charles Borromeo.

The Sisters' philosophy

- To help people become whole, to become more and more like the image of God and, as a sign of God's Kingdom, to respond to the challenges of our time with joy and simplicity, giving preference to those who are wronged.
- The Sisters were active in the Netherlands in many fields: retreat houses, hospitals, schools, pastoral work, the establishment of small Christian communities, and religious associations for justice and peace, especially among the poor, the suffering and those living on the margins of society.
- Worldwide, the Sisters are active in the Netherlands, Belgium, Kenya, Tanzania, Indonesia, the Philippines, East Indonesia (East Timor), Vietnam and Brazil.

The nickname in the Netherlands Zusters onder de Bogen (Sisters under the Arches) refers to their convent in Maastricht, which is known for its arched structures. The community remains committed to education and healthcare, and continues to play an active role in social projects, particularly at an international level. The Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen) is currently exploring ways to continue its presence in Maastricht.

The convent in Maastricht is the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Charles Borromeo. The convent is located in a number of historic buildings between Sint-Servaasklooster (a street name) and Kommelstraat. The convent garden contains a significant section of Maastricht's surviving first city wall. During archaeological excavations prior to the construction of a new convent wing on Sint-Servaasklooster in 1980, it was established that the late Roman and Merovingian burial ground on the Vrijthof extended as far as this point. A heavy double wall (9th

–11th century) was also discovered, possibly part of the Ottonian wall. Other wall remains probably belonged to the Provostry of Saint Servatius. The complex still forms a virtually enclosed enclave in Maastricht's city center today. Parts of the complex are only accessible during Open Convent Day and at concerts in the church (for example, during Musica Sacra). The Congregation is still growing worldwide. In the Netherlands, the number of sisters is declining and the average (advanced) age is rising. The Motherhouse complex has been visited by very few outsiders and is perhaps therefore relatively unknown. However, the complex is becoming increasingly accessible, for example during Open Convent Day, pilgrimages, concerts (including Musica Sacra) and exhibitions (including Medieval Charters of the Chapter of Servatius). The Congregation is considering its continued presence in Maastricht. The Motherhouse is more than a building; it is the heart of the Congregation, where its story began and continues. All branches of the Congregation are committed to protecting this heritage. By preserving parts of the Motherhouse, the Congregation remains rooted in its origins and can fulfil its mission by establishing a center where the richness of spirituality is deepened and shared with the members of the Congregation, the Church and society.

Henric van Veldekeplein

The area of what is now Henric van Veldekeplein belonged to The Chapter of Saint Servatius. In 1911, the section of Sint-Servaasklooster street comprising the square was renamed Henric van Veldekeplein. From that year onwards, a municipal committee and a citizens' committee worked tirelessly to establish a monument to the medieval poet Hendrik van Veldeke, the author of works including *Sente Servas* (The Life of Saint Servatius). In 1934, the bronze statue of the poet, designed by Charles Vos, was unveiled. It was only after this that the street name was changed.

The north side is entirely occupied by the south-western part of the Basilica of Saint Servatius. The east side of the square is dominated by the 79-metre-high tower of Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church). On either side of Sint-Janskerk, steeply sloping streets lead down to the Vrijthof. The narrow street between the two churches is called Het Vagevuur.

Of the Canons' Houses surrounding Henric van Veldeke Square, seven have the status of National Monuments (three of these are located along the north side of the square, where the official street name is Sint-Servaasklooster). The most impressive house is the 'Palace of the Grand Provost' at numbers 27-29-31.

The Basilica of Our Lady

This Basilica is not located directly alongside the other sites near the pilgrims' quarter, but it is certainly one of the most important sites in Maastricht to include here. As a pilgrimage site, this Basilica is currently no less important than the Basilica of Saint Servatius.

The Basilica of Our Lady also has a Treasury, which is managed by the church administration. The collection comprises a number of interesting and beautiful medieval objects (protected heritage), pieces from the Baroque period and religious artefacts relating to the veneration of Our Lady Star of the Sea. The Treasury reopened in 2023 with a completely new layout, which appeals to a wide audience and is accessible in five languages via QR codes.

The Basilica of Our Lady is also part of the Largest Museum in the Netherlands project, an initiative of the Catharijneconvent. The Largest Museum in the Netherlands was established in 2016 to, for example, make churches better known and more accessible to the general public.

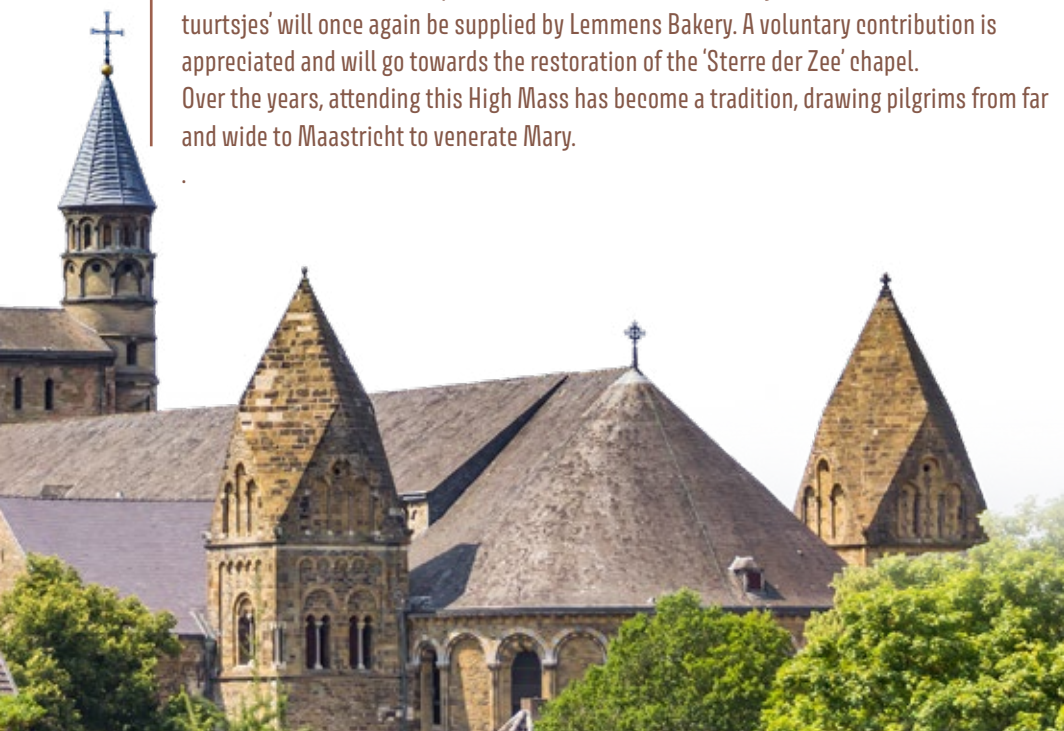
There is no formal collaboration with the Treasury of Saint Servatius. Given that both treasuries complement each other to a certain extent, collaboration could lead to a museum collection of European stature.





Feast of Sainte Marie – Friday August 15, 2025

On Friday, August 15 at 10 a.m., we will celebrate the great Feast of Sainte Marie in the Basilica of Our Lady, the patronage feast of the parish. The main celebrant and preacher will be Monsignor R. Maessen, who served as Vicar General for many years and administered the diocese during the period when there was no bishop, together with concelebrants and former Bishop F. Wiertz. They will be collected from the rectory in a procession. The High Mass is festively accompanied by the Da Capo 2000 Music Ensemble and the Schola nova. During the service, the 'Belt of Mary' and the miraculous statue of the 'Star of the Sea' are carried through the church and placed at the front for veneration. In keeping with tradition, the 'kroedwösj' is blessed during the service. It is recommended that you bring your own small bundle of kroedwösj (Tanacetum Vulgare), as the number of sprigs available is limited. After the festive celebration, you are warmly welcome in the Cloister and the courtyard to meet one another over a cup of coffee and a 'Slevrouwetuurtjes'. The famous 'Slevrouwetuurtjes' will once again be supplied by Lemmens Bakery. A voluntary contribution is appreciated and will go towards the restoration of the 'Sterre der Zee' chapel. Over the years, attending this High Mass has become a tradition, drawing pilgrims from far and wide to Maastricht to venerate Mary.



The Waalse Kerk

The Waalse Kerk Maastricht Foundation is a cultural public benefit organization whose aim is to use the historic building at Sint Pieterstraat 6 in Maastricht as a meeting place for the city's residents to fight spiritual poverty. The Waalse Kerk is currently being prepared for the 21st century. In addition to Sunday services, which are organized by the Zuiderkruiskerk, the historic building will be used throughout the week for social and cultural purposes. As regards its cultural function, collaborations are in place with, for example, Philharmonie Zuidnederland, the Muziekgieterij and JekerKlassiek. For social purposes, discussions are underway with a number of social organizations dedicated to serving the Maastricht community. In this context, discussions were held with Mr. Koelewijn.

Sint-Matthiaskerk

Sint-Matthiaskerk (Saint Matthew's Church) is located in the center of Maastricht, close to the market square and the city hall. The church is so surrounded by urban buildings that, at first glance, only the façade is visible. Via a narrow alley on the right-hand side, you can admire that side and the apse. At present, Sint-Matthiaskerk is largely closed to visitors, despite housing an impressive Treasury. One proposal put forward by stakeholders is to explicitly include the church in the plan as part of a pilgrimage network. As of January 1, 2025, the international Mass has been moved from Basilica of Saint Servatius to Sint-Matthiaskerk.

Koepelkerk

In 1921, two young Limburg architects, Alfons Boosten and Jos Ritzen, were commissioned to build the Koepelkerk. They opted for a style that was very modern, certainly for Limburg where the Neo-Gothic style was prevalent. Many young regional artists contributed to the decoration of this church, such as Henri Jonas, Charles Vos, Charles Eyck, Jo de Visser, Eugène Laudy, Gène Eggen and Marianne van der Heijden. They later became well-known artists. The interior was combined to form a large

and harmonious religious work of art. Art styles from the first half of the 20th century come together in the Koepelkerk. The Koepelkerk has been a listed building since 1995. On Saturdays, a service is held here by the Christian Eritrean Orthodox Oriental Church in the diaspora in the Netherlands.

Synagogues in Maastricht

Over the centuries, Maastricht has had various synagogues. An official document from 1295 refers to a platea judaeorum, now known as Jodenstraat, where, according to a manuscript from 1377, a synagogue must have stood, probably on the corner with the former Bokstraat, now known as Kesselskade. Nearby was the Jodenpoort, which provided access to the Maaskade.

By the end of the 18th century, and certainly from 1782 onwards, the Jews of Maastricht had a small house synagogue in a rear building on the Markt. Probably from 1797 onwards, the house synagogue was located above the entrance gate of the property at Kleine Gracht 3. This space was so cramped that the Jewish community requested permission to use the vacant chapel of the former Sint-Servaasgasthuis (Saint Servatius Hospital), but this was demolished in 1821. Similar requests concerning the Augustijnenkerk and the Capucijnenkerk were also unsuccessful.

The new synagogue was built on the site of a former Capuchin monastery (the “small Capuchin garden”) on the corner of Bogaardenstraat and Capucijnengang, a site made available free of charge by the municipality in 1838. The design of the new house of worship was by the city architect and art teacher Mathijs (Mathieu) Hermans (1789–1842). On August 21, 1840, the new main synagogue was inaugurated with a festive procession setting off from the Kleine Gracht, escorted by the military police and watched by thousands of onlookers, making its way to Bogaardenstraat while the city hall carillon played. The new building also housed classrooms for the Jewish school, which had been founded in 1833.

Following the deportation of Maastricht’s Jews during the Second World War, the building was confiscated by the German occupiers and used as a warehouse. Much of the contents were destroyed. However, the Torah scrolls were brought to safety in

time. In 1965, it emerged that the archives of the Maastricht Jewish community had also been preserved. After the liberation of Maastricht in September 1944, American soldiers helped to clear up the worst of the chaos in the synagogue. In the early years, the adjacent meeting room was used as a prayer room. In 1952, the synagogue was put back into use.

Saint Servatius Spring and Well

The Saint Servatius Spring or Saint Servatius Spring is a spring in the municipality of Maastricht in the Dutch province of Limburg. The spring is located south of the Biesland district in the Jekerdal, east of the Cannerweg. The Saint Servatius Spring has traditionally been associated – certainly since 1840 – with a passage in Hendrik van Veldeke’s Legend of Saint Servatius, in which the saint causes a healing spring to gush forth.

In 1496, a well was dug on the Vrijthof on the orders of the city’s administration. This well was intended to supply water to the Saint Servatius fountain located above it. The city’s administration and the Chapter of Servatius hoped in this way to stimulate pilgrimage tourism. The project failed, as the well contained too little water. A century later, a collection basin was built in the slightly higher-lying Servaasbroek and the water was channeled to the Vrijthof via a wooden pipeline. A round, sunken fountain was installed in the center of the square. This consisted of a bluestone fountain basin, a bronze lid and, on top of that, a small statue of a blessing Saint Servatius. The fountain was not a success as the water supply proved unreliable. Shortly after 1670, the fountain basin was filled with earth and, in 1733, the last remains were cleared away. The bluestone fountain basin now adorns the cloister of the Basilica of Saint Servatius. By the 19th century, all that remained of the spring was a marshy field. In 1886–1888, a round stone well was built on this site. A wrought-iron canopy, and a small statue of Saint Servatius were placed above the well. The rim of the well bore the inscription: Honor this holy spring, Oh pilgrim, and whether thirst or fever afflicts you, drink for refreshment and healing, so may Saint Servatius help you.





Het Rome van het Noorden (The Rome of the North)

Under this title, the second revised edition of *Maastricht, stad van Kerken, Kloosters en Kapellen* (Maastricht, City of Churches, Monasteries, Convents and Chapels) was published in 2025. It is a very comprehensive and well-organized study of all the locations in the city that fall under this category.

There are too many to list. Nevertheless, let us focus on one site, namely The Theresiakerk (Saint Theresa's Church), as an example of a site that appears to be undergoing a transition. This church is named after the 19th century Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Since 2022, the Sint-Theresiaparochie (Saint Thérèse Parish) has shared the church and its outbuildings with the Philharmonie Zuid-Nederland (referred to as Philzuid). Philzuid has been based at the Sint-Theresiakerk in Maastricht since January 2023. Alongside the Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, this is the venue where the orchestra regularly rehearses and occasionally gives concerts. The church floor has been converted into an ideal rehearsal space. The acoustics have been improved: special panels guarantee a shorter reverberation time. The stage is equipped with a hybrid system combining various heating technologies, guaranteeing a comfortable temperature on stage without (unnecessarily) heating the entire church. In addition, a climate-controlled room has been built on the stage to house the grand piano, double basses and other sensitive instruments. The ground floor of the church is also used by Philzuid. Here there are not only various offices and meeting rooms but also rehearsal rooms, changing rooms, the music library, and a canteen. The church's side chapel is still used weekly for church services. The movable walls on the stage make it possible to use the entire church on special occasions. The pews can then accommodate around 350 visitors. When Philzuid is not performing in *Opus 9* itself, local associations and other parties can make use of the facilities.

Another example of a transition mentioned by stakeholders is Kapel Opveld. This is located in the Heer district of Maastricht. It is the former monastery church of Klooster Opveld. After serving as a place of worship for a century, Kapel Opveld is now a new meeting place offering a wide range of activities. These include: concerts, singing and cabaret performances, lectures, meetings, exhibitions, rehearsal spaces, and funeral services.

Maastricht Pilgrimage as living heritage

Going on a pilgrimage – visiting a holy place – is a tradition as old as the Bible. Maastricht too has this centuries-old tradition, the highlight of which is the seven-yearly Pilgrimage of Relics (since 1391).

This tradition was honored once again during the 56th Pilgrimage of Relics in 2025, continuing an unbroken chain of veneration.

The Pilgrimage of Relics attracts tens of thousands of pilgrims from home and abroad (175,000 in 2025). During this multi-day event, the relics of Saint Servatius and other saints are carried in procession through the city. Maastricht then comes alive with prayer, song, art, theatre, and rituals. The Pilgrimage of Relics demonstrates that religion in Maastricht is not a relic of the past, but a living and unifying element in the present. It brings together faith, culture and community, and reflects values that remain relevant today. Intangible religious heritage – such as processions, rituals, stories, music and traditions – is not a tangible possession, but lives on through experience and transmission from generation to generation. The Pilgrimage of Relics is a powerful example of this: it offers spiritual enrichment, strengthens social cohesion and keeps traditions alive in a rapidly changing world.

The importance of this heritage lies in the way it offers meaning and a sense of purpose and contributes to identity formation and a sense of cohesion. By actively supporting it, we make sure traditions such as the Pilgrimage of Relics continue to resonate in the future while also providing space for reflection on contemporary themes such as sustainability, solidarity and community spirit. The 2025 edition was themed *Be a Bridge Builder* – a call for connection between people, generations and beliefs.

The Pilgrimage of Relics is organized by the Grave of Saint Servatius Association. Numerous activities take place in the run-up to the feast day. The program is wide-ranging and accessible with space for religious services, pilgrimages and processions, as well as cultural events such as exhibitions, concerts, theatre, storytelling, talks, and gatherings for young and old. In this context, discussions were held with Mr. Bovens and Mr. Essers.



The 56th Pilgrimage of Relics in Maastricht concluded on June 22, 2025 with a pontifical Mass and the second procession, part of which took place by boat on the River Meuse. After the closing ceremony on the Vrijthof, the Noodkist (Shrine of Saint Servatius) and the Bust of Saint Servatius were carried into the Basilica. Once the bronze doors of the Basilica had been closed behind them, the Pilgrimage of Relics was definitively over. The next edition will be in 2032.

"I've already noticed that in Maastricht, things can't last long enough and that nobody minds if it gets very late," joked Bishop Ron van den Hout before giving the final blessing at around 11 p.m. on Sunday evening, together with Bishop Hans van den Hende of Rotterdam. The closing of the Pilgrimage of Relics had begun at 3 p.m. with a pontifical Holy Mass in the Basilica of Saint Servatius with Cardinal Wim Eijk of Utrecht as the principal celebrant. In addition to the Bishop of Rotterdam, the bishops of Hasselt and Liège were also present, as well as a representative of the Bishop of Aachen. Naturally, suffragan bishop Everard de Jong and former Bishop Frans Wiertz of Roermond also took part in the celebration, along with a large number of priests from the region.

In his homily, Cardinal Eijk referred to the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, which on Sunday coincided with the conclusion of the Pilgrimage of Relics. "The Eucharist is food for eternal life," said the cardinal, who went on to remark that happiness can only be found in God. "The time you spend with Jesus is the best time of your life," he quoted Saint Mother Teresa. The celebration, which lasted almost two hours, was accompanied by music from the Capella Sancti Servati and the Franciscus Choir from Venlo. "In this way, we have built a musical bridge between Noord-Limburg and Zuid-Limburg," said Deacon John Dautzenberg in his closing remarks. He was referring to the theme of the Pilgrimage: 'Be a bridge-builder'.

Procession

This theme was also explored in depth during the evening procession. The procession on this final day began with a boat trip by a number of groups, who in this way literally forged a link with the bridges over the Meuse. Once they had disembarked, the procession formed and made its way through the center of Maastricht for the second time in ten days. Some of the same groups took part in the procession as in the first procession, but there were also brotherhoods and musical groups that had not been present on that occasion. The choir of the singing maidens from Tongeren were among the new participants.

Just as on the first Sunday, this procession also attracted quite a crowd. The procession ended in front of the grandstand on the Vrijthof. Prior to the procession, the Koninklijke Zangvereniging Mastreechter Staar and the Arka symphony orchestra had already given a mini-concert here for the audience in the grandstand. In his closing remarks, Theo Bovens, chairman of the organizing Association 'Het Graf van Sint Servaas', called on everyone to continue to be bridge-builders over the next seven years. The organizers are very pleased with how the Pilgrimage of Relics went. "Many bridges were built: between people, groups, neighborhoods and regions; but also between cultures and styles, between religions and beliefs, and for many, between themselves and Slivvenhier (Our Lord), not least through Saint Servatius," read the message of thanks sent on Sunday evening immediately after the conclusion of the Pilgrimage of Relics.

Pillar

Not only were all staff and sponsors thanked, but also the more than one hundred thousand pilgrims and spectators who took part in one or more program events, either individually or in groups. "Whatever your reason for coming, taking part or simply dropping by: your presence was the main pillar upon which we were able to build the bridge of the Pilgrimage of Relics. For building bridges, making connections and establishing peace requires people. We hope that the Pilgrimage of Relics may give you hope for a world where walls are torn down and bridges built, and that you have been inspired to play your part in this."





Relevant movable religious heritage in Maastricht

Without claiming to be exhaustive, stakeholders have identified the following movable heritage as relevant.

THE FOUR CITY DEVOTIONS OF MAASTRICHT

Maastricht's city devotions consist of four statues that are particularly venerated in this city. They are: the Star of the Sea, the Black Christ of Wijck, and the Busts of Saint Servatius and that of Saint Lambert. During the Pilgrimage of Relics, they are carried in the two major processions and the so-called Star Procession from the various parish churches. Each city devotion has its own brotherhood and/or bearers' guild.

STAR OF THE SEA

The Star of the Sea is perhaps the best known and most popular of the four city devotions. It is a 15th century miraculous image of Mary with the infant Jesus, which has been housed in the Church of Our Lady since 1837.

BLACK CHRIST OF WYCK

The Black Christ of Wyck is a 13th century corpus of a crucifix, which has been kept in the Sint-Martinuskerk (Saint Martin's Church) in Wyck since 1804. Prior to that, it was kept in the Wittevrouwenklooster (Wittevrouwen Convent) on the Vrijthof. The Black Christ attracted pilgrims as early as the Middle Ages, particularly from Central Europe.

BUST OF SAINT SERVATIUS

The gilded and silver-plated bust contains a fragment of the skull of Saint Servatius and is one of the most important art treasures in the Treasury of the Basilica of Saint Servatius.

BUST OF SAINT LAMBERT

The reliquary bust of Saint Lambert is relatively recent. In 1937, Sint-Lambertuskerk (Saint Lambert's Church) acquired a relic of Lambert, the only saint born in Maastricht. A year later, Father Linssen commissioned a gilded reliquary set with precious stones in the form of a portrait bust, modelled on the Servatius bust. The statue soon became one of the city's most popular objects of devotion.

SAINT SERVATIUS TREASURY FOUNDATION

The Foundation manages, operates and presents the church's entire movable and partly immovable art collection, both within the church building and in the rooms of the Treasury. The core collection of the Treasury (the Noodkist (Shrine of Saint Servatius), 'Servatiana' (everything related to Saint Servatius), medieval reliquaries and medieval textiles) falls under the Dutch Heritage Act and is therefore designated as legally protected cultural heritage.

The income is used to cover the collection's management costs and the Foundation's own staff costs. For tax purposes, the Foundation is regarded as a business.

The pursuit of profit is not an end in itself, but is necessary, on the one hand, to enable the Foundation to fulfil its own tasks and, on the other hand, to generate income that supports the church's religious and social ambitions. This requires economically sound management. The Foundation's original objectives have been expanded over time. On the one hand, the collection has grown and, on the other hand, the personnel and financial links between the church/Basilica and the Treasury are increasing. Activities are also increasingly being organized jointly. As a result, boundaries are blurring.

The Foundation is not a public benefit organization, not a recognized museum and not a member of the Dutch Museumvereniging (Museum Association). This distance from the mainstream Dutch museum sector can sometimes prove difficult when dealing with other museum institutions and the government.

Although the Foundation was originally established solely for the art collection of Saint Servatius' Church, over the years there has been a growing tendency to loan movable ecclesiastical art that can no longer be managed by the (ecclesiastical) owners themselves to the Treasury (acting as a safety net).

Private individuals also regularly donate items. As a result, the Treasury now houses objects on loan from other parishes, causing the available exhibition space to become (too) full.

The part of the collection that is not on public display is a serious cause for concern. Following the restoration in the 1980s, many items were relegated to the attic. What remains, is a collection of a mixed bag of old and new. Much of the material relates to the 19th and 20th centuries, periods not covered in the current exhibition. However, the existing storage space in the attic does not meet museum standards in any respect.

The current exhibition dates from the late 1980s; while modern for its time and still fundamentally adequate, it has since become somewhat dated. There is a lack of educational information about the veneration of Saint Servatius, the history of the church and (multilingual) explanations of the exhibited material.

In terms of content, the exhibited material is, on the one hand, one-sided and, on the other hand, of a hybrid nature. A clear concept is lacking. While the Treasury has too much regarding some items, certain aspects are entirely or almost entirely missing.

Archaeological finds from the Merovingian period are held in the municipal depots. The significant religious arts and crafts tradition in Maastricht, spanning various stylistic periods between 1860 and 1950, is also absent. The history of The Chapter of Saint Servatius is barely touched upon and the history of the church in the 19th and 20th centuries is entirely absent.



A tour of the Treasury therefore gives the visitor mainly an impression of a wealth of old and venerable objects, but there is no context regarding the history of the site, the coherence of the collection, the veneration of Saint Servatius through the centuries, or the functionality of the objects.

The Treasury and the Basilica are the main permanent 'attractions' for tourists in the city center.

Undeniably, the church building itself exerts the greatest appeal. Although Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Treasury will always attract visitors, ongoing investment is essential to maintain their appeal, including to make sure they remain attractive in the future.

The quality of visitor facilities has so far been mediocre. One option to consider might be to open the doors on the Vrijthof and the Bergportaal, combined with free entry to the church.

It might also be worth considering opening the doors of Keizer Karelplein, Vrijthof and Bergportaal on Sundays during High Mass to allow (tourist and curious) visitors to enter during Holy Mass, so that they may marvel at the beauty of the service and be given the opportunity to participate.



SINT-MATTHIJSKERK COLLECTION

The movable art collection of Sint-Matthiaskerk (Saint Matthias' Church) comprises a very extensive collection featuring 16th–20th century vestments, robes, objects from Saint Matthias', Saint Hubert's and Saint Joseph's Churches (some small objects are already housed in the Treasury of Saint Servatius) and statues. The collection of Maastricht silver and vestments lends itself perfectly to telling the story of the numerous Maastricht brotherhoods and guilds that have traditionally been active here. There is no clear overview of the physical condition of the items, but the current storage conditions do not meet museum standards. The collection is not on public display with the exception of items on loan to the Treasury of Saint Servatius. Should the collaboration between Saint Servatius and Saint Matthias continue, the management of this collection will place an increased burden on the Treasury, and both one-off and ongoing resources will be required to make sure its responsibly managed.



SINT-MARTINUSKERK COLLECTION IN WYCK

According to the published inventory lists, the Sint-Martinuskerk (Saint Martin's Church) possesses a significant collection of ancient objects for liturgical use and works of art. Information regarding the physical condition is not available. The collection is not on public display. Since 1804, this (first) neo-Gothic church by Pierre Cuypers has housed the miraculous statue of the Black Christ, one of Maastricht's four city devotions. The 13th century statue was venerated during the Middle Ages in the Wittevrouwenklooster (Wittevrouwen Convent) on the Vrijthof and is still carried (as a copy) every year in the Maastricht City Procession.

COLLECTIONS IN OTHER CHURCHES

Other churches, outside Maastricht's city center, also possess historical movable heritage, albeit on a smaller scale than the city center churches, but sometimes very old and valuable. They are not very visible to the public. Inventory lists do provide a rough idea of what is (or should be) present, but there is no clear policy on the closure of churches. Major risks arise in the phase preceding the decommissioning of a church for worship.

BONNEFANTEN MUSEUM

In addition to the aforementioned collections of movable heritage held by the church, the Bonnefanten Museum must also be mentioned in the context of religious heritage in Maastricht. With the Neutelings collection, it holds a large collection of medieval art (mainly sculptures) on long-term loan. Furthermore, the museum incorporates the Stichting Bisschoppelijk Museum (Episcopal Museum Foundation), which holds Limburg artefacts (sculptures and silver). We can disregard the Neutelings collection here; the Stichting Bisschoppelijk Museum does not carry out any independent activities, is not visible to the outside world as a foundation, and, while it has a fine collection, this is limited in scope.

Appendix: The Diocese of Maastricht

The Diocese of Maastricht (Latin: *Traiectum ad Mosam*), also known as the Diocese of Tongeren-Maastricht-Liège, is a former diocese of the Roman Catholic Church which had its main see in Maastricht in the early Middle Ages and from which the Diocese of Liège later emerged.

HISTORY

The 6th century historian Gregory of Tours wrote in his *Historia Francorum* (History of the Franks) how Servatius of Tongeren, a bishop of Armenian origin, travelled to Maastricht at the end of his life, died there and was buried along the Roman road. According to medieval interpretations of Gregory of Tours' text, Servatius is said to have transferred the episcopal see to Maastricht in 384.

In 535, Domitianus of Huy signed the acts of the Council of Auvergne as bishop of the Church of the Tungri: "quod e[st] Traiecto" (which is in Maastricht). This is the first historical source to refer to the Diocese of Maastricht. Prior to that time, the term "Diocese of the Tungri" was usually used, although the see may well have been in Maastricht even then. The history of the Diocese of Maastricht up to the beginning of the 6th century is based solely on apocryphal texts and later reconstructions. According to the 10th century historian Heriger of Lobbes, the transfer of the episcopal see from Tongeren to Maastricht did not take place until the second half of the 6th century, carried out by Bishop Monulfus, but this appears to be contradicted by historical facts. In the traditional view, it was Bishop Hubertus who transferred the see from Maastricht to Liège in 722. Some authors suggest that this took place later (late 8th, early 9th century). In any case, the bishops continued to use the title *episcopus tungrensis* (Bishop of Tongeren) even after 722. The last mention of Maastricht as an episcopal see dates from 682. In 835, Liège is first referred to as an episcopal see. In the 10th century, the Diocese of Liège developed into the powerful Prince-Bishopric of Liège, from which the new, ecclesiastical Diocese of Liège emerged during the French period. In 1841, the city of Maastricht, along with the rest of Dutch Limburg, was separated from the Diocese of Liège, and from 1853 onwards it has formed part of the Diocese of Roermond, which was re-established that year.

CATHEDRAL

It is unknown where the cathedral of the Diocese of Maastricht was located. In the Middle Ages, the chapters of the Saint Servatius Church and Church of Our Lady were already wrestling with this question, but no conclusive evidence has been found to this day. In favor of the Saint Servatius Church is the fact that the graves of the Bishops Servatius, Monulfus and Gondulfus are located within this church and that The Chapter of Saint Servatius was one of the most powerful institutions in the Holy Roman Empire for centuries. In favor of the Church of Our Lady is the fact that this church is located within the walls of the old Roman *castrum* (fortress) that, like the earlier Cathedral of Tongeren, bears the patronage of Mary, and that the church also maintained close ties with the bishops of Liège in later centuries.





THE 21 HOLY BISHOPS OF MAASTRICHT

	NAME	PERIOD	SAINT'S DAY
1	Saint Servatius	4th century	May 13
	Saint Candidus		June 13
2	Saint Agricolaus	4th/5th century (388–401)	February 5
3	Saint Urcisinus	4th/5th century (401–413)	October 1
4	Saint Designatus	5th century (413–437)	January 13
5	Saint Resignatus	5th century (437–465)	December 1
6	Saint Sulpitius	5th century (465–480)	January 17
7	Saint Quirillus	5th/6th century (480–520)	April 30
8	Saint Eucherius I	6th century (520–522)	February 20
9	Saint Falco	6th century (522–527)	February 20
10	Saint Eucharius II	6th century (527–530)	February 27
11	Saint Domitian of Huy	Before 535 – after 549	May 17
12	Saint Monulfus	Second half of the 6th century	July 16 or 27
13	Saint Perpetuus	586–589	November 4
14	Saint Gondulfus or Bettulfus	Around 614	July 16
15	Saint Evergislus or Ebrengisus	6th/7th century	March 28
16	Saint John I Agnus	Early 7th century	July 25
17	Saint Amandus	c. 647 – 650	February 6
18	Saint Remaclus	Second half of the 7th century	September 3
19	Saint Theodardus	Second half of the 7th century	September 10
20	Saint Lambert Faramundus	c. 670 – c. 700 675–683	September 17
21	Saint Hubert	c. 706–727	November 3

TITULAR BISHOPS

The Titular Diocese of Maastricht was established in 1970. The see has been occupied, with interruptions, by four bishops

NAME	PERIOD	COMMENTS
Petrus Moors	1970–1980	Previously Bishop of Roermond
Joannes Gijssen	1993–1996	Previously Bishop of Roermond; appointed Bishop of Reykjavik in 1996
Marco Pérez Caicedo	2006–2012	He was the suffragan bishop of Guayaquil; appointed Bishop of Babahoyo in 2012
Waldemar Stanisław Sommertag	2018 – present	Appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Nicaragua and Titular Archbishop of Maastricht on February 15, 2018. On March 6, 2022, he left Nicaragua to become nuncio to Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Mauritania. See below for his official coat of arms.



Appendix: Parochiefederatie Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe en Sint-Pieter (Parish Federation of Our Lady and Saint Peter)

This section has been included to provide an overview of part of the existing structure in Maastricht centered around the existing parishes.

Basilica of Our Lady – Star of the Sea Basilica

409 seats
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 7
6211 HD Maastricht

Kerk Sint-Pieter boven/Allerh. Verlosser en H. Petrus

350 seats
Ursulinenweg 2
6212 NC Maastricht

Parish office and Pieterkelderke Parish Hall

Sint Willibrordusstraat 12
6212 CB Maastricht

Onze Lieve Vrouw Parish Hall

Stokstraat 46 A
6211 GD Maastricht

Sint Lambertuskapel

Lage Kanaaldijk 12
6212 AE Maastricht

Kerk Sint-Pieter beneden/H. Petrus

Sint Maternusstraat 15
6212 BV Maastricht

Kerkhof Sint-Pieter boven

Ursulinenweg 2
6212 NC Maastricht

Lourdes Chapel and Grotto

Ursulinenweg 3B
6212 NC Maastricht





Appendix: Dekenaat Maastricht-Meerssen (Maastricht-Meerssen Deanery)

Dit hoofdstuk is opgenomen om een indruk te krijgen van een gedeelte van de bestaande structuur in Maastricht rondom de bestaande parochies.

Center

Federatie St. Servaas en H. Matthias

- Basilica of Saint Servatius
- St Matthias

Federatie Onze Lieve Vrouw Ten Hemelopneming en H. Petrus

- Onze Lieve Vrouw Ten Hemelopneming
- Heilige Petrus van Allerheiligst Verlosser
- Heilige Petrus (Sint-Pieter)

Parish of Saint Martin in Wyck

- Saint Martin of Wyck

Maastricht West

Federatie Johannes Paulus II

- Heilig Hart van Jezus (Church in Oud Caberg)
- Heilig Hart Petrus en Paulus (in Wolder)
- San Salvator
- De Vier Evangelisten (in Malberg)

Federation being established: Anna/Jozef/Theresia/Lambertus

- Heilige Anna (at the Brusselse Poort)
- Heilige Theresia (in Biesland)

Maastricht East

Federatie Oost

- Onze Lieve Vrouw van Lourdes (in Wittevrouwenveld)
- Sint Petrus' Banden (in Heer)
- Saints Monulphus en Gondulfus (in De Heeg)
- Heilige Walburga (in Amby)
- Heilige Michael (in Heugem)
- Johannes de Doper (in Limmel)
- Heilige Antonius van Padua (in Scharn)
- Heilig Hart van Jezus (in Koepelkerk)

Meerssen

Cluster 8

- Heilige Bartholomeus (in Meerssen)
- Sint Jozef Arbeider (in Meerssen West)
- Heilig Hart van Jezus (in Rothem)

Federatie Edith Stein

- Saint Agnes (in Bunde)
- Heilige Martinus (in Geulle-Brommelen)
- Heilig Onbevlekt Hart van Maria (in Moorveld-Waalsen)
- Heilige Catharina (in Ulestraten)
- Heilige Cornelius (in Borgharen)
- Heilige Martinus (in Itteren)

Appendix: Local Council of Churches of Maastricht

An important body is the Local Council of Churches of Maastricht (there are approximately 250 provincial, regional and local Councils of Churches active in the Netherlands). The following are represented within the Council in Maastricht:

- The Roman Catholic Church
- The Protestant Church
- The Dutch Reformed Church (including Het Zuiderkruis from Maastricht)
- The Armenian Apostolic Church
- The Old Catholic Church
- The Salvation Army
- The Remonstrant Church
- The Russian Orthodox Church

The Council of Churches of Maastricht was founded on October 31, 1967 (Reformation Day) during a service in the Basilica of Saint Servatius. At that time, the Council consisted of 11 members: 4 Roman Catholics, 3 Dutch Reformed believers, 2 Reformed believers (Calvinists), 1 Lutheran and 1 member of the Walloon Church. Incidentally, there had already been an Ecumenical Contact Group with 8 members since around 1950.



“Every religion in Europe demands fidelity to its doctrine. We must guard against this in this project so that each religion also accepts the other. Initiatives must be ‘rooted in the city’s religious traditions’, but, from a religious perspective, Maastricht is more than just the Catholic faith. The pilgrimage project can, in fact, foster (greater) self-reflection and a broader perspective.”
(Stakeholder response)

For clarity’s sake (and without claiming to be exhaustive), we will now take a closer look at a few communities that are also represented by the stakeholders.

PROTESTANT CHURCH



Protestantse Kerk

The Zuid-Limburg Protestant Congregation of Maas-Heuvelland (PKN) has churches in Maastricht, Vaals, Gulpen and Valkenburg. It is an active, accessible and welcoming congregation that lives, shares and believes together with others in openness, following the example of Jesus Christ. Sint Jans Kerk falls under this umbrella. In addition, there is the Stichting Waalse Kerk Maastricht (which manages the building), whose aim is to use this church as a meeting place for the people of Maastricht to combat spiritual poverty. Today, the church is used by the Dutch Reformed Church.

JUDAISM

The Nederlands Israëlitische Hoofdsynagoge Limburg (NIHS Limburg) is located in Maastricht. The NIHS Limburg is a religious community belonging to the Dutch Israelite Congregation. Traditionally, the Netherlands has a Christian-Jewish culture. Jews were already living in Venlo and Maastricht in the 13th century. The New Testament is based on the Old Testament. After the Second World War, the synagogue was put back in service in 1952.



ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church is to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and to spread His message of salvation. The city of Maastricht is linked to the Armenian community through Saint Servatius, the patron saint of Maastricht. Saint Servatius came to this region from Armenia in the 4th century to preach the Gospel.





GOD AND MAN

And what is a man if not a traveler, courageous, indefatigable, ever moving forward, always toward heaven, insistently knocking at the portals of hope. The abundant “light of glory” of human life is spread on this road only. And, only on this road can men walk freely with the unseen Creator, and having transformed their bodies into souls, they create that which is good, true, beautiful and just.

This is eternal man, resurrected on the road to Damascus through the grace of the resurrection of the Only-Begotten Son.

Easter Homily, 1960
His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians.

OTHER CHURCHES

In addition to the local Council of Churches in Maastricht, there is also the Pentecostal Church, the Baptist Church and the Moluccan Evangelical Church. There is also a separate Christian congregation in Bunde-Meerssen known as: Stem van de Goede Herder. These congregations are therefore not included within the Council of Churches.

ISLAM

The El Fath Mosque is a Moroccan-Dutch mosque. The Tevhid Mosque is a mosque and multicultural center. The mosque focuses primarily on Turkish-Dutch Muslims. The building is located right next to the El Fath Mosque.



Appendix: Future Exploration of Places of Worship in Maastricht

In this appendix, we summarize an independent study conducted in 2023, commissioned by the municipality of Maastricht, into the future of the many places of worship in Maastricht.

“Maastricht as a city of pilgrimage is a theme that resonates and attracts people. This can be further developed as part of the city’s identity, in combination with other ongoing initiatives” (included on page 47 of the study as an opportunity).

Incidentally, virtually all municipalities in Limburg are currently drawing up a similar vision.

Where the city skyline and urban concrete meet

The survival of various places of worship is under pressure and this will only get worse in the future. Fewer people are ‘attending church’, society is changing, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the often historic places of worship in good condition. This appendix contains the management summary.



Background and objective

Maastricht’s cultural identity is largely shaped by its religious past and the associated heritage. This applies both to the physical appearance of the city and to its social structure. However, the survival of that heritage is under considerable, and rapidly increasing, pressure. As in the rest of the Netherlands, the trend towards secularization means that fewer and fewer people are attending church or a synagogue. Virtually all places of worship are struggling with declining numbers, ageing congregations and shortages of priests, ministers and volunteers. Financial resources are also dwindling for the maintenance and management of these often large and energy-inefficient buildings to name but one issue. The Maastricht Board of the Mayor and Aldermen has decided, with financial support from central government, to commission what is being referred to as a ‘Church Vision’. The primary aim of this is to work with the religious communities to identify these issues and explore ways of achieving a sustainable future for places of worship whose continued existence is under threat.

After all, the demolition of significant religious buildings must be prevented as far as possible. The term ‘Church Vision’, as introduced nationally by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and frequently used, has been replaced, in the case of Maastricht, by ‘Future Exploration of Places of Worship’. This is explained in more detail in the report.

Research design

Based on desk research, a comprehensive overview of Maastricht’s places of worship was compiled (for the first time). Subsequently, efforts were made to build relationships with the owners of the places of worship to gain an understanding of the challenges they face and their future expectations regarding these buildings. Opportunities for sustainable preservation, including through collaboration between owners and the municipality of Maastricht, were also explored. To this end, the relevant policy





departments within the municipality were consulted. All places of worship (except five) were visited and assessed for their cultural-historical and urban planning significance, state of repair, and potential for sustainability. Furthermore, a digital survey was conducted among Maastricht residents (with a high response rate) to gauge how they view the importance of the places of worship and what they think about their future.

What did the research reveal?

We met and spoke with the managers and owners of places of worship during in-depth one-to-one discussions in almost all places of worship. Two joint meetings were also organized at the start and at the conclusion of the project. Separate meetings were held twice with the Roman Catholic deanery and all the parish priests (who represented the parish federations). The relationship between the municipality of Maastricht and owners of places of worship is of great importance as a basis for jointly identifying new sustainable prospects for places of worship that are becoming vacant. We were unable to make contact with five places of worship, including both mosques.

A very comprehensive overview has been compiled of the complete history of religious life in Maastricht and the cemeteries, monasteries, chapels, churchyards, places of worship and other sites that have been established, built and, in some cases, disappeared for this purpose. The overview contains 14 main categories and approximately 400 objects and locations.

A complete overview has been obtained of the collection of current, still-existing places of worship in Maastricht as a basis for the research: there are 46 in total. This count is based on the number of places of worship in Maastricht as indicated by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands on the basis of which the grant for a 'Kerkenvisie' (Church Vision) was obtained. An initial exploratory understanding has been gained of the characteristics and current status of this collection:

- Functions: 33 places of worship are still in religious use (72%), two are vacant (4%) and 11 have already been repurposed (24%) (as of 2023).
- Religious denominations of the 33 places of worship in religious use: 23 Roman Catholic (70%), 4 other Christian denominations (12%), 2 Islamic (6%), 1 Protestant Church in the Netherlands (Reformed) (3%), 1 Dutch Reformed Church (Liberated) (3%), 1 Jewish (3%), 1 Armenian Apostolic Church (3%),
- Cultural-historical and urban planning significance: the churches, monasteries and convents, their location, their footprint and their use have formed the basis of Maastricht's urban development for one and a half millennia. The earliest finds date from Roman times; by the early 6th century, there was probably already a first cathedral where the Basilica of Our Lady now stands (built in the 11th century), and also in the 6th century a Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Basilica of Saint Servatius) near the present-day Vrijthof. In the 13th century, the historic center developed, featuring many churches, monasteries and convents. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the city experienced explosive growth with the emergence of suburbs and new parishes, and the village centers, with their characteristic churches, became part of Maastricht.
- Structural condition of places of worship: based on the structural quick scan carried out, almost all score satisfactory in terms of structural condition (two were rated fair); the overall score in the villages and residential areas is slightly better than in the city center.
- Construction period: the churches of Maastricht collectively span over 1,500 years of architectural history. The origins of the Basilica of Saint Servatius even date back to the 6th century, making it one of the oldest churches in the Netherlands and perhaps even the oldest. The Basilica of Our Lady is also a very old church, dating from just after the year 1000, while Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church) and Sint-Matthiaskerk (Saint Matthew's Church) date from the 14th century. There are a few churches that were built in the 17th and 18th centuries. The largest proportion of places of worship, almost 25%, was built in the 19th century, and more than 50% in the 20th century. The newer places of worship therefore dominate in terms of numbers, but Maastricht also boasts an extraordinary wealth of much older church buildings.

- Listed status: of the 46 places of worship, 23 have national monument status (50%), 16 are listed as municipal monuments (35%), and the remaining 7 have no protected status (15%). The monumental religious heritage contributes significantly to Maastricht's cultural identity and tourist appeal, as well as to its status as the 'second city of monuments in the Netherlands'.
- Cultural and historical value: the fact that 85% of places of worship have listed status is in itself an indication of their high cultural and historical value. There are also unlisted buildings, including some from the post-war period, which does not mean that they lack architectural-historical value.
- All in all, the cultural-historical significance of the places of worship scores relatively highly in the assessment carried out as part of this study: an average of 7 in the residential areas and villages and an 8 in the city center. These scores are based on the quick scan, which was carried out as part of this study by a specialist architectural historian.
- Opportunities for sustainability: the heritage value of many places of worship limits the possibilities for sustainability in most cases, but there are certainly opportunities. Making church buildings or a synagogue more sustainable is often a chicken-and-egg problem. If the building is hardly used, investing in sustainability is not cost-effective. On the other hand, if you do not make the building more sustainable, the running costs of a church building are too high in terms of heating and you do not encourage greater use either.
- Opportunities for dual use adaptation or repurposing: based on the quick scan carried out, there appear to be sufficient opportunities for almost all places of worship to be used for dual use alongside their religious function or to be repurposed entirely.
- Insight into the challenges facing owners: through a strengths and weaknesses analysis and by means of quotes from the interviews throughout the report, insight is provided into the challenges that the owners of places of worship are facing or will face. With a few exceptions, all the places of worship surveyed are facing a continuing decline in membership and the resulting financial constraints that this entails.
- An initial insight has been gained into the future prospects anticipated by owners for each place of worship. This insight has been generalized in the report. By 2033, it is expected that, of the 33 places of worship currently in religious use, only 6 to 11 will remain (see also conclusion 1).
- There is a growing realization that a proactive approach is needed: adapting for dual use or redeveloping a place of worship can easily take five years. Now that it has become clear how many and which places of worship are likely to cease their religious function, either wholly or in part, between now and five years' time, it is possible to begin considering scenarios for the future in good time.
- A strengths and weaknesses analysis has been carried out with local policymakers, focusing on an initial exploration of opportunities for new or partial uses of places of worship across various policy areas relevant to the development of the city and its residents. There is a long list of 'space seekers', including cultural, economic and social initiatives. Maastricht has a shortage of meeting spaces.
- The resident survey has now made it clear that the people of Maastricht are deeply committed to their religious heritage; 80% believe that vacant places of worship deserve a new purpose.





What are the conclusions and recommendations for the way forward?

Now that the Future Exploration of Places of Worship in Maastricht has been carried out and we have got to know each other, clarified the task at hand and explored opportunities, we can draw a number of conclusions. One or more recommendations have been made for each conclusion. As the process has progressed, it has become increasingly clear that an in-depth research phase is needed to further develop the recommendations. Other cities, such as Arnhem and Haarlem, have also opted for this approach. It requires further steps to arrive at well-founded considerations, an action plan that is feasible and affordable for all parties involved, and a vision for the future of places of worship from the various perspectives.

1. THE PLACES OF WORSHIP IN MAASTRICHT (MANY OF WHICH ARE LISTED BUILDINGS) ARE UNDER SERIOUS THREAT OF CLOSURE.

By 2023, 24% of the 46 places of worship had already been repurposed and 4% stand empty. Of the 33 places of worship still in religious use, 17 are expected to lose their religious function by 2028. Five places of worship were not surveyed and 11 places of worship remain in religious use for the time being. It is expected that the percentage of the 46 places of worship in Maastricht still in religious use will fall from 72% to 35% within five years, and eventually to 24% (if the five churches not surveyed are included). By 2038, this number will halve again, leaving between 6 and 11 places of worship still in religious use (if the five churches not included in the survey are taken into account) and 22–27 places of worship that will cease to be used for religious purposes from 2023 onwards.

RECOMMENDATION 1A

Investigate the opportunities for places of worship that are becoming (partially) vacant in relation to the future and quality of life of their surroundings. First determine what this requires of church and other faith-based organizations, as well as the local authority. For further exploration, we see the following areas of research:

- What does it mean if the municipality, together with the owners, actively pursues the possibility of a 'building shift' (where cultural and social functions subsidized by the municipality are transferred to (listed) places of worship) and involves local residents and neighborhoods in related developments?
- What does it mean if the municipality adopts a vision that Maastricht wishes to nurture the meeting function, and preferably the social purpose, of places of worship for both current and future generations? It is not the municipality's role to 'impose' a new use, but it can encourage an initial exploration of the possibilities for such a meaningful new use. The administrations of places of worship are, of course, also in favor of a community-based use, but, at the same time, they face a considerable financial challenge. Municipal advisers, who are well acquainted with the need for venues for community functions, can actively contribute ideas on possibilities and help investigate the feasibility of potential options.
- How do we establish the link between a vision and approach for the place of worship conundrum and related substantive policy documents, such as the Environmental Vision and the current community center vision? How do we embed the outcomes we would like within the municipality's internal working methods?

RECOMMENDATION 1B

Investigate whether it is possible to support the maintenance of the large iconic city center churches through grants or other means. This is based on their urban significance as bearers of identity and as cultural and tourist icons of the city. There may also be opportunities to help increase their income in an appropriate manner.

RECOMMENDATION 1C

Resources are limited in relation to the owners and regarding the municipality of Maastricht. It is unrealistic and unaffordable to retain all places of worship that are expected to cease religious use for community use. Work with the owners of the places of worship to develop an assessment framework. Decisions can then be made regarding which places of worship are most desirable and promising to retain for the community if their religious function is no longer viable.

2. CHURCH BUILDINGS OF HIGH CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE ARE PROTECTED, BUT GREATER ATTENTION IS NEEDED FOR CHURCH INTERIORS AND MOVABLE RELIGIOUS HERITAGE.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Work with owners and experts from Museum Catharijneconvent to draw up a feasible plan for the identification and protection of the valuable interiors.

3. COMMUNITIES DECLINING IN NUMBERS ARE SEARCHING FOR DIRECTION.

For religious communities, it is an emotional journey when the religious function comes to an end. Moreover, developing a long-term vision for buildings requires expertise and insight into this field, which is often lacking.

RECOMMENDATION 3A

Support, where and when appropriate, the process currently being undertaken by the Roman Catholic 'declining attendance working group' to develop a pastoral plan and, subsequently, a framework for assessing the retention or disposal of church buildings based firstly on the Roman Catholic pastoral role and secondly on the associated ownership role of the Roman Catholic Church.



RECOMMENDATION 3B

Support, inspire and encourage owners of places of worship to proactively seek new uses to add or repurpose places of worship where the declining attendance makes this necessary. Launch three pilot projects to gain experience and learn lessons for follow-up projects, and support owners with preparatory work on their part to prepare themselves for decisions and any feasibility studies for dual uses or repurposing. In the meantime, investigate all funding options for follow-up steps from funding bodies at various levels.

There is much to learn from other local authorities that have previously drawn up a vision for their churches and, partly on that basis, have set up action-focused projects, often with (financial) support from central government and/or the province. Both the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and the province of Limburg attach great importance to a sustainable future for religious heritage and have incentive programs to this end, including for feasibility studies on repurposing and sustainability. For projects in which heritage is used for social, economic and spatial area development (at various scales), the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands can offer support through the Heritage Deal program. Religious heritage is certainly a priority in this regard.

One example is the Buurtbakens approach in Haarlem, which has received a substantial financial contribution from the Heritage Deal. This also applies to the Hart van Oosterhout project, where the repurposing of the Catholic church into a village hall forms the driving force behind the development of a village center for this village between Arnhem and Nijmegen.



A Heritage Deal contribution may also be requested for the follow-up process in Maastricht to supplement the municipality's own investment. Initial research indicates that an application for a Heritage Deal for a follow-up program, focused on the repurposing and sustainability of Maastricht's religious heritage, certainly stands a good chance of success. This will require a specific and detailed plan. In addition, the Province of Limburg could also be approached to contribute. It would be highly promising and set a fine example if the initiative were taken jointly by the municipality and the Diocese!

By offering not only municipal research capacity and external expertise but also a financial contribution to the owners of places of worship to carry out research in order to adapt them for dual use or repurposing, they will feel heard and supported, and will be more inclined to join a joint program. This could potentially be combined with a grant from the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands's Incentive Scheme for the Repurposing of Monuments, which is aimed at supporting feasibility studies for the repurposing of individual monuments and which is open for applications annually between October 1 and November 30.

It is recommended to start with (part of) the first batch of places of worship that are due to become available. The church administrations will determine this. In doing so, a distinction should be made between Roman Catholic and other places of worship, as the approach adopted for the 'declining attendance process' on the Roman Catholic side and its impact (67% of places of worship in religious use) are different and greater than those for places of worship of other faiths.

On the one hand, opt to engage strategically with the Roman Catholic delegation on this matter, including in the interests of the city. You can also, for example, opt for three pilot projects from among the most urgent places of worship that are set to lose their religious function, with the urgency being the starting point for the selection (the timeframe within which the church or synagogue is at risk of losing its religious function), while also taking into account any specific opportunities for repurposing that may arise. This would appear to result in a group of pilot projects comprising mainly Roman Catholic churches and the synagogue, provided the owners wish to participate. Design the program in such a

way that all other owners of places of worship can observe and learn, that there are also joint projects (such as setting up a platform to match supply and demand for the hire of spaces in places of worship), and that they too can get involved at a later stage.

4. HIGH ENERGY COSTS CALL FOR SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Sustainability measures only make sense if places of worship also have a sustainable future outlook in terms of functional use and associated long-term financial viability. Investigate, possibly in collaboration with the province, the possibilities of offering owners a 'Green Deal' program (Arnhem has had positive experiences with this), in which, in addition to process guidance, substantive expertise and available grant funds are utilized. Naturally, this could also apply to places of worship that still retain their religious function whether for the time being or not.

5. IF THE RELIGIOUS FUNCTION OF CHURCHES CEASES, THE RINGING OF BELLS IS ALSO AT RISK OF DISAPPEARING.

Residents of Maastricht may then find that they miss this aspect of the city's identity. Experience elsewhere shows that this only really sinks in once the noise has disappeared. It then becomes clear just how essential it was to the atmosphere of the city.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Contact the Stichting Klinkend Erfgoed (Sounding Heritage Foundation), which advocates for a "nationally protected urban sound" in relation to church bells. Carry out research into the effects and possible solutions for Maastricht.



Overall conclusion and recommendation

Implementation of the above recommendations is expedient to enable decision-making on a long-term Action Plan for the Future of Places of Worship in Maastricht, including a more comprehensive vision and financial justification. We recommend drawing up an action plan in the next nine-month phase, including an internal procedure for handling applications for permits etc. from owners of places of worship undergoing a transition process. At present, contact with owners of places of worship is handled by the Property Department. It is expedient that a clear point of contact for owners of places of worship from the Municipality of Maastricht be appointed for the next phase of the study, to whom they can turn with all their questions and ideas. This person would also act as a director and coordinator, operating at a higher level of abstraction and liaising between different departments. As the municipal project manager, he or she would work closely with external experts on all action points to guarantee the smooth running of the Action Plan for the Future of Places of Worship.

The municipality of Maastricht is also making funds available for:

- The implementation of three pilot projects to learn together what works and what is needed to find a positive future for valuable places of worship that are becoming vacant.
- Expert support for the process currently being undertaken by the Roman Catholic 'declining attendance working group' to develop a pastoral plan and, subsequently, an assessment framework for retaining and disposing of church buildings while prioritizing the Roman Catholic pastoral role first and the role of owners of church buildings second.
- The drafting of an overall assessment framework, incorporating both the assessment criteria of owners of places of worship and those of a general nature (e.g. architectural history and urban planning) as well as the interests of the city.
- The submission of applications for financial support to central government (Heritage Deal and repurposing grant) and the Province of Limburg, to supplement the development budget already set aside by the municipality of Maastricht and therefore increase its capacity to act.



Appendix: Contemplation Hotel in Maastricht

In discussions with stakeholders, reference was made to the former Sint-Servaasgasthuis. From the 11th–12th centuries, this hospital provided accommodation for pilgrims from home and abroad, offering three days' free lodging, bread, beer and pea soup. The site where this tradition is rooted is now largely used by the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen). Within the former Chapter grounds, which were in use from around 800 to 1797, this hospitable role could potentially be revived.

Newspaper article in De Limburger on June 11, 2025

Maastricht krijgt 'bezinningshotel' Bisschop in oud weeshuis vlak bij Tapijn

Maastricht krijgt 'bezinningshotel' Bisschop in oud weeshuis vlak bij Tapijn (Maastricht to get 'retreat hotel' Bisschop in former orphanage near Tapijn)

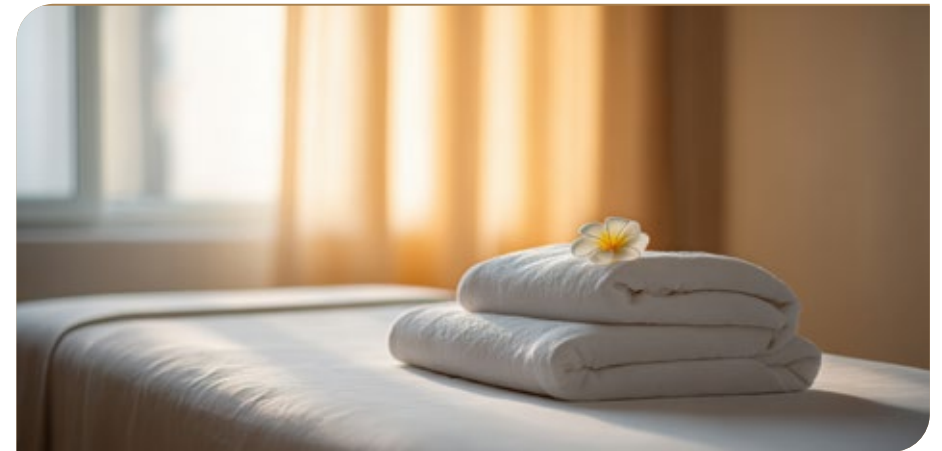
A former Protestant orphanage is to become a retreat hotel if the municipality of Maastricht approves the plan. The building is located at the entrance to the city. An attractive-looking building with shutters on Prins Bisschopsingel next to Tapijn and directly opposite Maastricht police station. Built in 1912 as a Protestant orphanage, it is now home to the Broeders van Maastricht, part of the Congregatio Fratrum Immaculatae Conceptionis (FIC) Beatae Mariae Virginis (Congregation of the Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

In Maastricht, the Brothers of FIC have three locations, including on Brusselsestraat and Capucijnengang. The number of brothers is declining sharply; the last sixteen will be moving to Jardin Monet, the new residential complex near De Geusselt, at the end of the year or the beginning of next year. There, the brothers have purchased an entire wing.

Renzo Goessens of developer Tenzin has purchased the building and submitted a plan for a retreat center to the municipality. "We want, for example, hikers on the Pieterpad trail to stay in Maastricht for a few days longer." As they often visit during the week, this fits in with the municipality's wish to encourage tourists to stay longer and indeed not just during weekends.

When Goessens saw the building, he immediately thought of a hotel. "It contains classrooms and other larger spaces that can easily be divided into rooms, some of which, for example, are austere and deliberately without Wi-Fi. The director's office, on the other hand, however, is large and luxurious, with a fireplace. So it will be a mix."

The plan refers to a boutique hotel in a listed building. The municipality is currently reviewing the plan, entitled Bisschop (name of the hotel). Goessens hopes to be able to start the renovation early next year. If the 35 rooms of the retreat hotel go ahead, the municipality estimates that there will only be room for around 57 more rooms in the city by 2034.



"We must be critical of developments of this kind. Does such a development really fit the plan or is it merely a veneer being applied over the top?"
(Stakeholder response)

Appendix: Contemplation in Limburg: the slow movement



This appendix provides an overview of a 2008 report (*Bezinningstoerisme in Limburg, kansen, concepten en voorwaarden*), which served as the basis for a project on slow tourism in Limburg. Parts of this report that remain relevant in 2025 are included in this chapter.

2008 foundation

The term 'tourism' appears frequently in the chapter on pilgrimage as well as in the description of religious heritage. As early as 2008, a report commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Limburg was published under the title: *Bezinningstoerisme in Limburg, kansen, concepten en voorwaarden* (Slow Tourism in Limburg: Opportunities, Concepts and Conditions). It actually still forms the foundation that can be found in various holiday packages especially on the Visit Zuid-Limburg website.

The aim of the research at the time was to map out the business and tourism market for contemplation. The results were intended to provide insight into the demand from businesses and tourists for services that combine the elements of hospitality and 'contemplation' (i.e., taking things slow). The terms spirituality (whether religious or not) and contemplation were used in this context.

- Spirituality concerns questions, senses of meaning and values that transcend or break through normal daily patterns of life and routines. We can add a certain attitude to this, which can be very intense or sporadic and may vary depending on the stage of life one is in. In this respect, spirituality can be compared to sportsmanship, creativity, etc. This study focused primarily on the behaviors that stem from spirituality, including both traditional forms (religion, rituals, pilgrimages, etc.) and newer forms (moments of contemplation, meditation, yoga, visits to specific locations, etc.).
- Contemplation is more of a general term and activity. In the report, 'contemplation' refers to deliberating, thinking about one's own life and finding peace.

In this sense, spirituality is a means of achieving contemplation. Mediums, astrology and the like have been excluded from the study.

It is argued that traditional forms of contemplation rely heavily on religion and the rituals associated with it. However, contemplation can also be viewed more broadly as moments of contemplation and reflection on daily life. From this perspective, contemplation is not reserved solely for religious people, but is more of an inner, psychological or even physical need. This need usually consists of stepping back from the daily hustle and bustle to reflect on life and perhaps put things into perspective.

Human beings are, by nature, existential beings. At key moments in their lives, they ask themselves questions about the point of their existence. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition of Western Europe, there was only one collective answer for a long time to these questions: faith. In recent decades, the church has largely lost that function and people are searching for other ways to find answers to these questions.

The decline in religiosity and church attendance has given rise to a new kind of 'searching religiosity' that is based on individual experience. It is interesting to note that around 70% (2008) indicate that religion can be composed of different traditions and ideas, leading people to increasingly seek out (literally or otherwise) ways to interpret this.

The decline in religiosity and church attendance should not, however, be confused with a decline in the need for contemplation, which is increasingly being met in different ways. The extent of this need cannot be clearly defined: contemplation is often a personal issue that is difficult to quantify. Churchgoers can be counted, but moments of contemplation during, for example, a walk are more difficult to register.

Further research shows that around 30% (2008) find comfort in their spirituality, whether religious or non-religious. Around 35% say they pray or meditate, and around 25–30% (2008) engage in general reflective activities: for example, watching a TV program or reading a book on the theme of spirituality. Furthermore, it appears that around a third (2008) are not at all receptive to a spiritual message. The remaining proportion is, however, spiritually receptive (to a greater or lesser extent) and also links behavior to this. This picture is reinforced by the level of participation in general rituals. Some of these activities are one-off or occasional in nature, whilst others are much more continuous.

The motives for contemplation vary considerably, which is also reflected in different patterns of behavior. Traditional motives for contemplation are devotion and the grieving process, which in most cases are experienced in a religious setting and within a group. Modern spiritual activities have much more personal motives for reflecting on life or contemplating life. This involves self-awareness, personal development or a 'search' for peace or happiness. Such themes are not only emerging in people's leisure time, but are also increasingly being applied in the workplace. The processing of trauma is also one of the motivations for forms of contemplation, but it requires professional guidance and personal attention.

MODULARIZATION: FAITH À LA CARTE

There is a noticeable trend towards adopting individual elements from religions without actually committing to any one particular religion. Elements of religions – particularly the Christian faith – remain popular as a result. Examples include the rituals surrounding Christmas or Easter, carnival masses and memorial services for victims of senseless violence. Religion (or the church in general), however, still plays a role in rituals such as marriage or birth.

'Faith à la carte' seems to be the guiding principle here, where individual religious rituals are consumed. There is also considerable interest in the 'optimistic aspects of faith': praying for a specific purpose, life after death, miracles, and so on. This does not, however, imply that this interest cannot be sincere, but the bond does become less strong.

INDIVIDUALIZATION: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Religious experience, or rather one's general philosophical outlook on life, is becoming more individual. Research shows that a majority of Dutch people regard religion as a personal matter and religion is increasingly less associated with church attendance and a sense of community.

DISCONNECTION/TRANSFORMATION: RITUALS DETACHED FROM THEIR CONTEXT

Another trend is the embrace or 'use' of all manner of religious beliefs and rituals detached from their original context. Prayer seems to have primarily become a form of meditation or introspection without turning to God. The changing meaning of Christmas is a good illustration of an adapted context. The rituals are experienced in a different way and judged more on their experience value.

All in all, the emphasis is more on experiencing a more general form of spirituality where greater attention is paid to its psychological aspects. This is partly evident from the emergence of new forms of spirituality.

GROWING INTEREST IN OTHER FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY

Despite the fact that many Dutch people have severed their ties with the church, there has been a rise in the number of people interested in spirituality (in the broadest sense of the word); (2008). The need for contemplation has by no means disappeared: around 80% (2008) indicate that they sometimes feel the need for a moment to reflect on their lives. This translates into different behaviors, but certainly also into what is available on the market where non-religious spirituality is playing a significant role. This form of spirituality is more focused on introspection and personal development. Spirituality is not an end in itself, but, rather, a means to progress in life, develop personally and 'slow down'.





An emerging form of spirituality, with a strong physical component, is the practice of yoga. Membership numbers at yoga centers have seen steady growth in recent years. The number of practitioners is estimated by the Stichting Yoga & Vedanta Nederland at approximately 150,000–200,000 people (2008). Further growth is expected in the coming years. Membership numbers at centers for contemplation and meditation have also grown in recent years, reflecting a growing interest in the spiritual world.

In recent years, spiritual monthly magazines have also become increasingly popular. Reading such magazines often provides the reader with an (indirect) moment of contemplation or an impetus for spiritual behavior. Sales of spiritual books have also increased.



THE EMERGENCE OF NEW FORMS OF COLLECTIVE CONTEMPLATION

Although the experience of religion and spirituality is becoming increasingly individual and personal, there is also a discernible trend towards the emergence of more collective forms of contemplation. These moments of contemplation may arise from specific events or have emerged over the past century. Examples include World AIDS Day, May 4 and 5, the attacks of September 11, 2001, senseless violence, Anti-racism Day, etc.

By 2025, it can only be concluded that this trend has continued. Examples include the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the war in Gaza, Extinction Rebellion, etc.

Around 50% to 60% say they feel a sense of unity with other Dutch people during disaster commemorations, Second World War remembrance events and silent marches against senseless violence. The sense of collectivity increases on such days. Incidents such as senseless violence are now more readily used as an opportunity for people to come together to mourn, contemplate or express their discontent. Around 10% of the Dutch population has now taken part in a silent march at least once.

This study lacked specific figures on the size of the slow tourism market. The study concludes with two findings.

- Trends point to individual participation: Both the activity and the purpose are increasingly individual and/or personal in nature. This applies to both religion and spirituality in a broader sense. Contemplation is primarily focused on personal needs, with useful elements of religions and contemplative activities being utilized to achieve this goal. This happens systematically but also often impulsively.
- Much latent demand but relatively little manifest demand: The demand for contemplation is mainly latent: people often have an inner need for contemplation, but only a small proportion translate that into behavior. When specific action is taken, this usually takes place in or immediately near the home environment. The slow tourism market remains a niche market for the time being; although it is growing, it is still relatively small in scale.

FOUR MARKETS, TWO TARGET GROUPS

As the research is primarily written from a tourism perspective, the following classification is used. .

MARKETS	
Religious tourism	Religious tourism occurs when the motive for undertaking the journey is religious: worship at a holy site, seeking spiritual guidance, or sometimes (literally) searching for God. This involves pilgrimages to traditional pilgrimage sites such as Lourdes, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Banneux or Kevelaer (which, incidentally, is located very close to the Limburg border). These journeys are increasingly seen as a personal or sporting challenge irrespective of their religious significance. Around 10% of the Dutch population has taken part in a pilgrimage at some point. Santiago de Compostela is reached annually by around 1,500 (2008) Dutch people on foot or by bicycle; they may call themselves true pilgrims.
Spiritual tourism	Spiritual tourism is more about the stories behind the slow tourism locations, which can provide inspiration for spiritual contemplation. Aesthetics also play an important role: visiting special places to admire the cultural heritage. The (beauty of) the surroundings can also be a catalyst for contemplation. On a smaller scale, slow tourism takes place; examples include contemplation weekends or a stay on a farm. These forms can also take place within the Netherlands. This form takes place abroad even more than religious tourism. This usually involves exotic, foreign destinations. Popular destinations include Asia, Greece and Israel. A differentiated range of products is offered such as: reflection holidays, yoga trips, meditation trips, etc.

MARKETS	
Wellness tourism	Wellness tourism focuses more on the physical aspect of contemplation: bringing body and mind to rest. The inner peace that this creates can also lead to contemplation of or reflecting on daily life in general. The wellness market is growing significantly each year by approximately 5–10%.
Business tourism	Spirituality is increasingly being incorporated into the workplace. The business segment within slow tourism is primarily focused on corporate courses and workshops, aimed at team building and personal development (leadership, self-confidence, etc.). These human resource activities usually take place outside the workplace, preferably in inspiring locations. In most cases, these are domestic locations.





TARGET GROUPS	
Purpose-driven visitors	These visitors have an explicit reason for seeking contemplation and come specifically to a slow tourism location. These may be regional visitors, but also tourists who deliberately book a weekend of contemplation in Limburg. In addition, companies offering specific spiritual courses also belong to this group. In this context, 'the place' is of primary importance. However, the majority of them will opt for traditional (foreign) holy sites (Santiago de Compostela, Lourdes or more exotic destinations). Due to competition from foreign slow tourism locations, Limburg's share is estimated to be relatively small.
Passersby	The vast majority of these passersby are tourists who are already in the province and show an interest based on a cultural-historical affinity, but who often also want to hear the story behind the attraction. A key characteristic of this type of tourist demand for contemplation is impulsiveness: people only decide when the opportunity arises. Experience shows that there is a high level of participation in spiritual activities (for example, yoga) in a relaxed setting. For this group, both 'the place' and 'the moment' are important.

TARGET GROUPS	
Profile	<p>The target group for slow tourism is generally characterized by the profile described below. This profile has been drawn up on the basis of discussions with providers of slow tourism products both within and outside the tourism sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age: the majority of spiritually oriented people fall into the 45+ age category. The majority of current participants in existing forms of slow tourism are at this stage of life. At this stage of life, people tend to reflect more on life's questions and their own personal development. There is a noticeable trend of increased interest from the age of 35 and older.• Gender: the majority of spiritually-minded people are women. Recently, however, a trend towards the 'spiritual man' has also become apparent.• Education: generally speaking, the older a person is, the more spiritual they tend to be; similarly, the higher their level of education, the more spiritual they tend to be.• Social class and income: experience shows that the majority of spiritually active people come from a higher social class.• Religion: the target group often has a religious background. In other words: they were brought up in a religious household but have lost their faith over the years. This applies, in particular, to the Catholic and Protestant faiths.



PLACES AND MOMENTS

Slow tourism has two 'ingredients': places and/or moments. Ideally, a place for slow tourism in Limburg should offer opportunities to engage with both elements.

Places	The place itself can be a catalyst for slow tourism. Lourdes is an example of this. Millions of people visit this place every year to see it.
Moments	Moments for contemplation can be both collective and personal. These might include major Christian or collective holidays of remembrance such as the Remembrance of the Dead on May 4, but personal moments of contemplation also fit into this.



CHOICE

The province of Limburg boasts a wealth of religious heritage. These sites are visited both in organized and unorganized groups, and particularly by the local population. For example, the province has no fewer than 938 church buildings and around 2,500 wayside and field crosses.

These are destinations that are frequently visited by vacationing cyclists and hikers, but have largely lost their original purpose. As a result, the story behind these symbols is often unknown and risks being lost even further. Nevertheless, these places continue to capture the imagination such as the monastery in Wittem and the convent in Steyl, and nature and tranquility spots like Hof van Bommerig in Mechelen, Rolduc in Kerkrade, the Saint Servatius Church in Maastricht, etc. Limburg's wealth in this area is evident and offers excellent starting points for slow tourism.

However, the range of alternative spiritual options is relatively limited compared to the Randstad: there are approximately 100–130 yoga centers in Limburg (2008). This is comparable to the range available in the city of Amsterdam. In addition, there are various fitness and sports centers that offer yoga as a sports activity. It is striking that the majority of yoga centers are concentrated around the larger cities in Limburg. The largest share is in Maastricht.

The exact number of spiritual workshops and organizations in Limburg is not known. It was concluded in 2008 that the range in this area in Limburg is relatively limited compared to other provinces. The range is comparable to that in Gelderland and Zeeland where a strong religious tradition also exists or has existed. This is probably one of the explanations for its modest size.



The Berckt Castle in Baarlo is seen as a good example of a 'new success story' in the field of spirituality. Every year, various workshops, training courses and similar events are held at this castle by spiritual or religious organizations. This generates approximately 10,000 overnight stays (2008) per year and further growth is expected. However, the range of what is on offer is entirely detached from the Limburg context: the location is chosen for its intrinsic qualities and accessibility, rather than the environmental qualities of Limburg. Guests are predominantly international.



DEMAND



The number of participants in spiritual hiking and nature tours, which also include religious destinations, is still growing in Limburg. For the older generation that takes part, devotion remains the primary motivation. It serves as a substitute for or a complement to the traditional church visit. However, a growing number of people from the younger generation are also taking part in such trips. The motives of this group of people for taking part are twofold:

- Personal goal: self-discovery/coming to terms with things;
- Atmosphere: contemplation/escape from everyday life.

The monasteries and convents such as those in Wittem (around 200,000 visitors in 2008) and Steyl (around 80,000 visitors in 2008) are very well known in Limburg and are also visited as places of pilgrimage. Various organizations arrange contemplative visits to these destinations with or without a religious background. Despite the lack of specific figures, an increase in the number of participants is noticeable here. The pilgrimage site of Kevelaer across the German border (around 1 million visitors annually in 2008) is also popular in Limburg.



OPPORTUNITIES AND STARTING POINTS	
<p>Catholic tradition</p> 	<p>The Catholic tradition in Limburg is strong. Examples include pilgrimages, processions, religious rituals, etc. This tradition is deeply rooted in Limburg culture. Traditional faith communities can play a role in promoting slow tourism. However, they cannot be expected to take the lead in this. The sites are not sufficiently geared towards tourism for this and there is too little understanding of how this market operates.</p>
<p>Existing events/festivals</p> 	<p>The range of religious or spiritual festivals in Limburg, as in other provinces, is limited in scope. Musica Sacra in the center of Maastricht is, however, a major attraction, offering a blend of culture, art, music and religion. The province does, however, offer a wide range of cultural events that provide opportunities for contemplation or deeper engagement. Many of these events have a Catholic background or still contain elements of this today. However, the reason for visiting is often more cultural (for music or art) in nature, without an explicit need for contemplation.</p>

OPPORTUNITIES AND STARTING POINTS	
<p>Nature</p> 	<p>The relative tranquility and space in the province contrast with the increased hustle and bustle of the Randstad. The uniqueness of these qualities is, for that matter, open to debate since provinces such as Drenthe, Friesland and Overijssel also have their own specific characteristics and tranquility. However, the landscape of Limburg is unique in the Netherlands. The hilly landscape remains special to many tourists even after frequent visits. In the context of slow tourism, nature could be made more tangible and experienceable through the creation of panoramic viewpoints and locations for contemplation. In addition, the traditional pilgrimage routes could be utilized as new contemplative routes.</p>
<p>Historical/religious cultural heritage</p> 	<p>The province of Limburg boasts a wealth of cultural and historical heritage, much of which has religious roots. The landscape is characterized by many symbols of the Catholic faith: chapels, wayside crosses, etc. By linking these sites to an activity or theme, they can play an important role in slow tourism in Limburg.</p>





BOTTLENECKS	
What is on offer, however, is not geared towards tourism	In most cases, providers in the slow tourism market lack the organizational capacity to cater to tourism. On the one hand, this is due to the small scale and inexperience of the various organizations in this sector. The capacity, both in terms of space and organization, is lacking to plan activities on a large scale. On the other hand, they face an area of conflict between the nature of the slow tourism range and the crowds that tourism can attract. Moreover, there is a desire to keep the destinations 'pure' by admitting only those with a genuine interest. Some churches, monasteries or convents do not admit tourists unless they are believers.
Stigmatization	Participants in or providers of spiritual activities do not wish to be directly questioned about the nature of the contemplation. Mentioning the contemplative element too explicitly may have a stigmatizing effect. Activities associated with contemplation are sometimes wrongly linked to having problems.
Knowledge is at risk of being lost	Knowledge of history and tradition, along with the passing on of traditions from one generation to the next, is at risk of being lost. Fewer and fewer people know how to tell old stories or explain the background of a local tradition. For slow tourism, it is important to preserve this knowledge so that it can be used to give the content greater depth.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Given its wealth of historical and religious heritage, Limburg has a vast potential range of slow tourism locations. In most cases, these locations have a religious significance. The qualities of the surroundings (especially nature) also offer good starting points for slow tourism. The province has a relatively modest range of 'modern' contemplation locations such as yoga and retreat centers.

By focusing more on the unique places Limburg has to offer, new markets can be tapped into. These include contemplation weekends in Limburg, business workshops with a spiritual theme, pilgrimages, etc.

However, the greatest potential for slow tourism in Limburg lies in the footfall market: encouraging tourists who are already staying in the province to take part in an activity related to slow tourism. The impulsive nature of this demand is of great importance here: people do not deliberately choose a contemplative destination, but will be tempted to participate by what is available at that moment. The unique experience can indirectly lead to moments of contemplation and enhance the value of the experience. The latter can result in a more positive image and repeat visits. This can be achieved by enhancing the qualities of the surroundings and promoting cultural events that have a link to contemplation and offer some depth. In our view, the focus should also be on the footfall market. This has two advantages: by capitalizing on this 'low-hanging fruit', less effort is required and it appeals to a broader target group that is better suited to the tourism sector.

In 2010, this research resulted in a list of unique locations that fit this theme, with the owners indicating they were open to accommodating guests. They have been included here for inspiration. It is clear which criteria have been applied.

NAME	LOCATION	WEBSITE
Hof van Bommerig Retreat	Mechelen	https://hofvanbommerig.nl/
The Berckt Castle	Baarlo	https://www.denieuweklasse.nl/kasteel-de-berckt/home
Hotel Brull	Mechelen	https://www.hotel-brull.nl/
The Leonardushoeve	Belfeld	https://www.leonardushoeve.nl/
The American cemetery	Margraten	https://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries-memorials/about-netherlands-american-cemetery/
Hoeve Rott	Vijlen	https://bb-hoeve-rott.limburgtophotels.com/nl/
The BloteVoetenPark	Brunssum	https://blotevoetenpark.nl/
Adidam Center and The Bright Room Gallery	Mariahoop	https://adidam.eu/nl/
Energy time	Kerkrade	Website niet gevonden
Meru	Vlodrop	https://meru.international/nl/
Huize Damiaan	Simpelveld	https://www.huizedamiaa.nl/
German military cemetery	IJsselstein	https://kriegsgraeberstaetten.volksbund.de/friedhof/ysselsteyn
Madama Art & Consultancy	Mariahoop	https://www.madama.nl
Beaujean Vacances	Gulpen	https://www.beaujean-vacances.com/
Klooster Wittem	Wittem	https://kloosterwittem.nl/
Basilica of Saint Servatius	Maastricht	https://www.sintservaas.nl/
Rolduc Abbey	Kerkrade	https://rolduc.com
Basiliek van het Heilig Sacrament	Meerssen	https://www.parochieclustermeerssen.nl/
Missiehuis Sint Michaël	Steyl	https://www.steyl.org/
Kerkenstad Sittard	Sittard	www.rk-kerken-sittard.nl
The Savelberg Monastery	Heerlen	https://savelbergklooster.nl/
Sint Petrus' Banden Kerk	Venray	https://www.petrusbandenkerkvenray.nl/
Chateau De Raay	Baarlo	https://www.hotelderaay.nl/nl/
Kortenbos Mental Balance Center	Meerlo	Website niet gevonden
Chateau Sint Gerlach	Valkenburg aan de Geul	https://www.oostwegelcollection.nl/chateau-st-gerlach
Thermae 2000	Valkenburg aan de Geul	https://www.thermae.nl/
Kasteel Vaalsbroek	Vaals	https://www.bilderberg.nl/vaals/kasteel-vaalsbroek
Thermaalbad Arcen	Arcen	https://www.roompot.nl/wellness/thermaalbad/





State of play 2025

Following the preliminary work in 2008, it is clear that the theme has taken shape, particularly in Zuid-Limburg. Under the inspiring title: Visit Zuid-Limburg presents a wonderful overview of churches, monasteries and convents in the region on its website as the jewels of the Zuid-Limburg landscape. "In Zuid-Limburg, you will not have to look far to find religious heritage. After all, this region is home to a particularly large number of churches, chapels, monasteries, convents and basilicas. Almost all of them have Roman Catholic origins and most are still in use. Looking for a bit of happiness? Then light a candle. Who knows, it might help!" (Visit Zuid-Limburg 2025)

SPECIAL CHURCHES

You should not miss these magnificent church buildings in Zuid-Limburg:

- Sint- Amelbergabasiliek (Susteren) – a Roman Catholic basilica with an impressive treasury.
- Gruizenkerkje (Sittard) – a historic clandestine church that is also known as the 'Geuzenklompje'. It has been in use since 1632.
- Cunibertuskerk (Wahlwiller) – featuring colorful murals and Stations of the Cross by Aad de Haas, suitable for a digital tour.
- Oude Salviuskerk (Limbricht) – an 11th century parish church with beautiful ceiling frescoes.
- Aachen Cathedral – just outside the region and where more than thirty German kings were crowned.
- Sint Laurentiuskerk (Voerendaal) – 12th century church and one of the few churches in the Netherlands consecrated by a pope.

A PEEK INSIDE

Thanks to digital tours, you can visit many churches, monasteries and convents virtually – even when they are closed or from the comfort of your own home. Audio and 360-degree tours explore the history along the Route vol Verwondering or at five additional locations:

- Route vol Verwondering
- De Kluis
- Cunibertuskerk
- Basilica of Meerssen
- Clemensdomein
- Rolduc Abbey
- Catharinakapel
- Sint-Pancratiuskerk in Mesch (famous for the diary of a sheepdog)

CYCLING PAST THE AREA'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Zuid-Limburg is ideal for cycling rides past religious gems.

- Route vol Verwondering – Grensmaas Valley: two loops taking in over 30 surprising locations, including basilicas and hidden spots that you can explore via digital tours.

MONASTERIES, CONVENTS & ABBEYS

Visit these places where the tranquility of centuries past can still be felt:

- Klooster Wittem – a welcoming monastery with a church and serene surroundings.
- Rolduc Abbey (Kerkrade) – the largest surviving monastery complex in the Netherlands with a hotel and seminary.
- Abdij Sint Benedictusberg (Vaals) – a listed building, open for overnight stays and relaxation.
- Regina Carmeli Retreat House for silence and contemplation.
- Kloosterboekwinkel Wittem – monastery library with an extensive section of philosophical books.

CHAPELS

During walks in the hilly countryside, you will come across many chapels. These three are particularly special:

- Catharinakapel – part of the digital tour options. Also a project by artist Hans Truijen <https://catharinakapel-lemiers.nl/schildering/>.
- De Kluis op the Sjaasberg (Valkenburg) – a hermit's dwelling and place of meditation in wooded surroundings.
- Clemenskerkje (Clemensdomein) – part of the most spiritual estate in the Netherlands.

UNDERGROUND CHAPELS

During the French Revolution, clandestine masses were held in underground chapels: priests refused to swear allegiance to the Republic, celebrated secret masses and baptized the faithful — the risks were high: arrests and deportations; many never returned.

SLEEPING IN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

There are four unique accommodation options with a religious history:

- Hotel Kint (Valkenburg) – former Franciscan monastery, now a boutique hotel (since 1883, reopened in 2019).
- Abdij Sint Benedictusberg – accommodation and retreat in an abbey setting.
- Regina Carmeli – a retreat house surrounded by nature and tranquility.
- Bed & Breakfast Riékelt – former Dominican monastery with views of Savelsbos and Rijckholt Castle.

DINING IN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Five welcoming eateries that combine religious history with a convivial atmosphere:

- Restaurant Brasserie Abshoven – in a former monastery with homemade traditional 'vlaai', soup and specialty beers.
- Spencers (Maastricht) – stained-glass windows in a former medieval monastery, refined regional cuisine.
- De Twee Gezusters (Heerlen) – in the Luciushof and Savelbergklooster monasteries, delicious and fair dishes.
- De Oude Pastorie – near Vrouwenbos, views over rolling hills; it serves a hearty Limburg menu.
- Restaurant Ambrozijn (Valkenburg) – high-end dining in the Irenekerk, open kitchen experience.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GEMS IN ZUID-LIMBURG

As well as stone churches, monasteries and convents, you will also find eight inspiring places:

- Clemensdomein – the most spiritual place in the Netherlands, with a small church, Lourdes Grotto and audio tour.
- De Kluis op de Sjaasberg – a hermit's dwelling and a meditative location in the woods.
- De Schat van Simpelveld – a museum in a monastery featuring embroidery, gold chalices and sculptures.
- Lourdes Grotto in Valkenburg – a replica of the French grotto, a place of pilgrimage since 1926.
- Lourdes Grotto Vaals – well-preserved grotto dating from 1934, located at an altitude of approx. 300 m.
- Museum Vaals – housed in a monastery chapel, with over 200 large church statues and a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
- Religious Market (Hoensbroek) – 800 m² of religious art and statues of saints from churches, monasteries and convents.
- Kloosterboekwinkel Wittem – extensive spiritual bookshop in a monastery setting.





Additions from stakeholders

During discussions with stakeholders, the locations listed below were additionally identified as relevant.

In this Master Opportunity, we also call for a comprehensive identification and analysis of what is on offer from a religious, spiritual and cultural perspective in Maastricht, Zuid-Limburg, the rest of the province and the Euregio, which is aligned with the theme of pilgrimage. We recommend involving students to carry out this research. This is also a way for young people to become acquainted with this theme.

HOUTHEM TREASURY - SAINT GERLACH

Every year, thousands of people are struck by the beauty of the Saint Gerlach sanctuary, home to the grave of Gerlach, the 12th century knight, pilgrim and hermit. For centuries, people have drawn inspiration from him and so a monastery was built here at an early stage. Towards the end of the 18th century, the monastery building was repurposed, but the church remained and became the parish church of Houthem. To this day, the residents of Houthem and others venerate Saint Gerlach. The Stichting Vrienden van Sint Gerlach aims to contribute to the remembrance and veneration of Saint Gerlach and to the preservation of his sanctuary. The site is officially included in the pilgrimage route to Santiago. Pilgrims can stay overnight in a refugio.



Pilgrimage walk on Saturday August 30, 2025 'In de voetsporen van St. Gerlach' (In the footsteps of Saint Gerlach) to the grave of Saint Servatius

Every year on the last Saturday in August, a group of pilgrims sets out from the Sint Gerlachuskerk in Houthem to the grave of Saint Servatius: following in the footsteps of Gerlach, who, according to his biography, made the journey to Saint Servatius's grave every day. He held this preacher of the faith in our region in great esteem. Every year, we follow in his footsteps and carry the silver bust containing the relic (the skull) of Gerlach. This is the 34th pilgrimage on foot to Maastricht.

We would like to make sure there are enough bearers for the bust known in advance so that changes can be made in good time. At least six people are needed for this. If there are not enough bearers, we will set off with a small relic of Saint Gerlach.

Pilgrims who do not wish to or are unable to walk, but still wish to be present at the Basilica of Saint Servatius, may travel to Maastricht independently.

What does the program for Saturday, August 30 look like?

At 6.30 a.m., we will gather at the Sint Gerlachuskerk at the grave of Saint Gerlach. We will begin there with a short prayer.

We will then walk via the Sint Gerlachuskapel on Onderstestraat, where we will pause briefly, to Geulhem; via the forest path up to the Mussenput, to the Schone Poel (around 7.00 a.m.). We will stop at the small, very old, cruciform chapel on the Rasberg (7.10 a.m.). A short prayer will take place here. People can still join us here. Of course, the best way to start is in Houthem, but those who wish to avoid the uphill climb can join the route at the Schone Poel or the little chapel of the cross.

Together we will head down the Rasberg, through the streets of Scharn and into the town center, past the birthplace of Saint Lambert. In the town center, we will begin with a communal prayer. Via the Star of the Sea Basilica, we will proceed to Saint Servatius, where we will celebrate the festive pilgrims' Mass at the high altar. The Mass is held at 9.00 a.m.

After the High Mass, you can visit the grave of Saint Servatius in the crypt at your leisure, but do observe the guidelines set by the government. Afterwards, you will be offered a cup of coffee. Return to Houthem at your own convenience.

Join us and bring others along. And please register in good time. Non-walkers are also very welcome to attend the Eucharistic celebration in the Basilica of Saint Servatius at 9.00 a.m.





NEW LORETO IN SIMPELVELD

Changing times called for a new vision for the Loreto Convent in Simpelveld. Founded and established by the international religious order Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus and in use from 1875 until 2012. Now – in 2024 – in collaboration with HERMON Heritage – it has been redeveloped for a new purpose. Under the name New Loreto, a small team is working with heart and soul to meet the challenge of reviving the Loreto Convent as a sanctuary for the soul. The renovation is still to take place, but you can already come to us for peace, space, silence and an authentic convent atmosphere. You are most welcome!

Our belief: We believe that every person needs peace and space. We also believe that more and more people are becoming aware of this. That it is simply wonderful to give yourself the gift of time and space; for yourself, your personal development, your ambition, your creativity and your health. We believe in the future of a new convent where, within its high walls, you can find peace and space for yourself. A place where you can be completely yourself, discover new things, learn something new, and meet other visitors and guests. So that you can set off again with a rucksack full of new stories, insights and feelings. New Loreto exudes tranquility and gives people the space to unwind. Discover and experience the power of mindfulness at the New Loreto Convent. New Loreto nourishes your soul.

Our ambition: We want to give the imposing convent complex a new and meaningful purpose, bringing people closer to themselves once again. A spa for the soul. In the heart of the Tuscany of the Netherlands, picturesque Zuid-Limburg. A place of peace and space. New Loreto will become a household name, a place of learning, a place of experience. A place where age-old values are brought back to life. A place for connection, mysticism, religion, meaning making, philosophy. For art, for ancient and new wisdom, Eastern and Western, heaven and earth. A meaningful place where you can 'simply be'.

The new Loreto Convent is about coming home, feeling at home, and a place of revelation where everyone is allowed to be themselves and, above all, can be themselves. New Loreto – peace and space – a place for me, a place for us.

KLOOSTER WITTEM PILGRIMAGE SITE

Many people visit Klooster Wittem. They light a candle, seek silence, take part in a liturgical service, or attend an activity. In short, Klooster Wittem is a place of pilgrimage. The modern pilgrim connects their own life and life journey – whether briefly or for a longer period – to a place that is sacred to people. Many pilgrimages are organized there. However, you do not necessarily have to set out on a journey to go on a pilgrimage. Our whole life can be seen as a pilgrimage. We come from somewhere, follow our life's path and meet people, places and situations. At the end of our lives, we arrive somewhere. That is the basic idea behind 'pilgrimage on the path of life'.



HX HOOGRUTS: THE MONASTERY OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Perhaps a bit of an odd one out, given its new purpose. Included at the request of stakeholders nonetheless. In the rolling countryside between Margraten and De Plank, Hoogcruts Monastery has recently become a real eye-catcher once again. The Stichting het Limburgs Landschap restored the old monastery ruins to their former glory and made sure the monastery's magic was preserved. Anyone who enters the renovated monastery complex with its walled garden finds themselves transported to another world. A world where, far from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, you can reflect in peace on the urgency and essence of things. Where the past is tangible, the present calls for contemplation and the future demands new perspectives. A Slow Land has been created in the atmospheric surroundings of the former Hoogcruts monastery. The story of the monastery and the landscape is presented in an informative manner. From monastic culture to the life of the farmer. From tree planting to fruit, from berries to jam, from apples to juice. Here, life at Hoogcruts today can be experienced.



JEZUÏETENBERG

The Jezuietenberg, near Maastricht, is a fascinating place that combines both nature and culture. From around the 16th century, blocks of marl have been extracted from this quarry by the 'block breakers' (miners) for use in construction. Around 1880, marl extraction ceased and the Jesuits discovered the abandoned quarry. They decided to turn this into a unique location in their spare time where art, science and spirituality came together. What makes the Jezuietenberg special are the countless reliefs and works of art carved into the marl walls. The Jesuits, who carried out physical labor here alongside their spiritual duties, created detailed sculptures of biblical scenes, historical figures and symbolic images. These works of art bear witness to great skill and deep devotion.

THE MARIAPARK ON THE OUDE MARKT IN SITTARD

The Mariapark on the Oude Markt in Sittard is a complex consisting of four wings surrounding a courtyard garden. The building was constructed in the nineteenth century and put into use as a place of rest and accommodation for pilgrims.

The building is located opposite the Basilica Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In 1879, the construction of a new church in Sittard, designed by the architect Johannes Kayser from Venlo, was completed. In 1883, this church received papal recognition as a Basilica Minor, making it the first church in the Netherlands to be elevated to the status of a basilica. Due to the growing number of pilgrims, the basilica became too small and a new reception area was needed. This was achieved with the construction of the Mariapark.

Mariapark has lost its original function and is now used for a wide variety of activities and festivities. Naturally, care is taken to make sure its use is in keeping with the character and history of the building. The Mariapark has now hosted exhibitions, lectures, musical performances, receptions, civil weddings, (sponsor) dinners, etc.





Abdij Sint-Benedictusberg

Abdij Sint-Benedictusberg is a Benedictine abbey in Marmelis in the municipality of Vaals. The church and part of the monastery are regarded as important examples of the Bossche School and the work of Dom Hans van der Laan. The entire building has the status of a listed building.

The Holy Sepulcher Chapel in Kanne

The Holy Sepulcher Chapel is a chapel in Neerkanne, a hamlet of Kanne, a village in Belgian Limburg. The Baroque building is built entirely from local marl and limestone and, as of 2020, is painted white. The original chapel was built in 1647 by Herman Jekermans, the son of a carpenter, as a smaller-scale replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, to fulfil a vow he had made following his safe return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Due to the influx of many pilgrims, the chapel soon became too small. In 1714, the present chapel was built on land belonging to Baron van Dopff, lord of the castle. The façade of the chapel, in particular, is richly ornamented with, for example, Tuscan pilasters and carved reliefs. The chapel was severely damaged during the Second World War but was subsequently restored.



Slow tourism as a counter-reaction to tourism (mass or otherwise)

In 2024, an article by Joost Gieling appeared on the Pretwerk website about slow tourism as a striking trend and a counter-reaction to conventional tourism (mass or otherwise).

CAPITALIZING ON THE JOURNEY TOWARDS INNER ENRICHMENT

Slow tourism is increasingly developing into a thriving market as an expansion of the standard experience people are accustomed to. This article shared some observations on the background of slow tourism and described the opportunities it offers for regions and those running businesses.

For some time now, meaningful travel and leisure have become increasingly important to consumers and it is no longer just the experience or enjoyment that counts. Slow tourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of meaningful travel and recreation. In fact, the rise of slow tourism is a remarkable paradox: people are less connected to organized religion, yet the spiritual hunger seems stronger than ever. This shift reveals a lasting desire for meaning making and inner enrichment. Add to this the fact that young people in particular are experiencing increasing levels of stress, including a growing number of burnouts, which explains the growing need for all kinds of forms of contemplation.



STRONG CORRELATION WITH LIFE'S TURNING POINTS

Slow tourism, however, goes beyond merely religious or spiritual interpretation; it is a form of recreation in which, during our free time, we gain a deeper insight into existential questions about life. Particularly during pivotal moments in life – such as a new job, a divorce or our children leaving home – there is a need for introspection. The diversity of slow tourism is remarkable, with forms such as pilgrimage routes, digital detox, yoga weekends, health festivals and silent retreats. Whether organized or not, whether it involves a short, intense recharge or a long, continuous flow, this form of tourism offers opportunities for personal growth and contemplation.

SLOW TOURISM AS A MARKET SEGMENT

Slow tourism is increasingly becoming a significant market. The combined offering of routes, accommodation options, stories and activities is a prerequisite for slow tourism. Entrepreneurship therefore plays a key role in creating a sustainable and attractive choice that facilitates the search for meaning making. Magazines such as *Happinez* have paved the way for a broader spectrum of commercial enterprises that focus on the needs of those seeking contemplation. Accommodation providers organize 'healthy festivals' on their premises, have special writers' cottages, or deliberately opt for Wi-Fi-free zones. Wellness and contemplation are becoming increasingly central; a clear signal that the commercial sector is taking the shifting demand seriously.

Slow tourism therefore offers an opportunity for regions and those running businesses to play a meaningful role in the well-being of society. It is an invitation to inspire and to create, together, a space where the human quest for purpose, peace and meaningful connections can flourish.

WALKING IS THE DOMINANT ACTIVITY

Walking is central to this trend, underpinned by a conscious slowing down and wanderlust. This age-old activity is a powerful source of inner peace and contemplation. Neuroscientist Eric Scherder not only confirms the physical benefits of daily walks, but also emphasizes the positive impact on mental and spiritual health. Walking as a form of contemplation therefore goes beyond mere physical well-being; it serves as a powerful tool for introspection and inner growth.

Slow tourism can easily be found within one's own country. The ancient and varied landscapes invite a profound exploration of one's own thoughts and feelings. In the northern Netherlands, you will find vast open spaces and tranquil villages, which allow you to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life for a while. Hiking from mound village to mound village and from church to church, not only reveals the historical heritage but also offers an opportunity for contemplation and introspection. Limburg, with its rolling hills and picturesque villages, offers an idyllic setting for contemplation and tranquility. The connection with the natural surroundings and the preservation of authentic footpaths contribute to the overall atmosphere of spirituality.





Appendix: Provincial relationship between religious heritage and pilgrimage

In this appendix, we explore the theme of religious heritage in Limburg and its connection to pilgrimage. It is intended as inspiration and not to be exhaustive.

The province of Limburg is immensely rich in religious heritage. Churches and monasteries are cultural and historical monuments that are characteristic of the Limburg landscape. Religious heritage not only has religious significance, but also represents cultural-historical, urban planning and socio-cultural value.

Limburg is home to many professional organizations, academic institutions and historical societies or foundations dedicated to the preservation and management of heritage and the Limburg cultural landscape.

From 2018 onward, therefore, work has been underway through the Coöperatie Erfgoed Limburg (CEL) to develop and shape structural coordination and cooperation between the institutions involved in heritage and, indirectly, pilgrimage at a provincial or regional level. Below, we would like to focus on various examples of organizations and initiatives in the province of Limburg with a connection to pilgrimage.



“In Limburg, most of the Netherlands’ basilicas are located within a few dozen kilometers of one another. Limburg has over 3,000 examples of what is known as small-scale religious heritage (crosses, chapels, statues of saints, etc.) in public spaces. This is unique in the Netherlands. No other region in the Netherlands has this.” (Stakeholder response)

Zuid-Limburg

The American trend watcher Faith Popcorn once identified seventeen cultural and social undercurrents that will shape the future of Western society. One of those trends is the growing search for ‘spiritual anchoring’. Visit Zuid-Limburg is capitalizing on this for tourism with the Bezin in Zuid-Limburg (Contemplation or Slow Tourism in Zuid-Limburg) campaign.

“Zuid-Limburg’s strategic location on the European cultural route of the Way of Saint James, combined with our religious heritage, our beautiful natural surroundings and our Catholic traditions, make Zuid-Limburg ideally suited to promoting slow tourism. Naturally, this also aims to encourage visits to our tourist businesses. This includes religious, spiritual, wellness and business tourism” (Visit Zuid-Limburg 2025).

Visit Zuid-Limburg

With Bezin in Zuid-Limburg and the Way of Saint James, Visit Zuid-Limburg aims to position itself as the place where you can ‘safely’ unwind, find peace and escape the daily grind. For pilgrims wishing to prepare for the longer journey to Santiago de Compostela, Zuid-Limburg is ideal. The aim is ultimately to generate more overnight stays and attract more high-quality visitors to Zuid-Limburg.





They aim to achieve this by:

- An approach aimed at passersby (not focusing on the religious hard core).
- Fostering collaboration and developing attractive packages.
- Creating a range that is easy to book and/or visit.
- Offering an 'experience', not a 'change of character'.

Bezin in Zuid-Limburg, the Caminis (mini caminos) and the Route vol Verwondering (Route full of wonder) are being promoted through:

- An online platform where, for example, the Caminis can be downloaded for free.
- The 'Bezin in Zuid-Limburg' brochure.
- 360-degree and audio tours regarding religious heritage.
- Advertisements in (special interest) magazines.
- Newsletters and press releases.
- Social media.
- Press launch for a new route.
- Press trips with journalists.
- Collaborations with influencers.
- Map of the Route vol Verwondering.

A one-day Camino

A Camini is a 'mini Camino', and in Visit Zuid-Limburg's view, a very short pilgrimage experience. Eleven have been developed. These pilgrimage hikes all follow the original Way of Saint James and, through verses and tasks, are specifically designed to encourage contemplation and self-awareness, as you would seek when walking to Santiago. Why 11 routes? Anyone walking a section of the Way of Saint James may feel a connection to religion and/or spirituality in the broadest sense of the word. The number 11 is what is often referred to as a master number. Master numbers are special numbers said to influence your life path according to the science of numerology. According to the ancient Egyptians, every number contains an energetic force. For instance, the number 11 is said to be about staying true to yourself and following your intuition. If you walk the real Camino as a pilgrim, you collect stamps in your Pilgrim's passport. You can redeem these on the stamp sheet in the booklet 'Bezin in Zuid-Limburg'.

Noord-Limburg

Based on information on the Noord-Limburg website, the impression is that pilgrimage in this region occupies a more limited, yet still recognizable and valued place within the cultural and religious landscape.

"The region is characterized by a rich tradition of pilgrimage dating back to the Middle Ages, which is evident in the landscape through, for example, chapels, crosses, churches and cathedrals that were visited or passed by pilgrims." (Visit Noord-Limburg 2025)

Pilgrimages are defined in their original sense as journeys to places of religious significance. In Noord-Limburg, there are several of these pilgrimage sites along well-known routes such as the Pieterpad trail and the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela.

A notable location in this context is the village of Tienray, which was granted the official status of 'Little Lourdes' by the Pope in the 19th century. This makes Tienray unique as the only official Lourdes pilgrimage site in the Netherlands. Here you will find, for example, a Lourdes Grotto, a Way of the Cross park and processional trails, intended as an alternative for pilgrims who are unable to travel to the real Lourdes. In addition, just across the border lies the important pilgrimage site of Kevelaer, which enjoys international renown and has attracted many pilgrims and tourists every year since the papal visit of John Paul II in 1987.

Visit Noord-Limburg also highlights the Urbanushof in Venlo as a local yet significant site where the Genooi chapel and its outbuildings form a small-scale place of pilgrimage. This place also serves a social purpose, as the barn has been repurposed as a café and workshop space for people with intellectual disabilities. The chapel is still visited for the lighting of candles, which indicates that this place is actively used within the religious community.

Jubilee pilgrimages to Roermond

As part of the Holy Year 2025, those interested can undertake a 'jubilee pilgrimage' to Roermond. In the bishop's city, a number of churches have been designated that can be visited as part of this pilgrimage. The jubilee pilgrimage can be undertaken in groups or individually. (Diocese of Roermond 2025)

The opportunity for a jubilee pilgrimage ties in with the motto of the Holy Year. Pope Francis has invited everyone to become 'Pilgrims of Hope'. It is customary to make a pilgrimage to Rome during a Holy Year, but not everyone is able or willing to do so. Anyone who still wishes to join the ranks of 'Pilgrims of Hope' during the Holy Year can therefore also undertake a jubilee pilgrimage to Roermond in Limburg.

The churches that can be visited during the pilgrimage are the Sint-Christoffelkathedraal, the Munsterkerk, the Caroluskapel and the Protestant Minderbroederskerk. These churches are within walking distance of one another in the center of Roermond. A text has been produced containing route descriptions and background information about these churches in relation to the Holy Year. Texts are also available for liturgical services or for personal inspiration.

Pilgrims can join the regular services in the churches, but groups may also arrange their own service if they wish. For individual pilgrims, additional services have been scheduled in the relevant churches, which will be offered throughout the Jubilee Year.

Pilgrims are free to choose how they travel to Roermond. This can be by car, coach or public transport, but it may also be on foot or by bicycle. The jubilee pilgrimage is not reserved solely for people from the Diocese of Roermond. Those interested from other parts of the country or abroad are also very welcome.

Anyone who wishes to do so may obtain the indulgence of the Holy Year during the jubilee pilgrimage. The cathedral in Roermond has been designated by the bishop as one of the jubilee churches where an indulgence can be obtained. See also the separate post about the jubilee churches.

Other relevant initiatives

HUIS VOOR DE PELGRIM

The Huis voor de Pelgrim (House for the Pilgrim), based in Maastricht, is the leading national pilgrimage organization in the Netherlands with over a hundred years of experience. Various initiatives are housed under one roof, such as the 'Stichting Militaire Lourdesbedevaart', 'Caritas Banneux' and the walking group 'De Wandelmaat'. They organize group trips to religious destinations.

A core group of around a thousand volunteers provide support as tour guides, stretcher bearers, nurses and chaplains, enabling vulnerable participants to join the trips as well.

The Huis voor de Pelgrim presents itself as a professional, socially driven organization with a strong foundation in voluntary work focused on pilgrim experiences — both within the Netherlands and internationally. With a rich program of trips, walks, publications and bespoke tours, it makes an effective contribution to the preservation and vitality of the modern pilgrimage tradition.

STICHTING PELGRIMSWEGEN & VOETPADEN

The Stichting Pelgrimswegen & Voetpaden (Pilgrimage Routes & Footpaths Foundation) organizes a group walk almost every month to pilgrimage sites and other special places both within and outside Limburg. This happens, for example, when an annual festival or a saint's feast day is celebrated there. The walks take place along quiet roads and paths and, as much as possible, through woods and open countryside. Devotion and a convivial atmosphere go hand in hand.

A Stichting Pelgrimswegen & Voetpaden pilgrimage walk is not a procession or a prayer walk in the sense that there is constant prayer along the way. There is plenty of opportunity for conversation or simply enjoying the silence. There are, however, moments of reflection at the start, along the way and at the end. Each walk always





begins in a church or at a wayside shrine with a welcome and information about the walk ahead. Each participant receives a leaflet containing a travelling prayer, with which each walk begins. It also contains a few other texts (prayers, poems and songs) that are each appropriate to the theme of the walk. You do not have to be Catholic or profess any faith to take part in the pilgrim walks: everyone is welcome!

STICHTING PELGRIMSWEGEN NAAR SINT JACOB (SPW)

When the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela began to enjoy growing interest in our country during the final decades of the last century, there was soon a need for specially marked trails. In Limburg, the episcopal city of Roermond played a central role in this. Here, Sint-Christoffelkathedraal had for centuries housed a major relic, consisting of a complete lower leg bone of the Apostle James the Greater; the largest relic of this saint kept outside Spain. A growing group of pilgrims who had already undertaken the journey to distant Santiago de Compostela got together here and founded the Stichting PelgrimsWegen naar Sint Jacob (SPW). Contact was soon established with like-minded people among our eastern neighbors, leading to a collaboration with the Landschaftsverband Rheinland (Rhineland Regional Association). Together, research was carried out into the historical route of the pilgrimage routes in the Middle Ages for the German/Dutch region between the Rhine and the Meuse.

That research identified various routes, depending on the different directions from which the pilgrims used to come. Routes that, to this day, have often been preserved down to the level of roads or paths. Sometimes adjustments proved necessary, for example to cross a motorway or canal. The paths also needed to be suitable for walkers and cyclists, which meant that these two groups of pilgrims had to take separate routes on some sections of the journey.

The Jacobspad Limburg (Limburg Way of Saint James), which largely follows the Meuse, is the westernmost of these historic pilgrimage routes between the Rhine and the Meuse and the only one on Dutch territory. Thanks to the surge in international interest and the unifying role of pilgrimage, a series of booklets was compiled with European and regional funding to serve as itineraries for the various pilgrimage routes, with Part Three – published in both Dutch and German – serving as a guide for the Jacobspad Limburg.

The main task of the SPW administration is to manage the Jacobspad Limburg and to make sure walkers and cyclists can continue to use this centuries-old pilgrimage route. To this end, it consults with local authorities and other bodies to achieve this objective.

The actual management is carried out in close cooperation with the route managers; volunteers who each take responsibility for a section of the route and check it regularly. The board also makes sure that necessary changes to the route are implemented, recorded and communicated to users via the website.



HET NEDERLANDS GENOOTSCHAP VAN SINT JACOB

The Nederlands Genootschap van Sint Jacob (Dutch Society of Saint James) is an association with approximately 14,500 members. Its aim is to broaden and deepen interest in pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (Spain). They assist pilgrims on their journey, both in a practical and spiritual sense. They provide tips on the route and places to stay. They also share stories of their experiences while completing their pilgrimage. The Limburg region is one of the 16 regions of the Nederlands Genootschap van Sint Jacob. The region has over 1,000 members and covers the area from Venray to Vaals with postcodes ranging from 5800 to 6499. Stretching 110 km from north to south, 40 km from east to west, and, at its narrowest point, just a few kilometers wide.

The region has all sorts of specific cultural traditions, including carnival, processions and marksmen's festivals. Partly due to its scenic values, the Nationaal Park De Maasduinen (Maasduinen National Park) in Noord-Limburg, the Nationaal Park de Groote Peel (Groote Peel National Park) in North and Central Limburg, the Maasplassen (Maas Lakes) and the Nationaal Park De Meinweg in Midden-Limburg (Meinweg National Park) in Central Limburg, the Nationaal Landschap Zuid-Limburg (Zuid-Limburg National Landscape) and the Heuvelland region within it in Zuid-Limburg, the province is of significant importance to tourism. Walkers and cyclists can enjoy themselves here on the many marked (Saint James') routes.



Pilgrims heading for Santiago de Compostela can stay overnight at three refugios in this region: at the Sint Albertus Magnus – Albertushof in Venlo, in the catacombs of Roermond Cathedral and at Sint Gerlachuskerk (parish church) in Houthem-Sint Gerlach near Valkenburg.

The Limburg Regional Committee aims to be the point of contact for all (prospective) pilgrims in this region, helping both new and experienced pilgrims find their way along the often unfamiliar Pelgrimspad (Pilgrim Path). To this end, it organizes various activities where members and non-members can meet to exchange experiences and information. These include the regional meetings held twice a year, featuring interesting speakers and topics, the monthly Café Saint-Jacques, where members can share their experiences, the informal get-togethers to help new pilgrims get started, the walking tours, the film evenings and the youth pilgrimage. Members also receive a monthly newsletter (via email) featuring interesting topics and experiences relating to the Camino.

STICHTING KRUISEN EN KAPELLEN

The Stichting Kruisen en Kapellen (Crosses and Chapels Foundation) in Limburg is dedicated to the preservation and management of small-scale religious heritage in Limburg. This includes crosses, chapels, (Lourdes) grottos, and statues of saints in public spaces. The foundation (officially a church institution) was established in 1954 and is closely linked to the Diocese of Roermond.

“Anyone driving, cycling or walking through Limburg will come across them everywhere: the crosses and chapels that have been included in the Limburg Landscape as monuments of piety. More than three thousand stand on the verges, along the edges of woods or sometimes in the middle of meadows. Scattered throughout the province, more than 1,500 crosses, 1,500 chapels, over a hundred (Lourdes) grottos and a large number of individual statues of saints or groups of statues have been erected over the years.” (Limburg Crosses and Chapels Foundation 2025)





STICHTING MGR. SCHRIJNENHUIS

The foundation's aim is to contribute to the education and personal development of women in Limburg in the areas of spirituality and meaning making based on Catholic and biblical/evangelical values. Women form an important group within the Catholic Church. It is often women who drive voluntary work and are involved in numerous service-oriented activities; education is therefore very important. Questions about life and how to deal with all manner of social and religious issues remain highly relevant today.

The foundation – named after the then Bishop of Roermond, Mgr. Schrijnen – was established in 1930 to promote the religious education of women and girls in Limburg. For decades, this was achieved by organizing retreats at the retreat house on the Molenberg in Heerlen, which had been built specifically for that purpose to a design by architect Frits Peutz. This retreat house was named the 'Mgr. Schrijnen-Huis'. In addition to organizing the retreats, the foundation was responsible for managing the retreat house for a considerable period. Although the retreat house has now been in use as office accommodation for over 25 years, the foundation's name has remained.

The mission statement is as follows: We wish to continue to uphold, both now and in the future, the richness of the Catholic faith and its intellectual heritage in keeping with the needs of the times in which we live. We hope to always maintain room for pluralism, with attention and respect for ecumenism and other philosophical convictions.

STICHTING KATHOLIEK ERFGOED

The Stichting Katholiek Erfgoed (Catholic Heritage Foundation) was established to contribute to the preservation and development of the Catholic heritage and knowledge that arises from this in the Netherlands. "Catholic heritage helps us to contribute to Dutch society based on the Catholic tradition and Catholic teaching.

It is the responsibility of every generation to preserve its knowledge in this area and pass it on to young people so that future generations can further develop this tradition and doctrine. The Stichting Katholiek Erfgoed hopes to work towards this with the support of the Catholic community and the dedication of volunteers. "

PELGRIM IN LIMBURG

Pelgrim in Limburg (Pilgrim in Limburg) organizes small-scale walking weekends, day walks and cycle tours with a pilgrimage theme. Along the way, there are moments of reflection and contemplation in the form of a poem or a short silent walk. We also visit old churches and chapels along the route. Pelgrim in Limburg is not affiliated with any religious denomination and is open to anyone who enjoys walking or cycling.

THE CAMINO ACADEMY

The Camino Academy is not located in Limburg, but is certainly worth mentioning in this context. It is a Dutch platform that bridges the gap between academic scholarship and the practical experience of pilgrimage. It promotes and facilitates encounters between academics and pilgrims with the aim of exploring the phenomenon of pilgrimage from multiple perspectives. Key features:

- Academic focus: organizes lectures, symposia and masterclasses on themes such as the therapeutic, cultural, historical and religious dimensions of pilgrimage.
- Pilgrims in practice: activities do not only include theory but also reflections drawn from practical experience.
- Cultural/art-historical perspective: the Academy explores art and symbolism along traditional pilgrimage routes such as the iconography of church portals.
- Public reach: the activities are aimed at a wide audience: from academics and students to interested pilgrims.

Appendix: The Euregio's connection with pilgrimage

In this appendix, we explore the theme of pilgrimage, both in Belgium and Germany. It is intended as inspiration and not to be exhaustive.

In the Master Opportunity, we call for a comprehensive identification and analysis of the religious, spiritual and cultural range that is on offer in Maastricht, Zuid-Limburg, the rest of the province, and the Euregio that are relevant to the theme of pilgrimage. We recommend involving students to carry out this research. This is also a way for young people to become acquainted with this theme.

Belgium

In this context, it is important, when implementing the Master Opportunity, to establish links with the cities of Liège, Hasselt, Tongeren and the pilgrimage sites mentioned in this section.



"I would prefer a cross-Euregional approach, as the borders in Zuid-Limburg are arbitrary and do not correspond to historical regions. For example, the area of The Chapter of Saint Servatius spans three countries. A Euregional approach and cooperation is also rightly adopted for cultural phenomena such as the cramignon, the typical hedgerow landscape, local produce (e.g. apple syrup) and pilgrimages. A pilgrim saint such as Saint Gerlach connects Maastricht with Aachen through his weekly pilgrimages, but he is also venerated here and there in the vicinity of Liège. Saint Servatius also has roots in Maastricht as well as in Tongeren and Aachen. It is also the case that the same saints are more or less venerated throughout the Euregio (such as, for example, Saint Lambert, the regional patron saints of livestock, etc.). Furthermore, there are many historic hermitages in the Euregio: another interesting theme! It is therefore quite possible to map out interesting pilgrimage routes in the Euregio." (Stakeholder response)

The Prince-Bishopric of Liège is the oldest of the eight Belgian dioceses. It celebrated its 800th anniversary in 1991. The seven collegiate churches of Liège were a group of foundations established in the city during the 10th and early 11th centuries. Each of these collegiate churches was a privileged corporation within the city with its own territory and rights. Saint-Paul, Saint-Barthélemy, Sainte-Croix, Saint-Denis, Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste, Saint-Jacques and Saint-Martin.

According to experts, exploring these collegiate churches is a way to relive a thousand years of art and history. "Understanding Liège is key to understanding Aachen and Maastricht."

The current bishop of the Diocese of Liège is Jean-Pierre Delville. He is the 92nd bishop. The current cathedral of the diocese is the former Saint Paul's Church.

The Diocese of Hasselt, which covers the same territory as the province of Limburg, was established on May 31, 1967. Previously, Limburg was part of the Diocese of Liège. Since October 25, 2004, the diocese has been led by Bishop Patrick Hoogmartens.

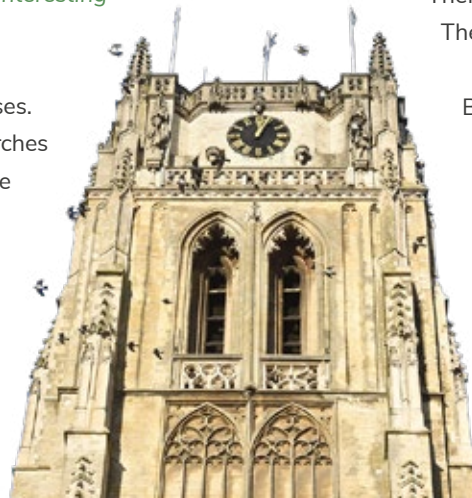
Tongeren was previously a diocese until around the year 750. In the year 2025, it became a deanery with the Basilica of Our Lady as its most important building. In this context, one of the stakeholders mentioned the church treasury in Tongeren.

This treasury has a new and modern interior, with an emphasis on 'experience'

There is an admission charge for the treasury; visiting the church is free.

The archaeological excavations have been made visible to the public.

Belgium has many traditional places of pilgrimage, including Oostakker, Scherpenheuvel, Halle and Banneux. These places are visited by people seeking support in their faith or wishing to ask for help with a specific matter. In many of these local pilgrimage sites, a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary is venerated. In Halle, for example, this is the Black Madonna.





From the 1960s onwards, many people lost their faith in the Church. One consequence of this was that fewer and fewer people went on pilgrimages. Nevertheless, the well-known pilgrimage sites remain attractive to many believers to this day and numerous traditional pilgrimages on foot are still undertaken to these places. These are usually day trips along traditional footpaths that set off before dawn. The pilgrims then set off from their home towns and walk several dozen kilometers to the place of pilgrimage. Such organized hikes are often coordinated by various local associations. The hikers then follow behind their association's banner. During some pilgrimages, people pray or sing; others take place in silence. Once the group has reached the place of pilgrimage, a mass is usually celebrated. The group is then blessed by the priest. A large number of these pilgrimages take place in May, the month of Mary (www.kn.nl 2022).

Pilgrimage sites such as Scherpenheuvel and Oostakker attract not only adults but also young people. Even today, there are youth movements that uphold the tradition of an annual pilgrimage. For example, the day trips to Scherpenheuvel in May still appeal to many youth associations. Other young people embark on the months-long pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. For several years now, the hike has been organized to provide a positive challenge for young people who have come into contact with the law. For them, it is a long-term endeavor. The young people are accompanied and are encouraged to use the journey as a fresh start.

The Pelgrimspastoraal Bisdom Hasselt (Pilgrimage Ministry of the Diocese of Hasselt) offers a wide and varied program of pilgrimages and hikes spread throughout the year with a special focus during the 2025 Jubilee Year. The program is both practical (hikes) and substantive (spiritual impulses and mission theology) and is closely linked to episcopal policy and church tradition. Bishop Patrick Hoogmartens emphasizes the mission of pilgrimage as a means of strengthening faith and community: "We are not wanderers but pilgrims, God's people on the move."

Tongeren is an ancient Marian shrine north of the Alps, home to the fifteenth century image of grace 'Mary, Cause of Our Joy'. This statue received a papal coronation, leading to the Coronation Procession and the seven-yearly coronation celebrations. Since 2009, the Tongeren deanery has organized an annual pilgrimage to this statue.

The pilgrimage combines historical and religious significance (devotion to Mary and Coronation Festivals) with spiritual contemplation and a sense of community, following the example of traditional pilgrimages. It brings people together across borders, starting in Voeren, Maastricht and elsewhere with reflection on themes such as peace under the motto 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

Germany

In this context, it is important, when implementing the Master Opportunity, to establish links with the city of Aachen and the places of pilgrimage mentioned in this section.

The current Diocese of Aachen was established in its present form in 1930. The largest cities within the diocese are Aachen, Mönchengladbach and Krefeld. Since 1349, the so-called Cathedral Procession has taken place every seven years in Aachen, Kornelimünster and Mönchengladbach when textile relics are venerated.



The website of the Diocese of Roermond mentions a pilgrimage to Aachen in 2023. "A group of around 100 pilgrims from the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany undertook a pilgrimage on foot on Saturday from the Three Countries Point in Vaals to Aachen Cathedral. The Euregional hike, undertaken in 30-degree heat, was part of the Pilgrimage to the Shrine being held this week in the Imperial City.

By eight o'clock in the morning, the pilgrims from the three countries had gathered at the spot where the borders meet, though they are now only symbolically visible. After an opening prayer in German, the procession made its way straight through the woods towards the center of Aachen. One of the participants led the processing while carrying a pilgrim's staff, the symbol of the Aachen pilgrimage. Among the participants were a delegation from the Maastricht Pilgrimage of Relics and students and a few teachers from the Grootseminarie Rolduc.

Along the way, the procession stopped at two locations for a short prayer in Dutch and French to guarantee that the three languages of the Euregio were well represented. The languages were also used interchangeably during the conversations along the way. Once they arrived in the center of Aachen, the group of Euregio pilgrims made their way together to the Katschhof, the large square next to the Cathedral, where an open-air Mass was subsequently held. Groups of pilgrims from other parts of the Diocese of Aachen had

also made the journey to Aachen on foot. At the heart of the pilgrimage are four special relics that have been kept in Aachen Cathedral for over 1,200 years. A large part of the Cathedral was even built to house these relics.

Unlike the Limburg pilgrimages, the focus in Aachen is not on the bones of saints but on textile relics. This includes some very special ones: the dress Mary wore when giving birth to Jesus, Jesus' nappies, the cloth in which the severed head of John the Baptist was kept and – most importantly – the loincloth Jesus wore on the cross. These relics were carried during the solemn entrance procession and shown to the pilgrims by the presbyteral choir at the start of the Eucharistic celebration.

Emeritus Bishop Josef Bode of Osnabrück, as the principal celebrant, carried the most important relic and also imparted the blessing with it at the end of Mass. "It gives you goosebumps to be allowed to hold this cloth," he said. Concelebrants during the Mass included the Euregio bishops of Aachen, Liège and Hasselt. Roermond was represented by Emeritus Bishop Frans Wiertz.

After the Mass, which lasted almost two hours in the blazing sun on the Katschhof, many pilgrims sought shade, either on one of the many terraces or in the Cathedral. For there, during this pilgrimage, all pilgrims can view and venerate the relics at close quarters. Many were willing to queue for almost an hour to do so.



KEVELAER

The German town of Kevelaer (just across the border from Venlo) has been a well-known Marian pilgrimage site for centuries. A miraculous image of the Virgin Mary (an engraving) has been venerated in this town since 1642. This image of grace is known as the 'Consolatrix Afflictorum': the 'Comforter of the Afflicted'. The Gnadenkapelle (Chapel of Mercy) was built around the original stone prayer niche in 1654; a pilgrimage church had already been built a few years earlier. In the nineteenth century, the large Saint Mary's Church was built, which was elevated to the status of a basilica in 1923.

Various Kevelaer Brotherhoods are active in the Archdiocese of Utrecht, organizing an annual one- or multi-day pilgrimage to Kevelaer. A number of brotherhoods also hold celebrations in the parishes, both before and at the end of the pilgrimage season.

Stakeholders genuinely wonder why there are not many more pilgrimages to Maastricht, both from Limburg and even from further afield, nationally and internationally. This project can address that.



Appendix: Servatius nationally and internationally

In the Netherlands, outside Maastricht, traces of Saint Servatius can be found in Nunhem, Schijndel, Dinther and Lieshout, among other places, where he is venerated as the patron saint of the church. In Utrecht too, the Servaasbrug and the Servaasbolwerk refer to the saint, much like in Maastricht.



*“Examples of pilgrimage cities/pilgrimage sites: Kevelaer, Scherpenheuvel, Santiago de Compostela, San Millán de Cogolla, Rome, Canterbury, Winchester, Prague, Saint Gerlach, Aachen, Trier, Cologne, Einsiedeln, etc. It would be interesting to see whether cooperation could be established with some of these historic pilgrimage sites, for example, regarding treasures or the veneration of relics. New pilgrimage sites such as Lourdes, Banneux, Fatima, etc. are, in my view, less suitable for collaboration because there are too few similarities with Maastricht. If the House of the Pilgrim can be included in the initiative, then one could also promote pilgrimages to these new pilgrimage sites (but this would concern pilgrims from the Euregio going on pilgrimage to those sites, and not pilgrims wishing to visit Maastricht).”
(Stakeholder response)*

Veneration of Saint Servatius in Nunhem: a piece of living heritage

By: Marie-Christine Adams

The veneration of Saint Servatius in Nunhem is one of the village's oldest and most vibrant religious traditions. Its origins probably date back to the Middle Ages and are closely linked to the former Keizerbosch Convent, which held the right of patronage over Nunhem until 1796. Saint Servatius was particularly venerated within this convent. It is known, for instance, that on May 13, the saint's feast day, the nuns received a special addition to their usually frugal meal thanks to generous donations.

The oldest tangible evidence of this veneration of Saint Servatius is to be found in the parish church of Nunhem. The large bell, cast in 1492, bears the inscription “+ SANCTE SERVAES +”. From this, it can be deduced that Saint Servatius was already the church's patron saint before that year.

To this day, this bell still hangs in the church tower. The beautiful monstrance, which was donated to the church in 1629 and was used during the Servatius procession with the Blessed Sacrament, also bears witness to this veneration. It features a small statue of Saint Servatius depicted holding the Book of Gospels in his left hand. The Saint Servatius Chapel and the linked Saint Servatius Spring also date back a long way. The chapel is already shown on a map of Central Limburg around Roermond dating from 1744, drawn by E. Prick. In 1796, surveyor Clemens van de Bercken described the chapel as located “in the woods on the heath, beside the stream, and around Saint Servatius's Chapel.” From the eighteenth century onwards, Nunhem is mentioned as a place of pilgrimage. The water from the spring, also known as the Servaasput, was considered to have healing properties and was used primarily for fevers and other illnesses.





The Saint Servatius Chapel and Spring are closely linked to what is known in church history as a baptismal church. In early Christian times, baptismal water was preferably taken from natural, pure springs. The clear water that wells up from the sandy soil near the hill at Nunhem was ideally suited for this purpose. The inhabitants of Nunhem and the surrounding villages attributed a sacred significance to this place, which, over the centuries, developed into a rich tradition of popular devotion and tales of miracles. This centuries-old tradition surrounding baptism and the veneration of Saint Servatius can still be read on the stone at the entrance to the present-day Saint Servatius Chapel.

The veneration of a relic of Saint Servatius is first mentioned in archives dating from 1884. In that year, Pope Leo XIII, at the request of the then bishop, granted indulgences to visitors to the chapel. To further encourage devotion, indulgences were granted again in 1913 and 1918, both by the Pope and by the Bishop of Roermond.

In 1892, the present Saint Servatius Chapel was built on the site of an older chapel, designed by the architects J. van Groenendaal and J. Franssen. The chapel was consecrated on May 16, 1892. Later, in 1933, an open-air chapel was built on the Servaasberg, complete with benches and a pulpit.

During the priesthood of Pastor Jean Adams (1939–1952), the Brotherhood of Saint Servatius flourished. In 1940, the Servaashuis was built as a cultural and religious center for exhibitions and the management of the veneration. A year later, in 1941, a new statue of Saint Servatius was erected. In 2017, the Brotherhood of Saint Servatius was re-established, with the aim of keeping the veneration of Saint Servatius and the faith alive for future generations.

In addition, during the 1990s, a group of young people came together under the banner of the Capella Sancti Servatii Nunhem, successfully bridging tradition and the future. With dedication and enthusiasm, they contributed to the preservation of the veneration of Saint Servatius and the customs surrounding it. They undertook pilgrimages from Paris to Chartres in France and walked the route from Saint Patrick of Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick in Ireland. Every year, pilgrims young and old



from the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Ireland gathered in Nunhem to venerate Saint Servatius. In this way, the heritage remained alive, carried forward by a new generation.

For many years now, every May, Nunhem comes alive again when the Servatius procession winds its way through the village. On the Saturday before the procession, a carpet of flowers is laid out, each year featuring a new design, symbols and texts. The designs are drawn by hand, laid out in the sand at the crack of dawn and outlined with moss. They are then filled with colored sand, marl and fine white sand, and lavishly decorated with flowers donated by local growers and carefully sorted by color by people of all ages. Young and old work together: children, teenagers, adults, parents, and grandparents, either from the village or returning to the village for this day. They meet up and, year after year, turn it into something special together.



On Sunday morning, in the early hours of the procession, flowers are scattered and little flags placed along the route. From Saint Servatius' Church, accompanied by the sound of prayers, hymns and the fanfare, the procession makes its way to the Saint

Servatius Chapel where Holy Mass is celebrated in the open air. Pages carry the Servatius candle, virgins walk along with palm branches, first communicants scatter flowers and the priest walks under the open sky with the Blessed Sacrament. The various chapels are visited, the Servaasbrug is crossed, and everyone walks with their own intention, yet all are united by the same tradition.

The Saint Servatius Procession is therefore more than a religious celebration. It is a living symbol of Nunhem itself: rooted in the past, sustained by the present and passed onto the future. Year after year, this pilgrimage reminds us that some journeys are not merely walked, but above all experienced.

Outside the Netherlands, there are also many references to the saint. In Belgium, these include churches in Liège and Grimbergen, as well as the town of Saint-Servais, now a borough of Namur. In Germany, churches are dedicated to him in Quedlinburg and Siegburg.

The veneration of Saint Servatius extends worldwide: more than 425 churches, spread across the globe, possess a relic, a statue, a painting or a stained-glass window of him. Streets or squares in numerous towns and villages are also named after him, such as Rue Saint-Servais, Servatiusplatz or Servaeshoeve. In the French region of Brittany, several places bear his name, such as Saint-Servais

(Côtes-d'Armor), Saint-Servais (Finistère), Saint-Servant (Morbihan) and Saint-Servan (Saint-Malo). Even outside Europe, the veneration continues: in Kampung Sawah in Indonesia there is a Saint Servatius Church, where a relic has also been present since 1984, brought there by Father Kurrus from Maastricht.

SAINT-SERVAIS





Armenia

According to historical sources, Saint Servatius was born in Armenia, then part of the Kingdom of Armenia (189 BC – 428 AD). Armenia was the first country in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion in 301 AD. The oldest cathedral in the world, in Etchmiadzin, bears witness to this.

The earliest reference to Saint Servatius' Armenian origins dates from the 11th century although it is based on older, lost sources. There are many relics and objects associated with Saint Servatius that originate from Armenia.

Saint Servatius Monument in Yerevan

The National Center Development Foundation has taken the initiative to build a monument in honor of Saint Servatius in Yerevan, Armenia. This monument will highlight the historical ties between Armenia and the Netherlands.

Monument details:

- Dimensions: Up to 2.5 meters high × 2.0 meters wide (excluding plinth).
- Materials: Bronze sculpture with a stone plinth.
- Planned unveiling: May 13, 2027 (Feast Day of Saint Servatius).

Proposed locations in Yerevan

Existing city parks in need of renovation are being considered for the construction of the monument. Proposed locations:

- Shahumyan Park.
- Part of the Children's Park.
- City authorities may also propose alternative locations.

The monument will serve as:

- A symbol of European unity.
- A celebration of Armenian heritage.
- A means of strengthening ties between Armenia and the Netherlands.

Source:

National Center Development Foundation (NCDF)

Websites: www.national.center | www.servatios.com

Contact: info@servatios.com | Tel: +374 33 77310



St. SERVATIOS Monument
**MEMORIAL IN
YEREVAN,
ARMENIA**

Appendix: Trends and developments

In this appendix, we focus on trends and developments relating to the topics highlighted in the Master Opportunity.

Trend research is a crucial tool for organizations to respond to changes in the market and society. Recognizing and analyzing trends provides insights for strategic decisions and new opportunities. Trend analysis goes beyond identifying patterns; it reveals the drivers behind behavior, technology and societal developments.

This chapter discusses the three levels of trend analysis: megatrends (long-term societal shifts), macro trends (consumer-focused changes over several years) and micro trends (short-term market trends).

By understanding the interrelationship between these levels, we can better respond to sector-specific and target group-focused changes such as enhancing pilgrim experiences.

In the coming years, people will face significant global challenges such as geopolitical tensions, economic pressures and environmental issues. Although many people may feel overwhelmed, they will demonstrate creativity and resilience to move forward. This is manifesting itself in key trends and societal developments.

Escaping algorithms and rediscovering authenticity and autonomy

The use of personalized advertising and AI-driven recommendations has led to a world in which choices feel less and less personal. People are becoming aware of the impersonal mechanisms influencing their consumption behavior, which has led to a desire to break free from this algorithmic influence and return to unique, authentic experiences. The idea of 'reclaiming the thrill of discovery' plays a central role here with people proactively seeking out quirky and unexpected discoveries outside the algorithm. Social media has contributed to overcrowding at popular destinations and a homogenization of cultural experiences, which has increased the demand for unique



and exclusive experiences. This has led to initiatives such as NoPlace, a social media platform that eschews algorithms in favor of genuine connections. Such initiatives highlight that people are seeking spontaneous and organic ways to rediscover joy.

Slowing down for deeper connections and wellbeing

The culture of speed and constant connectivity has led to a wider recognition that faster is not always better. There is an increasing focus on the value of living more slowly and mindfully. People are increasingly opting for activities and services that enable them to live mindfully and form deeper connections. In the Netherlands, this is illustrated, for example, by events organized by The Offline Club, where participants, such as at the Westerkerk in Amsterdam, hand in their phones to spend an evening free from digital distractions. Initiatives of this kind strengthen personal interactions and emphasize human contact, which promotes a sense of well-being and connection.





New forms of social connection and intuitive choices

The rise of a mindset in which people take personal responsibility for solving problems highlights people's willingness to step up where systems fall short. This goes hand in hand with a focus on strengthening social bonds to counter feelings of disconnection. People are increasingly feeling lonely, which leads to initiatives and investments in new methods to build relationships and combat loneliness. The need for genuine human connection is also supported by technologies such as AI companions and the use of platforms that simulate not only physical but also digital interactions. There are an increasing number of small-scale 'boutique fitness clubs' and group activities are becoming more important, not only for personal health but also as meeting places for social interaction. This reflects a wider trend in which people are using intuition and instinct to guide their decisions and relationships, and want to be less reliant on algorithmic suggestions.

The value of local and tactile

People are increasingly turning away from mass production and focusing on local products and services to maintain a sense of connection and quality. 'Local Allure' plays a key role here: buying locally produced goods not only offers tangible benefits, but also strengthens the local economy and a sense of community. This fits into a broader trend in which people value tangible experiences and prioritize human interaction over digital alternatives. This preference for the local and tangible is reinforced by a growing resistance to modern culture, which centers on speed and instant gratification. This is driven by a society focused on quick results. People are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with frictionless and automated experiences and are consciously opting for a slower pace and quality, even if that means processes take longer.

The rise of social wellness and the commercialization of connections

In our highly connected world, where technology is omnipresent, many people still often feel lonely. This has led to a growing realization that social well-being – having good relationships and a sense of connection – is important for both body and mind. The feeling of loneliness is exacerbated by trends such as living alone and postponing major life milestones such as getting married and starting a family.

In response, companies are developing services that help people build deeper and more meaningful connections. Think of dating apps and websites that are not only intended for romantic relationships, but also for making new friends and connecting with others. In addition, digital environments are being created, such as the so-called metaverse, where people can meet and interact, even without being physically together. Technology is also being used to support family ties and relationships; for example, programs such as Slack, which were originally intended for work, are now being used to communicate more effectively and make plans within families and relationships.

Although there are many new commercial initiatives to help people build relationships, people are also increasingly looking for ways to connect with others in a genuine and non-commercial way. They want experiences that are not just about profit, but about genuine, human connection. Social well-being is increasingly seen as a key part of a happy and healthy life.

Ageing population

Companies that respond to the ageing population can benefit by offering products and services specifically designed for the older demographic. This can range from healthcare services and wellness programs to recreational and educational activities. The market for older people is growing and offers opportunities for those running businesses to come up with creative and well-thought-out solutions that support this demographic. The growing elderly population is remaining independent and active for longer, which calls for products and services that support their quality of life. This means there is an increasing demand for accessible and user-friendly technologies, personalized healthcare and services that help older people remain socially engaged. Think of adapted housing, support devices and activities that promote physical and mental health. An ageing population also offers an opportunity to strengthen connections between generations. Many older people are looking for opportunities to participate in communities and social activities where they feel useful and involved.



Programs that bring young and old together, such as mentoring schemes, joint sporting activities or cultural events, are becoming increasingly popular. Not only do they help combat loneliness, but they also foster understanding and solidarity between generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the trend analysis offers valuable insights for the concept of The Chapter of Saint Servatius and the Basilica of Saint Servatius.

By responding to the need for authentic experiences, slowing down and mindful living, social connection, local engagement, intergenerational programs and social wellbeing, promising and sustainable concepts can be developed. This approach strengthens the basilica's position as a spiritual and cultural center and contributes to positioning Maastricht as a significant pilgrimage city.

The project to position Maastricht as a pilgrimage city and strengthen the identity of The Chapter of Saint Servatius focuses on highlighting and preserving cultural and religious heritage and developing a future-focused identity.

The pillars of this initiative are promoting the city as a pilgrimage destination, honoring Saint Servatius as the city's patron saint, and fostering collaboration. The project comprises various sectors such as the religious and spiritual sector, tourism and hospitality, the cultural sector, heritage management and event organization. It is worthwhile to examine developments in these sectors and to investigate how value is created, both economically and socially. This insight can help to increase the project's impact and position Maastricht sustainably as a center of pilgrimage and cultural heritage.



Religious and spiritual sector

In the Netherlands, there is a clear trend of declining church attendance, but this does not automatically lead to people leaving church communities. People often continue to feel the need to attend church on special occasions, such as Christmas services, weddings and funerals. Although the major traditional churches in the Netherlands are facing a decline in visitor numbers, some smaller churches, such as evangelical congregations and Pentecostal churches, are actually seeing an increase in members and visitors. Orthodox denominations, meanwhile, appear to be experiencing slight growth. Secularization is primarily a Western European phenomenon, while the number of Christians worldwide is still increasing. Religion encompasses more than just church attendance or membership of a specific denomination. The 2018 Statistics Netherlands survey, which claims that the Netherlands is becoming less and less religious, has therefore attracted some criticism. Religious scholars and theologians point out that there is a significant group of Dutch people who do consider themselves religious, but who consciously remain outside the established institutions.

This makes it difficult to measure the degree of religiosity using figures, but there are plenty of signs indicating that spirituality still plays a role in society. In 2021, for example, 58% of Dutch people stated that they did not consider themselves part of a religious or philosophical group. In addition, there are increasingly more alternative ways of experiencing spirituality. The definition of faith is changing and it is increasingly becoming a personal, individual experience rather than a shared activity. Religion is changing in character and often takes place outside the walls of the church. For years, churches have been trying to modernize and get closer to people, for example, by adapting their language and introducing modern elements such as beat music. Events such as The Passion demonstrate that there is still an interest in faith, albeit in new forms. The decline in church attendance does not mean that people are less interested in religion. All sorts of new ways of experiencing religious engagement are emerging, such as silent retreats and other forms of contemplation.

Developments in the religious and spiritual sector today reveal a fusion of traditional values and modern innovations, driven by technology and changing social needs.

A significant change is the rise of digital and virtual spirituality. More and more people are using apps and online platforms for prayer, meditation and spiritual guidance, making religious and spiritual content more accessible. Virtual church services, live streams and augmented reality (AR)/virtual reality (VR) experiences offer remote participation, which increases engagement and lowers barriers to participation.

Spirituality is also increasingly being integrated with holistic well-being practices, such as mindfulness, yoga and alternative medicine, contributing to a broader acceptance of spiritual activities as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Interfaith and inclusive initiatives are on the rise with faith communities seeking to collaborate, organize events and foster dialogue on shared values. Sustainability and spiritual ethics are playing an increasingly prominent role.

Faith communities are integrating environmental awareness and ethical principles into their practices, for example, through green pilgrimage routes, sustainably organized events and ecofriendly religious activities. Interest in personal spiritual development is also growing, evident in the popularity of retreats and workshops focused on personal growth and profound spiritual experiences.

Innovations in the field of pilgrimage demonstrate how tradition and modernity converge. Digital tools enrich the pilgrimage experience and make it more accessible, such as apps that guide pilgrims with interactive maps, spiritual reflections and historical information about routes and holy sites.

Platforms for sharing personal stories and creating a global community strengthen the sense of connection. Sustainability is a key factor in modern pilgrimage initiatives with routes designed to support nature conservation, utilize renewable energy sources, and provide ecofriendly accommodation.

This is in line with the growing demand for responsible and ethical travel options. In addition, personalized pilgrimage travel options are on the rise with a focus on individual spiritual growth and meaningful experiences. Themed routes cater to personal interests, such as inner peace, historical heritage or meditation and mindfulness, and combine traditional pilgrimage destinations with modern wellness aspects. Technology also facilitates the logistics and comfort of pilgrimages with apps providing real-time updates on weather, safety and facilities. Hybrid experiences such as digital pilgrimages enable people to participate virtually in a journey and therefore they increase inclusivity for those who are physically unable to travel.

Tourism and hospitality sector

The tourism and hospitality sector has undergone radical change in recent years, driven by shifting traveler preferences and new technological and social developments. One of the most striking trends is the rise of sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Travelers are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious and are looking for travel options that are ecofriendly.

Hotels and travel companies are increasingly incorporating sustainable practices, such as renewable energy, ecofriendly accommodation and carbon offset schemes. In addition, the popularity of experience-focused and cultural tourism is on the rise. Travelers want more than just relaxation; they are seeking authentic experiences in which they can discover local cultures, traditions and culinary delights. This has led to collaborations between tourism organizations and local communities to offer unique and personalized experiences. Digital technology plays a crucial role in the modern travel experience.

Innovations such as AI and the Internet of Things (IoT) enable personalized services in smart hotel rooms and travel planners, which offer tailor-made trips based on personal preferences and behavior data. The trend towards hybrid work-tourism is also striking with people traveling for longer periods to combine work and holidays. Hotels and resorts are responding to this by offering workspaces, high-speed internet connections and business centers.

Wellness and health tourism is another rapidly growing trend. People are traveling more often with the aim of relaxing both physically and mentally, and accommodation providers are responding to this trend with comprehensive wellness programs, spas, yoga and meditation retreats, and holistic health services. Micro-holidays, where travelers take shorter and more frequent breaks, often closer to home, are also on the rise. These micro-holidays offer the chance to relax quickly and explore the local area without a significant time commitment. Hotels and travel organizations are responding to this trend with special packages and deals aimed at short stays such as weekend and midweek breaks.





The personalized approach to travel is becoming increasingly important. Travelers expect their experience to be tailored to their individual preferences, leading to an increase in personalized itineraries, activities and bespoke services. Data analysis and AI are helping travel providers to meet these expectations. Furthermore, contactless technologies, fueled by the pandemic, have revolutionized the way people travel. Contactless check-in options, digital keys and mobile payments have become the norm, enhancing the convenience and safety of travel. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) have made their mark in promoting and enhancing travel experiences. Travelers can explore a destination virtually before booking or use AR during their stay to add extra information and interactive elements to their experience .

In the food and drink sector, gastronomic tourism continues to grow with a focus on authentic and local culinary experiences. Hotels and restaurants are embracing farm-to-table concepts and using locally sourced ingredients to offer sustainable and unique dining experiences. Finally, there is a greater focus on inclusivity and accessibility. More and more tourism organizations are investing in making accommodation, tours and attractions accessible to people with disabilities, to make travel possible for everyone. A key insight into travelers' motivations is that the most important factors influencing their choice of destination are the weather (69%), the food (59%) and the atmosphere (57%). In terms of costs, by 2025 flights (64%) and hotels (60%) will be the main cost factors, followed by food and drink (32%). In addition, travelers mainly draw inspiration for destinations from social media (39%), travel guides (37%) and online magazines (33%).

Cultural sector

The cultural sector is evolving rapidly with trends centering on technology, sustainability and inclusivity. Digitalization plays a major role with virtual exhibitions and hybrid events combining physical and online elements to reach a wider audience. There is also a growing focus on participatory art and interactive projects that actively engage visitors. Sustainability is important with ecofriendly materials and green energy being used.

Storytelling is a powerful trend used to engage visitors on a deeper level. By telling stories, exhibitions and artworks gain more context and emotional significance, leading to a more intense experience. Experience-focused cultural experiences that stimulate multiple senses, such as light and sound shows and interactive installations, are gaining popularity and attracting a wide audience. Cross-sector collaborations with technology and education companies are producing innovative projects that enhance these experiences. New funding models such as crowdfunding are helping the sector to become less reliant on government support. Artificial intelligence is being used to personalize visitor experiences and art in public spaces makes culture more accessible to everyone. These trends demonstrate a sector that is constantly innovating and responding to the needs of a modern audience.

Heritage management sector

In the heritage management sector, there are various developments and trends that respond to the need to preserve and modernize cultural heritage. Digital conservation and virtualization play a key role with advanced technologies such as 3D scanning, and VR and AR being used to digitize cultural heritage and make it accessible worldwide. This is particularly valuable when physical access to heritage sites is limited.

Heritage management is increasingly shifting towards a participatory approach in which local communities are actively involved in the preservation and interpretation of their heritage. This creates a greater sense of ownership and strengthens the bond between heritage institutions and society. In addition, sustainability is a key theme with environmentally friendly practices such as energy-efficient renovations and the use of renewable materials to minimize the ecological footprint of management processes.

Exhibitions are increasingly being designed as hybrid and interactive experiences, combining physical and digital elements to allow visitors to engage with heritage in new ways.

Educational programs are making greater use of technology, such as interactive apps and online platforms, to present heritage in an engaging and accessible way. International collaboration and knowledge exchange are becoming more important, enabling heritage institutions to share innovative methods and solutions that can be applied worldwide.

At the same time, due to declining government support, institutions are seeking new funding models, such as crowdfunding and commercial partnerships, which offer greater financial flexibility for future projects.

Accessibility and inclusivity have become key priorities with efforts to design collections and exhibitions to appeal to a broader and more diverse audience. Heritage organizations are taking steps to reduce physical and cultural barriers, making heritage more accessible to people from different backgrounds with different needs.

The smart use of data and artificial intelligence helps institutions to better understand visitor behavior and to personalize and enhance the visitor experience. The repurposing of heritage sites is also a growing trend with historic buildings being given a new lease of life as event spaces, restaurants or cultural centers. This promotes preservation by adding economic value and utilizing heritage sustainably.



The events sector

The event and leisure sector is developing rapidly with trends responding to the changing preferences of the public and the need for innovation. Hybrid events, which combine physical and online elements, are popular and increase reach and accessibility. Sustainability plays a major role with a focus on green events that use reusable materials and renewable energy.

Experience-driven events, often supported by AR and VR, offer visitors an immersive experience that stimulates all the senses. Contactless technologies such as mobile ticketing and digital payments have become commonplace, while wellness and wellbeing events are responding to the growing need for mental and physical health. Hyper-personalization, driven by data and AI, makes sure that events are better tailored to the preferences of individual visitors.

In addition, storytelling plays a central role in creating an emotional connection with the audience and delivering memorable experiences. Events are experimenting with new forms of entertainment such as esports and interactive performances, while health and safety remain a priority.

Finally, local and small-scale events are on the rise, supporting the community and offering unique, personalized experiences. These trends reveal an industry that is constantly innovating with a focus on technology, sustainability and inclusivity.



Conclusion

The sector analysis demonstrates that there are significant opportunities to strengthen the project centered on The Chapter of Saint Servatius and the Basilica of Saint Servatius by capitalizing on key sectoral trends and developments. The religious and spiritual sector demonstrates that, despite secularization, the need for spirituality persists, particularly in modern and digital forms. This offers opportunities for innovative spiritual experiences that combine technology with traditional values, such as digital pilgrimages and interactive services.

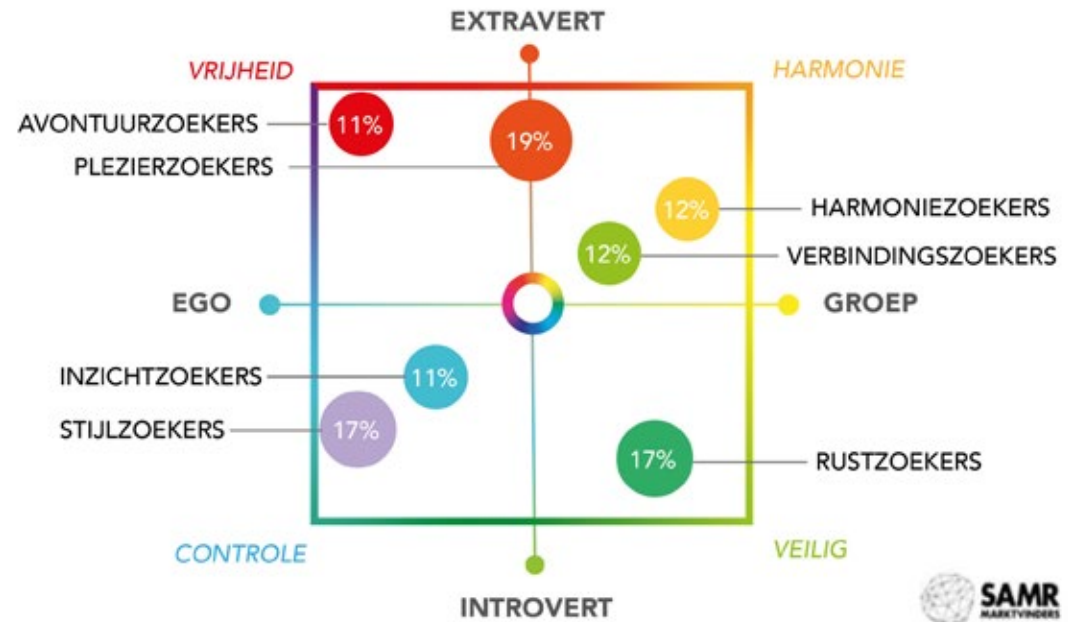
The tourism and hospitality sector highlights the growing demand for sustainable, experience-focused and personalized travel experiences. This means that the project can benefit from partnerships with local communities and by offering authentic pilgrimage routes and ecofriendly facilities that attract tourists. In the cultural and heritage management sector, we see that digitalization, participation and sustainability are key. The conservation and presentation of heritage can be enhanced through the use of 3D scans, VR/AR and interactive exhibitions that enable wider accessibility. The events and leisure sector highlights the demand for hybrid, inclusive and sustainable events that offer personalized and sensory experiences. The use of storytelling and technology can enhance the appeal of events and foster deeper engagement among visitors. In conclusion, by incorporating these trends into the project, Maastricht and The Chapter of Saint Servatius can position themselves as a leading pilgrimage city that combines modern spirituality, sustainable tourism and cultural heritage with innovative and participatory experiences. This not only strengthens the identity of The Chapter of Saint Servatius but also the cultural value of the city.



Appendix: Lifestyles

In this appendix, we examine the concept of 'lifestyles', which is frequently used in city branding. In doing so, we establish a link with the aforementioned 'style seeker' and Maastricht Marketing.

The 'Lifestyle Finder' helps to identify people's motivations and explore what drives them. Lifestyles reveal what people need in their free time or on holiday, and what the differences are. Some people want peace and regularity while others prefer hustle and bustle and excitement. See the website www.leefstijlvinder.nl in this context. Visit Maastricht therefore uses the Leefstijlvinder (Lifestyle Finder) model below. The model is based on seven different lifestyles.



ADVENTURE SEEKERS

They want to experience 'real' life, in all its richness. For example, in a museum, in nature or on a course where they learn new things. They see authentic experiences as a great enrichment of their lives. It is therefore not surprising that they travel around a lot on holiday. They look for unusual, quirky or surprising places to stay.

PLEASURE SEEKERS

You often see them at festivals and events, but they also enjoy watching a film together. A day without laughter is a day not lived. There is no better time than now to have fun. On holiday, the pleasure seeker loves to set off with family and friends. For example, on a sun and beach holiday, a party holiday or an adventure holiday. The most important thing is that it is fun and that there is something for everyone to do. If that is possible at a campsite, that is fine, but if they can find a great deal on a luxury hotel... that is pure bliss!





HARMONY SEEKERS

Even on holiday, they want there to be something for everyone to do. Activities for the children, a lovely swimming pool. No wonder they like to rent a cottage in a park with plenty of facilities. A family campsite is also an option. Holidaymakers in this group are warm-hearted people with a keen interest in others. They describe themselves as easy-going, cheerful and gentle.

CONNECTION SEEKERS

In their spare time, they enjoy getting out into nature, whether on a bike or on foot. They also enjoy visiting museums or the theatre. Their interest in others and the world is also reflected in their travel behavior; they do not need to stay in one place. They enjoy travelling around. They like to stay at a campsite with good facilities or in a well-known hotel chain. What happens when they enjoy it? Then they come back and share their experiences with others.

THOSE SEEKING PEACE AND QUIET

'The world is changing very fast' is a widely held view. Just like 'Why travel far when there is plenty of beauty to see close to home?'. Actually, they find life most enjoyable when they can do their own thing around the house; a bit of gardening, perhaps a bike ride or a walk. They do, of course, go out now and then. In those cases, they like to sort as much out as possible in advance. No surprises and no hustle and bustle. Privacy, peace and quiet are important.

INSIGHT SEEKERS

Leisure time is time you should spend consciously. Visiting museums and historic buildings; that is where their interests lie. Getting out into nature is also an option, preferably on foot or by bike. They prefer to stay overnight in a place where practical facilities are well organized such as a well-known hotel chain or a bed and breakfast with good reviews. They are therefore quite willing to pay a little more. They read the newspapers (NRC, Trouw and Volkskrant) with remarkable regularity and, when it comes to social media, mainly use LinkedIn.

STYLE SEEKERS

They are confident and goal-oriented people seeking recreation. Hard workers with ambition and an entrepreneurial spirit often fall into this category too. Their active and ambitious lifestyle is clearly reflected in their leisure time and vacations. In their own words: 'Work hard, play hard'. Being pampered and enjoying exclusivity is what holidays are all about for them. Luxury and comfort are therefore very important. In addition, the social scene has to be just right. So they would like to be surrounded by as many 'people like us' as possible, who are on the same wavelength. Good for your network too.

Modern pilgrims fit well with two lifestyle types from the Lifestyle Finder: the **Adventure seeker and the Insight seeker**.

The **ADVENTURE SEEKER** loves a challenge, innovation and the unknown. For this person, a pilgrimage is not purely a religious journey, but a way to gain new experiences, push physical boundaries and discover other cultures or landscapes. The journey itself — often on foot and covering long distances — offers exactly the kind of adventure and independence this group is looking for.

Characteristics that tie in with this are:

- Seeking experiences and physical challenges.
- Interest in travel and discovery.
- Values freedom and variety.

THE INSIGHT SEEKER wants to give meaning to life and is open to reflection and deeper understanding. For these people, a pilgrimage is an opportunity to reflect on their lives, find peace, and perhaps even discover answers to personal questions. They are often seeking a sense of meaning, spirituality or a moment of reflection away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Characteristics that tie in with this are:

- Seeking personal growth or inner peace.
- Is open to philosophy, religion or spirituality.
- Wants to break free from the everyday and find themselves.

In June, 2025, an article by Maurice Ubags appeared on the website of De Nieuwe Ster van Maastricht with the title: 'Stad mikt op slow traveler voor avontuur, stijl of inzicht' (City targets slow travelers seeking adventure, style or insight). The reason for this is the revamp of the Maastricht Marketing website. The aim of the website is to respond to changing travel behavior. People do not just want to see what a city has to offer, but also to experience what makes a place unique and special. The website is therefore now structured around the principle of slow travel – travelling at a more leisurely pace with an eye for experience and context.

Using the Lifestyle Finder, the focus is on three specific lifestyles that would suit the city's profile. These are the Adventure seeker, the Style seeker and the Insight seeker.

The modern pilgrim is, of course, not a one-dimensional figure. Some people walk the pilgrimage route for the adventure, others for the insight — and often the two go hand in hand. That is why they fit so well within these two lifestyle types from the Lifestyle Finder, which have therefore also been chosen by Visit Maastricht.





Appendix: Concepts for inspiration for inside and around the Basilica of Saint Servatius

Nina Hendrix was asked by The Chapter of Saint Servatius to develop a number of concepts for inside and around the Basilica of Saint Servatius in early 2025. These have already been discussed with the Basilica of Saint Servatius board.

Approach

Based on a creative brainstorming session organized with international students affiliated with the Basilica of Saint Servatius, the issue of 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' was explored using "how can we" questions.

Based on this session and the findings from various research reports, a series of ideas were subsequently generated. The initial phase focused primarily on gathering a large number of promising concepts.

These were documented and discussed with Dean Dautzenberg and Mr. Van Hilten of the board of the Basilica of Saint Servatius. During this consultation, particular interest was shown in six specific ideas.

These six concepts have been further developed and fleshed out in this appendix. Attention has been paid to the underlying rationale, objectives, possible design and practical applicability. Each concept includes an explanation. This concept book therefore constitutes an in-depth next step within the development process. It not only provides a clear framework for the selected ideas, but also serves as a substantive basis for further dialogue, assessment and (possible) implementation.

Introduction

This concept book has been produced for the development of innovative and forward-looking concepts for The Chapter of Saint Servatius and Basilica of Saint Servatius. Based on the previously compiled book of ideas, which is organized around the themes of connecting, welcoming and inspiring wonder, the most promising and inspiring ideas have been selected. These ideas have been further developed into specific concepts, which are presented in a structured manner in this document. The aim of this concept book is to clearly convey the selected concepts, both visually and in terms of content. It serves as a guide for further decision-making and acts as a compelling communication tool for team members, stakeholders and other involved parties. By developing the concepts, they become tangible and open to discussion, enabling well-considered choices to be made regarding implementation.

Internal discussions have concluded that the following concepts show promise:

1. The Pilgrim Pod.
2. Servatius Offline.
3. A welcoming work of art or object.
4. App for the pilgrim.
5. The echo of Saint Servatius.
6. Faith in public spaces





Each of the above concepts has been developed on the basis of six fixed elements:

A concept description	A clear description of the idea, including the problem it addresses and the solution it offers.
Visual support	Visual materials stimulate the imagination and clarify the concept.
Rationale	The relevance of the concept is explained with a focus on social developments.
Scenario or storyboard	An outline of how the concept will be brought to life in practice and how the target group will come into contact with it.
Implementation plan and costs	A concise implementation strategy, taking into account feasibility: both financial and organizational. Through this structured approach, this concept book provides a foundation for further development, investment and realization. It serves as a source of inspiration to preserve, enhance and pass on the heritage value of the Basilica of Saint Servatius and its surrounding region to future generations.

Pilgrim Pod

Pilgrims seek not luxury but the essentials: a place to unwind after a day full of impressions. The Pilgrim Pod combines the simplicity and tranquility of old refugios with the efficiency of Japanese capsule hotels. Compact, functional and spiritually charged. The Pilgrim Pod concept is a portable, modular sleeping space that offers pilgrims and budget-conscious travelers an affordable, peaceful place to stay. Not just a place to sleep but a physical and mental haven of peace. With a minimalist

design and subtle spiritual touches, the Pod supports the traveler on their journey without distractions or unnecessary luxury. Each Pod can be fitted with an icon, quote or subtle reference to the journey. Capsules can be clustered together. Pilgrim Pods are private and secure, yet always part of a larger whole. There is no forced social dynamic but a natural interplay of tranquility and connection. Each location has a Central Pavilion: a shared space where meeting, reflection and connection take place. This can be furnished with a long table and a small library containing books on pilgrimages, spirituality and Maastricht.

Maastricht does not currently actively promote itself as a pilgrimage city, despite its historical and spiritual potential. Providing an accessible, affordable and inspiring place to stay for pilgrims helps to address this key issue. The Pilgrim Pod creates an accessible place of rest and a space for meeting, reflection and community.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

The Pilgrim Pod is more than just a sleeping concept; it responds to profound social developments and changing travel needs. More and more people are turning away from mass tourism and seeking meaningful travel experiences. Slow travel, where travelers consciously slow down and connect with their surroundings, is gaining ground as a counterreaction to fleeting city breaks. In line with this trend, Pilgrim Pods offer a contemporary take on the traditional refugio, a resting place along pilgrimage routes, but in a modular, portable and sustainable format. This makes it possible to create temporary and flexible accommodation without the need for permanent construction. In addition, the Pilgrim Pod responds to the growing need for alternative forms of housing and accommodation. Tiny houses, nomadic lifestyles and minimalist accommodation are becoming increasingly popular whilst traditional hotels and hostels are becoming more expensive and less accessible to budget-conscious travelers. Thanks to their scalability and portability, Pilgrim Pods can respond flexibly to peak periods during the pilgrimage and offer both permanent and temporary accommodation options. This creates a concept that supports affordable, sustainable and meaningful travel – perfectly suited to today's need for simplicity, reflection and community.

INSPIRATION AND AWARENESS

People need to be inspired to visit the Pilgrim Pod and to choose Maastricht as their destination. This can be achieved through marketing via social media, blogs, travel organizations, pilgrim apps and guides. A strong online presence is important. A website is essential.

CONSIDERATION AND PLANNING

Visitors must be able to find the Pilgrim Pod on Google Maps, Booking.com or a dedicated booking platform. The reviews and experiences of other pilgrims play a major role in the decision-making process. Pilgrims can contribute ideas regarding the design of the surroundings and the production of the Pods.

ARRIVAL AND EXPERIENCE

Check-in should be accessible and straightforward; this can be done digitally or via a key box. The Pilgrim Pod must provide what is needed: a clean space. In addition, there must be information about the shared facilities, such as the central pavilion, the dining area and the reading corner. The traveler experiences a balance between privacy and community. During their stay, a meeting can also be organized with the Basilica or The Chapter of Saint Servatius, and a guide can be provided with tips for pilgrims in Maastricht.

DEPARTURE AND REFLECTION

Travelers can share their experiences in a guestbook and there could be a ritual before departure. For example, the traveler could leave a small stone or write down a wish.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ORGANIZATION

To successfully establish and operate the Pilgrim Pod, the organization must have a solid structure.

LEGAL STRUCTURE AND REVENUE MODEL

Decisions need to be made regarding the structure of the Pilgrim Pod: a commercial enterprise focused on profitability and scalability, a foundation focused on social impact and donations, or a social enterprise that combines social impact with a financially sustainable model. A sustainable revenue model is important. Potential sources of income include:

- Affordable accommodation.
- Collaborating with local businesses for meals, bike hire and excursions.
- Crowdfunding for the initial pilot to gauge support.
- Grants for sustainable tourism and cultural heritage.

LOCATION AND FACILITIES

A suitable location must be found. Ideally near a spiritual site. For example, at the site of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen). There must be sanitary facilities or the possibility of installing them. There must also be scope for a modular design so that the Pods remain flexible.





OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND HOSPITALITY

To guarantee that everything goes smoothly, the following must be arranged:

- A self-check-in system.
- Cleaning and maintenance; possibly in collaboration with volunteers or local businesses.
- Energy and waste management.
- Hospitality and community building through hosts or volunteers and optional group gatherings or meals.

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

To attract travelers and pilgrims, a strong marketing strategy is required with a focus on online presence, partnerships with pilgrim organizations, monasteries, convents and travel initiatives.

There must be a dedicated marketing officer or volunteer to manage the community and establish partnerships.

CHALLENGES:

- Initial set-up costs.
- Permits.
- The success of the marketing.
- Management and operation.
- This concept requires a relatively large amount of time and resources.

COSTS

The chosen location plays a role in calculating the costs. In addition, the production and installation of the Pods must be taken into account. Five units could cost between €20,000 and €35,000. In addition, a self-check-in system would cost between €5,000 and €8,000. The creation of other facilities such as a central pavilion with furniture and a library may also incur additional costs. In addition to the necessary equipment, there are also marketing costs and cleaning costs. Bringing this concept to fruition is a major financial challenge.

Servatius Offline

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

Servatius Offline is an evening without screens and full of wonder. In a world where we are constantly connected, always reachable, and always in a hurry, it is becoming increasingly rare to truly focus. Servatius Offline is an invitation to do just that. An evening without notifications and without digital distractions but with space for wonder.

The Basilica of Saint Servatius becomes a place where visitors step out of their daily digital world for a moment and immerse themselves fully in the here and now. Not simply by being offline, but by actively experiencing what happens when you are truly present.

Participants leave their mobiles at home or store them safely in a mobile phone hotel. Society is collectively addicted to stimuli, but what happens when we break the habit of scrolling?

Servatius Offline is a conscious choice for something different. The details for Servatius Offline may vary from edition to edition, but the core remains the same: slowing down, reflecting, connecting and marveling.

A FREE EXPERIENCE

Visitors are invited to experience the tranquility of the Basilica in their own way and to make the most of the evening as they see fit. Perhaps by simply sitting, wandering aimlessly, reading a book, connecting with others, or engaging in another offline activity such as drawing.

SESSION WITH A SPEAKER

There may also be brief moments of inspiration in which visitors are challenged to reflect on life and relationships. This can be facilitated by a speaker. Each edition can explore a different theme: the beauty of life, the power of silence, the meaning of community, and/or the role of religion or art.

Servatius Offline is not an event in the traditional sense. It is an experience that you can only understand by going through it. A reset, a brief escape from the everyday noise. After all, in a world that is always on, going offline is perhaps the most radical form of connection and wonder.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

The Servatius Offline concept tackles the problem of people's reluctance to enter a church. People may see the church as a closed or unfamiliar space where they do not yet feel at home. For some visitors, the association with religion can act as a barrier. When the church is seen solely as a place for a mass, wedding or funeral, there can be a sense of distance; as if the church is not always meant for them. Once that barrier is crossed, the Basilica can transform from an unfamiliar place into a familiar environment. Many people see the church as an institution belonging to the past, which has no relevance to their modern lives. Servatius Offline makes the connection with modern life.

The church is, in fact, a valuable space for peace and reflection in today's world. Whilst the Servatius Offline concept lowers the threshold for visiting a church, it also gives people the chance to reflect on life and the world around us: something that happens less frequently due to the impact of constant digital stimuli. The digital world has led to a decline in our capacity for wonder and connection. The Servatius Offline concept allows people who are digitally overwhelmed to experience this anew. This also creates an opportunity to experience the church in a new way.

AWARENESS AND INTEREST

Flyers, social media and a news article are used to promote the Servatius Offline event. The communications spark curiosity and people must be able to recognize themselves in the problem of constant digital stimuli. Potential participants are provided with the relevant information.

DECISION TO TAKE PART

When someone decides to take part, possibly with a friend, a registration form can be sent out. This makes it clear in advance whether there is a lot or little interest.

RECEIVING INFORMATION

Participants will receive a confirmation with practical details: leave your mobile phone at home or store it in the mobile phone hotel. Rules will also be communicated regarding what is and is not permitted in the Basilica.

ARRIVAL AND EXPERIENCE

On arrival, participants are greeted and can store their phones in the mobile phone hotel. Servatius Offline begins with an opening address. Suggestions are offered on what to do, along with information about wonder and connection. This can make the first few minutes feel less awkward. Visitors find their own way to surrender to the moment. There is space to sit in silence, walk around, admire the architecture, draw, write, read, or strike up a conversation with someone else. There may also be a group reading.

END AND DEPARTURE

When Servatius Offline ends, there is a moment of closure, farewell and getting phones back. After Servatius Offline, visitors reflect on the experience and consider whether the image of the church as closed off or old-fashioned might shift.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To make sure Servatius Offline runs smoothly, various organizational aspects need to be arranged:

VENUE AND FACILITIES

The Basilica must be made available for one evening. Consultation is required with the church organization regarding dates, access and practical matters. Lighting must be provided, and consideration must be given to music or silence. Cushions and small tables may need to be provided for those who wish to write or draw. If a mobile phone charging station is required, this must be hired or purchased. It is important to choose a secure option to prevent problems with theft and damage.





PROGRAM AND EXPERIENCE

The program for Servatius Offline must be clearly drawn up and communicated. In a free-form experience, visitors should be free to interpret the event as they wish, but the Basilica can also provide materials that complement offline experiences.

A speaker may also be engaged for a short inspirational session. This must be booked in advance. Other activities can also be organized such as a silent walk, meditation or a musical interlude.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

A marketing campaign must be organized before the event begins. Collaborations with the media can be arranged. Attention can be generated through newspapers, radio and printed materials. Volunteers and staff must be present to welcome visitors, provide guidance and explain things.

CHALLENGES

- Risk of resistance to going offline and a fear of taking the plunge.
- The church administration may be reluctant to use the Basilica for an event that is not directly religious.
- A great deal of coordination with the organizers is required regarding practical matters.
- Volunteers are needed.
- Group dynamics must be managed: what if people become noisy, still want to use their phones and do not adhere to the intention of the event?
- Appealing to both believers and non-believers without diluting the concept.
- Keeping mobile phones safe.

COSTS

Organizing Servatius Offline involves cost items and potential sources of income. Costs include the mobile phone hotel, marketing, speakers' fees, lighting, volunteer expenses, and printing. If there are no sponsors, costs of between €1,000 and €5,000 must be taken into account. Tickets can be sold for participation in Servatius Offline. However, free admission lowers the threshold to come.

Welcoming artwork: “Why I’m coming”

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

The concept “Why I’m coming” brings together all possible reasons for visiting a church. These diverse motivations are gathered and transformed into a dynamic artwork that is exhibited outside the Basilica. The reasons reveal diverse, often deeply personal motivations, thereby creating a sense of connection and social proof. When passersby see that others are visiting the Basilica for meaningful reasons, this lowers the threshold for them to step inside themselves. The artwork makes the experience more accessible and personal, enabling visitors to identify more easily with the place and inspiring them to also take part in the rich spiritual and cultural experience of the Basilica. There are many reasons to step inside. The artwork makes the experience more accessible and personal, enabling visitors to identify more easily with the place and inspiring them to also take part in the rich spiritual and cultural experience of the Basilica.

For example, an artist might incorporate the following reasons or motivations into a work of art:

1. Sense of community
2. Family tradition and upbringing
3. Prayer
4. Worship
5. Contemplation
6. Spiritual growth
7. Forgiveness
8. Reconciliation
9. Experiencing closeness
10. Gratitude
11. Seeking answers
12. Cultural identity
13. Meeting
14. Volunteering
15. Marriage
16. Celebrating Christmas
17. Celebrating Easter
18. Admiring architecture
19. Art and history
20. Curiosity
21. Meaning making
22. Nostalgia and memories
23. Need for structure
24. Fear of death
25. Beauty
26. Peace



The artwork may refer to a door or gate to symbolize the welcoming idea.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

The concept “Why I’m coming” contributes to social connection and personal meaning making by creating a dialogue about the diverse motivations behind a visit to the Basilica. At a time when church attendance is declining in many Western countries and religious institutions are increasingly perceived as less accessible, this project offers an accessible way to reignite the conversation about faith, spirituality and culture.

Artwork plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion. By making visitors’ personal reasons visible, a sense of recognition and connection is created.

People see that others visit the Basilica for diverse and sometimes unexpected reasons, which may inspire them to step inside themselves. This sense of shared experience lowers the threshold for those who were still hesitant and makes it clear that a visit to the Basilica is not reserved solely for a specific group of believers but is accessible to everyone.

Furthermore, the project contributes to the re-evaluation of the Basilica’s cultural and spiritual significance. Religious sites are increasingly viewed merely as tourist attractions, while their deeper significance fades into the background. This artwork changes that by emphasizing the spiritual, historical and emotional value of the Basilica in a contemporary way.

Visitors are invited not only to admire the building, but also to focus on the many ways in which people feel connected to this place.

Another important aspect of the project is the accessibility it creates. Many people feel a certain distance from religious institutions, either because they are unsure whether they are welcome there or because they believe that visiting a church requires an explicitly religious motivation. By highlighting a wide range of reasons, from curiosity to a need for peace and quiet, from tradition to artistic admiration, the artwork shows that there is no right or wrong reason to step inside. It emphasizes the Basilica’s openness and invites personal reflection.





The project also addresses specific challenges the Basilica may be facing. At a time when visitor numbers are declining, it offers an innovative way to appeal to new target groups. By combining art and personal stories, it appeals to both believers and non-believers and can bridge the gap between different perspectives. Furthermore, it helps to improve the Basilica's public image. Whereas religious institutions are sometimes perceived as closed or formal, this artwork demonstrates that the Basilica is a welcoming place where everyone can feel at home, regardless of background or belief. Through the visual and interactive nature of the artwork, the Basilica becomes not only a place of spiritual reflection, but also a cultural and social meeting place.

CHANCE OR DELIBERATE ENCOUNTER WITH THE ARTWORK

A passer-by walks past the Basilica and the artwork catches their eye: "What is this?". Alternatively, a visitor to the artwork may have heard or read about the object and therefore pay a visit.

RECOGNITION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MESSAGE

When the visitor interprets the diverse motivations within the artwork, a moment of recognition may well arise. Perhaps they will find a reason that resonates with their own experience, such as peace, spiritual growth, or curiosity. This creates a sense of connection whilst the visitor is still outside and lowers the threshold for entering the Basilica. At this point, social proof plays an important role. The idea that others are going inside for a variety of personal reasons can provide just that final nudge.

ACTION

The visitor decides to step inside the Basilica. Once inside, the visitor experiences all that the Basilica has to offer. The visitor now experiences the Basilica in their own personal way.

LEAVING THE BASILICA

For some visitors, it remains a one-off experience while others may be inspired to return. This may make visitors feel more connected to the Basilica.

CHALLENGES

- Finding an artist who can create this artwork.
- Spatial challenge: the artwork must be integrated into its environment without detracting from the site's historical and architectural value. This may require planning permission and the right materials must be chosen without detracting from the cityscape.
- Human motivations involve continuity and innovation. This may give rise to comments and discussions.
- The artwork must be maintained and may be damaged or vandalized.

A specific design must be developed. This process involves decisions regarding form, style, content, materials, non-symbolic interpretation and collaboration with an artist or design team.

LOCATION AND DESIGN

As the artwork will be placed in a public space, the location must be determined. For example, on Henric van Veldekeplein. Municipal approval is required, and consideration must be given to heritage regulations, architectural integration and safety regulations.

TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTALLATION

The artwork must be produced and correctly installed. To make the artwork impactful, effective communication is essential. Consider a campaign and a launch event. The artwork can also be linked to guided tours and educational initiatives.

MAINTENANCE

The artwork must be well maintained.

COSTS

The costs of the artwork will depend on its scale and the choice of materials. Due to this variability, a budget can be drawn up for the realization of the artwork. Costs for lettering and transport must also be taken into account.

Maastricht Pilgrim App

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

Pilgrimage is timeless. Whereas pilgrims once found their way via dusty roads and yellowed maps, today they seek digital guidance and inspiration. The Maastricht Pilgrim App brings tradition and technology together, offering a contemporary experience of spirituality, history and connection. With an interactive map, audio tours and augmented reality, the app transforms the city into a living pilgrimage route. Not just static information, but a dynamic experience that takes users on a journey through sacred sites, ancient stories and moments for personal reflection. Whether you are seeking silence or history, or are meaning making, the app adapts to your pilgrimage. Through gamification, the app encourages the completion of routes and challenges with the chance to earn digital badges and physical souvenirs. A pilgrim's diary offers the chance to record experiences whilst a community feature connects pilgrims with one another – physically and digitally. With the option to light a candle or plan a moment of reflection, the spiritual dimension is not forgotten.

This app is more than a guide; it is a personal companion on a journey through the heart of Maastricht. It makes centuries-old stories accessible to a new generation and lowers the threshold for experiencing spirituality – whether you are religious or simply meaning making. The Maastricht Pilgrim App is not just a route planner, but a contemporary interpretation of an age-old ritual.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

The Maastricht Pilgrim App transforms centuries-old pilgrimage into a contemporary, digital experience and responds to the growing need for spirituality, heritage engagement and accessibility. Maastricht, with its rich religious history, attracts pilgrims and tourists, but the way people visit spiritual sites is changing. The app offers an interactive alternative to traditional tourism, featuring routes past religious landmarks, historical stories and moments for reflection. In addition, the app connects visitors with one another and with local church communities by integrating up-to-date information on church services, events and accommodation.

In this way, the app not only promotes sustainable tourism but also community building and a deeper spiritual experience.

SCENARIO

A user of the Maastricht Pilgrim App goes through various stages.

1. Discovering the App: Someone learns about the app via digital channels or in person in Maastricht. The user becomes curious and decides to download the app.
2. Exploring the features: The user learns about the app's features: selecting routes, audio guide, spiritual options (lighting a candle, keeping a diary, masses, locations, opening hours, and tips) and practical information for their stay.
3. Use during the pilgrimage: The app demonstrates its full potential by enhancing the experience of Maastricht as a pilgrimage city.
4. Receiving rewards or certification: Through the app, pilgrims can earn digital badges for undertaking various religious activities.

CHALLENGES

- Developing the app and making it user-friendly can be a technical challenge: the app must run smoothly.
- Foreign pilgrims must have an internet connection and a modern phone.
- An audio tour must be created and every feature on the app must be well thought out.
- The app must be multilingual.
- An app involves high implementation and maintenance costs. The costs are ongoing due to updates, bug fixes and server costs.
- Content, such as opening hours, changes and must be kept up to date.





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- It must be investigated whether there are any existing pilgrim apps or competitors.
- Core functionality must be defined.
- We need to explore potential partnerships such as with the municipality of Maastricht.
- The costs and revenue model must be assessed.
- The app must be developed with a focus on user-friendliness and reliability.
- The content must be developed. Content about Maastricht must be written, an audio tour created and the necessary information gathered.
- The app must be implemented as required.
- It must be promoted.
- Attention must be paid to maintenance and updates.

COSTS

The total costs depend on the complexity and features of the app. Development costs include app development, GPS navigation, audio guides, voice-overs, content creation, testing, bug fixing, hosting, legal fees, marketing, and launch. A bespoke app can cost between €10,000 and €200,000. Every choice affects the price. An app for pilgrims with many features will be very expensive. Operational costs will also be added after development. A revenue model could be explored by making the app a paid service. However, it must first be investigated whether enough people would buy the app.

Echo of The Chapter of Saint Servatius

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

This project brings the history and stories of Saint Servatius and The Chapter of Saint Servatius to life through projections and soundscapes, inside and perhaps even outside the Basilica. Visitors are therefore given an accessible and visually appealing insight into the traditions, symbolism and heritage of this historic site. Through the use of image and sound, the rich history is not only told but also experienced. Think of projections of historical events or rituals of the Chapter, complemented by

soundscapes that enhance the atmosphere and meaning. This combination brings the past to life and offers a new way to discover the Basilica and its stories. This concept meets the contemporary need for experience and interaction without compromising the authenticity of the heritage. It offers a contemporary addition to the existing presentation of history, allowing both visitors with prior knowledge and newcomers to be drawn into the world of Saint Servatius.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

This project preserves and makes accessible the cultural heritage of Saint Servatius and The Chapter in an innovative way. Through projections and soundscapes, history is brought to life for a wide audience. It responds to the growing demand for experience-focused learning and makes heritage accessible and engaging for young and old alike. The concept helps to keep cultural heritage alive and prevent important stories from being lost.

SCENARIO

DISCOVERING THE EXPERIENCE

Visitors discover the experience through the media, advertising or the Basilica's website. The local tourist office or hospitality sector can also promote the event. Information is also provided about the duration, times, theme and experience.

ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION

Visitors arrive at the Basilica or the pilgrim house and gain entry based on a booked time slot.

EXPERIENCE

Visitors experience the projections and soundscapes. The historical narrative unfolds through images, sound and, where applicable, interactive elements. Different parts of the story are projected at different locations. Visitors can purchase a souvenir afterwards.

CHALLENGES

- Balancing innovation and heritage preservation: The Basilica is a historic and religious monument. It is important to utilize technology without detracting from the atmosphere and character of the space.
- Technical feasibility: The projections and soundscapes must be realized and the images must be clearly visible.
- The Basilica's infrastructure may impose restrictions on the installation of equipment such as electricity and projection surfaces.
- A balance must be struck between event visitors and religious visitors.
- High-quality equipment such as laser projectors, LED lighting installations and 3D mapping software entails high costs. Every installation must be fully bespoke. The costs for a partner, such as Moment Factory, can be very high.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Identify the historical and cultural stories that need to be told.
- Determine technical possibilities.
- Research into similar projects (Moment Factory or alternatives).
- Involve the church administration, parish, local artists and technology partners.
- Drawing up a budget and exploring sponsorship opportunities.
- Mood board and sketches for projections, soundscapes and script development.
- Creative and technical design, tailored to technical capabilities.
- Making sure safety measures are in place.
- Production of installation and content.
- Communication: promotion and ticket sales.
- Launch.

COSTS

Similar projects, such as AURA and Foresta Lumina, required significant investment, which was recouped. These projects took place in 2014 and 2017. At the time, such projects were relatively new and were rolled out in larger cities. This may have played a role in the costs and the success. Maastricht has a smaller international audience and, today, immersive light and sound experiences are no longer rare. Eindhoven,

for example, has GLOW, which means Maastricht may struggle to offer a distinctive experience and compete with larger, already successful events. For inspiration, see the Luminiscence website (<https://luminiscence.com>).

Believing in public space

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

How do we bring faith to the streets without it feeling like proselytizing? In a world where the gap between religion and everyday life seems to be widening, the power lies in creating meaningful encounters.

This concept revolves around making faith visible through actions, conversations and experience without imposing beliefs.

Traditional forms of spreading faith do not always align with the lived experience of street culture. People are less open to dogmatic messages, but they want to find a sense of meaning and connection.

How can we create a new form of religious experience that is accessible, open and inviting?

This initiative brings faith to the streets in an organic way. No sermons, no conversion, but an accessible, experiential approach, in which people come into contact with religious values such as love, compassion and community in their own way.

This can take various forms: visible compassion, cultural expression, or a mobile chapel or installation that invites reflection without explicit pressure to convert.

VISIBLE COMPASSION

- Free coffee with a message.
- Receiving a free handwritten card or box of comfort with encouraging words.





CULTURAL COMPASSION

- A street musician sharing a message.
- A pop-up performance exploring life's big questions.

SCENARIO

No fixed route, no rigid script; it is precisely the unexpected and the serendipitous that make this concept powerful. Faith appears in places where you least expect it – without pressure and without a message, but as a spontaneous encounter that touches the heart.

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT

At a time when loneliness is on the rise and human connection is becoming increasingly fleeting, the 'Faith in Public Space' concept offers a response to a growing social need. Many people experience the city as a place where everything happens at speed and anonymously, and where genuine encounters are rare. This initiative creates moments of unexpected connection without pressure or expectations. A handwritten card with an encouraging message, a spontaneous musical performance in a square or a quiet spot in the heart of the city – small, meaningful interventions that offer a moment of peace and reflection in everyday life.

At the same time, there is a growing need for meaning making outside traditional, religious frameworks. Although churches are emptying, the search for meaning and spirituality continues. This concept does not make faith exclusive or institutional, but brings it back to the streets, where it becomes part of everyday life in an open and accessible way.

Through art, encounters and subtle interventions, a form of faith emerges that excludes no one and invites everyone to recognize something in it in their own way. In recent decades, public space has increasingly become a place of consumption. Shops, advertising and commercial interests dominate the streetscape whilst places for meeting and reflection are becoming increasingly rare.

This initiative restores the street as a space where meaningful interactions can take place. It gives people the opportunity to participate, free of charge and without obligation, in something that touches, inspires or simply brings a smile to their face. Furthermore, this concept addresses the polarization that often arises around faith and identity. Instead of presenting religion as something that divides, it shows that faith can be a source of connection.

CHALLENGES

- Guaranteeing that people do not perceive it as a disguised form of proselytizing. The balance between openness and authenticity is crucial. There may be suspicion about hidden intentions.
- Street events and objects in public spaces require permission and sometimes a license.
- Some people may react with evasion or negativity.
- Volunteers are needed to support this concept.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Brainstorming with volunteers: which messages and which formats are suitable.
- Developing actions.
- Selecting locations.
- Designing the initial interventions and preparation.
- Implementing.
- Observing which formats are successful and making adjustments.

COSTS

This concept is largely based on spontaneous and small-scale initiatives. This keeps costs low. However, there may be costs associated with handwritten cards, free coffee/tea, volunteers, simple installations and marketing. A mobile chapel, street art and performance art may cost more.

Appendix: The pilgrim and the soup stone

This story was shared with us during a conversation with a stakeholder. It fits perfectly with the feeling that everything in Maastricht is already in place to create a 'City for the Pilgrim'. All that remains is to bring the ingredients together, write the recipe and decide on the kitchen team. Along with the realization that no chef can please everyone.

Somewhere in a remote village in the mountains, the people no longer felt happy. It used to be different. When the sun emerged from behind the mountain ridges, they would set to work whistling. But now things were different. Everyone looked glum and everyone was only thinking of themselves.

Yes, there was a famine in the village. Everyone thought there was a shortage of food and so everyone hoarded all the food they could get their hands on in their cellars.

One day, a pilgrim arrived in the village. He was poorly dressed, had not shaved for days and looked emaciated. But he had bright, sparkling eyes and a face that always seemed to be smiling.

"Why does everyone look so glum?" asked the pilgrim.

"We are hungry and there's hardly anything to eat," came the reply.

The pilgrim scratched his stubble for a moment, pushed his top hat back a little and thought. Suddenly he said: "I'll make you some soup!" "Soup?" asked the people. "And what are we supposed to make soup with?"

"Do not worry," said the pilgrim, "I've got a soup stone with me." "And with that, you make the most delicious soup in the world."

The villagers could not believe their ears: a soup stone! No, they had never heard of such a thing. The news spread like wildfire through the village. "But I still need a cauldron," said the pilgrim.

The villagers fetched a large pot of water and put it on the fire. With a grand gesture, the pilgrim carefully took the soup stone out of his bag and placed it in the water, which was already beginning to boil.

A moment later, he tasted it.

"Mmm... delicious," said the pilgrim. "But the soup would be even better if we added some potatoes. Does anyone happen to have a few potatoes?"

Some people, hoping to have a taste of the soup themselves, brought over a few small potatoes. After a while, the pilgrim tasted it again.

"Great!" he said, "but it would taste even better if we added some vegetables. Anyone who can spare a few vegetables can have a bowl of my delicious soup later."

A few residents shyly brought some leeks and celery, and a woman brought a bunch of carrots. It was already starting to smell delicious in the market square, and more and more people came to look and sniff around the large soup pot.

"It's almost ready, but if we add a few herbs and some salt now, it'll be the best soup in the whole world. Oh yes, and perhaps we've got a bit of soup meat as well."

The portly innkeeper, who was a real food lover, was already dreaming of a delicious bowl of soup and came trudging over with a large piece of soup meat.





The aroma of delicious soup filled the whole village. It was not long before everyone was standing ready with a plate and a spoon to taste the soup.

When the soup was ready, it was served, and everyone was allowed to help themselves to a bowl, as everyone had also contributed something from their own supplies.

All the residents began to tuck in and enjoy it. They had never tasted such delicious soup before. They kept coming back to refill their plates. The children ate their fill too.

Everyone felt happy again and you could tell from the look on their faces that they had really enjoyed it.

The minstrel took out his violin again and the people began to dance and laugh. The village was filled with joy once more.

“I’m sorry,” said the pilgrim, “but I must leave.”

Everyone was sorry to see him go.

“But you may keep the soup stone,” said the pilgrim. “To make such delicious soup, you must always do what you did today: share what you have at home so that everyone can enjoy it.”

The people nodded and felt overjoyed that they were allowed to keep the soup stone. The pilgrim was glad that he had brought joy back to the village.

Just outside the village, the pilgrim bent down...

He picked up another stone from the ground and put it in his pocket.

(Source: unknown)



Appendix to the Maastricht Brand Book

This appendix contains the relevant passages from the Maastricht Brand Book (May, 2024 version) compiled by Maastricht Marketing.

Global appeal and local pride.

Maastricht and the region represent the good life. In every way. For centuries, we have been building a culture, architecture, traditions and businesses that allow people to enjoy, work, do business and live at a different pace and with greater love. Our leisure economy is built on this. We are world-famous for it. It makes Maastricht the capital of the good life. Yet it is also time to give our city and region even more substance, shape and direction for the future. To highlight with its vibrant and historic character as a key asset a number of aspects that make sure balance is a priority and that quality of life is optimally realized in every respect.

Research shows that Maastricht is one of the strongest city brands in the Netherlands (in 2022 we were in second place, after Amsterdam), but that it is too one-sided from a tourism perspective. Precisely because it is such a strong and well-known brand, it can be used for much broader objectives. That is why Maastricht Marketing is broadening its horizons to include visitors, residents, businesses and 'brains'.

Maastricht

Brand story

Maastricht, a cosmopolitan city on the Meuse. You do not have to travel far. We are close by. Between Aachen and Liège, Düsseldorf and Antwerp, right in the heart of Europe. We live in a beautiful spot on the map. The Romans recognized this too and settled here to trade. The European powers that fought over our city through the centuries saw that too. So did the heads of government who brought the European Union into being in Maastricht.

The magnetic pull of this city and region has brought economic prosperity and a rich culture. Our innovations today set the tone for tomorrow. This is where things grow and flourish. Maastricht has yet another asset. Our national character. Here, life is celebrated. We do not run, we walk. We pay attention to one another and to the things that matter. At home, in our bars and at work. We call that social strength. In Maastricht, we are good at bringing diversity together. Residents, visitors, those who run businesses, students. The business community, academia and culture. That feels good and, for us, is a prerequisite for success. Chance encounters, a good conversation, academic cross-pollination: this is where it happens. There is an international vibe here that forms the basis for culture, innovation and creative excellence.

Work hard and play hard. But in the Maastricht way. Success is there to be enjoyed. On the terraces, in the restaurants, in the museums and in the poshest shops in the Netherlands. Amidst enviable surroundings. This is how we strengthen our international character, the foundation on which our city is built. Maastricht attracts and retains. The most intimate metropolis on earth. You might never want to leave





Archetypes

We used Carl Jung's twelve personality archetypes as a basis. In doing so, we found that not one but two archetypes together best capture the character of Maastricht: the lover and the hero.

MAASTRICHT THE LOVER

Maastricht is a born lover. The dialect, the classical architecture and stylish residents give the city a charming golden edge that draws people in. This is not the same as traditional, saccharine or a Disney-style enchantment, but is genuine, sensory, inclusive and does not go unnoticed. The city is seductive and therefore earns a place on everyone's bucket list, often featuring among their most cherished memories.

HERO MAASTRICHT

As a hero, Maastricht has guts and leads the way in achieving new things. Maastricht does not always show courage through innovation, but rather by staying true to its own DNA. Maastricht does things in its own unique way and dares to reinvent itself time and time again. Furthermore, as a true hero, Maastricht empowers people. The creators, researchers, those running businesses, companies and residents are the icons of Maastricht and the surrounding region. The people of Maastricht are a proud folk and walk with their heads held high: ready for new challenges.

Minnares én heldin





Maastricht's identity (DNA) is not a choice. We are who we are: an internationally oriented city characterized by its history, central location and the joie de vivre of its residents. The Maastricht brand, however, is a choice. It is a communicatively appealing summary of the (finest) distinctive features our city has to offer. We use it as a means to present the city and region to various target groups and to attract new Maastricht people regardless of whether they are temporarily amongst us or not to Maastricht: residents, students, visitors, businesses, institutions, and knowledge and skilled workers. A strong brand is genuine and credible. That is why we are building the Maastricht brand on a solid foundation: nine typically Maastricht characteristics: our DNA.

BEING HAPPY BY ENJOYING LIFE

Happiness is a crucial key to health. In Maastricht and the surrounding region, we enjoy life just that little bit more. Our healthy innovations help us to enjoy life much more mindfully at home and to achieve breakthroughs on the international stage. These are the ingredients of a new, indulgent lifestyle.

SOCIAL POWER

Here, we create opportunities to meet people. By not fixing everything in a schedule and by being where other people are. This leads to spontaneous conversations that can result in a professional connection, meaningful relationships and strong initiatives. In short, social power.

UNIQUENESS THROUGH LOCALITY

Maastricht has partly become 'great' thanks to its manufacturing industry. We put our uniqueness at the heart of what we do and give it world-class quality. We source everything locally wherever possible. In this way, we make the local scene interesting for everyone who lives, works or spends their leisure time here.

SMARTER THROUGH DIALOGUE

Here, we expand our collective knowledge through (academic) conversations; meaningful discussions that help develop new perspectives and concepts. Conversations that help us develop our critical thinking skills and deepen our understanding of one another. A knowledge boost for our economy.

WORKING TOGETHER INFORMALLY

In Maastricht and the surrounding region, informal connections contribute to business success. Here in the south, we understand that effective collaboration starts with getting to know one another. Getting to know each other properly; in informal networks.

TAKING THE REQUIRED TIME EFFECTIVELY

We do not use time efficiently, but effectively. We do not run, we walk. We do not rush, we take our time. Here, we take the time to think, to do things properly, to be careful. This is how we reach sound decisions and safeguard our unique quality of life. This always pays off in the long run.

EXCLUSIVITY THROUGH INCLUSIVITY

Here, we do not believe in more of the same, but in diversity and differences. What is brewing is exciting. New ideas, influences and perspectives, drawn from everyone's input and on an equal footing, take us further. Together, we tackle problems head-on. As a result, the whole is always better than the sum of its parts.

BUILDING THE FUTURE BASED ON THE PAST

Maastricht and Limburg have been shaped by various crises and periods of domination. That makes us winners. We have a great past. The lessons we have learnt make sure we always stay up to date. With this winning mentality, the city is building a sustainable 21st century.

A STAGE FOR ART (OF LIVING)

Maastricht has an energy that makes sure the city is bursting with creative minds, researchers and makers. Maastricht is culture. A stage for the south, 365 days a year. Enjoy our art of living. Take a breather in the most intimate metropolis on earth.





Brand promise

In Maastricht and the surrounding region, we combine innovation and career opportunities with a high quality of life. Perfectly balanced.

On the way to a Blue Zone

The Maastricht City Vision 2040 focuses on the healthy city. This is fully in line with the ambitions of the province, which aims to be a frontrunner in healthcare innovation to improve both the quantity (in years) and the quality of life. Social innovation and positive health are also key components of this. The need is great and this calls for innovative solutions and a very strong collaboration. Many activities within our (scientific) ecosystem have enormous potential and quality, and are closely linked to our pursuit of that international and national leading position. For example, all four Brightlands campuses in Limburg (Health, Chemelot, Smart Services and Greenport Venlo) each contribute, based on their own expertise, to improving health and quality of life. Naturally, Maastricht University and Maastricht UMC+ play a key role in this, as do many other companies and institutions in Maastricht and the surrounding region.



Nine common characteristics of Blue Zones

MOVE NATURALLY

No gym, but living in a healthy and clean environment that encourages you to move without even thinking about it.

KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

Know what you want to wake up for in the morning. Having a purpose can add seven years to your life expectancy.

MINIMIZE STRESS

Make time to relax every day.

THE 80% RULE

Reduce your calorie intake by 20%.

PLANT-BASED FOODS

Grow your own food. Beans, in particular, are a staple of the daily diet of most centenarians.

WINE

Drink regularly, in moderation, and whilst eating or socializing with friends.

LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE

Belonging to a group that meets regularly has a positive impact on health.

FAMILY

Put family and loved ones first.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Make sure you have a good circle of friends and sufficient social contacts.

Appendix: Relationship with other challenges in the city of Maastricht

In a conversation with Mr. Guy Vroemen of Maastricht Marketing, we were tasked with also assessing the Master Opportunity based on the challenges facing the city of Maastricht in the area of well-being. In summary: what challenges does the city face and how can this Master Opportunity contribute to solutions and connections? This theme was also included in the discussions with stakeholders. For inspiration, we have identified a number of challenges that emerged during the discussions and we have linked them to this Master Opportunity in a positive way.

Reduced social contact and loneliness	The Master Opportunity highlights the connection and interaction that are central to it. The door of the pilgrim house that will soon be literally open where there is time for everyone to have a chat and will offer a bowl of soup. Other examples include the many events that are organized where everyone is welcome. The aim, in any case, is to create a free and accessible infrastructure that puts people first.
Low participation of newcomers/migrants in social structures	Within this Master Opportunity, every demographic group is more than welcome. There is also ample scope to focus on multilingualism.
Declining trust in institutions & commitment, including the church	The Master Opportunity is being approached from a broad perspective. Religion is an important pillar of the movement but not the only one. It is also a contemporary way of looking at the church and faith. This Master Opportunity does not focus on the pilgrim of 1525. The Master Opportunity contributes to community building and therefore fosters connection and trust.
Declining participation in voluntary work	We are convinced that 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' can be a global story that attracts young people from all over the world with the right intentions to, for example, contribute as volunteers to the realization of this Master Opportunity.
Differences between population groups	'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' is for everyone, young and old, rich and poor, students, tourists, long-term residents, believers and non-believers. It offers an opportunity for these groups to meet as they are less likely to meet one another in everyday life. It also gives Muslim residents of Maastricht a place to connect with centuries-old history since it allows them to share their pilgrimage tradition with other groups.
Safe and accessible meeting places	The development of the pilgrim quarter and, hopefully, the opening up of the garden of the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters Onder de Bogen) will create safe and accessible spaces where local residents are more than welcome. We see the pilgrim quarter as an intimate and highly distinctive environment.

In this way, Maastricht presents itself not only as a tourist destination, but as a meeting place for people from different backgrounds. 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' can act as a catalyst for social connection and a sense of purpose. Residents become fellow pilgrims in their own city: on a journey of discovery, of commitment, and of encounter.

Maastricht can develop into a city where pilgrims are not merely passersby but catalysts for connection and where everyone benefits from greater commitment, interaction and well-being.





Appendix: Sources

The reports, publications and websites listed below were submitted by stakeholders and consulted in order to produce this Master Opportunity.

Reports and publications

(In alphabetical order)

Atelier Heiligdomsvaart: *Heiligdomsvaart Maastricht 2025*. Maastricht 2025
Pilgrimage of Relics). June 2025.

Bezin in Limburg. (Contemplation in Limburg). Magazine featuring inspiring locations, 2011.

EMR 2030, een strategie voor de toekomst van de Euregio Maas-Rijn. (EMR 2030, a strategy for the future of the Meuse-Rhine Euregio.)

Municipality of Maastricht. *Toekomstverkenning gebedshuizen – waar stadssilhouet en stedelijk cement elkaar ontmoeten..* (A Vision for the Future of Places of Worship – Where the City Skyline Meets Urban Concrete.) June 2024.

The Chapter of Saint Servatius. *Historische waarden, behouden, herbeleven, versterken*. (Preserve, revive and enhance historical values.) Research report, October 2024, compiled by Nina Hendrix.

The Chapter of Saint Servatius. *Concepten voor de Sint-Servaasbasiliek*. (Concepts for the Basilica of Saint Servatius.) Research report, February 2025.

'*Het Rome van het Noorden*', Maastricht, stad van Kerken, Kloosters en Kapellen, een uitgave van de Raad van Kerken Maastricht ('The Rome of the North', Maastricht, city of churches, monasteries and chapels, published by the Raad van Kerken Maastricht (Maastricht Council of Churches), At Ipenburg, second revised edition 2025.

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Un Souffle nouveau pour l'Europe.

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Ralph Kunz, *Pilgern. Glauben auf dem Weg*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019.

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(Op alfabetische volgorde)

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Aartsbisdom Utrecht (Archdiocese of Utrecht). *Bedevaarten naar Kevelaer (Pilgrimages to Kevelaer)*.
Information found on: <https://www.bisdom-roermond.nl/Bedevaart-Kevelaer-vanuit-Sittard-en-omgeving>

Abdij Benedictusberg (Benedictusberg Abbey).
Information found on: <https://www.benedictusberg.nl/>

Abdij Rolduc (Rolduc Abbey).
Information found on: <https://www.bcrolduc.nl/>

All places of pilgrimage in the Netherlands.
Information found on: [Bedevaarten in Nederland](#)

Archeo Route Limburg.
Information found on: <https://archeoroutelimburg.nl/nl>





Bisdom Hasselt (Diocese of Hasselt).

Information found on: <https://www.otho.be/bisdom-hasselt>

Bisdom Luik (Diocese of Liège; Évêché de Liège).

Information found on: <https://www.evechedeliege.be/fr>

Bisdom Roermond (Diocese of Roermond).

Information found on: <https://www.bisdom-roermond.nl/>

Bisdom Roermond (Diocese of Roermond). *Heiligdomsvaart afgesloten – blijf bruggen bouwen (Pilgrimage of Relics closed - continue building bridges).*

Information found on: <https://www.bisdom-roermond.nl/Heiligdomsvaart-afgesloten-blijf-bruggen-bouwen>

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Information found on: <https://www.bisdom-roermond.nl/Warme-voettocht-naar-Heiligdomsvaart-in-Aken>

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Information found on: <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/broederschappen/gids/inleiding/negentiende eeuw>

Camino Academie.

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Circuit des Collégiales.

Information found on: <https://www.circuitdescollegiales.be/>

Conservatorium Maastricht.

Information found on: <https://www.conservatoriummaastricht.nl/nl>

Cruises Maastricht.

Information found on: <https://maastrichtexcursies.nl/vaararrangementen/>

Curator Musica Capitulum Sancti Servatii.

Information found on: <https://www.vincent-kusters.com>

Maastricht-Meersen Deneary.

Information found on: <https://www.rkmaastricht.nl/>

Tongeren Deneary.

Information found on: <https://dekenaattongeren.be>

Tongeren Deneary. *Pilgrimage in Tongeren (Pilgrimage in Tongeren).*

Information found on: <https://dekenaattongeren.be/pilgrimage/>

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Dutch Mountain Trail.

Information found on: <https://www.wandel.nl/routes/dutch-mountain-trail/>

Euregio 2030 strategy.

Information found on: <https://euregio-mr.info/nl/ueber-uns/strategie/>

European Commission.

Information found on: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/funding-opportunities-for-cultural-heritage>

Celebration of Saint Marie.

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Information found on: <https://historischcentrumlimburg.nl>

Het Nederlands Genootschap van Sint Jacob (The Dutch Society of Saint James).

Information found on: <https://www.santiago.nl/genootschap/>

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Huis voor de Pelgrim (House for the Pilgrim).

Information found on: <https://www.huisvoordepelgrim.nl>

Jezuïetenberg.

Information found on: <https://www.limburgs-landschap.nl/natuurgebied/jezuïetenberg/>

J.M. Vogl-stichting.

Information found on: <https://www.voordezangkunst.nl/>

Joods Cultureel Kwartier (Jewish Cultural Quarter).

Information found on: <https://jck.nl>

Joods Maastricht.

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Kapittel van Servaas (Chapter of Servatius).

Information found on: <https://www.kapittelvansintservaas.nl>
<https://holyromanempireassociation.org/chapter-saint-servatius>

Katholieke Nieuwsblad (Catholic newspaper). *Pelgrims trekken er weer massaal op uit (Pilgrims are once again setting out in droves)*.

Information found on: <https://www.kn.nl/pelgrims-trekken-er-weer-massaal-op-uit-zon-15-miljoen-gelovigen-bezochten-belgische-heiligdommen-in-2022/>

Katholieke sociale leer (Catholic social doctrine).

<https://kro-ncrv.nl/katholiek/encyclopedie/k/katholieke-sociale-leer>

Kerk en Synagoge (Church and Synagogue).

Information found on: <https://kro-ncrv.nl/katholiek/encyclopedie/k/katholieke-sociale-leer>

Kerknet. Pelgrimspastoraal Bisdom Hasselt (Pilgrim pastoral Hasselt Diocese).

Information found on: <https://www.kerknet.be/organisatie/pelgrimspastoraal-bisdom-hasselt>

Kerkvernieuwing (Church renewal).

Information found on: <https://www.kerk2030.nl>

Klein geluk uit Roerdalen.

Information found on: <https://www.kleingelukuitroerdalen.nl/onze-geluksplekken>

Kloosterpad Noord-Brabant.

Information found on: <https://onskloosterpad.nl/ons-kloosterpad/>

Klooster Wittem.

Information found on: <https://kloosterwittem.nl/Pelgrimeren>

Koninklijk Limburgs Geschied- en Oudheidkundig Genootschap

Information found on: <https://lgog.nl>

Leefstijlvinder.nl.

Information found on: <https://leefstijlvinder.nl>





Leger des Heils.

Information found on: <https://www.legerdesheils.nl/buurtwerk>

Limburgs Erfgoed.

Information found on: <https://www.limburgserfgoed.nl>

Limburgs Samenlevingsarchief.

Information found on: <https://www.tracelimburg.nl>

Luminiscence.

Information found on: <https://luminiscence.com/en/>

Maastricht Catholic Student Chaplaincy.

Information found on: <https://www.maastrichtcatholic.com>

Maastricht, stad van welbevinden (Maastricht, city of well-being).

Information found on: <https://www.maastrichtvitalestad.nl/onze-droom>

Mariapark Maastricht.

Information found on: <https://mariapark.nl/mariapark-ca-1910/>

Matthias kerk.

Information found on: <https://www.kerkgebouwen-in-limburg.nl/kerken/maastricht/matthias>

Museum Catharijneconvent.

Information found on: <https://www.grootstemuseum.nl/nl/>

Musica Sacra Maastricht.

Information found on: <https://www.musicasacramaastricht.nl/over-ons>

New Loreto Simpelveld.

Information found on: <https://www.newloreto.com>

Oasen van hoop (Oases of hope).

Information found on: <https://www.oasenvanhoop.nl>

Organisaties rondom de Sint-Servaasbasiliek.

Information found on: <https://www.sintservaas.nl/index.php/Basiliek-en-parochie/De-Servaas-gemeenschap>

Parochiefederatie Onze-Lieve-Vrouw en Sint-Pieter.

Information found on: <https://olv-sintpieter.nl/kerken/>

Pelgrimeren (Pilgriming).

Information found on: <https://kro-ncrv.nl/katholiek/encyclopedie/p/pelgrimeren>

Pelgrimeren in deze tijd (Pilgriming in our times).

Information found on: <https://mjschuurman.wordpress.com/2020/10/17/pelgrimeren-een-oude-praktijk-met-hedendaagse-betekenis/>

Pelgrim in Limburg (Pilgrim in Limburg).

Information found on: <https://www.pelgrimlimburg.nl>

Pelgrimstocht het Zonneliedpad.

Information found on: <https://www.franciscaansebeweging.nl/activiteiten/pelgrimstocht-het-zonneliedpad>

Phil Zuid.

Information found on: <https://philzuid.nl/nl/over-opus-9>

Positive Health for Everyone.

Information found on: <https://www.iph.nl>

Presentation of the city of Aachen.

Information found on: <https://route-charlemagne.eu>

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Information found on: <https://pretwerk.nl/insight/bezinningstoerisme-inspelen-op-de-reis-naar-innerlijke-verrijking/85808/>

Provincie Limburg. *Erfgoed in Limburg (Heritage in Limburg)*.

Information found on: <https://www.limburg.nl/onderwerpen/cultuur-erfgoed-archeologie/erfgoed/>

Raad van kerken (Board of churches).

Information found on: <https://www.raadvankerken.nl/organisatie/lokale-raden-van-kerken/>

Religieuze betrokkenheid in Nederland (Religious commitment in the Netherlands).

Information found on: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2025/16/daling-aandeel-mensen-dat-aangeeft-bij-religie-te-horen-stagneert>

Robert Schuman gedachtengoed (Robert Schuman's body of thought).

Information found on: <https://www.kn.nl/eu-grondlegger-robert-schuman-gebruikte-instrumenten-van-oorlog-voor-de-vrede/>

Ruimte voor vernieuwing in geloofsgemeenschappen (Room for renewal in faith communities).

Information found on: <https://spaceforgrace.nl/2025/07/08/gregoriaanse-vespers-in-mokum/>

Servaas legende (Legend of Servatius).

Information found on: <https://www.literatuurgeschiedenis.org/teksten/servaaslegende-sente-servas>

Schrijnenhuis.

Information found on: <https://www.schrijnenhuis.nl>

Sint-Servaaskerk (Quedlinburg) en de collectie.

Information found on: <https://www.domschatzquedlinburg.de> en [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quedlinburg_\(stad\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quedlinburg_(stad))

Stichting Jacobswegen Nederland. Sint-Jacobswandelpad (Camino de Santiago).

Information found on: <https://www.stjacobspad.nl/SPWSPW.html>

St. Janskerk Maastricht.

Information found on: <https://www.stjanskerkmaastricht.nl>

Stichting Katholiek erfgoed.

Information found on: <https://web.archive.org/web/20250318030023/http://www.stichtingkatholiekerfgoed.nl/>

Stichting Kruisen en Kapellen Limburg.

Information found on: <https://www.kruisenenkapellenlimburg.nl/kruisen-kapellen>

Stichting Peelgrijn.

Information found on: <https://peelgrijn.nl>

Stichting Pelgrimswegen & Voetpaden Limburg (SPV Limburg).

Information found on: <https://www.spvlimburg.nl>

Stichting Sint Carolus Borromeus.

Information found on: <https://www.sintcarolusborromeusstichting.nl/>

The British Pilgrimage Trust.

Information found on: <https://www.britishpilgrimage.org>

Vereniging van het Heilige Roomse Rijk (Associazione dei Nobili del Sacro Romano Impero).

Information found on: <https://holyromanempireassociation.org>

Visit Maastricht. *Religieuze hotspot Maastricht. (Religious hotspot)*.

Information found on: <https://www.visitmaastricht.com/nl/dit-is-maastricht/bouwen-op-het-verleden/historie/religieuze-hotspot>

Visit Noord-Limburg. *Pelgrims in Noord-Limburg (Pilgrims in Noord-Limburg)*.

Information found on: <https://www.visitnoordlimburg.nl/nl/pelgrims-noord-limburg>

Visit Zuid-Limburg Partners. *Pelgrims in Zuid-Limburg (Pilgrims in Zuid-Limburg)*.

Information found on: <https://partners.visitzuidlimburg.nl/>





Visit Zuid-Limburg. *Kerken en kloosters in Kerken en kloosters in Zuid-Limburg (Zuid-Limburg (Churches, monasteries and convents in Zuid-Limburg))*.
Information found on: <https://www.visitzuidlimburg.nl/te-doen-in-zuid-limburg/historisch-erfgoed/kerken-en-kloosters/>

Vrienden van Sint Gerlach in Houthem.
Information found on: <https://vriendenvansintgerlach.nl/>

Voormalig kloostercomplex Hoog Cruts.
Information found on: <https://www.hxhoogcruts.eu>

Walse Kerk Maastricht.
Information found on: <https://www.walsekerkmaastricht.nl>

Walk of Wisdom.
Information found on: <https://walkofwisdom.org>

Zingeving in Nederland. (Meaning making in the Netherlands).
Information found on: <https://www.ipsos-publiek.nl/actueel/zeven-op-tien-nederlanders-zoeken-naar-zin/>

Used photographic material from the following sources:

Website <https://www.maastricht-marketing.nl/nl>

Website: <https://www.sintservaas.nl>

Website: <https://olv-sintpieter.nl/>

Website: <https://www.bisdome-roermond.nl>

Website: <https://www.joodsmaastricht.nl/nl/>

Thijs Vossen, Bureau Leisurebrains

Stefan Vrancken, member of Koninklijk Limburgs Geschied- en Oudheidkundig genootschap (LGOG)

Jean-Pierre Geusens, Focuss 22 (only the Maastricht skyline photo)

Marco Jeurissen, bureau Haven (only the 2025 Pilgrimage of Relics picture)

Len Dumont, initiator of Pelgrim in Limburg

Marie-Christine Adams

Daniel van der Wens (only the photo on page 179)



List of stakeholders and discussion guide

During the development of this Master Opportunity, we spoke to many people whom we have referred to as stakeholders. The term 'stakeholders' means the group of interested parties and those involved in this plan. Their contributions were sometimes based on a personal perspective and sometimes on the role they fulfilled within an organization. In any case, this plan has come about thanks to them. To give the Master Opportunity more cachet, their exact words have been included in places. Information from other sources has often been enriched or supplemented by valuable input from the discussions with these stakeholders. The discussions took place in an informal setting. However, a list of questions was sent to most of them in advance. We discussed the plan only briefly with some stakeholders. Both the names of the people interviewed and the questionnaire are included in this chapter. We view this plan as a living document that will only grow as more and more people and organizations get involved.

Names of interviewees

- Mr. John Aarts, alderman for the municipality of Maastricht
- Mr. Frans Bastiaens, alderman for the Municipality of Maastricht
- Mr. Matheu Bemelmans, spokesperson/communications advisor for the Diocese of Roermond, responsible for PR and communications at the Huis voor de Pelgrim, and previously involved in initiatives relating to slow tourism in Limburg.
- Dr. Lydia Beerkens, in the church administration of the parish federation of the Basilica of Our Lady and Saint Peter; responsible for church treasuries. Also director of SRAL Maastricht – Stichting Restauratie Atelier Maastricht
- Mr. Theo Bovens, interim chair of the Association of the Grave of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Jeroen Bollen, Huis voor de pelgrim
- Ms. Pieterneel Coenen, curator of the Treasury and Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Frans Willem Cox, hotelier in Maastricht, also actively involved in the wider community
- Mr. Rolf-Peter Cremer, Canon of the Cathedral Chapter of Aachen
- Mr. Dean John Dautzenberg, Chair of the church administration of the Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Jean-Pierre Deleersnijder, Chancellor of the Curia of the Diocese of Liège, Director of Communications
- Ms. Elly de Haan – Verduyn, an elder involved in various roles within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, at local, classis (diocese) and national (Synod) levels.
- Ms. Evelijn de Jong, Chair of the church administration of the Protestant Congregation of Maas-Heuvelland
- Mr. Len Dumont, initiator of pilgrimages in Limburg
- Monseigneur Everard de Jong, missionary (suffragan) bishop and priest
- Mr. Paul Elshout, pilgrim, member of the Brotherhood of Saint James the Greater, former project leader for slow tourism in South Limburg
- Mr. Maurice Essers, Chair of the Stichting Katholiek Erfgoed (Catholic Heritage Foundation) and Chair of the Vrienden van St. Gerlach (Friends of Saint Gerlach, and Chairman of the Stichting Steun Stille Omgang Amsterdam (Foundation for the Support of the Silent Procession in Amsterdam). His input was provided by the Stichting Katholiek Erfgoed.
- Mr. René Francot, member of the church administration and Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Henk van Gelderen, treasurer of the Protestant Congregation of Maas-Heuvelland
- Ms. Vynée Gilissen, 'Maastricht Catholic Youth Professionals'
- Ms. Martje Gulikers, Marketing and Communications Manager at Maastricht Marketing





- Mr. Volker Hauck, Chair of the Protestantse Stichting Vrienden van de Sint Janskerk Maastricht
- Mr. Peter Hofland, member of the church administration and Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Julien Maquet, curator of the Trésor de la Cathédrale de Liège
- Mr. Frank Hage, member of the Raad Economische Aangelegenheden (Council for Economic Affairs) of the Sisters of Charity of St Charles Borromeo, also known as the Zusters onder de Bogen, in a personal capacity.
- Mr. Thijs Hendrix on behalf of The Chapter of Saint Servatius.
- Mr. Servé Hermans, MSc, entrepreneur in a personal capacity.
- Ms. Cunera Huenges Wajer-van Lanschot, board member of the Stichting monseigneur schrijnenhuis
- Mr. Wim Hupperetz in his capacity as a representative of Center Céramique, the Natuur Historisch Museum and Maastricht Museum.
- Mr. Alex Jaminon, MSc, Vice-Chairman/Treasurer of the Parochiefederatie OLV|Sint-Pieter.
- Mr. Sam Janssen, policy officer for the leisure economy and events
- Mr. Mattie Jeukens, Franciscan and parish priest in the parishes of Wijckerpoort and Wittevrouwenveld.
- Mr. Klaas Koelewijn, Chair of the Maastricht Stichting Waalse kerk
- Mr. Vincent Kusters, singer, pianist and organist
- Mr. Leerssen, Emeritus Professor at the University of Amsterdam
- Ms. Jeanine Moenen, Huis voor de Pelgrim
- Mr. Robert Muijsers, Arbol b.v., in connection with the visit to the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen)
- Mr. Camille Oostwegel in his capacity as an entrepreneur and ambassador for Maastricht, owner of various religious heritage sites used as hotels.
- Monsignor Leo Palm, priest in Banneux
- Mr. Chris Pieterse, church administration member of the parish of Onze Lieve Vrouw, responsible for PR and communication
- Mr. Frank Pijpers, member of the church administration and Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Ton Raaijmakers, Monastery Manager and Finance and Administration Manager, in connection with the visit to the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen)
- Sister Lisbeth Ratwasih, Superior, in connection with the visit to the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen)
- Mr. Arnold Sanders, staff member/volunteer at the Saint Servatius parish office, administration member of the Limburgs Geschied- en Oudheidkundig Genootschap
- Ms. Senta Schiffeleers, CEO of the Historisch Centrum Limburg
- Mr. Jacques Schreurs, member of the church administration and Basilica of Saint Servatius
- Mr. Raoul Spronken, sporty local guide & globetrotter
- Mr. Arjan van der Star, former secretary of the College van Kerkrentmeesters van de PGMH (Protestantse Gemeente Maas-Heuvelland), enthusiast of the historical heritage in and of Sint-Janskerk (Saint John Church) in Maastricht, founder of the HISP (Historische Studies Protestantisme Arjan van der Star (Historical Studies of Protestantism))
- Mr. Caspar van Hilten, secretary to the church administration and the Basilica of Saint Servatius

- Mr. Jacques van Rensch, former Keeper of Public Records in Limburg, in a personal capacity.
- Mr. Theo Thuis, Chairman of the Stichting Jeugd- en Verenigingsbelangen St. Theresia Maastricht
- Mr. Veenhof, Chairman of the Stichting Open Monumentendag Maastricht, Chairman of the Stichting Maastricht Heuvelland Culinair, Chairman of the Stichting Limburgse Oorkondes, Chairman of the Stichting Vrienden Gevelstenen Maastricht.
- Ms. Astrid Verberne in her capacity as Director of Centrummanagement Maastricht.
- Monsignor Jan Vries, Parochiefederatie Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe en Sint-Pieter
- Mr. Guy Vroemen, CEO of Maastricht Marketing
- Mr. Eric Wetzels, Cultural Heritage Policy Officer for the Municipality of Maastricht
- Mr. Benoit Wesley, Honorary Consul of Israel in the Netherlands and entrepreneur in Maastricht
- Mr. Willem Wolters in his capacity as director of the Dekenat Maastricht/ Koepelkerk and member of the Broederschap van Sint Servaas.



Interview questions

INTRODUCTION

We are currently exploring opportunities to develop meaningful forms of pilgrimage and heritage experiences that can strengthen not only the positioning of the city of Maastricht, but also that of Limburg and the Euregio as a whole.

Discussions with stakeholders should help to make sure a widely supported, inspiring and realistic Master Plan is produced, ideally already accompanied by a broad implementation agenda that links pilgrimage, religious heritage, spiritual fulfilment and sustainable tourism—to and from Maastricht, with connections to other places in Limburg and the Euregio.

1.

What significance do you attach to pilgrimage in the modern day (personally or professionally)?

2.

What significance do you attach to religious heritage in the modern day?

3.

What specific significance do you attach to religious heritage in contemporary Maastricht (and/or Limburg/Euregio)?

4.

What connection do you see between religious heritage in contemporary Maastricht (and/or Limburg/Euregio) and the significance you attach to pilgrimage?

5.

In your view, what makes Maastricht potentially suitable as a 'City for the Pilgrim'?

6.

How might the concept of 'City for the Pilgrim' contribute to the identity of Maastricht (and/or Limburg/Euregio)?





- 7.**
Which elements (places, events and specific heritage) in Maastricht do you think could play a central role in relation to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 8.**
Which elements (places, events and/or specific heritage) in Limburg do you think could play a supporting role in relation to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 9.**
Which elements (places, events and/or specific heritage) in the Euregio do you think could play a supporting role in relation to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 10.**
How do you view the balance between authenticity and modernization in relation to this theme, for example, in terms of experience, Product-Market Combinations, heritage presentation and marketing?
- 11.**
What do you consider essential for treating religious heritage with respect?
- 12.**
How could we use this plan to not just inform visitors about 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'? How can we also move them—in terms of experience and meaning making—to arrive at a deeper significance?
- 13.**
What forms of storytelling or experience concepts would be effective in relation to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 14.**
How can a strong pilgrim narrative contribute to Maastricht's marketing as a city or otherwise?
- 15.**
How can we prevent 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' from degenerating into mass tourism or unwanted commercialization?
- 16.**
In your view, what are the key factors for sustainable, meaningful tourism in this context?
- 17.**
What are some examples (locations elsewhere) from which we can learn in this context (in both a positive and negative sense)?
- 18.**
Do you see opportunities for regional expansion, for example, pilgrimage routes or places of interest outside Maastricht? In Limburg, but certainly also in the Euregio?
- 19.**
What mission do you envisage with regard to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 20.**
What core values do you have in mind with regard to 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 21.**
What ambitions do you have regarding 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 22.**
What role could you, your company, organization or supporters play in realizing the ambitions regarding 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?
- 23.**
Which other parties must we absolutely not forget to involve at this stage or during the potential implementation?

24.

In your view, what are the conditions for long-term cooperation and shared ownership regarding 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?

25.

In your view, what are the main risks or concerns regarding 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?

26.

What is your view on the connection between the physical space in the center of Maastricht and the theme 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?

27.

What is your view on a program of events in the center of Maastricht and the theme 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'?

28.

How can the Palace of the Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius become a place of significance and inspiration within the overall scheme?

29.

What images do you have in mind regarding the regeneration of the entire area around the Basilica of Saint Servatius, Henric van Veldekeplein and Palace of the Provost of The Chapter of Saint Servatius, the site of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo (Zusters onder de Bogen), Servaasklooster 14, and the Maastricht University area, Minderbroedersberg 4)?

30.

What infrastructure or facilities are needed to make 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim' a success?

"Thank you very much for your time and valuable input. Your insights will help us to make sure the Master Plan is both substantively robust and widely supported. We will, of course, keep you informed of the next steps if you wish and we hope you will continue to be involved in the subsequent phases. Where possible, your responses will be included in the Master Plan in an anonymized form. If we feel that a direct quotation is more appropriate, we will include a source reference and seek your permission in advance."

+May God always be with you+





Appendix: Profile of the quartermaster

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The project initiator lays the foundations for the realization of the Master Opportunity, 'Maastricht, City for the Pilgrim'. The project initiator builds a supportive network, develops the organizational framework and prepares for operational implementation.

PERSONAL PROFILE

- Connecting leader: able to build bridges between ecclesiastical, cultural, tourism, social and administrative partners.
- An understanding of the subject matter: an intrinsic affinity with religion, spirituality, culture and heritage.
- Credible and recognized: recognized and respected by stakeholders from the religious, cultural and administrative sectors.
- Regionally rooted: good understanding of the identity of Maastricht and the Euregio (NL – BE – DE).
- Multilingual: preferably proficient in Dutch, French, German and English.
- Strategic thinker and doer: moves seamlessly between developing a vision, building networks and the practical organization.
- Good communicator: maintains relationships with the media, directors and subject matter partners in a natural manner.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Further expand the stakeholder network.
- Identify and connect core and secondary stakeholders.
- Establish a collaborative structure (steering group and working groups).
- Organize a kick-off meeting.
- Involve all key stakeholders.
- Establish the mission, vision and core values of the Master Opportunity.
- Develop a proposal for the organizational structure (for example, the foundation or cooperative).
- Determine, in consultation, whether a project leader will be appointed after the launch.
- Draw up a profile for this future project leader.
- Strategic and financial preparation.
- Draft an initial business model (year 1).
- Explore start-up grants through the municipality of Maastricht, the province of Limburg and LIOF.
- Work towards a formal adoption of the Master Plan and joint endorsement.
- Maintain contact with initiators and the press.
- Represent the initiative at relevant events and platforms.





MAESTRICHT

