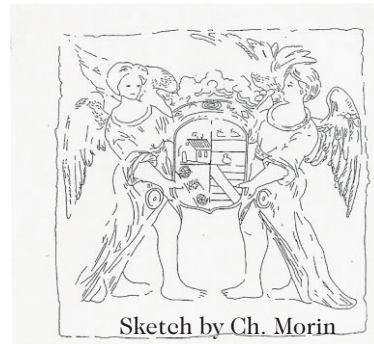


The north transept (to the left) offers the visitor a rare example of christian piety in the 17th century. A painting, discovered recently during renovation work and richly decorated with palms and flower filled vases, shows all the elements of the Passion yet does not depict Christ himself. A protestant influence.



Sketch by Ch. Morin
October 1991

The chancel composes two spans of which only the second is covered with intersecting ribs. The six capitals are excellent examples of the 14th century gothic style. Above all, note the altar and altarpiece. High up on the left is a grill which may have allowed the two nuns in the family Chappelle of Jumilhac to attend services.

The altarpiece is a baroque masterpiece from the second half of the 17th century. The bas reliefs to the left and right of the tabernacle show events from the life of Saint Peter including his release from prison and he, himself, receiving the keys. Note the very fine Christ on the door of the tabernacle. On the altarpiece are four statues one of which has Saint Peter dressed in papal robes and tiara in the style of the 17th century.

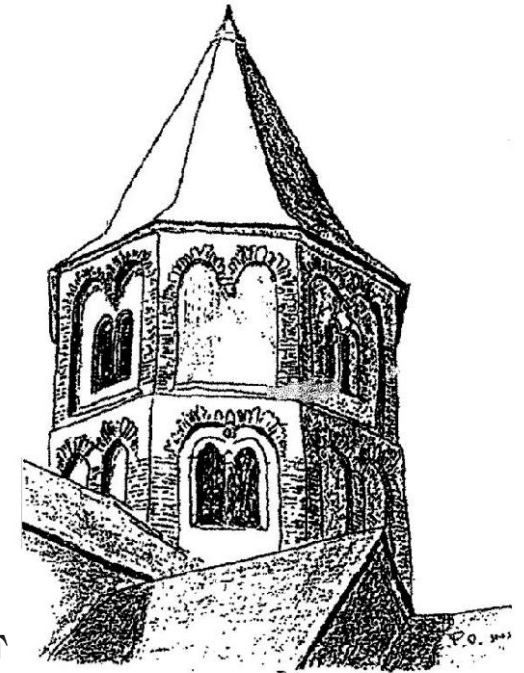
The main altar dates from the directoire period (end of the 18th century). Two 17th century statues on pedestals draw the eye. To the right is that of Saint Roch who was very much celebrated in the 17th century, he is missing his dog and his stick. He was a great pilgrim, hence the cockle shells on clothing. Suffering from the plaque, from which he was miraculously cured, he shows us his bubo. He was reputed to protect against the plaque.

To the left is saint Antoine « of the desert » who has a meditative air. The father of all the monks and hermits of the east and west, he lived in the 3rd and 4th centuries. He lacks his pig who, it is said, symbolised the temptations of the saint at the height of his monastic life.

Pierre Ortega



ENGLISH



THE CHURCH OF SAINT PIERRE-ES-LIENS JUMILHAC LE GRAND

A brief history

The church in Jumilhac est dedicated to Saint Pierre-es-Liens (St Peter in Bonds). This dedication recalls the the imprisonment of the apostle in Jerusalem at the very beginning of christianity.

As with the vast majority of churches in France, there are no records available either of its origins or its construction.

By comparing this church with other monuments of known date and by analysing the layouts and techniques used in its construction, we believe it to be of the second half of the 11th century.

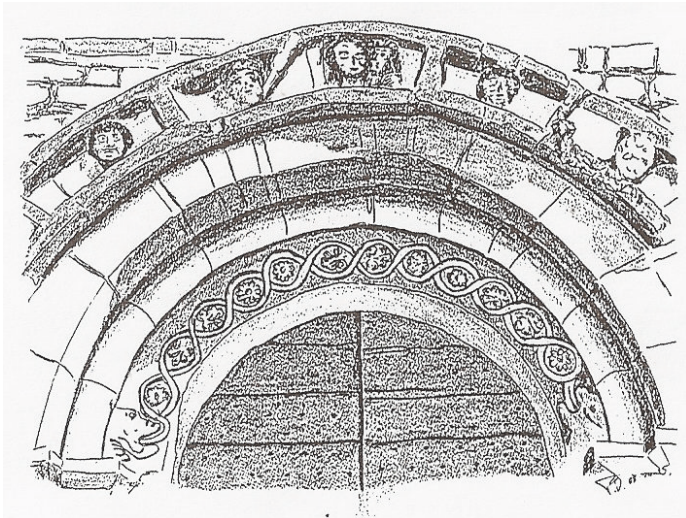
The exterior

Approaching from the square in front of the chateau, the visitor arrives at the most recent part of the church ; the choir is from the 14th century.

At the junction of the old and new parts rises an octagonal bell tower, typical of the Limousin area, with alternate open and closed window bays. Note the masks on the arch springs.

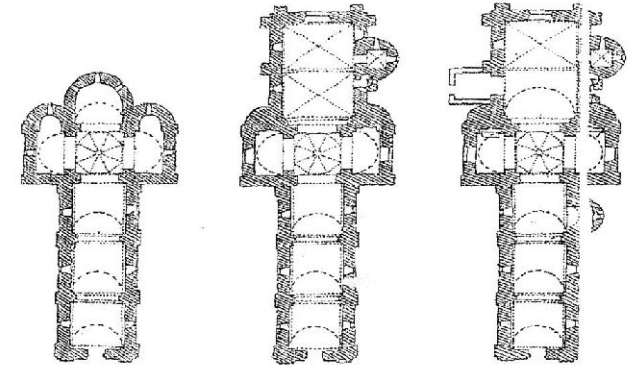
The half-round tower to the left of the chevet once housed a prison as shown by the narrow barred window on the second floor, the first floor of the sacristy.

Continuing the tour you arrive at the façade, a classic frontage for a church of the roman period. On the façade you will find a doorway topped by an arch of flowers issuing from the mouths of two monsters. The arch is supported by two columns with palms at the capitals. Above this are triple archways of much older appearance. The carved heads are of an ancient technique reminiscent of sculptures of the roman period so possibly of the 10th or 11th century. There are many theories on the significance of these thirteen characters ; Jesus and the apostles ? Charlemagne and his valiant knights ? No hypothesis is entirely satisfactory



The interior

Entering by the main door the visitor sees the full length of the church ; 46 metres long and 10 metres wide.



XII century XIII/XV centuries XVII/XIX centuries
Attempt to reconstruct the various states of the building

The nave is not vaulted. The false marble decoration on the pillars has been restored to that which the Marquis of Jumilhac had painted in the 18th century.

The funeral line. Around the church runs a black band with coats of arms of the family Chapel of Jumilhac. By a royal decree these lords had the right to administer justice and to bury their dead in the chancel of the church.

The transept crossing sits on 4 strong pillars which support both the octagonal dome and the bell tower. On the arch springs of the dome (called écoinçons) are modern paintings showing four scenes from the life of St Peter

The south transept (to the right) has two altars. The altar of the Virgin is from the early 18th century and houses the relics of Saint Aubin, bishop of Angers and patron of the parish. The altar of St Joseph houses the relics of Saint Eusice, born in Chaluset a tiny hamlet in the commune of Jumilhac. On the wall between the two altars is a 17th century wooden medallion with a representation of God the Father surrounded by three cherubs