



STIFT  
KLOSTER  
NEUBURG

# Press kit

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**Ein Ort. Tausend Geschichten.**



## Contents

The Abbey in figures .....	3
History of Klosterneuburg Abbey .....	4
Margrave Leopold III – Saint and patron saint of the province .....	5
Legend of the veil .....	6
Leopold Festival.....	6
Augustinian canons and canonesses .....	7
Convent .....	8
Visitation .....	9
Parishes of the Abbey.....	10
Remarkable personalities .....	11
Social commitment worldwide .....	13
Awards and honours .....	14
Excerpt from the Abbey Chronicle .....	15
Economic enterprises .....	17
Sustainable management .....	18
Culture and science .....	21
St. Leopold Peace Prize .....	24
Pius Parsch Prize .....	25
Abbey Music .....	26
900 years of architectural history .....	27
Collections and scholarship in the abbey .....	29
Wine Estate .....	32
Forestry and agriculture .....	34
Abbey gardens, property management, construction department, chamber office .....	35
Infrastructure.....	36

### Klosterneuburg Abbey

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### Klosterneuburg Abbey in figures

In 1114, Margrave Leopold III laid the **foundation stone** for the abbey church in Neuburg. In **1133**, Leopold III handed over the monastery to the **Augustinian canons**. Currently, around **40 brothers** from seven different **countries** live in the abbey. From here, the canons look after **29 parishes** – four of which **are in the USA** and one **in Norway**. Around **750 Holy Masses** are celebrated in the monastery every year. Anton Höslinger was elected as the **67th provost** of the monastery. Over **€1,000,000** is spent annually on **renovating** the church buildings. Over **200 people** from **17 countries** work in the abbey's economic enterprises. The canons and employees of the abbey look out through around **800 windows**. Every year on Leopoldi, around **12,000 people** slide down the **'thousand-bucket barrel'**. With around **300,000 books**, the abbey library has the largest private collection in Austria. The abbey archives hold **3,600 documents**, the oldest of which dates **back to 1043**. The **church tower** measures **82 metres** to the top. The Verdun Altar consists of **51** fire-gilded **enamel panels**. The abbey wine estate cultivates **110 hectares** of vineyards. **900,000 bottles** of wine are bottled annually. The cultivation area for St. Laurent covers **40 hectares**, making it the largest continuous area in the world. In **1860**, the world's first **viticulture school** was founded. Organic farming is practised on **400 hectares**. **31 hunting grounds** covering a total of **9,500 hectares** of forest are managed. The abbey rents out **700 apartments**, offices and business premises. There are **5,500** lease, tenancy and **building rights contracts**. There are **660 square metres** of photovoltaic panels on abbey land. Around **100,000 guests** are welcomed to the Abbey Museum and art collections every year. Over **€1,000,000** is donated to charitable causes annually. Provost Ambros Lorenz founded the Abbey Museum **in 1774**. It is one of the **oldest museums** in the world and was the **first museum in Austria** to be open to the public.



## History of Klosterneuburg Abbey

### Historical overview

On 12 June 1114, a few years after moving their residence to Klosterneuburg, Margrave Leopold III of Babenberg and his wife Agnes founded the abbey in the immediate vicinity of their castle as the religious, social and cultural centre of their country. In 1133, they handed over this abbey to the Augustinian canons.

The abbey church was consecrated in 1136, and a few months later, on 15 November, Leopold III died and was buried in a small crypt beneath what is now the Leopold Chapel.

In 1181, the goldsmith Nikolaus from the city of Verdun completed a pulpit covering made of enamel panels depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments that tell the story of salvation. After the devastating fire at the abbey in 1330, these enamel panels were redesigned to form the "Verdun Altar", one of the most important works of art of the European Middle Ages.

Around 1200, Klosterneuburg became a residence again for a few years: Leopold VI of Babenberg had a new palace built on the present-day abbey grounds with a magnificent chapel, the "Capella Speciosa", the first Gothic building in Austria. Only a few remains of both buildings are still standing today.

In the Middle Ages, the abbey had become an important centre of scientific and theological research, as evidenced by the more than 1,200 manuscripts in the abbey library. The canonisation of the abbey's founder, Leopold III, in 1485 highlighted the abbey's importance in the ecclesiastical landscape of Austria, which was only interrupted by the Reformation, when only a few canons remained in the abbey, many of whom were sympathetic to the Reformation. At the same time, the convent established parallel to the canons' abbey ceased to exist.

With the Catholic Counter-Reformation, the abbey quickly regained its former importance and, with the foundation of the Austrian Archducal Hat as the "holy crown of the country" in 1616, became the guardian of this insignia, which could only be removed from the tomb of St. Leopold for the "hereditary homage". A few years later, the interior of the Romanesque abbey church underwent Baroqueisation, which was interrupted by the Turkish War of 1683: the Turkish army besieging Vienna also encircled Klosterneuburg, where the defence had been organised by a canon and a lay brother. The successful defence of Klosterneuburg in September 1683 with the Battle of Kahlenberg ended the second Turkish siege by imperial troops.

In 1730, the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI decided to build a monastery residence in Klosterneuburg, modelled on the Spanish Escorial. The plan envisaged a huge complex with nine domes and four courtyards. During the construction work, the emperor died suddenly in 1740. His daughter and successor, Maria Theresia, wanted to expand Schönbrunn Palace in the French style, in keeping with the spirit of the times. The monastery was glad to be relieved of the enormous construction costs: work was stopped immediately, with only an eighth of the plans having been realised. It was not until 100 years later that at least one courtyard, the Imperial Court, was completed, thus fulfilling a quarter of the plans.

The reign of Emperor Joseph II marked the beginning of a period of upheaval: imperial church policy led to a significant expansion of parish pastoral care and social engagement. The revolution of 1848 ended feudalism. Among other things, this meant that tax sovereignty was transferred to state authorities, necessitating a restructuring of the abbey's economy.

The end of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918 brought further changes, and the ensuing years, with their economic, social and political tensions, conflicts and catastrophes, placed a renewed strain on the abbey.

In the 1920s, Canon Pius Parsch brought about a similar renewal in Austria through his journalistic work on the "renewal and deepening of the understanding of church liturgy" – a popular liturgical reform movement originating in France and Germany. By returning to the Bible and new forms of liturgy – such as the use of the respective national language and a people's altar – it became a liturgical reform of the universal Church. It made its international breakthrough at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).



With the annexation of Austria to the National Socialist German Reich in 1938, the new rulers immediately began taking measures against the abbey as a national Austrian symbol and Christian institution: confiscation of premises, expropriation of leased land and, finally, in 1941, the abolition of the abbey. The abbey buildings and all their collections were transferred to the Kunsthistorisches (Art History) Museum, while everything else was divided among various institutions.

In April 1945, the re-establishment of the abbey was one of the first acts of the new government, and Klosterneuburg Abbey subsequently became one of the most important factors in the reconstruction of the church.

## Margrave Leopold III – Patron Saint

Leopold III, from the ruling dynasty of the Babenbergs, was born around 1075, presumably in Melk. In 1095, he succeeded his father Leopold II as Margrave of the March of Ostarrichi, the eastern border region of the Roman-German Empire under Emperor Henry IV. He initially remained neutral in the so-called Investiture Controversy (a dispute between the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy). When the dispute between Emperor Henry IV (known for his walk to Canossa) and the papal party threatened to escalate in 1105, his withdrawal from the imperial army ended this danger. In recognition of this act, Emperor Henry V gave him his sister Agnes as his wife, whose rich dowry Leopold invested in the expansion of his land: he moved his residence to (Kloster)Neuburg and in 1114 founded a monastery there as the religious, social and cultural centre of the march. He ensured the economic viability of this foundation, which he handed over to the Order of Augustinian Canons in 1133, by providing it with rich endowments.

By 1125, Leopold had already achieved such prestige that German princes nominated him as a candidate for the royal election, but he declined this candidacy "in order not to be drawn into the turmoil in the empire".

The importance of Leopold III should not be underestimated: he laid the foundations for Austrian independence. He succeeded in establishing a territorial rule and securing it for his sons through his wife Agnes. When she married Leopold, Agnes was already widowed. One of her sons from her first marriage to the Duke of Swabia became the first German Staufer emperor. He, in turn, needed the support of his half-brother against the Guelphs in Bavaria. When the warring parties reconciled, Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa rewarded the Babenberg with the "Privilegium minus": Henry, the son of Leopold and Agnes, became the first Duke of Austria.

Leopold's reign was – with the exception of the period since 1945 – the longest period of peace in Austrian history.

On 15 November 1136, Leopold died as a result of a hunting accident. His tomb in Klosterneuburg Abbey quickly became a place of pilgrimage, as the population mourned their "charitable" prince and even the Pope sent a letter of condolence.

In 1485, Leopold was canonised by the Catholic Church as a role model. The reasons for this were his peace policy, his social commitment, his exemplary family life and his promotion of the Church through the founding of the monasteries of Klosterneuburg, Heiligenkreuz and probably Kleinmariazell.

In 1663, the Habsburg Emperor Leopold I elevated Saint Leopold to the patron saint of Lower and Upper Austria. In the 1950s, he was named the patron saint of the whole of Austria. Today, he is the supreme patron saint of Lower Austria and Vienna.



## Legend of the veil

The following legend is told about the founding of Klosterneuburg Abbey: Leopold III of Babenberg celebrated his wedding to Agnes, daughter of Emperor Henry IV, at his castle on what is now Leopoldsberg near Vienna. Suddenly, a gust of wind caught the precious bridal veil and blew it away. The search proved fruitless, whereupon the margrave vowed to build a monastery on the spot where the veil was found. Nine years later, Leopold was hunting in the floodplains of the Danube when suddenly his dogs began to bark. They led Leopold to an elderberry bush, where he found his wife's veil intact. He saw this as a sign from heaven and built Klosterneuburg Abbey on this spot.

A piece of the veil is still kept today in a small 14th-century travel altar, which can be viewed in the treasury. The fabric dates from the time of Leopold III, but whether it was actually Agnes's bridal veil can no longer be determined with absolute certainty.

## Leopoldi

"The feast day of St. Leopold should be celebrated with appropriate dignity and due pomp." This was the wish of Emperor Leopold I, who made him the patron saint of Lower Austria and Vienna in 1663. Thus, the traditional Leopold Festival takes place every year around 15th November – the anniversary of Leopold III's death – in Klosterneuburg. The abbey and the town of Klosterneuburg jointly host the celebrations. In addition to the Leopold Market with its amusement rides and market stalls on the town hall square, highlights include attending High Mass in the abbey church and barrel sliding in the Binderstadl.

### **Barrel sliding**

The thousand-bucket barrel, which is now located in the Binderstadl, was made in 1704. With a length of five metres and a height of four metres, it holds a total of 56,000 litres. Originally, it was probably used to store the so-called tithe wine that tenant farmers had to deliver to the abbey. They climbed onto the barrel on one side, emptied the wine at the top and slid down the other side. Barrel sliding at Leopoldi is still a huge crowd puller today. You climb onto the barrel via a comfortable staircase and then slide down the oversized barrel back. You can make a wish as you do so. The custom can be traced back to 1813. The net proceeds go to the the project „Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder“ („A Home for Street Children“) for Concordia Sozialprojekte

### **Skull relic**

The skull relic of St. Leopold is only displayed for veneration during the Leopold Festival. It is housed in a precious setting dating from 1677, consisting of velvet, pearls and precious stones. Only the saint's forehead bone is visible. It is crowned with a copy of the archduke's hat, made of fabric and jewels. The real hat would be too heavy and too large for the fragile skeleton.



### Augustinian canons

The Augustinian canons are so-called "regular canons". This term refers to members of a collegiate church who live according to the rules of an order, have taken religious vows and have been ordained as priests. This distinguishes them from a monastic community, which is usually composed primarily of lay brothers. The correct form of address for fellow canons is therefore not "Father" or "Brother", but "Sir".

Canonical foundations serve two basic purposes: on the one hand, the monasteries are intended to be spiritual centres. On the other hand, the activities of the members of the order extend outward to various forms of pastoral care. Traditionally, the focus is on parish pastoral care.

The Order of Canons Regular of St Augustine dates back to St Augustine, who, as Bishop of Hippo Regius (in present-day Algeria) at the beginning of the 5th century, lived a communal life with the priests of his episcopal city in order to combine pastoral ministry with monastic life. His writings on the Trinity and original sin, as well as his theologically oriented system of world history (*De Civitate Dei*), gave him fundamental importance for the whole of medieval theology and thus made him a "Scholar of the Church".

At the Lateran Synod of 1059, Pope Gregory VII called on the clergy to follow the example of St. Augustine. When he demanded the sharing of property, this led to a division between the secular canons (*canonici saeculares*), who held on to private property, and the regular canons (*canonici regulares*), who took religious vows (renunciation of property, celibacy, obedience) based on the Rule of St. Augustine. Strict monastic life, worship, exemplary pastoral care and scientific activity earned the regular canons the recognition of the ecclesiastical authorities and the Christian people.

#### **Austrian Canons' Congregation**

The 12th century marked the beginning of the heyday of the Augustinian Canons Regular. However, most of the monasteries were destroyed during the ecclesiastical and political turmoil of the Hussite Wars, the Reformation, the French Revolution, Josephinism in Austria and secularisation in Germany. The remaining canons' monasteries joined together to form canons' congregations. The Austrian Congregation, which has existed since 1907, comprises the six monasteries of St. Florian, Herzogenburg, Klosterneuburg, Neustift bei Brixen, Reichersberg and Vorau. The congregation is headed by the Abbot General, who is elected for a five-year term – since 2024, this has been Provost Eduard Fischnaller from Neustift Abbey (South Tyrol). The confederation (Augustinian canons worldwide) is headed by the Abbot Primate, who is elected for a six-year term. Since 2022, this has been Provost Jean Scarella from St. Maurice Abbey (Switzerland).

### Augustinian Canons and Canonesses

When Margrave Leopold III and his wife Agnes handed over the monastery to the Augustinian canons in 1133, it became a double monastery, as was customary at the time. There was also a women's convent, which was headed by a mistress and was subordinate to the provost of the men's convent. The Augustinian canonesses were closely connected to the nobility and the ruling family. In addition to girls and young women, noble widows also joined the community. Wives also lived in the convent for a time when their husbands were away. The canonesses ran a school where not only future members were taught, but also the daughters of local families who did not enter the convent – a rarity at that time. Alongside viticulture and the estates that the women brought into the community, teaching was an important source of income for the monastery.

While elsewhere the double monastery structure was abandoned by the 13th century at the latest and the women's convent was dissolved, it remained in Klosterneuburg until 1568. The women were so successful that in 1261 they expanded to include the St. Jakob convent in Klosterneuburg. After its dissolution in the 16th century, its possessions, art, books and all its land fell to the Augustinian monastery.



## Convent

Augustinian canons have lived in Klosterneuburg Abbey for almost 900 years. Currently, there are around 40 members from seven different countries (Austria, Germany, Vietnam, Romania, the USA, Poland and Norway).

Upon entering the abbey, the future canon receives the religious habit – a black cassock with a narrow white band, known as a „Sarockel“ (from sarrocium = remnant of the white surplice) – and his religious name. This marks the beginning of the one-year probationary period of novitiate. This is followed by the "simple profession", which binds him to the monastery for three years, followed by the "solemn" or "eternal profession", which is valid for life.

The main task of the Augustinian Canons is pastoral care in the 29 parishes owned by the monastery: 24 in Vienna and Lower Austria, one in Norway and four in the USA. In addition, some of the brothers are active in academia, as religious education teachers and in categorical pastoral care (note: pastoral care for people in specific life situations, such as hospital pastoral care).

At the head of the convent is the provost, who is elected by his fellow brothers in a secret ballot. He is responsible for supervising all matters relating to the abbey. His deputy is the dean, who is responsible for the internal management of the house. The treasurer is responsible for the abbey's economic affairs.

Together with the provost and the dean, the chapter council and the chapter – i.e. those canons who have taken perpetual vows – are responsible for the community and the tasks of the monastery. Consultations are held at chapter meetings and binding decisions are made by vote.

### **Provost Anton Wolfgang Höslinger Can.Reg.**

Since 14 August 2023, the position of Provost has been held by **Prelate Anton Wolfgang Höslinger**. He is thus the 67th Provost of Klosterneuburg Abbey.

Anton Wolfgang Höslinger was born on 5 January 1970 in Klosterneuburg. He entered the abbey in 1989 and was ordained a priest in 1998. From 1998 to 2003, he served as chaplain in the abbey parish of Klosterneuburg and from 2003 to 2005 as parish priest in the abbey parish of Donaufeld. From 2005 to 2016, he served as novice master and director of clerics at the abbey, and from 2010 to 2016 as secretary to the abbot primate. In May 2016, Anton Höslinger was appointed assistant to the abbey treasurer, and from December 2021 to February 2024 he served as interim treasurer. From 2002 to 2023, he also served as Secretary General of the Austrian Augustinian Canons Congregation, from 2005 to 2023 as Chapter Secretary, and from November 2021 to December 2023 as Provisional Parish Priest in the Parish of Maria Hietzing.

### **Dean Clemens Timothy Suarez Galban Can.Reg.**

The provost's deputy is **Dean Clemens Timothy Suarez Galban**. Born on 18 August 1964 in Morristown (New Jersey, USA), he was ordained a priest in 1997 and entered Klosterneuburg Abbey in 2002. He served as chaplain in Bergen (Norway) and in the abbey parish in Klosterneuburg. He then became parish priest in the parishes of Kritzendorf and Höflein. Since 2006, Clemens Galban has served as guest master of the abbey and from 2021 to November 2023 he was companion to the novices and juniors and parish vicar in the parish of Floridsdorf. He was elected dean of the abbey by his fellow brothers on 26 September 2023.





## Visitation

In ecclesiastical usage, the word "visitation" means an inspection visit. It is a tool for maintaining or restoring monastic discipline. Historically, it was ordered by both spiritual and secular authorities. The visitors themselves were usually clergymen.

The Austrian Congregation of Augustinian Canons routinely schedules a visitation of its affiliated monasteries by the Abbot General every five years.

The first non-routine visitation to Klosterneuburg Abbey took place in 1301, ordered by the Bishop of Passau. The visitors deposed the then provost Hadmar and imposed new, stricter statutes. Over the centuries, such extraordinary inspection visits took place repeatedly. The last one was in 2020. At that time, Bishop Josef Clemens, former secretary to Cardinal Ratzinger, was appointed Apostolic Delegate to the collegiate foundation. He was tasked with determining whether allegations of inappropriate conduct levelled against the former provost of the foundation, Bernhard Backovsky, were true. The allegations related to cases of abuse within the monastery community and the provost's handling of these cases. Clemens commissioned a canonical investigation, which identified shortcomings in the monastery's management and led to a canonical monitio (admonition).

As a result of the investigation, the collegiate community has reorganised itself. A prevention office has been set up, staffed by a clergyman and a lay person. Since autumn 2021, all employees of the monastery and all canons have completed prevention training, which continues at regular intervals with varying content. In addition, the training programme for the novitiate has been revised. With the election of Canon Anton Höslinger as provost, this apostolic visitation ended on 14 August 2023.



## Parishes of the Abbey

The Augustinian canons of Klosterneuburg Abbey currently look after 29 parishes, with the parishes of the abbey church and Klosterneuburg St. Martin belonging to the abbey from the outset, while others were added later with land ownership. When what were then the outskirts of Vienna experienced enormous population growth in the 19th century, new centres of pastoral care had to be created there as well.

In the recent past, there has been international growth: since 2003, the parish in Bergen, Norway, has also been under their care. And in June 2011, three of the abbey's American canons founded the Glen Cove branch in New York, thus bringing the institution of the Augustinian canons to the United States. Four parishes are now under their care there.

### Incorporated parishes

#### In Klosterneuburg

Nativity of Mary (abbey parish)

3400 Klosterneuburg, Stiftsplatz 1

Kierling / St. Peter

3400 Klosterneuburg, Kirchenplatz 1

Höflein a.d. Donau / St. Margareta

3421 Höflein an der Donau, Schulgasse 9

Klosterneuburg / St. Leopold

3400 Klosterneuburg, Sachsengasse 2

Kritzendorf / St. Vitus

3420 Kritzendorf, Vitusplatz 1

Klosterneuburg / St. Martin

3400 Klosterneuburg, Martinstraße 38

Weidling / St. Peter

3400 Klosterneuburg-Weidling, Hauptstraße 2

#### In Lower Austria

Haselbach / St. Michael

2000 Stockerau, Kirchenplatz 3

Tattendorf / St. Mary of Misery

2523 Tattendorf, Kirchengasse 11

Korneuburg / St. Ägydus

2100 Korneuburg, Kirchenplatz 1

Reinprechtspölla / St. Pankratius

3713 Harmannsdorf, Reinprechtspölla 36

Langenzersdorf / St. Katharina

2103 Langenzersdorf, Obere Kirchengasse 6

Stoitzendorf / St. Leopold

3743 Röschitz, Granitz 7

#### In Vienna

Donaufeld / Hl. Leopold

1210 Vienna, Kinzerplatz 3

Heiligenstadt / St. Michael

1190 Vienna, Pfarrplatz 3

Maria Lourdes / Maria Lourdes

1120 Vienna, Tivoligasse 20

Floridsdorf / St. Joseph

1210 Vienna, Pius-Parsch-Platz 3

Kahlenbergerdorf / St. George

1190 Vienna, Zwillinggasse 3

Meidling / St. John Nepomuk

1120 Vienna, Albrechtsberggasse 6

Grinzing / Holy Cross

1190 Vienna, Himmelstraße 25

Hietzing / Nativity of Mary

1130 Vienna, Am Platz 1

Neustift am Walde / St. Rochus

1190 Vienna, Eyblergasse 1

Nußdorf / St. Thomas

1190 Vienna, Greinergasse 25

Sievering / St. Sievering

1190 Vienna, Fröschelgasse 18

#### International

Glen Cove / St. Patrick

235 Glenn Street

Glen Cove, NY 11542 / USA

Sea Cliff / St. Boniface

145 Glen Avenue

Sea Cliff, NY 11579 / USA

Glen Cove / St. Rocco

18 Third Street

Glen Cove, NY 11542 / USA

Bergen / St. Paul

Parkveien 32

5007 Bergen / Norway

Glen Head / St. Hyacinth

319 Cedar Swamp Road

Glen Head, NY 11545 / USA

### Real patronages

In addition, the abbey has so-called real patronage over the parish churches of Hauskirchen, St. Bernhard, Neukirchen an der Wild, the branch church of Maria Bründl in Poysdorf (all in Lower Austria) and Großjedlersdorf (Vienna). This means that the abbey must make a financial contribution here – for example, for maintenance work.



## Remarkable personalities

### **Hartmann von Brixen (~1090 – 1164)**

Hartmann, who came from Bavaria, was the first provost of the canons regular of Klosterneuburg Abbey. He was one of those reformers whose goal was to establish clerical communities that would live in a monastic manner according to the Rule of St. Augustine. After his training at St. Nikola Abbey in Passau, he was appointed head of the cathedral chapter by Archbishop Konrad I of Salzburg in 1125 in order to bring it under the Augustinian rule. Around 1129, Hartmann became provost of the Augustinian canon monastery of Chiemsee, founded by Konrad, and in 1133 he was appointed head of Klosterneuburg Abbey by Margrave Leopold III. He was responsible for founding the canonesses' monastery, whose endowment came from the assets of Margravine Agnes. In 1140, he was elected Bishop of Brixen, where he founded the Augustinian monastery of Neustift in 1142 and staffed it with canons from Klosterneuburg.

### **Floridus Leeb (1731–1799)**

He headed the monastery from 1782 to 1799 and was appointed rector of the University of Vienna in 1786. In the same year, he allocated building plots in the area of what is now the district centre of Floridsdorf, today's 21st district of Vienna. When the settlement was destroyed by flooding just one year later, he waived rent for several years to facilitate reconstruction. In gratitude, the residents named their village Floridsdorf. His tenure also saw the only papal visit that Klosterneuburg Abbey has ever experienced. Pope Pius VII stopped here on 20 April 1782 on his way to visit Emperor Joseph II to discuss his church policy measures and persuade him to revoke the dissolution of monasteries.

### **Gaudentius Andreas Dunkler (1746–1829)**

Dunkler, who came from South Moravia, was provost of Klosterneuburg Abbey from 1800 to 1829. Under his leadership, the Vienna suburb of Neu-Meidling received permission from the abbey, as the landowner, to constitute itself as an independent municipality in 1819. Dunkler thus contributed significantly to the further development of the town. In gratitude, the town was henceforth named Gaudenzdorf. Today, Gaudenzdorf is part of Vienna's 12th district, Meidling. In 1824, Dunkler was also one of the co-founders of the Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein (Vienna Municipal Insurance Association).

### **Rudolf Franz Eichhorn (1853–1925)**

The son of a farmer from the Waldviertel region, he became familiar with the misery of the population in this industrial settlement while serving as chaplain of the Floridsdorf parish. His description of these conditions and his publication on "The White Slaves of the Vienna Tramway Company" are early examples of social reportage. His concern with social problems brought him into conflict with his superiors in the church and the police. From 1888 to 1890, Eichhorn was a member of the Imperial Council for the Christian Social Party and, in this capacity, sought to alleviate the misery of the working class.

### **Friedrich Gustav Piffl (1864–1932)**

Like his fellow brother Rudolf Franz Eichhorn, Friedrich Gustav Piffl was also involved in workers' welfare. In 1907, he was elected provost and in 1913 appointed Archbishop of Vienna by Emperor Franz Josef I, who also elevated him to the rank of prince. After the collapse of the monarchy in 1918, he called for loyalty to the republic, which made him appear a traitor to the monarchists. In the interwar period, he was committed to establishing Caritas aid and promoting "Catholic Action". Piffl was also considered a supporter of party-political Catholicism and a confidant of the Christian Social Chancellor Ignaz Seipel.

### **Pius Parsch (1884 – 1954)**

Through his "Volksliturgische Bewegung" (People's Liturgical Movement), the monastery became the starting point for liturgical reform in Austria, with worldwide influence. As a field chaplain in the First World War, Pius Parsch experienced that for many soldiers, the content and form of Christian services were of little significance. He developed activities to modernise church liturgy (Mass in German, greater involvement of the congregation), which were taken up by the Second Vatican Council. His work is continued today by the Pius Parsch Institute for Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology.



### **Alois Kremar (1908 – 1945)**

Born into a modest family in Vienna, he entered Klosterneuburg Abbey in 1926. In 1938, he took over the parish in Tattendorf, south of Vienna, where he proved to be a committed pastor. In the final days of the war, on 3 April 1945, he was murdered by Soviet soldiers when he stood in front of girls and women to protect them. The parish chronicle reports on the dramatic events: *On the night before Easter Tuesday, the residents made the acquaintance of their liberators. The terrible events unfolded after the combat troops had already passed through and the baggage train followed and began to "take action" of its own. With nowhere else to go, women and girls fled to the parish house to seek protection from their priest. When one of the soldiers reached for a fleeing girl, Alois pushed him away. The soldier fired a shot at the priest, hitting him in the abdomen, and shortly afterwards fired two more shots.*

### **Roman Karl Scholz (1912 – 1944)**

Initially sympathetic to National Socialism, he became a staunch opponent after attending the Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg in 1936. He founded the resistance group "German Freedom Movement," which was renamed the "Austrian Freedom Movement" after Austria's annexation by Hitler's Germany. Its political goal was primarily to educate the population about the true intentions of National Socialism and to re-establish an independent Austria. He kept his involvement secret from the religious community. In 1940, the group was betrayed by a Gestapo informer and Scholz was arrested. The Nazi authorities classified the movement as a "secret treasonous organisation". In 1944, he was sentenced to death and executed on the scaffold. His last words were "For Christ and Austria".



## Social commitment worldwide

Since its foundation, the abbey has provided valuable social and charitable services. Even its founder, Margrave Leopold III, was revered as a philanthropist. In 1786, for example, the abbey helped the victims of a flood disaster in Vienna and enabled them to rebuild their village. In gratitude, they named their new village after the then provost of the abbey, Floridus Leeb: Floridsdorf – today the third largest district of Vienna. The abbey has been active in the social housing sector for more than 100 years and continues to create opportunities for the construction of relatively affordable homes and starter apartments on a cooperative basis by leasing land.

### Declaration of principles

Continuing this tradition, the abbey has issued a declaration of principles on social commitment. This is a voluntary declaration of intent to help those among us who so urgently need our help – as far as our income allows.

The focus of our support is on associations and organisations that help children and young people in their development. In addition to its own social project, "Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder", Klosterneuburg Abbey is involved, for example, in a child protection centre run by "Kindernothilfe" in Honduras, supports an eye clinic in South Sudan as part of "Licht in die Welt" (Light into the World), and supports a school project in Cameroon and Chad. We also support a number of associations and organisations in Austria. In addition, the abbey participates in relief efforts for flood victims in our region and provides support to tenants and leaseholders of the abbey when they find themselves in emergency situations. In total, the expenditure for social causes amounts to **over one million euros** per year. Our **"Impact Report – Social Activities of Klosterneuburg Abbey"** provides a very good insight into this.

### „Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder“ (A home for street children)

One of the first activities under the self-imposed "Declaration of Principles" was the funding of a children's village project by Father Georg Sporschill SJ in Ploiesti, Romania, with an annual contribution of 175,000 euros in 2000.

Through the association "Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder" (A Home for Street Children), which was founded specifically for this purpose, Klosterneuburg Abbey has since been supporting the "Concordia Social Projects" founded by Father Sporschill with an annual contribution of €270,000. The funds used for this purpose come from individual donors, charity events organised by parishes and the financial income of the abbey's own businesses. We use these funds to support projects in Romania, Bulgaria, Kosovo and the Republic of Moldova that provide rapid and direct assistance to children, young people and families where the need is greatest. In children's homes, social centres and supervised shared accommodation, children and young people are guided towards an independent life, receive an education and can learn a trade. What started as a small social project has grown into an organisation that cares for around a thousand children and young people and provides thousands of elderly people with hot meals.

Every year, a small delegation from the abbey, accompanied by journalists, visits one of these projects to check that everything is in order and to select a specific project to support in the following year. We would be happy to add you to our information donation database: [presse@stift-klosterneuburg.at](mailto:presse@stift-klosterneuburg.at)

### Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder – social project of Klosterneuburg Abbey

The donation association has been awarded the Austrian Seal of Approval for Charitable Organisations. All donations go to the project without any deductions. All costs incurred, such as personnel costs, travel expenses or advertising costs, are additionally borne by the abbey.

#### Donation accounts

Erste Bank: IBAN: AT10 2011 1824 2710 1000, BIC: GIBAATWWXXX  
Raiffeisenlandesbank NÖ: IBAN: AT05 3200 0000 0001 1148, BIC: RLNWATWW

Your donation is tax-deductible as a special expense. Our registration number is SV 1477.



## Awards and honours

### **Leopoldipfennig (Leopold penny)**

The minting of Leopold pennies follows a long tradition. As early as 1584, Klosterneuburg Abbey had the first consecration pennies made in honour of St. Leopold at the mint in Vienna. Originally intended as donations for the poor, the coins were soon also given to guests as souvenirs.

Slovakian medal artist Ludmila Cvengrošova was commissioned to design the Leopold penny for the 900th anniversary in 2014. The front shows Saint Leopold in traditional attire with a model of a church, while the back combines the coats of arms of the abbey, the town of Klosterneuburg and the prelate and former provost, Bernhard H. Backovsky. The coins were minted in gold, silver and bronze at the Austrian Mint. The gold and silver Leopoldi pennies are given out by the abbey as gifts of honour. The bronze version is available for purchase as a souvenir.

### **Leopold Cross**

Since 1985, the Leopold Cross has been awarded to individuals who have rendered outstanding services to Klosterneuburg Abbey. The occasion for the establishment of this honorary award was the completion of the general renovation at that time, but also the 500th anniversary of the canonisation of the abbey's founder, Margrave Leopold III.

The Leopold Cross was first awarded on 15 November 1985, St Leopold's Day, to the provincial government for its services to the general renovation at that time.

The decoration is awarded in three classes, bronze, silver and gold, by the respective provost; since 2015, the highest level has been the "Star of the Leopold Cross in Gold". The award can be given to both priests (except the canons themselves) and lay people. The bronze decoration is worn on the chest, while the silver and gold decorations are worn around the neck. The design was created by the Augustinian canon Floridus Röhrig, who based it on the Austrian Imperial Order of Leopold.

### **St. Leopold Friedenspreis**

The "St. Leopold Peace Prize", named after the founder of the abbey, honours works of art that critically address humanitarian and socio-political issues. It is awarded every two years for works of fine art in the fields of painting, graphic art, photography and sculpture that, in addition to their artistic merit, demonstrate humanitarian commitment and address the specified theme. The aim is to make humanitarian issues a more prominent feature of works of art again. (see page 24)

### **Pius Parsch Prize**

Named after Canon Pius Parsch (1884-1954), whose "Volksliturgische Bewegung" (People's Liturgical Movement) made the monastery the starting point for liturgical reform in Austria with worldwide influence. The prize is awarded every two years and honours achievements in liturgical studies in Europe. It serves to promote young theologians with excellent research results, as well as to encourage discussion of the Liturgical Movement before the Second Vatican Council and the liturgical reform that resulted from this council. (see page 25)



## Excerpt from the Abbey Chronicle

- 1114 Laying of the foundation stone of the abbey church by Babenberg Margrave Leopold III on 12 June
- 1133 Augustinian canons and canonesses called to Neuburg.
- 1136 Consecration of the collegiate church in honour of the Holy Mother of God Mary (Birth of Mary) on 29 September.
- 1136 Death of Leopold III on 15 November
- 1142 Provost Hartmann founds the Neustift Abbey near Brixen
- 1181 Completion of the Verdun Altarpiece.
- 1329 After a fire in the church, Stephan von Sierndorf has the goldsmith work of Nikolaus von Verdun converted into a winged altar.
- 1330 A Master Martin creates a catalogue of the library with over 3,000 works
- 1372 First written mention of the veil legend.
- 1485 Canonisation of Leopold by Pope Innocent VIII on 6 January
- 1529 The canons flee to Passau with relics and church treasures to escape the Turkish siege. The monastery was not captured.
- 1568 Dissolution of the canoness's abbey.
- 1616 Archduke Maximilian III donates the Austrian archducal crown as the "Holy Crown of Austria".
- 1642 Completion of the so-called "Freundt organ", one of the few original large organs from the early Baroque period that has been preserved.
- 1663 On 19 October, Emperor Leopold I proclaimed St. Leopold the patron saint of Austria.
- 1683 Klosterneuburg is attacked again by the Turks, but the abbey and the upper town successfully defend themselves.
- 1730 Expansion and Baroque redesign of the abbey under Emperor Charles VI as a combination of royal residence and monastery – after his death, work was immediately halted.
- 1774 Provost Ambros Lorenz founds the Abbey Museum, Austria's first public museum.
- 1782 Pope Pius VI visits Klosterneuburg Abbey
- 178 The present-day district of Floridsdorf in Vienna is named after Provost Floridus Leeb, who enables poor people to settle on abbey land.
- 1805 During the French occupation, Napoleon Bonaparte visits the abbey.
- 1813 First mention of barrel sliding in the Binderstadl.
- 1824 Provost Gaudentius Dunkler is co-founder of the "Wechselseitige k.k. privilegierte Brandschaden-Versicherungs-Anstalt" (Mutual Imperial and Royal Privileged Fire Damage Insurance Institution), today's Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein (Vienna Municipal Insurance Company).
- 1834-42 Under the architect Joseph Kornhäusel, the imperial wing of the monastery takes on its present appearance.
- 1860 The world's first fruit and viticulture school is founded with the Vienna Imperial and Royal Agricultural Society.
- 1860 First documented mention of the St. Laurent grape: the abbey donates vines to the viticulture school for experimental purposes – today it is the flagship grape of the abbey's vineyard.



- 1888 Construction of the neo-Gothic west façade with the two church towers
- 1908 An exhibition at Klosterneuburg Abbey gives the still unknown Egon Schiele his first opportunity to present his work to the public
- 1913 Provost Friedrich Gustav Piffel becomes Archbishop of Vienna.
- 1922 The Popular Liturgical Movement is founded by Augustinian canon Pius Parsch.
- 1936 Elevation of the abbey church to the rank of minor basilica by Pope Pius XI.
- 1941 Abolition of the abbey church by the Nazi regime.
- 1943 Promulgation of the liturgical constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium", which took up the theological thinking of the Klosterneuburg canon Pius Parsch „Volksliturgische Bewegung“ (folk liturgical movement).
- 1972 Foundation of the Pius Parsch Institute by Canon Norbert Höslinger
- 1985 The "Leopoldskreuz" was created as a portable form of gratitude award.
- 1997 Start of extensive renovation work in the abbey and basilica.
- 2000 The abbey adopted a voluntary declaration of principles on social commitment. This marked the beginning of the 'Ein Zuhause für Straßenkinder' project.
- 2003 Takeover of the parish of St. Paul in Bergen, Norway
- 2003 Commissioning of the biomass heating plant.
- 2005 Appointment of Markus Bernt Eidsvig Can.Reg. as Bishop of Oslo by Pope Benedict XVI.
- 2006 Opening of the new visitor centre "Sala terrena"
- 2007 Awarding of the European Cultural Heritage Prize "Europa Nostra" to the monastery.
- 2008 First award of the "St. Leopold Peace Prize"
- 2008 The abbey church receives a new people's altar.
- 2009 First awarding of the "Pius Parsch Prize"
- 2011 Establishment of the US parishes in Glen Cove, NY
- 2011 Opening of the treasure chamber to visitors.
- 2012 Revitalisation of the "Gardens of the Centuries"
- 2013 Opening of the "Gallery of Modern Art"
- 2014 Anniversary year "900 years of Klosterneuburg Abbey"
- 2019 Development of the rear Sala terrena rooms as exhibition space "Sala terrena Gallery"
- 2020 Apostolic visitation; canonical investigation of cases of abuse; the abbey is placed under papal commission.
- 2022 Start of a further renovation phase: abbey towers with westwork, abbey wall, Binderstadl
- 2022 During the renovation of the church tower crosses, two time capsules containing information on the building's history from 1887 are discovered. One year later, the renovated crosses are replaced with two new time capsules.
- 2023 August 14: Election of Anton Höslinger Can.Reg. as the 67th provost of Klosterneuburg Abbey.
- 2023 Construction and opening of the "Quartier 1114" seminar rooms in the Schüttkasten
- 2024 Redesign of the Baroque wine cellar with light installations and a new tour concept





## Economic enterprises

The commercial enterprises provide the economic basis for the work of the members of the convent as pastors, scientists and teachers, as well as for the operation and maintenance of the abbey and its parishes. A large part of the income goes towards construction and renovation work, but a considerable portion is also spent on social purposes. Klosterneuburg Abbey not only fulfils a wide range of religious, social and cultural tasks, but is also an important economic factor for Lower Austria. The abbey's economic enterprises generate a turnover of around 50 million per year, employ over 200 people and ensure high added value in the region. The main areas of business are agriculture and forestry, property management, culture and tourism.

### The Management

#### Treasurer Elias Matthew Carr Can.Reg.

At the head of the economic enterprises is the treasurer, who is appointed by the provost. He is the highest spiritual administrator of the abbey's economy. Elias Carr has held this position since February 2024. He was born in New York City in 1968, ordained a priest in 1999 and joined Klosterneuburg Abbey in 2002. He was one of three canons sent to establish the abbey's branch in Glen Cove / Long Island (USA) in 2011. There he was parish priest of Saint Rocco for six years, headmaster of the Catholic regional school "All Saints" for seven years and, most recently, president of the "Schools of Saint Mary" for two and a half years. In 2022, he received his doctorate in theology from the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. He is also an author.

#### Chief Financial Officer Andreas Gahleitner

The Chief Financial Officer, who reports to the Treasurer, is responsible for the operational management of the businesses. Andreas Gahleitner has held this position since 2008. Born in Upper Austria, he studied in Linz and Dublin and first came into contact with the Abbey during an internship. After completing his studies, he began his career here in controlling.

### The business areas

#### Agriculture and forestry:

- The abbey's vineyard is the oldest in Austria, with 110 hectares of cultivated land (Klosterneuburg, Vienna, Tattendorf and Gumpoldskirchen).
- The forestry operation covers 9,500 hectares and is divided into four districts.
- Organic farming with around 400 hectares of land (Langenzersdorf, Prinzendorf, Tattendorf)
- Underground biomass heating for the abbey and municipal facilities

#### Property management:

- Rental of around 700 flats, offices and commercial premises
- Around 5,500 lease agreements for properties in Vienna, Klosterneuburg, Korneuburg, Bisamberg, Langenzersdorf and Tattendorf, as well as in Anif in Salzburg

#### Culture and science:

- Around 100,000 visitors per year
- Abbey museum, art collections, cultural treasures, abbey library, abbey archive, research
- Rental of premises (Augustinussaal, Binderstadl, seminar rooms, etc.)

#### Operation and maintenance

- Construction department with six workshops (carpenter, plumber, electrician, bricklayer, painter, locksmith)
- Chamber office (sewing, tailoring, kitchen, porters, domestic workers, room maintenance)
- Gardening department (maintenance of around 5 hectares of outdoor facilities with gardens and orangery; events; alternating every two years: orchid exhibition and garden days)
- Service areas (accounting, human resources, IT, public relations, legal advice, organisational development)



## Sustainable management

In keeping with its responsibility for creation, Klosterneuburg Abbey is committed to preserving valuable assets for future generations. Sustainable management through forward-looking and responsible action for people and nature are the basic principles of the abbey's economic activities. Ethical, social and ecological criteria are given equal weight alongside economic goals.

### **The abbey's own biomass plant**

The underground biomass district heating plant, built in 2003, supplies the abbey and its outbuildings as well as municipal facilities in Klosterneuburg, such as the town hall, hospital and Happyland leisure centre, with environmentally friendly natural heat. Where possible, the wood chips required for this come from the abbey's own nearby forests, thus avoiding long transport routes. Compared to the heating systems used previously, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been reduced by more than 3,000 tonnes per year. Since the 2023 winter season, the abbey's biomass heating plant has been cooperating with that of the Lower Austrian energy supplier EVN. Thanks to this cooperation, it is now possible to supply all connected businesses and households with natural heat all year round. Peak demand is mutually offset and the supplementary use of gas in the abbey's biomass heating plant has been reduced to one per cent.

### **First climate-neutral winery**

In March 2009, the Klosterneuburg Abbey Winery became the first winery in Austria to be certified as climate neutral, thus taking early action in terms of sustainability and climate protection. Together with consultants from ClimatePartner, numerous measures were implemented to reduce emissions and energy consumption. These included reducing travel, natural cooling of buildings and the use of heat recovery systems for the wine tanks. These measures enabled the winery to save up to 1.7 kilograms of carbon dioxide per bottle, which corresponds to just under one cubic metre of gas. Since 2025, the vineyard has been certified organic and is being continuously expanded.

### **Power supply from renewable energies**

In 2021, the abbey's first photovoltaic system (22.5 kWp) was installed on the flat roof of a warehouse on the abbey's wine estate. It supplies the wine shop, offices and storage rooms of the winery with its own green electricity. Just one year later, a second photovoltaic system with over 110 kWp followed. It is located in the garden behind the Sebastian Chapel on 500 square metres of open space. The annual yield of 110,000 kilowatt hours is fed directly into the estate's own grid.

Another photovoltaic system, which has already been approved, is currently being planned in Prinzendorf an der Zaya. It is to be built on an area of around ten hectares.

In the Pax forest district near Schwarza im Gebirge, the abbey has two small hydroelectric power plants that supply the abbey's own forest houses with electricity and feed it into the grid.

The Matzen-Klein-Harras II wind farm, which has been producing clean, regional energy since the beginning of 2022, is also located on the grounds of Klosterneuburg Abbey. A total of three wind turbines have been commissioned there by the company W.E.B., with a total output of 12.6 megawatts, supplying around 23,000 people with electricity. Further wind power projects are planned on development sites in the Waldviertel and Weinviertel regions as well as in Styria.



## **E-mobility**

A total of six Smatrics charging stations for electric vehicles are available to visitors in all three car parks on the abbey grounds. There are also three e-bike charging stations operated by Wien Energie in the forecourt of the underground car park entrance. The abbey's vehicle fleet is also being continuously converted to e-mobility.

In March 2025, Austria's first viticulture robot was put into operation. It works autonomously and performs numerous tasks that would otherwise have to be done by a tractor driver. The big advantage: the robot is not tied to fixed working hours, is emission-free and is powered 100 per cent by electricity. With an operating time of 8 to 10 hours and a charging time of only two hours, it sets new standards in efficiency. Manufactured in France, the robot has been successfully deployed more than 250 times worldwide – the abbey is the first winery in Austria to use this pioneering technology in viticulture.

## **Family-friendly working environment**

The commercial enterprises of Klosterneuburg Abbey are a certified family-friendly employer. Back in 2011, an internal working group identified potential for improvement in an audit process offered by the Ministry of Economy and Family Affairs called "berufundfamilie" (work and family) and developed a plan of objectives and measures, the implementation of which is monitored by employees and the ministry. Certified companies are committed to promoting a sustainable work-life balance. This involves operational flexibility in terms of working hours, improvements in information and communication policy, personnel development, parental leave and returning to work.

## **Preserving and promoting biodiversity**

Back in 2001, Klosterneuburg Abbey converted its farmland to organic farming, has since dispensed with mineral fertilisers and pesticides, and thus ensures the long-term production of high-quality food. By creating green fallow areas with a variety of flowering plants, the abbey is attempting to create food sources, refuges and wintering grounds for numerous animal species.

Through the careful management of around 8,000 hectares of forest and extensive reforestation, the abbey maintains its forests as a recreational area for people and a refuge for numerous animal and plant species. The natural regeneration of old-growth forests increases the diversity of flora and fauna and strengthens the vitality of the ecosystem.

The revitalisation programme for the abbey's gardens is also ambitious. As an important partner in Lower Austria's "Nature in the Garden" programme, strict requirements are observed and fulfilled in the planning and execution. Peat mulch is completely avoided, moor soil is replaced as far as possible, and the paths are also largely constructed by hand. A medieval cross garden has been reconstructed in the middle of the historic cloister, and the convent garden captivates visitors with numerous rare native and exotic plants such as the Biedermeier peony and the yellow chestnut.

## **Preservation of a bat colony**

The greater mouse-eared bat, known in Latin as *Myotis myotis*, is the largest bat species native to our region. They are strictly protected, a status that Klosterneuburg Abbey also complies with. Around a hundred animals and their young take up summer residence in the abbey's attic every year. Special consideration was given to the mouse-eared bats during the extensive renovation work on the roof. The work was postponed until they had left their summer quarters. When the roof was re-covered in winter, the old rafters were left in place so that the animals, known as "church bats", could find their familiar places again the following summer. The entrance and exit holes under a roof intersection were also preserved.



## **Company fire brigade**

Commander: Senior Fire Inspector (OBI) Stefan Viktorin-Pomper

The abbey fire brigade was established in May 1890 under Abbey Treasurer Gilbert Gürsch Can.Reg. Even before that, there was a house fire brigade, but it consisted of only three men. The pump crew usually had to be recruited at the scene of the fire. The treasurer therefore decided to establish an organised in-house fire brigade in line with the requirements of the modern age. A new fire engine and the necessary other equipment were purchased.

The most important task of the abbey's volunteer fire brigade is preventive fire protection. With 230 hand-held fire extinguishers, 20 wall hydrants, six dry risers, a fire alarm system with over 1,600 smoke detectors and a gas extinguishing system with six extinguishing areas, a great deal is done to ensure the safety of the abbey.

But the fire brigade is also well equipped for defensive fire protection. With a current crew of 21 active members and eight reservists, the team, which consists of volunteers and a canon, has a small fire engine and a supply vehicle with interchangeable containers, rapid intervention equipment and breathing apparatus at its disposal. In addition to monthly drills, a joint exercise is held every two years with the fire brigades of the Klosterneuburg section and the Vienna professional fire brigade.



## Culture and Science

Director: Matthias Hofmeister-Kiss

Klosterneuburg Abbey is one of the most important destinations for cultural tourism in Austria: the collections of the abbey museum and treasury, which have been built up over centuries, bring together cultural treasures from the Middle Ages to the present day. The building complex is unique, featuring structures ranging from Romanesque to Baroque splendour to historicism. The Baroque construction site of the Sala terrena, which has remained unchanged since construction work was halted in 1740, is also unique in the world. Changing exhibitions of scientific research results and modern art round off this range of offerings. The biennial orchid exhibition in the abbey's convent garden, the largest of its kind in Austria, has become a real crowd puller. A total of around 100,000 visitors are counted annually.

### The top ten sights

1. The **Verdun Altar**: designed and created in 1181 by the goldsmith Nikolaus of Verdun from fire-gilded enamel panels. Originally a pulpit covering, it was converted into a winged altar after 1330 and is one of the most important cultural treasures of the Middle Ages – it can be viewed as part of a guided tour of the abbey.
2. The **Austrian Archducal Crown**: Donated in 1616, the Holy Crown of Austria of the Habsburgs, which could only be taken away from the abbey for the purpose of paying homage to the heir – on display in the treasury.
3. The **Sala terrena**: The planned garden hall remained in its shell state from 1740 – and thus a globally unique Baroque construction site with eight atlas sculptures. Today it is used as a visitor reception area with an abbey shop.
4. The **back of the Verdun Altar** in the medieval treasures exhibition room: the oldest surviving large panel paintings north of the Alps, created around 1330 and showing a strong Italian influence – on display as part of a guided tour of the abbey.
5. The **seven-armed candlestick**: a gift from Agnes and Leopold to the collegiate church before 1136. The huge bronze candlestick was part of the church's basic furnishings. It comes from the same workshop as the bronze doors of San Zeno in Verona – on display as part of a guided tour of the abbey.
6. The **Babenberg family tree**: In order to introduce the family of the new saint to the people after Leopold's canonisation in 1485, this monumental work was commissioned by the Habsburgs. It depicts all the Babenberg rulers and their wives – on display in the Abbey Museum.
7. The **veil monstrance** by Matthias Steinl, designed in 1710, a highlight of Baroque goldsmithing – on display in the treasury.
8. The **ivory collection**: from the "writing implements of St. Leopold", an early medieval box from Spain, to incredibly fine works of art from the Baroque period – the most important pieces can be seen in the treasury.
9. The **collection of liturgical vestments**, with particularly valuable pieces from the Baroque period to the multi-part Marian vestments in Art Nouveau design – the most magnificent vestments are on display in the treasury.
10. The **abbey church** with its **festival organ**: a total work of art from different centuries with details that would require a guided tour of their own. The originally Romanesque church was converted to Baroque style. The festival organ was assembled between 1636 and 1642 from two organs already present in the church by the Passau organ builder Johannes Freundt. Today, it is an extraordinary example of early Baroque organ building and is considered one of the most important European monument organs thanks to its excellent sound.



## **The Abbey Museum**

In 1774, Provost Ambros Lorenz founded the Abbey Museum. It was established 20 years before the Louvre, making it one of the oldest museums in the world and the first publicly accessible museum in Austria. Its first acquisition was already a significant work of art: the panels of the Albrecht Altar – one of the great masterpieces of Viennese painting around 1440. They show the oldest depiction of St. Stephen's Cathedral with the tower completed shortly before the altar was created. It had fallen victim to the modernisation of the „Kirche am Hof“ in Vienna, large parts of it had already been burned, only the panel paintings remained. The panel paintings have now been placed in the Sebastian Chapel and can be viewed as part of a special guided tour.

From the very beginning, the abbey was able to boast valuable holdings: for example, the so-called "writing implements of St. Leopold" were part of a valuable ivory collection, and the cycle of paintings by Rueland Frueauf the Younger, which deals with the founding of the abbey, was already in the house. The same applies to the Babenberg family tree, a huge three-part painting that was intended to introduce pilgrims to the family of the new patron saint of the region in 1492.

In the following centuries, the collection was gradually expanded: naturally, the abbey mainly collected depictions of Saint Leopold and the abbey itself – such as four works by Egon Schiele. Even today, works by modern artists are still being acquired to complete the collection.

## **The treasure chamber**

The showpiece of the collection is the "Holy Crown of Austria", the Austrian archducal crown donated in 1616 by Archduke Maximilian III of Habsburg, which could only be removed from Klosterneuburg for the hereditary homage of the archdukes. The oldest exhibits in the treasury date back to the foundation of the abbey. These include an ivory abbot's crozier from the 14th century and enamel reliquaries from Limoges (France). The so-called "travel altar of St. Leopold" contains a piece of fabric behind rock crystal that is said to come from the veil of Margravine Agnes. According to recent research, it dates back to that period, but whether it actually belonged to Agnes cannot be proven. The magnificent veil monstrance dates from 1714 and was commissioned by the abbey from Vienna's leading goldsmith, Johann Baptist Känischbauer.

The treasury was not open to the public for a long time. In 2011, it was equipped according to the latest security and conservation standards and is now open to visitors all year round.

## **The Modern Art Gallery**

The Gallery of Modern Art in the Klosterneuburg Abbey Museum, which has been in existence since 2013, presents sacred art from the 20th and 21st centuries. The spectrum ranges from expressionist works of the 1920s to creations by young Austrian artists. These now enter into an exciting dialogue with the works of the Old Masters. For many centuries, the abbey has seen it as its duty to commission and acquire works of sacred art. This is also the legacy of Prelate Alfred Sammer (1942–2010), who was committed to modern sacred art throughout his life and whose art collection was inherited by the abbey. In recent years, the collection has been expanded through a number of bequests and purchases. These include works by Herwig Zens, Linde Waber, Peter Atanasov, Gerhard Gutruf, Maria Schwarz, Julia Faber and many others.

## **The Sala Terrena**

When Emperor Charles VI died unexpectedly in 1740, his dream of an Austrian Escorial also came to an end. Construction work was halted because neither his daughter and later successor Maria Theresa nor the canons of the abbey were interested in continuing it. As a result, the so-called Sala terrena also remained unfinished. In this room, court sculptor Lorenzo Mattielli (1688–1748) had created eight supporting Atlases, but otherwise only the bare masonry remains. With the construction of the underground car park and the biomass district heating system, a new visitor reception area was created in the Sala terrena, which went into operation in 2006.



Two years later, this revitalisation was awarded the European Union's heritage conservation prize, the Europa Nostra Award.

### **The Imperial Apartments**

An imperial residence that was to combine the functions of a monastery and a royal palace: Emperor Charles VI had literally big plans for Klosterneuburg Abbey. From 1730 onwards, the most gigantic of all Baroque monastery complexes was to be built in Klosterneuburg. The model was the Escorial near Madrid. However, only one eighth of the planned complex was realised during the emperor's lifetime, including the magnificently furnished imperial rooms.

The imperial apartments are imperial chambers from the Baroque period that have been preserved unchanged. The Italian architect Donato Felice d'Allio designed the interior decoration of the rooms. His detailed sketches of the stoves have been preserved. The stucco decorations on the ceilings, fireplaces and stoves were executed by Santino and Gaetano Bussi.

The rooms were never adapted after the emperor's death, and the sequence of rooms corresponds to Spanish court ceremony. This means that the closer one was to the emperor, the further one could advance: starting in the Marble Hall, the official reception room, one proceeded to the large antechamber, then to the audience chamber, the dining room, the second antechamber and finally to the emperor's private room, the "innermost retreat". Adjacent to this, in the north wing, was the bedroom of the emperor and his wife Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. The empress's rooms were connected to this. Today, these rooms are used as reception rooms for the prelature, meaning they are reserved for the prelate's guests.

Charles VI was only able to live in his apartments once. He stayed here from 14 to 15 November 1739 during the court pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Leopold. He died the following year at the age of 55.

### **The Roman Lapidarium**

Today's Augustinian monastery stands on the site of the Roman camp of Arrianis, which was part of the northern border of the Roman Empire. For over four centuries, the Danube Limes stretched across this area, leaving behind a wealth of archaeological finds. Of particular note is a large number of gravestones, which provide interesting insights into life in the military camp and the civilian settlement. These stones were used as building material in the Middle Ages and were only discovered in 1976 and removed from the masonry. These and other finds can be viewed in the lapidary. Among the small finds, the military diploma from 80 AD deserves special attention.



## St. Leopold Peace Prize

The St. Leopold Peace Prize, named after the founder of the abbey, honours works of art that critically address humanitarian and socio-political issues. It is awarded every two years for works of fine art in the fields of painting, graphic art, photography and sculpture that, in addition to their artistic merit, demonstrate humanitarian commitment and address the specified theme. The aim is to make humanitarian issues a more prominent feature of works of art.

Artists of any nationality, political or religious conviction are eligible to apply. The St. Leopold Peace Prize is endowed with 12,000 euros and was first awarded in 2008 on the initiative of Provost Bernhard Backovsky.

### Previous winners:

- 2008** Theme: *Crossroads and Redemption*: Elke Punkt Fleisch (A) with *Allzweckreinigerinnen*
- 2009** Theme: *Faith, Love, Hope*: Ramona Schnekenburger (Germany)  
Recognition awards: Agnes Winzig (A), Eva Weiler
- 2010** Theme: *Giving the poor a voice*: Dora Várkonyi (Germany)  
Recognition awards: Andreas Laugesen (Germany), Marko Lipuš (Austria)  
Special prize for photography: Leonard Popien
- 2011** Theme *Justice creates peace*: Mariele Bergmann (D)  
Recognition awards: Peter Berresheim (Germany), Ingrid Sonntag Ramirez Ponce (Germany)  
Special prize for photography: Lela Ahmadzai (Afghanistan/Germany)
- 2012** Theme *Human dignity versus cynicism*: Marion Linke (Switzerland)  
Recognition awards: Robert Fleischanderl (A), Stephan Popella (D)  
Special prize for photography Claudia Henzler (Germany)
- 2014** Theme: *Am I my brother's keeper?*: Peter Müller (Germany)  
Recognition awards: Willy Puchner (A), Dominik Fleischmann (D)
- 2016** Theme *The power of greed*: Gregor Sailer (A)  
Recognition awards: Frenzy Höhne (Germany), Wadim Rakowski (Russia)
- 2018** Theme: *Time is given to us and we shape time*: Simon Schober (A)  
Recognition awards: Daniel Sommergruber (A), Gerd Paulicke (D)
- 2020** Theme *Lord, come to my aid, the water is up to my throat*: Petra Weifenbach (Germany)  
Honourable mentions: Gea van Eck (NL), Jenny Ymker (NL)
- 2023** Theme *Let us bear one another's burdens*: Konstanze Trommer (D)  
Honourable mentions: Ulrike Anna Schwartz (Germany), Ines Schaikowski (Germany)
- 2025** Theme: *We even turn waste into money!* Osama Zatar  
Recognition awards: Julia Belova (RUS), Barbara Dombrowski (D)





## Pius Parsch Prize

Named after Canon Pius Parsch (1884-1954), whose "Volksliturgische Bewegung" (People's Liturgical Movement) made the monastery the starting point for liturgical reform in Austria with worldwide influence. The prize is awarded every two years and honours achievements in liturgical studies in Europe. It serves to promote young theologians with excellent research results, as well as to encourage engagement with the Liturgical Movement before and the liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council.

Primarily academic works such as postdoctoral theses, dissertations, monographs, licentiate or master's theses may be submitted. The studies should not be more than three years old.

The prize, endowed with €6,000 by Klosterneuburg Abbey and awarded by a jury of international scholars, is presented by the provost of the abbey in St. Gertrude's Church, named after Pius Parsch, on the anniversary of the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium (4 December 1963).

### Previous prize winners:

- 2009** Eugen Daigeler, dissertation: *Liturgische Bildung als Weg zur tätigen Teilnahme bei Pius Parsch*
- 2011** Josef Keplinger, dissertation: *Der Vorstehersitz. Studie über die Verortung liturgischer Vorstehung im Spannungsfeld von Funktionalität und theologischer Zeichenstruktur.*
- 2013** Michael Schneiders, Master's thesis: *Theologie und Praxis der Taufe in der vorkonziliaren Liturgischen Bewegung bei Pius Parsch.*
- 2015** Guido Pasenow, dissertation: *Heinrich Meurers (1888-1953). Ein Förderer und Wegbereiter der Liturgischen Bewegung in Deutschland..*
- 2017** Joint prize winners:  
Christian Stoll, dissertation: *Die Öffentlichkeit der Christus-Krise.*  
*Erik Petersons eschatologischer Kirchenbegriff im Kontext der Moderne.*  
Andreas Kaiser, dissertation: *Das lateinisch-deutsche Altarmessbuch (1965). Der vergessene Schritt zur Umsetzung der Liturgiereform.*
- 2019** Marco Benini (Habilitation): *Liturgische Bibelhermeneutik. Die Heilige Schrift im Horizont des Gottesdienstes.*
- 2021** Lea Lerch, dissertation: *Liturgie im gesellschaftlichen Umbruch. Romano Guardinis Reformtheologie im historischen Kontext der Weimarer Republik.*
- 2023** Josef Raufer, dissertation: *Tagzeitengebet als Gebet aller Getauften. Ansätze des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils und Rezeption im deutschen Sprachgebiet.*



## Abbey music

Director: Daniel Freistetter

"He who sings prays twice": St Augustine was already aware of the effect and significance of church music. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) then stated that it is not merely ornamentation, but represents liturgy itself. This tradition has been upheld at Klosterneuburg Abbey for centuries.

This is evidenced, for example, by the **festival organ**, which was assembled between 1636 and 1642 from two organs already present in the church by the Passau organ builder Johannes Freundt. Today, it stands as an extraordinary testimony to early Baroque organ building. Thanks to its outstanding sound, the Freundt organ is considered one of the most important European monument organs.

The **choir organ**, on the other hand, was designed and built in 2005 by the renowned Swiss organ builder Kuhn as a "historical new construction" – incorporating 18th-century construction principles and based on 18th-century South German-Austrian works in terms of design, choice of materials and workmanship.

In 2022, the abbey music was reorganised under the direction of Daniel Freistetter and abbey organist Johannes Zeinler.

Every year, around ten high masses with orchestral masses take place, in addition to around 30 church services with musical accompaniment by choirs, ensembles or soloists. Two oratorio concerts and five organ concerts are performed annually on the festival organ: once a month, there are short concerts by the Abbey Music as part of the Freund(t)-Musiken series.

- The **Abbey Music Orchestra** is made up of professional musicians from Klosterneuburg and the surrounding area. The **Abbey Choir** performs at High Masses on feast days and participates in special events at the convent.
- The **youth ensemble** performs project-based masses and concerts in the abbey basilica.
- The **vocal circle** is open to anyone who enjoys singing. It mainly performs at parish masses on Sunday evenings.
- The **Freund(t) Ensemble** was founded as a professional vocal and instrumental ensemble. It is mainly dedicated to music from the 16th and 17th centuries, always striving to incorporate the festival organ in all its tonal diversity. However, contemporary works also find their way into the repertoire.



### 900 years of architectural history

The abbey grounds contain evidence of over 900 years of construction activity. A tour of the abbey is therefore also a tour of European architectural history.

#### **Middle Ages**

Part of the abbey square is dominated by the abbey church, built between 1114 and 1136, which was the largest church in the country at the time. The original style is clearly visible on the outside of the nave: a Romanesque basilica in the style of a house church of the Salian royal family, from which Margravine Agnes originated. The original 12th-century church wall with exposed architectural elements is still clearly visible in the south wing of the cloister.

The transition to the Gothic style is evident in the remaining wall of Duke Leopold VI's palace on Stiftsplatz, dating from around 1200. Only the foundation walls remain of the Capella speciosa next to it, the first Gothic building in Austria. In contrast, the large church for the canonesses, built in the 13th century, still stands, although it was secularised in the 18th century and has since been used as a wine press house. The Tutzsäule column from 1381 can be considered a prime example of High Gothic architecture.

Another Gothic monument can be found in the Leopoldihof: the bay window on the former castle of Margrave Leopold, while the huge window of the former Thomas Chapel was built during the transition to the Renaissance. The adjoining princely wing was built between 1618 and 1620 and impresses with its beautiful Renaissance smoke hoods.

#### **Unique Baroque**

In 1634, work began on the Baroque interior design of the collegiate church, which continued in several phases until 1730 and made the Romanesque impression of the space disappear. However, the major Baroque renovation began in 1730: Emperor Charles VI commissioned his fortress architect Donato Felice d'Allio to build a monastery residence modelled on the Spanish Escorial. The plan called for four large courtyards and nine domes, each of which was to bear a Habsburg crown. The foundations were extended far beyond the abbey terrace, resulting in cellar vaults extending over three floors. When Charles VI died unexpectedly in 1740, only one eighth of the complex had been completed. Maria Theresa had no interest in continuing the construction – nor did the abbey, which had to bear the financing costs.

The Baroque building remained unfinished, with individual parts, such as the planned Sala terrena and the corridor system behind it, left as a suddenly abandoned construction site. In 1756, at least the Marble Hall was completed, and between 1834 and 1842, architect Joseph Kornhäusel completed the present-day Imperial Court in simplified Baroque forms. It was not until 2005 that the abbey began to open the Sala terrena to the public and give it a function as an entrance for visitors.

#### **Historicism to the present day**

In 1879, Friedrich von Schmidt, the architect who designed Vienna City Hall, began urgently-needed renovations on the abbey church. The west façade of the church was redesigned in the Neo-Gothic style, as were the towers, which were both raised to the same height of 82.75 metres.

In the 1960s, the Sebastian Chapel, consecrated in 1421, which had to be largely demolished under Joseph II as a "superfluous place of worship", was rebuilt in concrete on top of the old foundation walls.

The most recent renovation of the abbey began in 2001: star architect Heinz Tesar designed the Sala terrena as a new visitor entrance, as well as the underground car park and the underground biomass heating plant.

In 2007, as part of the general renovation of Klosterneuburg Abbey, the roof of the abbey basilica was recovered in a diamond pattern. Round-cut tiles from Tondach were used, and the roofing was carried out by Gerhard Hohl GmbH from Vienna, which was awarded a prize for "special and outstanding achievements" by the International Federation of Roofing Contractors in 2011.



## **General renovations: conservation projects for the future**

### 1977 to 2014

The general renovation of Klosterneuburg Abbey, which began in 1977, was the largest monument preservation project in Lower Austria. The renovation work planned for the first stage of the abbey buildings to preserve the historic building fabric was successfully completed in 2014.

More than 60% of the 1.1 million euros per year required for the first stage of the general renovation was provided by the abbey's commercial enterprises, with the remainder contributed by the province of Lower Austria (25%) as well as the federal government, the Archdiocese of Vienna and the city of Klosterneuburg.

### 2020 to 2023

The two church towers of the abbey church were renovated and the westwork (the connecting wing between the towers) and the palatine wall (1198) were restored. The costs for this amounted to 5.2 million euros. A time capsule was found in each of the two church spires, the documents from which are now in the abbey archives – two new time capsules were placed in the church spires.

Thanks to the excellent cooperation with the Federal Monuments Office and all the companies involved, the estimated budget of just under 5.5 million euros was underspent by around six per cent, or approximately 300,000 euros.

### 2024 to 2027

4.4 million euros will be invested in the current stage of renovation and preservation of the historic building fabric. Of this, the province of Lower Austria will cover 25% and the federal government 20%. The municipality of Klosterneuburg and the Archdiocese of Vienna will contribute 1.14% and 1.36% respectively. This leaves the abbey with a share of € 2,310,000, or 52.5%.

This includes the renovation of the exterior façades of Binderstadl and Sebastianikapelle, the renovation of the city, defence and enclosure walls, the restoration of the Baroque parquet floors in the museum area, and the restoration of the ceiling frescoes and walls in the Marble Hall.



## Collections and scholarship at the abbey

For centuries, Klosterneuburg Abbey has been a centre of science and research of supraregional importance. Scientific research was never limited to theological disciplines; in the late Middle Ages, for example, the abbey was also a centre of astronomy. The prime meridian, for example, runs through Klosterneuburg on a map of Central Europe by the astronomer, geographer and later provost Georg Münstinger.

Even today, scientific education and activity play an important role in the life of the Augustinian Canons. In addition to theologians, the convent is home to scholars and scientists from a wide variety of disciplines. Thus, the tradition of being a centre of science is still upheld today, as evidenced by numerous high-profile research projects.

### **The Library**

Director: Christina Jackel

With around 300,000 volumes, the abbey library is the largest private library in Austria. The heart of the collection is the medieval library with its 1,250 manuscripts and 860 incunabula. Most of these were produced and illuminated in the abbey's scriptorium, but some were also purchased from Italy or France in the High and Late Middle Ages. Particularly noteworthy are a Bible given to the canons in 1136 by the founder Leopold and a four-volume, magnificently decorated choir book commissioned by Provost Georg Münstinger (1418-1442). The book treasure of the former canonesses' convent has also been included in the collection.

As early as the Middle Ages, a universal library was established that not only housed works on the Bible and theology, but also contained legal codes, scientific and medical texts, and editions of ancient classics.

In the early modern period up to the Enlightenment, a non-denominational book collection was assembled, suggesting a largely cosmopolitan convent. In addition to countless religious, literary and everyday texts, the shelves contain the writings of Martin Luther, the encyclopaedias of the French Enlightenment and the poetry of the "Stürmer und Dränger" movement.

Today, the Abbey Library presents itself as a knowledge institution and partner to various regional and international research institutions. In cooperation with the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the holdings are being digitised and made available on the Internet ([www.manuscripta.at](http://www.manuscripta.at)). The manuscript holdings of the abbeys of Admont, Neustift in South Tyrol and Voralpe have also been digitised in cooperation with the Abbey Library. Several research projects are currently focusing on the Abbey Library's holdings, in particular the medieval manuscripts and prints as well as the history of the collection.

Another key focus is on promoting young scholars in the humanities. In cooperation with lecturers from the universities of Vienna, Innsbruck, Graz, Salzburg, Klagenfurt and Prague, students are supported in their work on the sources for their research and theses. Their research results, as well as other special insights into the collection, are presented to the public during book evenings in the dome hall of the abbey library.

### **The Abbey Archives**

Director: Karl Holubar

The Klosterneuburg Abbey Archive preserves around 3,500 deeds and millions of documents, such as files, land registers and plans, dating back to the beginning of the 11th century, i.e. before the abbey was founded.

For example, the document certifying the canonisation of Leopold III of Babenberg, the current patron saint of Lower Austria and Vienna, issued by Pope Innocent VIII, dates from 1485.

The Golden Bull (the imperial law book) of Emperor Frederick III from 1492 records the rights and privileges of Klosterneuburg Abbey at that time.

A well-organised archive is essential for the smooth functioning of the economy and administration, forms the legal basis for the abbey's possessions and, beyond that, provides the foundation for historical research. As a



public archive, the abbey archive is one of the most important sources of regional history in Lower Austria and Vienna.

The archive also houses the abbey's archaeological collection (partly exhibited in the lapidarium), which bears witness to the area's past as a Roman fort.

### **The music archive**

Director: Martin Haltrich

The holdings of the music archive at Klosterneuburg Abbey comprise around 3,000 handwritten works and around 4,000 music prints. The oldest musical documents in the possession of Klosterneuburg Abbey date from the 12th century. At that time, melodies were not yet recorded with notes as we know them today, but were notated in the form of neumes. The majority of the music in the archive dates from the mid-18th century to the end of the 19th century. The collection contains pieces by over 450 composers, many of whom were so-called monastery composers who wrote contemporary music for liturgical or private use. Among the special features of the music archive are dozens of autographs by the Klosterneuburg composer Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and Franz Schubert's autograph of his famous "Mass in G".

The archive's holdings are being gradually digitised and made available online in a database ([klostermusiksammlungen.at](http://klostermusiksammlungen.at)) developed as part of the FTI project (= Research, Technology, Innovation Programme of the Province of Lower Austria) [Kloster\\_Musik\\_Sammlungen](http://Kloster_Musik_Sammlungen).

### **The Research Centre for Cultural Studies (FoKuS)**

Director: Martin Haltrich

The Research Centre for Cultural Studies was established at Klosterneuburg Abbey in 2023. Its task is to stimulate and promote research into the cultural heritage of religious monastic life and to communicate this to a wider public. It has set itself the task of preparing new topics and fields of research, organising the development of projects, coordinating the content internally and supporting submissions.

Currently, nearly twenty projects, primarily in the field of basic research in the humanities, are being carried out on sources and materials from the abbey's collections. Manuscripts, inscriptions, archival materials and musical scores are being researched using interdisciplinary methods such as multispectral analysis, spectroscopy, *machine learning*, *handwritten text recognition* (HTR), as well as palaeography, codicology and digital text editions. The most important research partners include the Austrian and Slovak Academies of Sciences, the universities of Brno, Cambridge, Innsbruck, London, Oxford, Prague, Princeton, Salzburg, Vienna, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Institute for Medieval Realia Studies in Krems and the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten.

The research centre is also responsible for publishing the traditional *yearbook of Klosterneuburg Abbey* and the new book series *Fokus Kloster. Lebens- und Wissensräume religiöser Kulturen* (*Focus on Monasteries: Living and Learning Spaces of Religious Cultures*) - the individual volumes of both series are available open access on the Böhlau Verlag website.

### **The Pius Parsch Institute for Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology (PPI) and the Liturgical Studies Society of Klosterneuburg (LWG)**

Director: Andreas Redtenbacher Can.Reg.

Considering the historical background of the centuries-old centre of scholarship at Klosterneuburg Abbey and the significance of the "Volksliturgische Bewegung" (People's Liturgical Movement) under Pius Parsch Can.Reg., the institute's profile has roots that go back a long way.



The institute's history can be traced back to the "Folk Liturgical Apostolate" established by Pius Parsch in 1922. In addition, he had been professor of pastoral theology since 1913 at the religious college of Klosterneuburg Abbey, founded in 1796, where liturgical studies (liturgics) was a subject area at that time. Pius Parsch's works have been translated into 17 languages, including Chinese, Japanese and Swahili.

The "Pius Parsch Institute" was founded as an association in 1972 by Norbert Höslinger Can.Reg. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Parsch's death, the "Liturgical Society of Klosterneuburg" was founded in 2004 and the "Pius Parsch Institute" was reorganised under the direction of Andreas Redtenbacher Can.Reg. Its tasks are:

- evaluating and unlocking the life's work of Pius Parsch, as well as receiving and integrating his approaches into international liturgical studies
- Organising lectures, conferences and symposia
- Publishing three academic book series and co-editing of the journal "Heiliger Dienst"
- Collaboration in liturgical committees of the Church in Austria
- Management and evaluation of the Pius Parsch Archive

The institute enjoys the support of the Science Department of the Province of Lower Austria.



## Wine Estate

Management: Peter Frei

Since its foundation in 1114, Klosterneuburg Abbey has been involved in winegrowing, making it Austria's oldest winery. With 110 hectares of vineyards, it is one of the largest and most renowned wineries in the country. Even at the inauguration of the basilica in 1136, only wine from the abbey's own vineyards was drunk. Throughout the abbey's long history, viticulture has always been of paramount importance. The vineyards are located in selected sites in Klosterneuburg, Vienna, Gumpoldskirchen and Tattendorf. Ecological soil management, beneficial insect-friendly cultivation and organic fertilisation are the unshakeable principles behind the care of the abbey's vineyards, in line with a nature-friendly approach. The winery has been certified organic since 2025.

### Cradle of Austrian wine culture

The highest wine quality and innovative spirit are linked to a rich tradition of striving to develop Austrian viticulture. Numerous pioneering initiatives for the Austrian wine industry originated at Klosterneuburg Abbey, including the founding of the world's first viticulture school (1860), the development of the Klosterneuburg Must Scale (1861) and the selection and propagation of the St. Laurent grape variety. As Austria's first climate-neutral winery (2009), it remains a pioneer in sustainability and climate protection. In 2025, Austria's first viticulture robot was put into operation.

### Wine from the most suitable terroir

The different soils and microclimatic conditions of the vineyards enable the Klosterneuburg Abbey Wine Estate to cultivate different grape varieties in their ideal terroir.

- **Klosterneuburg:** Covering 23 hectares, the abbey vineyards are almost entirely south and south-east facing. This is home to the classic varieties Grüner Veltliner, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc, which develop a distinctive liveliness and fruitiness on the tertiary sandstone weathered soils, partly overlaid with loess and loam.
- **Vienna:** The abbey's vineyards cover a significant part of the classic Viennese vineyards on the slopes of Leopoldsberg, Kahlenberg and Nussberg. The vineyards, which slope to the south and east, benefit from the sunny, warm Pannonian climate and the influence of the Danube, which acts as a climate regulator. Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gewürztraminer and the Viennese Gemischter Satz thrive here on a total of 27 hectares.
- **Gumpoldskirchen:** The five hectares of vineyards owned by the foundation are located in the heart of the world-famous white-wine centre of the Thermenregion. Here, two classic indigenous varieties, Zierfandler and Rotgipfler, are cultivated, which only reach their full potential in this region. The reason for this is the unique terroir of the area: protected from inclement weather by the Anninger and Eichkogel mountains, the sun-drenched south-eastern slopes have calcareous brown earth soils in which these two distinctive varieties thrive.
- **Tattendorf:** The abbey's largest vineyards, covering 55 hectares, are located in this red wine community 25 kilometres southeast of Vienna. Here in the southern thermal region is one of Austria's most outstanding red-wine terroirs – especially for the abbey's flagship variety, St. Laurent, which covers an area of 40 hectares. Thanks to the sunny and hot Pannonian climate, the berries ripen perfectly. The heat-retaining alluvial gravel soils with their nutrient-rich subsoils, interspersed with brown earth, serve as an additional "radiator". Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir also thrive here and are cultivated by the abbey winery.





## **The home of St. Laurent**

The St. Laurent grape variety, originally from Alsace, was first planted around 1850 by the Stift Klosterneuburg winery in Austria. This pioneering spirit has more than paid off since then. The Stift winery's many years of experience and enormous knowledge of this grape variety inspire experts, who repeatedly award these wines.

## **The wine shop**

Used as a wine press house as early as the Middle Ages, the wine shop today combines historic architecture with modern interior design – a unique setting for sophisticated wine enjoyment. Here, an extensive range of wines and sparkling wines from our own vineyards, fine brandies and single-varietal, naturally cloudy juices are offered. Delicacies and exclusive gift sets round off the tasteful selection.

## **The historic cellars**

The Baroque cellar complex directly below the abbey extends over four floors to a depth of 36 metres. The seven-metre-thick double walls maintain constant temperatures throughout the year and ensure the best conditions for maturing. The press house and cellars are state-of-the-art and represent a unique combination of tradition and modernity. To this day, the wine barrels at the winery are made from oak or acacia from the abbey's own forest. Recently, small barrique barrels made from Klosterneuburg oak have also been used to age the best red wines.

At the beginning of 2024, a new visitor tour was opened that appeals to all the senses and captivates visitors with impressive light installations. To this end, the baroque complex was redesigned with around 1,000 light sources and 400 wine bottles over a distance of 600 metres, tracing the path of the grape. This immersive experience can be enjoyed as part of a wine cellar tour.

## **The fruit juices**

Fruit juice also has a very long tradition at Klosterneuburg Abbey and has been cultivated since the monastery was founded. In addition to classics such as Golden Delicious and Granny Smith, high-quality varieties such as Idared, Cox Orange and Jonagold are cultivated in cooperation with partner farms in accordance with strict quality standards. The gentle processing of the fruit results in a range of naturally cloudy juices - apple as well as mixed fruit - of the highest quality.

The red grapes used in the popular St. Laurent juice come from the Tattendorf vineyards. Fruit nectars made from currants, apricots and strawberries complete the range.

The juices and nectars from Stift Klosterneuburg also impress the expert jury. They are regular winners at the annual fruit juice awards, the "Golden Pear", which is one of the largest and most important juice competitions in Europe.



### Forestry operation

Management: Hubertus Kimmel

The forestry operations of Klosterneuburg Abbey are based on three pillars: timber production, hunting and fishing. They cover around 9,500 hectares and are divided into four large forest districts with a total of eleven sub-districts:

- Wald- u. Weinviertel (St. Bernhard, Matzen, Rohrwald Hofau)
- Vienna Woods and Klosterneuburg (Weidling, Höflein, Klosterneuburger Au, Tattendorf)
- Schneebergland (Pax, Rohr im Gebirge)
- Styria (St. Katharein, Schöttl)

Thanks to the large geographical spread of the abbey's hunting grounds – from the Danube floodplains to the high mountains – there is an enormous variety of species. For example, there are five species of hoofed game (roe deer, red deer, black deer, mouflon and chamois) and various species of small game such as hares, black grouse and capercaillie.

The forestry operation includes four fishing grounds: three on the Danube and its floodplains. These barbel (Danube) and bream regions (in the floodplains) are home to carp, pike, zander, perch and catfish, among others. The Schöttlbach fishing ground in the Murau district, municipality of Oberwölz, is located in the so-called trout region. Char and bullhead can also be found here.

There is also a wide variety of tree species. The most economically important include spruce, fir, pine, larch, beech, oak and maple. The current challenge in forestry management is to find species that can cope with the phenomena associated with climate change, such as increasing drought, wind and extreme precipitation. Forward planning is essential here – what is planted today will only be harvested in 80 years' time.

#### **Protecting nature – responsibility for creation**

The abbey's forests are PEFC certified (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes). This confirms that the forests are managed in an active, careful, sustainable and climate-friendly manner and in accordance with strict standards. It is proof that the wood comes from forests that are managed in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable manner.

The SURE (Sustainable Resources Verification Scheme) certification system, in turn, ensures that sustainability requirements for biomass are reliably met. This is particularly important as operators of biomass power plants are obliged to use sustainable biomass and to provide evidence of this.

Significant areas of the Klosterneuburg Abbey's forest land also fall under the Natura 2000 protected area for the conservation of rare habitats and species, or under UNESCO-initiated biosphere reserves, where sustainable development in ecological, economic and social terms is to be realised in an exemplary manner.

### Agriculture

Management: Karl Priesching

Klosterneuburg Abbey cultivates around 400 hectares of agricultural land at three locations in the Lower Austrian municipalities of Langenzersdorf, Prinzendorf an der Zaya and Tattendorf.

Certified as an organic farm since 2001, the farm does not use synthetic fertilisers or pesticides. In cooperation with local farmers, organic food grains such as wheat, spelt and rye are grown, as well as sunflowers, soybeans and organic feed such as grain maize, triticale (a cross between wheat and rye) and grain peas. The produce is marketed through various organic grain traders. The regular cultivation of alfalfa serves to control weeds, bind nitrogen and enrich the soil with humus, thus acting as a CO<sub>2</sub> sink. In general, great importance is attached to diverse crop rotation in order to maintain or improve soil fertility in the long term.



### Abbey nursery / orangery

Manager: Josef Bauer Jr.

Maintenance of around 5 hectares of outdoor facilities with gardens and orangery. Floral arrangements throughout the liturgical year are one of the main activities of the abbey nursery. In addition to the large gardens and outdoor facilities in the abbey grounds, the nursery is also partly responsible for maintaining the gardens of all the abbey parishes in Lower Austria and Vienna.

The work of the monastery garden also includes maintenance and infrastructure measures throughout the monastery grounds. Depending on the workload and season, the monastery garden employs a varying number of staff who are responsible for all floristry, design and maintenance work. Thanks to a protected working environment in the nursery, people with limited mobility can comfortably be a part of the team. The nursery thus fulfils its work on God's creation and also fulfils a social mission.

#### **The abbey's orangery**

Joseph Kornhäusel's classicist greenhouse was built as part of his expansion of Klosterneuburg Abbey between 1834 and 1842 for the wintering of tropical plants and as a place of recreation for the canons. Severe war damage left the building in ruins, and it was not until 1995 that renovation work began. It can be visited as part of orchid exhibitions and garden days.

### Property management

Head: Christian Reichl

Property management has always been an important pillar of the Stift Klosterneuburg's economic enterprises. The abbey rents out around 700 apartments, offices and business premises in over 70 buildings in Vienna and Lower Austria, some of which are listed buildings, with a total area of approximately 87,000 square metres. In addition, around 5,500 lease, inventory and building lease agreements for properties in Vienna, Lower Austria and Salzburg are managed.

### Construction department

Head: Niklas Göttersdorfer

Carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, locksmiths, painters, electricians: a wide variety of tradespeople work in the workshops of the Construction Department to maintain and service the building stock and building services. Due to the historical fabric of the buildings, the trades face particular challenges here – for example, with regard to the materials and techniques used.

### Chamber Office

Head: Dagmar Feix

Around 35 employees of the Chamber Office ensure that everyday life in the monastery and the numerous internal events run smoothly. This includes the monastery kitchen, which provides meals and care for the canons and their guests every morning, noon and evening, as well as the domestic staff, service and cleaning personnel, porters and chauffeurs. Not to forget the employees in the tailoring and sewing departments, who individually tailor and, if necessary, repair the order's robes and vestments, coats, suits and church linen, such as altar cloths and chalice cloths.



## Infrastructure

### **Parking spaces and charging stations**

Car parking spaces, bus parking spaces, electric charging stations, electric filling station for bicycles

### **Seminar rooms: Quartier 1114**

From seminars and team building to gymnastics: since 2023, the elaborately renovated former granary of Klosterneuburg Abbey has been open to the public as a venue for events with modern facilities. A total of four multifunctional rooms of various sizes between 20 and 80 square metres for eight to 50 people are available for hire. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, audio and video equipment, a fully equipped kitchenette and a large lounge area. An attractive supporting programme can also be organised on request: from a guided tour of the abbey or wine tasting to an exclusive short organ concert or Christian meditation sessions.

### **Stiftsrestaurant Leopold**

Restaurant, catering and event location

Tenant: Fredi Stijepic

T: +43 2243 411 610

E: [office@stiftsrestaurant-leopold.at](mailto:office@stiftsrestaurant-leopold.at)

W: [www.stiftsrestaurant-leopold.at](http://www.stiftsrestaurant-leopold.at)

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### **Klosterneuburg Abbey**

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