

The Cathedral of Saint Peter of Beauvais is a Roman Catholic church in the northern town of Beauvais, Oise, France. The cathedral is in the Gothic style, and consists of a 13th-century choir, with an apse and seven polygonal apsidal chapels reached by an ambulatory, joined to a 16th-century transept. It has the highest Gothic choir in the world: 159 feet under vault. From 1569 to 1573 the cathedral of Beauvais was, with its tower of 501.9 feet, the highest human construction of the world. Its designers had the ambition to make it the largest gothic cathedral in France ahead of Amiens. Victim of two collapses, one in the 13th century, the other in the 16th century, it remains unfinished today, only the choir and the transept have been built. The planned nave of the cathedral was never constructed. The remnant of the previous 10th-century Romanesque cathedral, still occupies the intended site of the nave. Work was begun in 1225 under count-bishop Milo of Nanteuil, with funding from his family, immediately after the third in a series of fires in the old wooden-roofed basilica, which had reconsecrated its altar only three years before the fire; the choir was completed in 1272, in two campaigns, with an interval (1232–38) owing to a funding crisis provoked by a struggle with Louis IX. The two campaigns are distinguishable by a slight shift in the axis of the work and by changes in stylistic handwriting. Under Bishop Guillaume de Grez, an extra 16 feet was added to the height, to make it the highest-vaulted cathedral in Europe. The vaulting in the interior of the choir reaches 156 feet in height, far surpassing the concurrently constructed Amiens Cathedral, with its 138 foot nave, and making Beauvais Cathedral the tallest vault of all the Gothic Cathedrals. It is slightly taller than the nave of St Peter's Basilica in Rome at 152 feet. The work was interrupted in 1284 by the collapse of some of the vaulting of the recently completed choir. This collapse has been seen as a disaster that produced a failure of nerve among the French masons working in Gothic style. The collapse also marked the beginning of an age of smaller structures generally, which was associated with demographic decline, the Hundred Years' War, and with the thirteenth century.

The transept was built from 1500 to 1548. In 1573, the fall of the 502 feet central tower stopped work again. The tower made the church the tallest structure in the world (1569–1573). Afterwards little structural addition was made. The choir has always been wholeheartedly admired, with Eugène Viollet-le-Duc calling the Beauvais choir "the Parthenon of French Gothic." Its facades, especially that on the south, exhibit all the richness of the late Gothic style. The carved wooden doors of both the north and the south portals are masterpieces, respectively, of Gothic and Renaissance workmanship. The church possesses an elaborate astronomical clock in neo-Gothic taste (1866) and tapestries of the 15th and 17th centuries, but its chief artistic treasures are stained glass windows of the 13th, 14th, and 16th centuries. With the passage of time, other problems surfaced, some requiring more drastic remedies. The north transept now has four large wood-and-steel lateral trusses at different heights, installed during the 1990s to keep the transept from collapsing. In addition, the main floor of the transept is interrupted by a much larger brace that rises out of the floor at a 45-degree angle. This brace was installed as an emergency measure to give additional support to the pillars that, until now, have held up the tallest vault in the world. These temporary measures will remain in place until more permanent solutions can be determined. Various studies are under way to determine with more assurance what can be done to preserve the structure. Columbia University is performing a study on a three-dimensional model constructed using laser scans of the building in an attempt to determine the weaknesses in the building and remedies.



**Stewardship as a Way of Life:** *“They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets” (Luke 9:17).* The story of the Loaves and Fishes shows us that when you share what you have, even if it doesn’t seem like that much, miracles can happen! Do not think that your gift is too small or insignificant! Each of us has a role in God’s plan; you just need to place your trust in the Lord. Nothing is impossible with God. You may be the answer to someone else’s prayer.