



*Senior correspondent PJJ, Little Rock AR:* On a recent journey to France, I toured the Cathedral Saint-Pierre in Rennes, Brittany. It's a Catholic landmark dedicated to the memory of Saint Peter. Rennes is 217 miles east of Paris, a train ride of just over two hours. I spent a day in Rennes touring its historic cathedral and the charming city.

The imposing structure is located just a short walk from Gare de Rennes train station near the center of town, and open to visitors most days. I stood outside in wonder of the gloriously soaring Gothic structure with towers stretching nearly 160 feet high. Each external level featured Baroque columns, decorative carvings and statues of saints. Inside, I walked through the ancient aisles to the nave and into the choir loft, while admiring the hundreds of paintings along the walls and ceilings. There's a quiet peacefulness, a truly a stirring and spiritual experience.

As with many religious sites in Europe, the location of the current Cathedral of Rennes has been a place of worship since Catholicism was established in France more than 15 centuries ago. Structures were built, demolished, expanded and improved through the years until most of the present neo-Gothic cathedral and surrounding grounds were completed in the mid-19th Century.

In the 1940s, because of heavy World War II bombings and ground combat in Brittany, Rennes and the cathedral were badly damaged. Today, the city and historic structures are completely restored, and Rennes is a busy commercial center with a population of more than 200,000.