

What is Catharism?

Catharisme is a christian religion that developed in the Occitanie region between the XIth and the XIIIth century, against the dogma of the Catholic Church.



The Cathars ("pure" in greek) led a very austere life and developed a doctrine dictated by a desire for purification. They freed themselves from the traditional sacraments of the Catholic Church and recognized only the one: Baptism, also called "Consolament". They had only one prayer, the Pater. They were then designated as "heretics" and were eliminated during the "Crusade against the Albigenses" from 1208, followed by the Inquisition entrusted to the Dominicans from 1233.

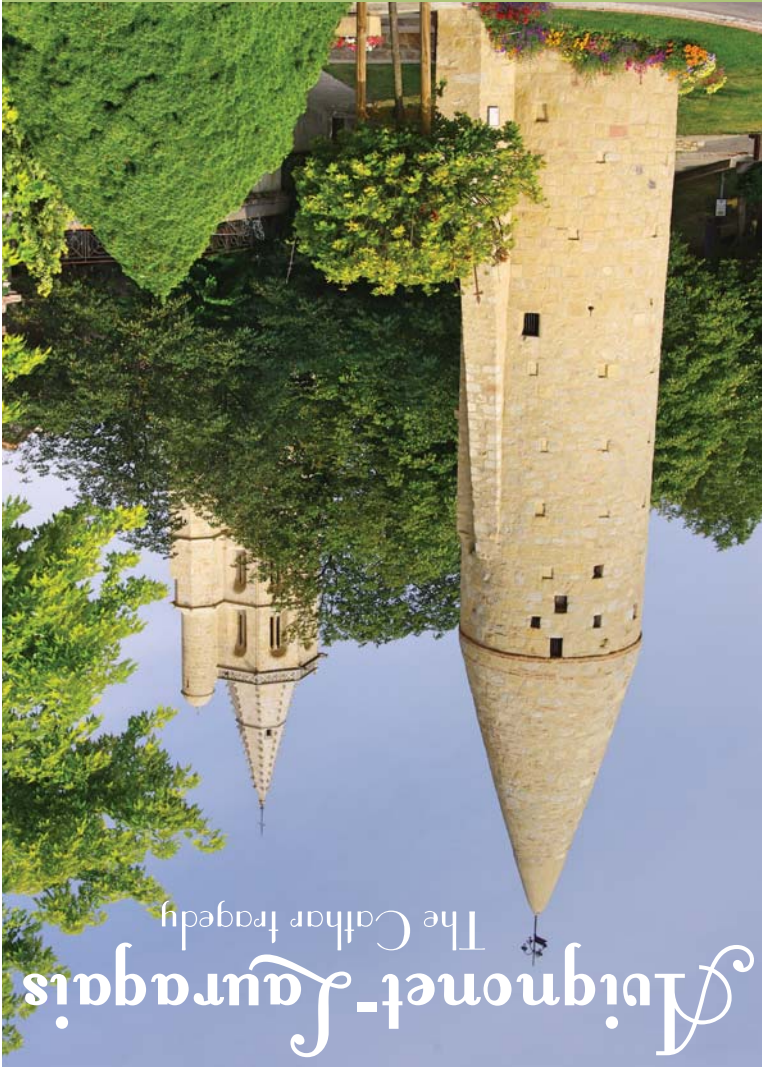
The fall of Montségur (Ariège) in 1244 marked the decline of the movement that ended with the death at the stake of Guillaume Belibaste in 1321, considered by the Church as the last "perfect"!



The ride of the «Faydits»

The massacre of the Inquisitors

On May 28, 1242, the «Faydits» (the local name to design the dispossessed Lords) came down from the fortress of Montségur to Avignonet. With the complicity of the inhabitants, they murdered the Inquisitors at night, using axes. A painting in the church represents this tragic episode that will give a new impetus to rebellion against the French royal authority throughout the Occitanie region. But a few month later, the Montsegur fortress, seat of the rebellion was besieged in retaliation. 200 cathars were were sent to the stake.



Avignonet-Lauragais
The Cathar tragedy

Do not throw on the public highway

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Open from Monday to Saturday from 14h to 19h
From July 1st to September 15th from 10h to 19h

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Avignonet-Lauragais, between History and modernity

In the footsteps of the Cathars – from the magnificent church to the footpaths, from the Canal du Midi to the rolling hills, from the wind farm to the watchtower, discover the charms of a village in the heart of the Lauragais region.



1 Ruines of the former castle (XIIIth century), once surrounded by a defensive wall. This ensemble was called «castellum».

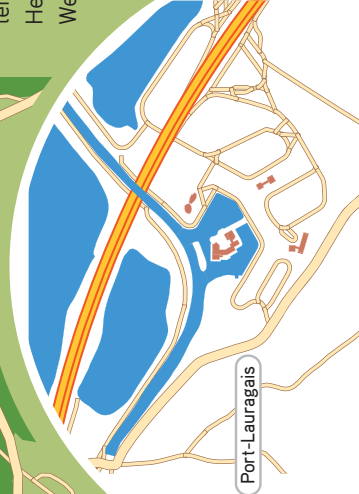
2 The Church of Our Lady of Miracles in southern Gothic style was built from 1320. Work stopped in 1348 because of the plague, the famine and the English invasion. They resumed around 1480 and ended in 1516. Inside is a painting depicting the massacre of the Inquisitors perpetrated in 1242.

3 Viewpoint on Port Lauragais and the surrounding hills. On this spot existed formerly a big watchtower. Below passed the famous «Via Aquitania» dating back to the 1st century AD, whose layout was similar to the current motorway A61 leading to Carcassonne.

4 19th century market hall recalling the merchant past of the city. Fairs and markets were organized from 1250. They were famous for the sheets. At the Renaissance period, wood trade brought great wealth and prosperity to the city.

5 Ancient ramparts surrounding the city on which was placed a discoid stela found in the countryside.

6 This pepperpot tower was used as a prison in 1583 to lock Michel de Paulo, a brigand who terrorized the population and the merchants of the countryside. He was captured, beheaded and his body was thrown over the ramparts! We can note the presence of a statue of warrior sporting the coat of arms of Avignonet.



LE CANAL DU MIDI

Pierre Paul Riquet's project was constructed between 1666 and 1681. Port Lauragais, the cycle path, the campsite and the footpath are all cool places to unwind in the shade of the plane trees.

Walking trails

Several footpaths of all levels are accessible throughout the surrounding countryside, especially the way to Santiago de Compostella

Leaflet available at the Tourist Office

The wind & solar farm

This park is the first of its' kind in France combining wind and solar energies which can supply 5200 households. (Power of 17MW).

* 12 wind turbines from 50 to 70 m high

* 20320 solar pannels (5 ha)

