

Crown of Thorns Salvaged From Notre Dame Blaze

The Paris Fire Brigade Chaplain braved the flames in Notre Dame to save the crown of thorns relic from the raging fire.

“Father [Jean-Marc] Fournier is an absolute hero,” a member of the emergency services said. “He showed no fear at all as he made straight for the relics inside the cathedral, and made sure they were saved. He deals with life and death every day, and shows no fear.”

Fournier also helped form a human chain to save other artifacts housed in the 12th-century cathedral.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo confirmed that “The crown of thorns, the tunic of Saint Louis and several other major works (of art) are now in a safe place.”

The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* listed the artifacts firefighters saved from the blaze:

The crown of thorns: While the authenticity of the relic has not been certified, the purported crown of thorns—a braided circle of canes that according to Scripture, was placed on the head of Jesus Christ as he was tried by Pontius Pilot before his crucifixion—is kept in the cathedral. The crown is encased in an ornate gold and glass reliquary commissioned by Napoleon. The crown is only brought out on Fridays during Lent and on Good Friday. This Friday is Good Friday. Easter is Sunday.

Stone from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: A stone said to be from the site where Jesus Christ was crucified.

A piece of the cross: Another relic from Jesus’ Passion held in the cathedral is a purported piece of the cross that Jesus

was crucified upon.

Nails from the cross: *The church also says to have some of the nails used to nail Jesus to the cross.*

Representations of the Virgin Mary: *There are 37 representations of the Virgin Mary in Notre Dame.*

The great organ: *The largest organ in France and one of the most famous in the world. The organ dates from 1401. Some of the Medieval pipes remained in the building.*

The Emmanuel Bell: *A 15th century bell called the Emmanuel Bell, has been rung for centuries to make major events in France and in the world. It rang on Sept. 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York were demolished in terrorist attacks. Emmanuel is one of 10 bells in the cathedral. It weighs 13 tons.*

Artwork: *There are paintings in the nave of the church, some dating from the 1600s such as "The Visitation."*

Sculptures: *There are more than 30 sculptures in the building, including the statue of Madonna and Child.*

Jean-Francois Martins, Paris's deputy mayor for tourism and sports, says bystanders worked together to save the artifacts.

"We made a human chain, with our friends from the church ... to get, as quick as possible, to get all the relics," he said.

"Thanks to the great bravery of all our firefighters, and as well all the public servants there, we had a very quick intervention. Very quickly a team was fully dedicated to save all these holy pieces, and specifically the relics and the crown," Martins said. "Everything is safe and undamaged, and in our really bad day, we had one good news."