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## BRUSSELS : THE NOTRE DAME CHURCH OF LAKEN

**Laken** is the name of one of the suburbs of Brussels. It is also the community where the royal family of Belgium lives in the Royal Residence, nearby the Notre Dame church. Not far away is the Heysel area with the Atomium and Mini-Europe.

The church was built in **1854**, during the reign of King Leopold I, to commemorate the death of his wife **Louise-Marie of Orléans**,

the moment (March 1997) the church is again under renovation.

The Notre Dame church was designed by **Joseph POELAERT**, the architect of the Brussels Palace of Justice. Behind the church, in the cemetery of Laken, one can still see the choir of the old medieval church which used to stand here. This cemetery is certainly worth a visit because of the magnificent late 19th century tombstones and graves belonging to the Brussels bourgeoisie. Among the many statues is an original **"Thinker" of Rodin**.



Inside the Notre Dame church is the **royal crypt** where the kings and queens of Belgium are buried. Five Belgian kings have found there grave here: Leopold I, Leopold II, Albert I, Leopold III and king Boudewijn. The crypt is only open to the public on special occasions such as the anniversary of the death of one of the kings, the first of November (All Saints Day) and the 15th of November (Dynasty day).

### Location

