



27 JUNE – 1 JULY 2027

Priory Saint Léonard

Bay of Mont Saint-Michel

Maison Guillaume le Conquérant pour l'Art et la Science

PARTICIPANT BOOKLET · FIRST EDITION

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The bay through a window of the priory · The oak staircase, with the portrait of the Marquis de Nocé, an ancestor and close to the Regent

WELCOME

Welcome to the priory



Priory Saint Léonard, Vains

Draft for the host's review. Please edit this text in your own voice before printing.

Dear participants,

It is a great honour to welcome you to the Priory Saint Léonard, on the shore of the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel, for the first edition of this symposium.

For fifteen centuries the Benedictine tradition has joined prayer and work, stability and change, attention to place and care for the land. Today the bay faces questions of climate, ecosystem, heritage and community that no single discipline can answer. We have gathered about thirty researchers from different fields to look at them together, with the Benedictine way as our guide.

This symposium will be held every year at the end of June, at the priory. We hope that you will help us make this first meeting the beginning of a lasting conversation.

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

Gilles de Buretel de Chassey
Chairman, INGENIA

The symposium and its theme

The symposium has two movements. The first day makes a **diagnosis of the bay**, its strengths and its weaknesses, through five workshops. The following days ask what the **Benedictine way** can teach us: what we can learn from other places, what changes across space and time, and whether a neo-Benedictine way is possible.

Agenda

All times are local time (Normandy). The programme may be adjusted; the latest version is on the participants' website.

SUNDAY 27 JUNE 2027 · DAY 0

Welcome

From 17:00 Welcome

18:00 Visit of the Priory Saint Léonard
G. de Chassey (INGENIA)

19:00 Cocktail and dinner at the priory

MONDAY 28 JUNE 2027 · DAY 1

Diagnosis: strengths and weaknesses of the bay

08:00–09:00 Continental breakfast

09:00–09:30 Official launch of the symposium
V. Masson-Delmotte (GIEC / CEA), T. Davies (UEE), P. Doll (Norwich Cathedral)

09:30–09:45 Presentation of the five workshops (five people per workshop)
F. Beauchais (AGEB)

09:45–10:00 Coffee break

10:00–17:00 Workshops
AGEB and ICOMOS

17:00–17:30 Tea time at the priory

17:30–19:00 Minutes and synthesis
T. Davies (UEE), G. de Chassey (INGENIA)

19:30–22:00 Cocktail and dinner at the priory

TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2027 · DAY 2

The Benedictine way

08:00–09:00	Continental breakfast
09:00–09:15	Presentation of the session: method and objectives T. Davies (UEE), G. de Chassey (INGENIA)
09:15–12:00	Definition of the Benedictine way P. Doll (Norwich Cathedral), Abbot of Solesmes (name to be confirmed) Knowledge of other places · Comparison across space and time · The neo-Benedictine way?
Midday	Lunch at the priory
From 14:00	Walk across the bay to Mont Saint-Michel
	Visit of the village, the sanctuary and the abbey
	Cocktail of the EPIC Thomas Velter, Aymeric Chauchat (EPIC)
	Gala dinner Ends around 23:00

WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2027 · DAY 3

Perspectives

09:30–11:00	Session on perspectives
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Programme of Day 3 to be completed: the booklet draft gives only the 09:30–11:00 slot.

THURSDAY 1 JULY 2027 · DAY 4

Conclusion

08:00–09:30	Continental breakfast
09:30–10:30	Wrap-up and conclusion of the symposium
10:30–11:00	Au revoir

The five workshops

On Monday 28 June, participants work in five workshops of five people each, coordinated by AGEB and ICOMOS. Each one examines one dimension of the bay.

1. Nature

Botany and the plant life of the bay.

2. Animals

Fauna and the animal life of the bay.

3. Engineering intervention

Dykes, polders and other works carried out on the bay.

4. Human intervention by agriculture

How farming has shaped and continues to shape the bay.

5. The ecosystem of the bay, with ICOMOS

The bay as a whole, between natural and cultural heritage.

Descriptions are short summaries of the booklet draft's headings. Workshop leaders, questions to address and expected outputs to be added.

Speakers and partners

Valérie Masson-Delmotte
GIEC / CEA

P. Doll
Norwich Cathedral

Thomas Velter
EPIC

Abbot of Solesmes
Name to be confirmed

T. Davies
UEE

F. Beauchais
AGEB

Aymeric Chauchat
EPIC

Gilles de Buretel de Chassey
INGENIA, host

Partner organisations: AGEB, ICOMOS, INGENIA, UEE, EPIC.

List of participants (about thirty researchers) to be added, with their institution. Full first names and titles to be checked with each speaker.

Practical information



The Mont-Saint-Michel seen from the priory

Venue

Priory Saint Léonard, 1 route du Fréchet, 50300 Vains, Bay of Mont Saint-Michel.

Getting there

To be completed: nearest station and airport, transfers, parking.

Accommodation

To be completed: whether participants stay at the priory or nearby, and booking arrangements.

Meals

Continental breakfast and meals are served at the priory. A gala dinner takes place on Tuesday 29 June.

Dietary needs and allergies: how to inform the organisers.

The walk across the bay

To be completed: the crossing of the bay depends on the tides. Safety instructions, a qualified guide, footwear and the tide schedule for 29 June 2027 to be confirmed with the organisers.

Language

Working language: English. Some sessions or conversations may take place in French.

To be confirmed.

The priory and the bay



Priory Saint Léonard, Vains



The salon of the priory

The Priory Saint Léonard, in Vains, looks over the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel. The Association des Amis du Prieuré saint Léonard looks after the priory, its chapel and its surroundings, and develops cultural, artistic and scientific activity there.

The symposium takes place under the umbrella of the Maison Guillaume le Conquérant pour l'Art et la Science.

On a promontory overlooking the bay, the priory has its origins in the Merovingian period, when Leodovald, the “Lion of the Forest” and future Saint Leonard, first bishop of Avranches (540–630) and of Frankish family, gave his name to the land of his birth.

A fief of William the Conqueror, with a manor, salt pans worked until the 19th century, fishing and seaweed gathering, the estate was bequeathed at his death in 1087 to the Benedictines of the Abbey of Saint-Étienne in Caen, who built a priory around a square court of buildings. The commendam brought its decline in the 17th century, and the small monastic community left. Sold as national property during the Revolution, it became a farm.

The Romanesque church, mainly 12th century, in granite and schist, was restored in the 1980s. Its square bell tower, with a gabled roof and a frieze of carved corbels, marks the centre of the village; the interior is lit by contemporary stained glass from the Loire workshop, and a 15th-century statue of Saint Leonard stands in one corner.

Source: Abbayes de Normandie, abbayes-normandie.com (adapted).

Contacts and maps

To be completed: organiser contact, venue map, emergency numbers, local doctor and pharmacy, taxi numbers.

Website for participants: **to be added.**