

Hungarian Stamps 2009

The PÉCS BISHOPRIC IS 1000 YEARS OLD



Magyar Posta is greeting the one thousandth anniversary of the foundation of the Pécs bishopric with the issue of a special stamp.

The first Hungarian Christian ruler, **Saint Stephen** created the Christian state of Hungary from the federation of the Hungarian tribes to cover the entire territory of the Carpathian Basin. It was he who established the Hungarian Christian church, and his name is linked to the foundation of several archbishoprics and bishoprics: Esztergom, Pécs, Kalocsa, Erdély, Várad, Veszprém, Győr, Vác, Eger, Csanád. (source: <http://hu.wikipedia.org>)

The **diocese of Pécs** is the only Hungarian diocese about which we know the data of foundation, therefore we know precisely when the Holy See sanctified the royal wish. The foundation took place in the castle of Győr on 23 August 1009, in the presence of bishop Azo of Ostia, the papal legate. It was at this time they laid down the boundaries of the diocese, and its first bishop was Bonipert. The thousand years of history bear witness that besides the culture and value-producing activity of the Church, it always gave strength to the people for the building of the future. In preparation for the millennium the diocese announced a three-year preparatory period, which it started with holy mass on 4 March 2006. Since then numerous programs and events have taken place, among these the most outstanding: consecration of the diocese flag, diocese pilgrimages abroad and to destinations in Hungary and within the diocese itself, and also the complete renovation of the famous Angster organ of the cathedral. (Source: www.pecs.egyhazi.hu)

The origins of **Pécs Cathedral** reach back to the age of the Roman Empire. The foundation walls of today's crypt were laid at the end of the 4th century then extended to the west in the 8th-9th centuries. The original church became a crypt in the time of Saint Stephen, when the chancel of today was built above it. The two western towers also probably originate from this period. Two further towers were added to the church in the Middle Ages. The chapels were established in the Gothic period. The cathedral withstood the Turkish Occupation (1543-1686) with some minor and major damage being caused. The bishops following each other performed restoration work in various artistic styles. In 1807 it was rebuilt according to the plans drawn up by architect Mihály Pollack in the classicist style, with a pointed main facade. Today's form of the cathedral was established during the reconstruction between 1882-1891. The work was carried out on the commission of bishop Nándor Dulánszky and directed by architect Frigyes Schmiedt. At this time it regained its original Romanesque character and became a national treasure famous all over Europe. The last external and internal restoration took place between 1962-68. (Source: <http://pecsibazilika.hu>)

The stamp issued in honour of the millennium of the Pécs Bishopric shows a statue of the founder Saint Stephen (1900, György Kiss) and the building of Pécs Cathedral, the first day cover shows the decorated internal space of the building. The graphic of the special cancellation stamp includes a text documenting the anniversary.

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Designer: Eszter Domé

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The stamp is issued in 300,000 copies.

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