

Chur



Places

Martinskirche (St. Martin's Church)

St. Martin's was built in 1491 in the Gothic style. In 1523, the City Council appointed Johannes Comander of Maienfeld as the pastor of St. Martin's. Sometime around 1525, he held the first Protestant Eucharist. After the Ilanz Articles of 1526, and certainly from 1527 on, Chur adopted the Reformation with the exception of the Bishop's Court. Altars, ornaments, vestments and banners were removed; the high altar remained in the church until 1529. The artfully carved choir stalls were preserved.

To the left of the church is Comandergasse, where Johannes Comander lived, and the Antistitium at Kirchgasse No. 12, home to the pastor's office of St. Martin to this day. The "*Hasenstube*" ("Hare's Parlor") with wall paintings from 1600 is used as a conference room today. The name of the room is derived from a Renaissance painting whose main motif is an "inverted world": In a triumphal parade, ten hares march off a hunter and his dogs.

Regulakirche (St. Regula's Church)

Originally dating back to the 9th century, the *Regulakirche* was rebuilt in the Gothic style some time before 1500. The mural of 1504 was painted over during the Reformation and only restored in 1968.

In 1526, the strictly Catholic priest Johann Brunner was dismissed. From 1530 on, the parish was led by Johannes Blasius, probably of Münstertal, who co-authored the Bündner Catechism (1538). After his death in 1550, Philipp Gallicius, also of Münstertal, author of the *Confessio Raetica* (1552/53) was appointed pastor at Regulakirche.

Nikolaikloster (St. Nicolai's Monastery)

In 1526, the monasteries of the Three Leagues were placed under government control. In 1538, the monastery of St. Nicolai was dissolved, and in 1538/39, Comander established a Latin school, which became the forerunner of the later Canton school. From 1539 to 1542, the strident Münstertal humanist Simon Lemnius (author of the heroic epic "Raeteis" and the "Amores" love elegies) taught here. In 1544, Comander temporarily succeeded in preventing Lemnius from returning as a teacher, and Johannes Pontsella (†1574) was appointed instead; through the intervention of Johannes Travers, Lemnius ultimately succeeded in returning to Nicolai School in 1545.

Stadtgarten (Municipal Park)

From 1529 on, this was the site of the first Protestant graveyard – the Scaletta cemetery – for 333 years, until the establishment of the Daleu cemetery in 1862. Comander is buried here anonymously and without a gravestone. The traditional vestment of the Reformed Three-Leagues clergy, the Scaletta robe, takes its name from the Scaletta cemetery.

Tailors' Guild

The house at *Kirchgasse* No. 14 was home to the Tailors' Guild, one of the five guilds of Chur. In the course of the democratization movement in the Three Leagues in the 15th century, the people of Chur won civil freedoms and more autonomy from the Prince-Bishop and introduced guild law.

Town Hall

The town hall is first mentioned in the second half of the 14th century; soon after that, it was transformed into a hospital. A new town hall with an integrated store was built next door. The hospital, town hall and town store were all destroyed in the fire of 1464. While the year 1525 is engraved above the entrance of today's town hall in *Reichsgasse*, the council hall already was completed in 1494. As the headquarters of the League of God's House, the Chur Council was instrumental in curtailing the Bishop's sovereign power. The council hall of 1540 dealt with transit traffic and trade matters.

Cathedral and St. Luzi

As the Catholic Bishop's Court, the citadel sits enthroned above the city at the former site of a Bronze-Age settlement and a fort from the late Roman era. The Bishops of Chur were elevated to the rank of imperial princes in 1170 by the Emperor. The Cathedral is consecrated to the Ascension of Mary. Above the Cathedral stands the Catholic Church of St. Luzi, home to the relics of St. Lucius. As a consequence of the democratization movements in the Three Leagues, the Bishop's power was curtailed significantly, so that Bishop Paul Ziegler left the city in 1524 and for the next 16 years resided at the *Fürstenburg* in the Vinschgau Valley.

Comanderkirche

Chur's only church built by the Reformed Christians, the *Comanderkirche* was consecrated on Reformation Sunday in 1957, the 400th anniversary of Comander's passing.

History

The first Bishopric north of the Alps was founded in Chur and dates back to the 4th century. Both the Cathedral and the Bishop's Castle were built later on the "Hof," a rock plateau above today's Old Town, where they stand to this day. The alliance of the Three Leagues (League of God's House, Grey League, League of the Ten Jurisdictions) formed a free state in the region of today's Canton Grisons; it slowly formed in the middle of the 15th century to curtail the Bishop's power, among other things. After the town fire in 1464, Emperor Frederic III. granted the citizens of Chur almost complete autonomy from episcopal rule. The de facto political power shifted to the five newly established guilds, which paved the way for the coming church reforms.

In 1523, the Council appointed Johannes Comander of Maienfeld to serve at St. Martin's, the town's main church. Prior to that, the reform-minded Jakob Salzman had been active in Chur, and the Bishop's Court was also open to reforms. With the Ilanz Articles of 1524 and 1526, the independent state gave itself its own legislation. The First Articles addressed the shortcomings of the church. The Second Articles introduced more radical changes, including the severe restriction of the Bishop's rights. As a consequence, more power shifted to the parishes; e.g., from that time on, parishes were entitled to appoint and dismiss their own pastors.

After the Second Ilanz Articles were issued in 1526, the City Council decreed in 1527 that Chur was to adopt the Reformation. Altars, ornaments, vestments and banners were removed; the high altar, however, remained in the church until 1529. The artfully carved choir stalls were preserved. As a result of the Ilanz Articles, the Reformation in the region of the Three Leagues was mostly a peaceful affair. One important prerequisite for this was religious freedom for every man and woman. This provided the chance of equal representation in the parishes. In some of them, heated disputes arose later on as a result of denominational radicalization.

In 1537, the Protestant Rhaetian Synod was founded by the Diet to consolidate and institutionalize the Reformed Church of the Leagues and its clergy on both sides of the Alps. The Synod as the assembly of all Reformed pastors exists to this day and meets once a year in one of its member parishes. The Synod exists to this day and meets once a year in one of its member parishes. The *Confessio Raetica* was written by Philipp Gallicius in 1552/1553 as a joint creed, a Synod constitution and a worship ordinance for the Three Leagues and its dependencies (Chiavenna, Valtellina and Bormio). In 1566, the *Confessio Raetica* was supplemented by the Second Helvetic Confession by Heinrich Bullinger.

Johannes Comander

Johannes Dorfmann (1484-1557), called Comander, was the son of a milliner from Maienfeld and attended St. Gallen Monastery School and Basel University. In St. Gallen, he met the later Reformer Vadian; in Basel, he met Zwingli. From 1512 on, Comander was the vicar and from 1521 the pastor of Escholzmatt (LU). In 1523, he was appointed to St. Martin's in Chur by the City Council. His Reformation sermons were soon widely known. At the Ilanz Disputation (1526) he presented 18 theses that later served as a basis for the Bern Theses (1528).

He was the first president of the Synod founded in 1537; in 1538, he worked with Johannes Blasius to create the first Bündner Catechism and a church ordinance for Chur in 1545. In 1539, he founded the St. Nicolai Latin School. Thanks to Heinrich Bullinger's support and counsel, he succeeded having the southern valleys (*Südtäler*) join the Synod with the *Confessio Raetica* (1552/53).

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