

Before this Basilica was built, the site was occupied by the Romanesque church of Saint-Laurent. Dating from the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century, it was a narrow, dark and damp building.

The old church was demolished in 1888, to be replaced by a new and much larger structure, designed to welcome pilgrims to the tomb of Father de Montfort, who was proclaimed Blessed by Pope Leon XIII in the same year, and was to be canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1947.

The crypt, apse, transept and tower were all completed in 1892. The second phase of its construction began on 22 January 1938, but was not finished until 1949. The church was consecrated in 1963, and elevated to the status of Minor Basilica by Pope John XXIII.

