

Christ the King
Saint-Laurent-de-Brévedent



Monumental statue of Christ the Redeemer in 1948. © private collection

On the heights above Saint-Laurent-de-Brévedent, overlooking the wooded valley of the River Saint-Laurent stands a monumental statue representing Christ the King, in the style of the Brazilian Corcovado.

Also known as Christ the Liberator or Redeemer, this statue demonstrates the piety found in the local area.

During the Second World War, the village became a strategic target, being close to anti-aircraft batteries and the Rouen to Le Havre railway. However, the town was somehow spared from being bombed, including in 1944.

After the war, Abbé Bataille, the parish priest from 1943 to 1952, wanted to erect a statue as a symbol of recognition and thanks. A plot of land on the roadside at a place called *la Briganderie* was donated by local landowners the Lesauvage family as a site for the monument. The abbot then approached the sculptor Marcel Adam from Le Havre.



The statue, with the sculptor present, in 1948. © private collection

The statue is 2.60m high, carved in Burgundy stone and stands on a reinforced cement-coated concrete base.

Plaster prototypes show the artist's experiments with the draping of Christ's tunic: one slung over the shoulder and the other with a simple hanging garment. It was this latter that he copied.



Two prototypes of the statue with different cloth draping. © private collections

This work is part of a regional post-war movement, with the launching of contributions in several villages in the *Pointe de Caux*, an area severely affected by the Second World War. These votive objects were erected in gratitude for the lives spared.

This is why Marcel Adam was also commissioned to produce the 11-metre high Calvary of Montivilliers as monument. It was erected by the parish of Sainte-Croix to pay homage to the victims of the Second World War and thank God for having protected the town from bombing. Sculpted by Adam in 1946, it shows Christ in anguish, whose hands emphasise the suffering of the crucifixion.



The Calvary of Montivilliers today © private collection

The Calvary of Saint-Romain-de-Colbosc was erected at the request of Abbé Durand in 1948, from drawings by Henri Colboc, holder of a *Prix de Rome*. By using reinforced concrete, Colboc combined modernism with the traditional form of an altar surmounted by an

altarpiece, accessed by a step. The crucified Christ was modelled using the technique of sculpting with fresh cement.



The Calvary of Saint-Romain-de-Colbosc, n.d. © private collection

Other monuments dedicated to the Virgin Mary have also been erected, including the monument at Tancarville, built a little later in 1960.

Inland, at Ancretiéville-Saint-Victor, the statue of Our Lady of Pity was created by Carlo Sarrabezolles using the same technique of sculpting fresh concrete. Following a request by Father Mathan, the figure was blessed by Monsignor Petit de Julleville in 1947.



The monumental statue of Our Lady of Pity by Sarrabezolles. © Département de la Seine-Maritime

These statues, monuments to the dead and calvaries, demonstrate a strong sense of piety and are characteristic of the post-war period, both in their aesthetic and materials.

In Saint-Laurent-de-Brévedent, the choice of sculptor fell on an artist from Le Havre, Marcel Adam (1912-1976), the son of a marble mason, who was awarded the status of *Premier ouvrier de France* and whose workshop was located opposite the Sainte-Marie cemetery. He studied at the *Beaux-Arts de Paris* and at the studio of the master Bouchais, before returning to Normandy and working in le Havre and the surrounding area. Perhaps you know his work without realising it? He did in fact produce several bas-reliefs adorning the Reconstruction-era Perret apartment buildings on Avenue Foch and Boulevard François 1st (the Combattants, the Corsair, the Hydra of Lerna, Commerce and Industry, the Football Players). He also created a ceramic bas-relief for the Fontaine-la-Mallet school buildings. He also worked on the restoration of historical monuments, such as the Château d'Ételan, Notre-Dame du Havre Cathedral and Graille Abbey.



The Pirate bas-relief in the sculptor's studio, before its installation on the apartment building, V6 block, avenue Foch in le Havre, n.d. © private collection

As an artist, Marcel Adam lent his skills to the Reconstruction and significantly contributed to the aspect of remembrance. He wished to highlight the sacrifices of the local population by choosing to decorate the Maison des Combattants (block V6, former site of the Gestapo headquarters) by building the In memoriam calvary in Montivilliers and by erecting Christ the Liberator in Saint-Laurent-de-Brévedent.