



The crown of thorns relic believed to have been worn by Jesus Christ is displayed on the altar during a Good Friday veneration at the St Germain l'Auxerrois church in Paris, Friday, April 2, 2021. An ancient relic that many Christians revere as Jesus Christ's "Crown of Thorns" is returning to Notre Dame, nearly five years after it was saved from the flames of the cathedral's devastating 2019 fire. (AP/Michel Euler, File)

by Associated Press

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An ancient relic that many Christians revere as Jesus Christ's Crown of Thorns is returning to Notre Dame, five years after it was saved from the flames of the cathedral's devastating 2019 fire.

The crown — a circular band of branches encased in a gilded golden tube — is being brought back to its historic home Friday. The ceremony will be presided over by the archbishop of Paris and attended by knights and dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher, marking a key moment in the cathedral's restoration journey.

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The relic was first mentioned by Jerusalem pilgrims in the 5th century before being transferred to Constantinople in the 10th century. In 1239, it was acquired by King Louis IX of France, who brought it to Paris and housed it at Notre Dame before commissioning the Sainte-Chapelle for its safekeeping. It was later returned to Notre Dame.

During the fire that consumed much of Notre Dame on April 15, 2019, the Crown of Thorns was preserved in a sealed case alongside other relics. Firefighters' quick actions ensured the survival of those treasures.

Starting Jan. 10, the Crown of Thorns will be displayed for public veneration every Friday until April 18, culminating on Good Friday. Afterward, it will be shown on the first Friday of each month.