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The nave of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral is seen while French President Emmanuel Macron visits the restored interiors of the monument, Friday, Nov. 29, 2024 in Paris. (Sarah Meyssonier/Pool via AP)

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Paris — December 2, 2024

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The reopening of [Notre Dame](#) this coming weekend is going to be a high-security affair, with a repeat of some measures used during [the Paris Olympics](#) and the sealing-off to tourists of the cathedral's island location in the heart of the French capital.

After more than five [years of reconstruction](#) following the [fire that devastated Notre Dame in 2019](#), invite-only ceremonies Saturday and Sunday will usher in [its rebirth](#).

Police chief Laurent Nuñez said only people with invitations and the island's residents will have access to the Ile de la Cité in the middle of the River Seine, which includes Notre Dame and habitually hums with tourists.

He said about 50 heads of state and government are expected and that security arrangements are drawing on the police measures that [sealed off large sections of central Paris](#) for the [Paris Games' flamboyant opening ceremony](#).

"A very high level of security will be applied," Nuñez said in an interview published Monday in Le Parisien.

Archbishop to bang on the doors

The first celebrations starting Saturday afternoon will blend religious ritual and showbiz. Paris Archbishop Laurent Ulrich will preside at a reopening service, banging on Notre Dame's shuttered doors with his staff to reopen them, [the cathedral website](#) says.

The archbishop will also symbolically reawaken Notre Dame's thunderous grand organ. The fire that [melted the cathedral's lead roofing](#) coated the huge instrument in toxic dust. Its 8,000 pipes, ranging in size from that of a pen to over 10 meters (33 feet) tall, have been painstakingly [disassembled, cleaned, and retuned](#).

There will also be psalms, prayers and singing. French President Emmanuel Macron will attend and address the VIP guests.

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A musical show

After the service, opera singers Pretty Yende, from South Africa, and Julie Fuchs, from France; Chinese pianist Lang Lang; cellist Yo-Yo Ma; Benin-born singer [Angelique Kidjo](#); Lebanese singer Hiba Tawaji and others will perform at a concert Saturday evening for the cathedral and those who took part in [the reconstruction](#), says the show's broadcaster, France Télévisions.

The security cordon sealing off the whole of the Ile de La Cité, plus a stretch of the Seine's southern bank and nine of its bridges, will be in place from early Saturday evening to Sunday night, the police chief said. Only those involved in the ceremonies and residents will be granted access, he said. All shops on the island — many are geared to the tourist trade — as well as boat tours that start and stop there will be closed for the weekend, he added.

Sunday Mass and buffet

The Paris archbishop will also lead an inaugural Mass and consecration of the new altar on Sunday morning.

Nearly 170 bishops from France and other countries will join the celebration, as well as priests from all 106 parishes in the Paris diocese, the cathedral website says.

It says Mass will be followed by a “fraternal buffet” for the needy.

Public viewing areas capable of holding 40,000 people will be set up on the Seine's southern bank, so spectators can follow the two days of events on screens, the police chief said.