

# Sagrada Familia



The Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família,[a] otherwise known as Sagrada Família, is a church under construction in the Eixample district of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. It is the largest unfinished Catholic church in the world. Designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926), in 2005 his work on Sagrada Família was added to an existing (1984) UNESCO World Heritage Site, "Works of Antoni Gaudí".[4] On 7 November 2010, Pope Benedict XVI consecrated the church and proclaimed it a minor basilica.[5][6][7]

On 19 March 1882, construction of Sagrada Família began under architect Francisco de Paula del Villar. In 1883, when Villar resigned,[4] Gaudí took over as chief architect, transforming the project with his architectural and engineering style, combining Gothic and curvilinear Art Nouveau forms. Gaudí devoted the remainder of his life to the project, and he is buried in the church's crypt. At the time of his death in 1926, less than a quarter of the project was complete.[8]

## HISTORY

### Origins

Sagrada Família was inspired by a bookseller, José María Bocabella [es], founder of Asociación Espiritual de Devotos de San José (Spiritual Association of Devotees of St. Joseph). After a visit to the Vatican in 1872, Bocabella returned from Italy with the intention of building a church

inspired by the basilica at Loreto. The apse crypt of the church, funded by donations, was begun 19 March 1882, on the festival of St. Joseph, to the design of the architect Francisco de Paula del Villar, whose plan was for a Gothic revival church of a standard form. The apse crypt was completed before Villar's resignation on 18 March 1883, when Antoni Gaudí assumed responsibility for its design, which he changed radically.[16] Gaudi began work on the church in 1883 but was not appointed Architect Director until 1884.

On the subject of the extremely long construction period, Gaudí is said to have remarked: "My client is not in a hurry." [17] When Gaudí died in 1926, the basilica was between 15 and 25 percent complete.[8][18] After Gaudí's death, work continued under the direction of his main disciple Domènec Sugrañes i Gras until interrupted by the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Parts of the unfinished basilica and Gaudí's models and workshop were destroyed during the war. The present design is based on reconstructed versions of the plans that were burned in a fire as well as on modern adaptations.[13] Since 1940, the architects Francesc Quintana, Isidre Puig Boada, Lluís Bonet i Garí and Francesc Cardoner have carried on the work. The illumination was designed by Carles Buigas. The director until 2012 was the son of Lluís Bonet, Jordi Bonet i Armengol. Armengol began introducing computers into the design and construction process in the 1980s.

## Incidents

On 19 April 2011, an arsonist started a small fire in the sacristy which forced the evacuation of tourists and construction workers.[38] The sacristy was damaged, and the fire took 45 minutes to contain.[39]

On 11 March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain, construction temporarily stopped and the basilica was closed.[40] This was the first time the construction had been halted since the Spanish Civil War.[41] The Gaudí House Museum in Park Güell was also closed. The basilica reopened, initially to key workers, on 4 July 2020.[42]

On 29 November 2021, a 7 m (23 ft) twelve-pointed illuminated crystal star was installed on one of the main towers of the basilica dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Local residents have concerns about plans to build a large stairway leading up to the basilica's main entrance, unfinished at the time, which could require the demolition of three city blocks: the homes to 1,000 people as well as some businesses.[43]

## DESIGN, PLAN, SPIRES

## Design

The style of Sagrada Família is variously likened to Spanish Late Gothic, Catalan Modernism or Art Nouveau. While the style falls within the Art Nouveau period, Nikolaus Pevsner points out

that, along with Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow, Gaudí carried the Art Nouveau style far beyond its usual application as a surface decoration.[44]

While never a cathedral, Sagrada Família was planned from the outset to be a large building, comparable in size to a cathedral. Its ground-plan has obvious links to earlier Spanish cathedrals such as Burgos Cathedral, León Cathedral and Seville Cathedral. In common with Catalan and many other European Gothic cathedrals, Sagrada Família is short in comparison to its width, and has a great complexity of parts, which include double aisles, an ambulatory with a chevet of seven apsidal chapels, a multitude of steeples and three portals, each widely different in structure as well as ornament.[citation needed] Where it is common for cathedrals in Spain to be surrounded by numerous chapels and ecclesiastical buildings, the layout of Sagrada Família has an unusual feature: a covered passage or cloister which forms a rectangle enclosing the church and passing through the narthex of each of its three portals. With this peculiarity aside, the plan, influenced by Villar's crypt, barely hints at the complexity of Gaudí's design or its deviations from traditional church architecture.[citation needed] There are no exact right angles to be seen inside or outside the church, and few straight lines in the design.[45][46]

## THE CHURCH IS DESIGNED

# Façades

The church is designed to have three grand façades: the Nativity façade to the east, the Passion façade to the west, and the Glory façade to the south (incomplete).

The Nativity façade was built before work was interrupted in 1935 and bears the most direct Gaudí influence.

The Nativity façade The Passion façade was built according to the design that Gaudi created in 1917. The construction began in 1954, and the steeples, built over the elliptical plan, were finished in 1976. It is especially striking for its spare, gaunt, tormented characters, including emaciated figures of Christ being scourged at the pillar; and Christ on the Cross. These controversial designs are the work of Josep Maria Subirachs.