The background of the image is a detailed black and white relief sculpture from the Nativity Façade of the Sagrada Família. It depicts the birth of Jesus Christ, with Mary reclining on the left, Joseph on the right, and the infant Jesus in a manger. The scene is surrounded by a dense crowd of figures, including shepherds and animals, all rendered with intricate detail and dramatic lighting.

**Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la  
Sagrada Família**

**Basilica and Expiatory Temple of the  
Holy Family**

**and**

**Antoni Gaudí**

**[Background: Nativity Façade]**

# Antoni Gaudí i Cornet, 1852 - 1926



- Spanish architect from Catalonia
- Best known practitioner of *Catalan Modernism*
- Work of Gaudí highly individualistic and difficult to classify into any style
- Still, influence of neo-Gothic art and oriental techniques (Byzantine/Middle-Eastern) apparent in his buildings
- Liked to work in 3-D scale models more than detailed drawing

# Antoni Gaudí i Cornet, 1852 - 1926



- Staunch religious upbringing in the Roman Catholic tradition; often eulogised as “God’s architect”
- Reputed to be strongly influenced by the Oriental/Byzantine tradition: preference for ornamentation
- Reverence for the Holy Family and dedication to Christ a strong motive force behind his work on the *Sagrada Família* basilica temple
- Movement within the Spanish church for his beatification and ultimate canonisation
- Evidence of Catalan tradition in his work?

# Cathedral of the Holy Cross & St Eulàlia (Co-patron saint of Barcelona), Barcelona



- Spanish neo-Gothic style
- Constructed from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (mainly built in 14<sup>th</sup> century)
- Built next to an older cloister
- Neo-Gothic façade constructed in late 19<sup>th</sup> century over a non-descript exterior, common in Catalonia
- Since beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, overshadowed by Gaudí's *Sagrada Família*
- Common traits of expression shared with *Sagrada Família*

# Palace of the Generalitat, Barcelona



**Renaissance-style Palace of the Generalitat (Palace of Catalan President) celebrates 600 years of Catalan architecture – 2018: traces of Moorish, Gothic influences?**

# Examples of Spanish rococo style



**From left:** Palace of the Marqués de Dos Aguas, Valencia; **Centre:** Cathedral of Santiago de Compostella; **details of Ceramics Museum, Valencia.** **Far right:** Sagrada Família, any similarities to rococo architecture?

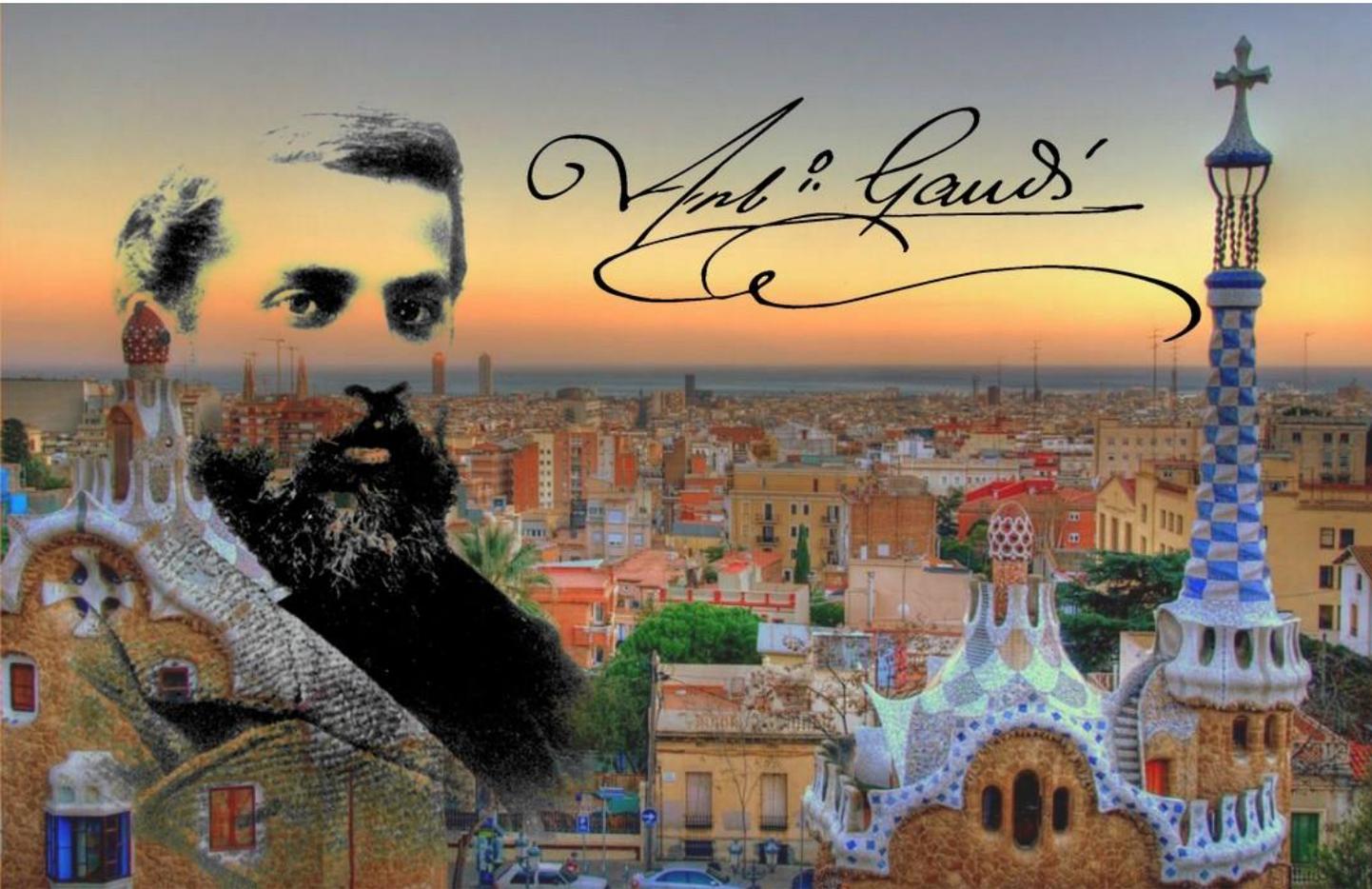
# 19<sup>th</sup> century *fin-de-siècle* influence

- Vienna Secession – movement in the arts around 1900



- Contemporaneous with Gaudí
- Painting by Gustav Klimt (left)
- Karlplatz, old Stadtbahn station, Vienna (right)
- Vienna Secession dates back to 1897, marking beginning of modern art in Austria, and, in time, other countries of Europe
- Ornate, but making clean break from classicism or Gothic revival

# Gaudí's works before Sagrada Família



# Gaudí's works before Sagrada Família

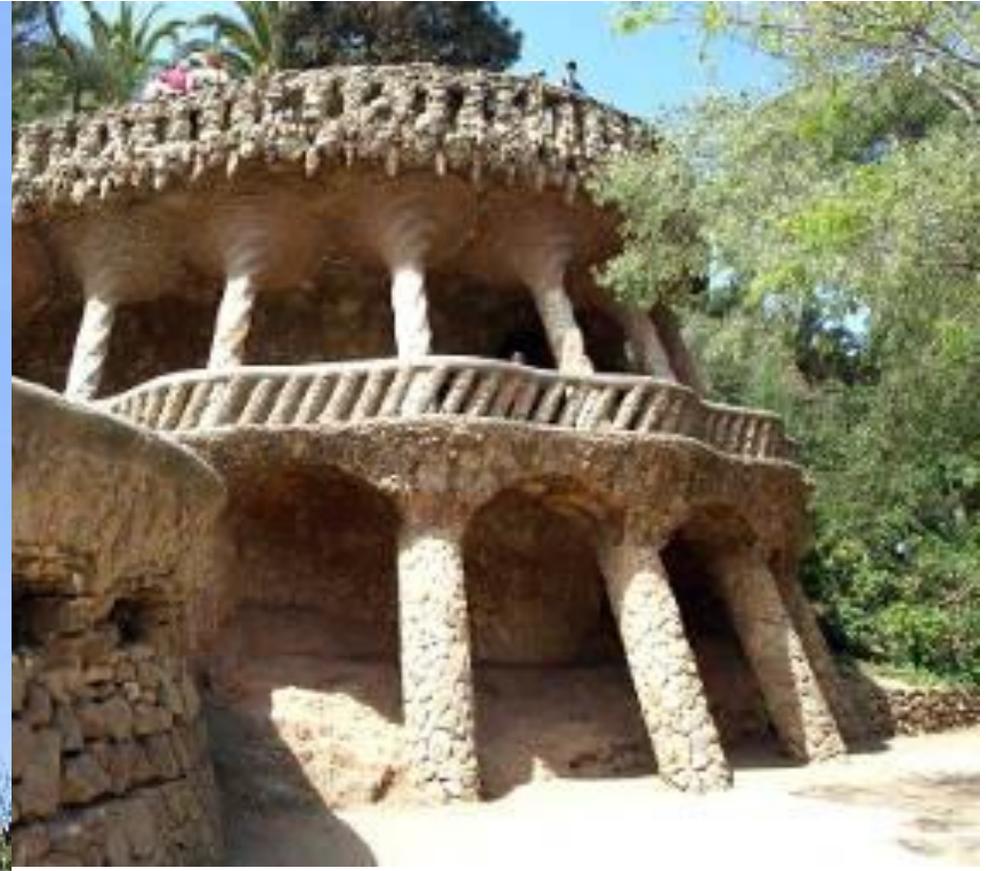


**Left:** Güell Palace, built in late 1880s, one of Gaudí's first works and greatest masterpieces.

**Centre:** Casa de los Botines, 1891, in Leon.

**Right:** Casa Calvet, 1898-1900

# Gaudí's works before Sagrada Família



**Left:** Casa Vincens, 1883-1889; UNESCO World Heritage Site of 'Works of Antoni Gaudí', 2005; **Right:** Park Güell, 1900-1914; recognized as World Heritage Site, 1984

# Gaudí's works before Sagrada Família

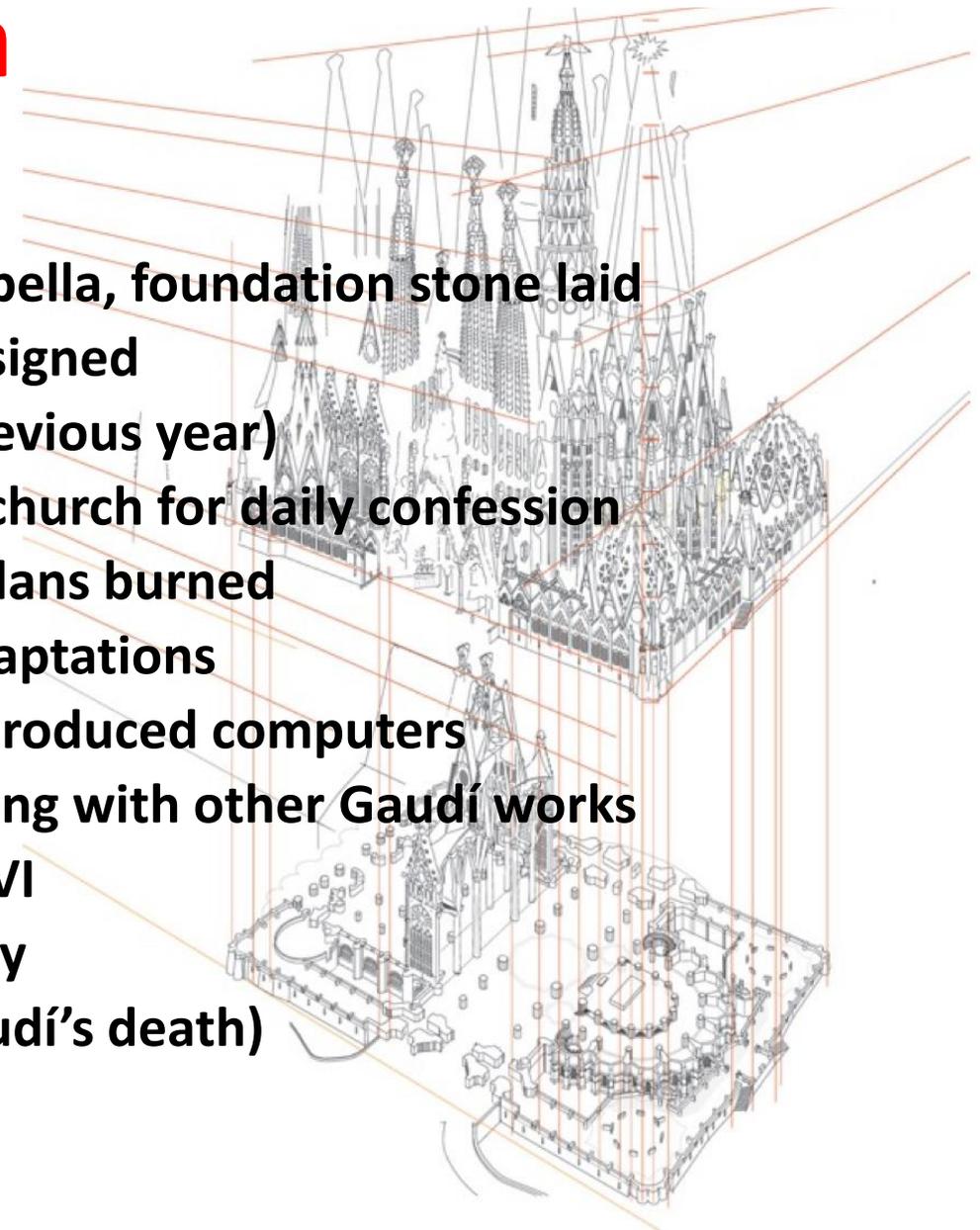


**Left:** Casa Mila, built between 1906 and 1912. **Right:** UNESCO world heritage site of 'Works of Antoni Gaudí since 1984. **Right:** Casa Batlló, 'House of Bones', completed in 1906, one of Gaudí's most outstanding works <https://www.historylists.org/architecture/list-of-top-10-antoni-gaudi-works.html>

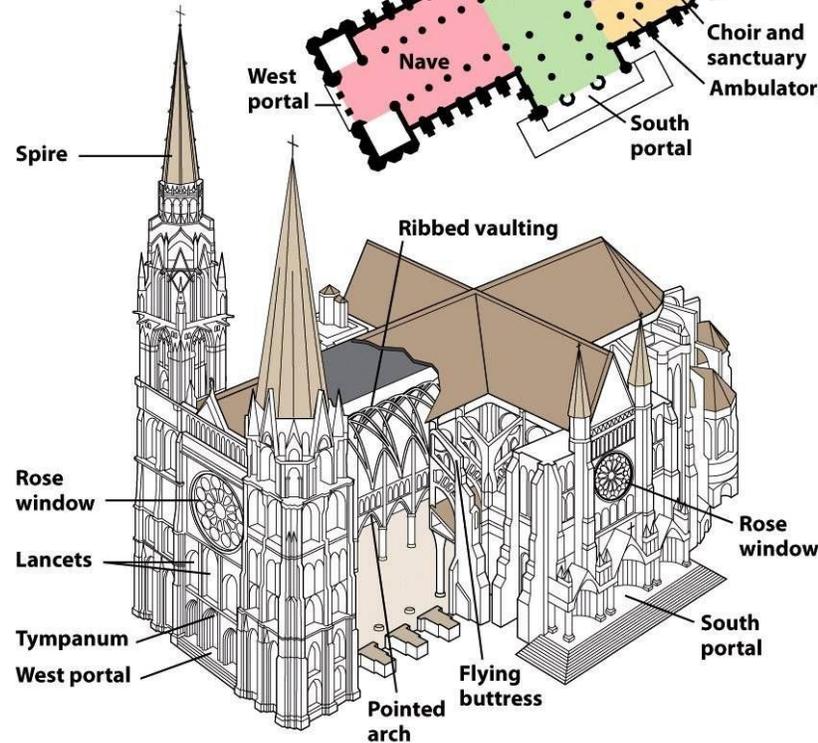
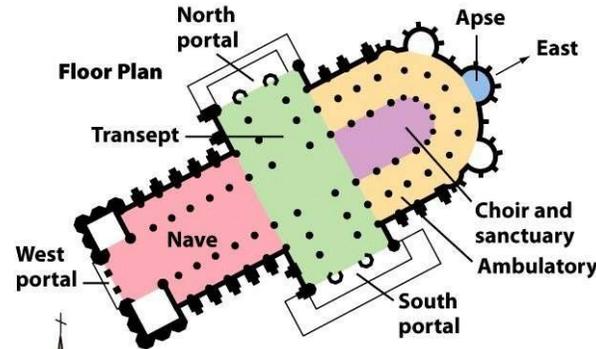
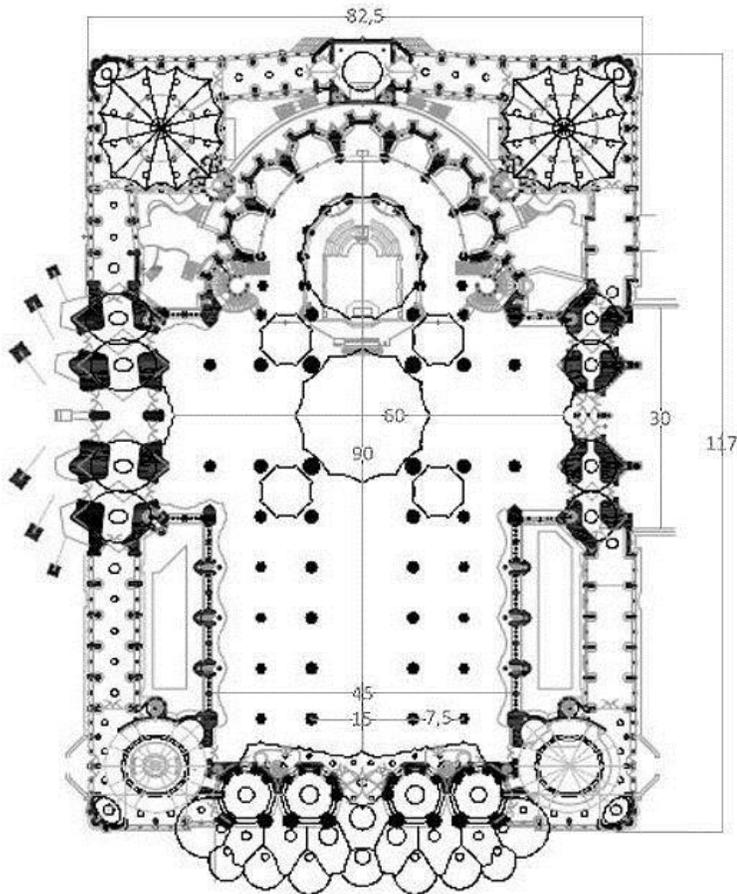
# Sagrada Família Basilica

## Chronology

- 1882:** Inspired by bookseller Josep Maria Bocabella, foundation stone laid
- 1883:** Architect Francisco de Paula del Villar resigned
- 1884:** Gaudí appointed (had started work in previous year)
- 1926:** Death of Gaudí, hit by a tram on way to church for daily confession
- 1936:** Work interrupted by Spanish Civil War, plans burned
- 1940:** Reconstitution of plans, with modern adaptations
- 1984:** Jordi Bonet appointed chief architect, introduced computers
- 2005:** Declared UNESCO world heritage site along with other Gaudí works
- 2010:** Consecrated basilica by Pope Benedict XVI
- 2011:** Arsonist set fire and damaged the sacristy
- 2026:** Scheduled completion (centennial of Gaudí's death)



# Sagrada Família Basilica



Elements of a Gothic Church (Chartres Cathedral)  
 Chapter 11, *Western Society: A Brief History*  
 Copyright © 2010 by Bedford/St. Martin's  
 Page 269

## Height

Sagrada Família: 170 m  
 Chartres Cathedral: 113 m

## Length

Sagrada Família: 90 m  
 Chartres Cathedral: 130 m

## Width

Sagrada Família: 60 m  
 Chartres Cathedral: 46 m

## Ground area

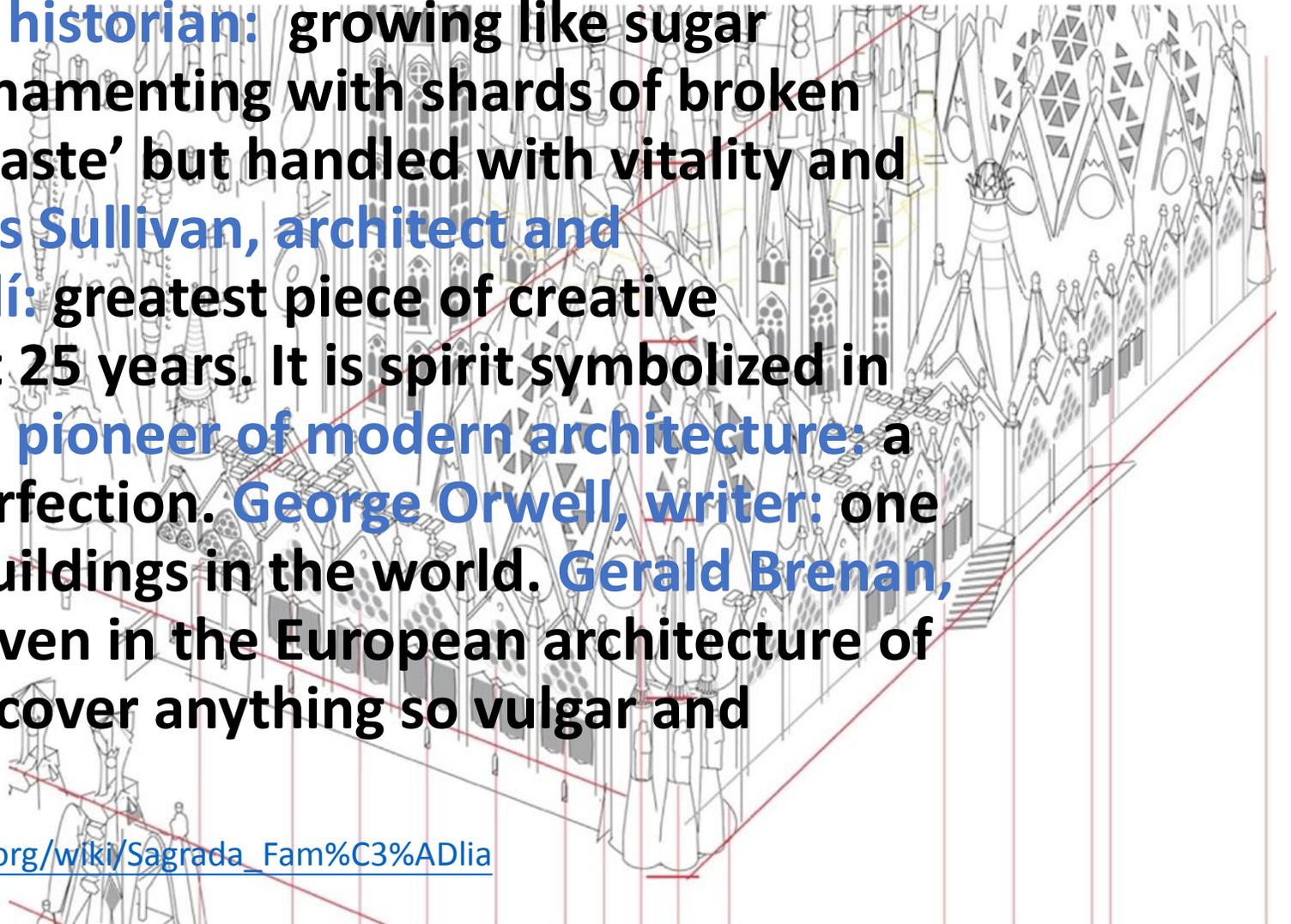
Sagrada Família: 4,500 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Chartres Cathedral: 10,875 m<sup>2</sup>

Sagrada Família has shorter  
 choir and nave; double aisles  
 and many more towers

# Sagrada Família Basilica

**Nicholaus Pevsner, art historian:** growing like sugar loaves and anthills; ornamenting with shards of broken pottery possibly 'bad taste' but handled with vitality and ruthless audacity. **Louis Sullivan, architect and contemporary of Gaudí:** greatest piece of creative architecture in the last 25 years. It is spirit symbolized in stone. **Walter Gropius, pioneer of modern architecture:** a marvel of technical perfection. **George Orwell, writer:** one of the most hideous buildings in the world. **Gerald Brenan, British historian:** not even in the European architecture of the period can one discover anything so vulgar and pretentious.

Source: Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada\\_Fam%C3%ADlia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada_Fam%C3%ADlia)



# Sagrada Família Basilica

## Three façades:

- Nativity (first completed)
- Passion (recently completed)
- Glory (last to be completed)

## Twelve perimeter towers:

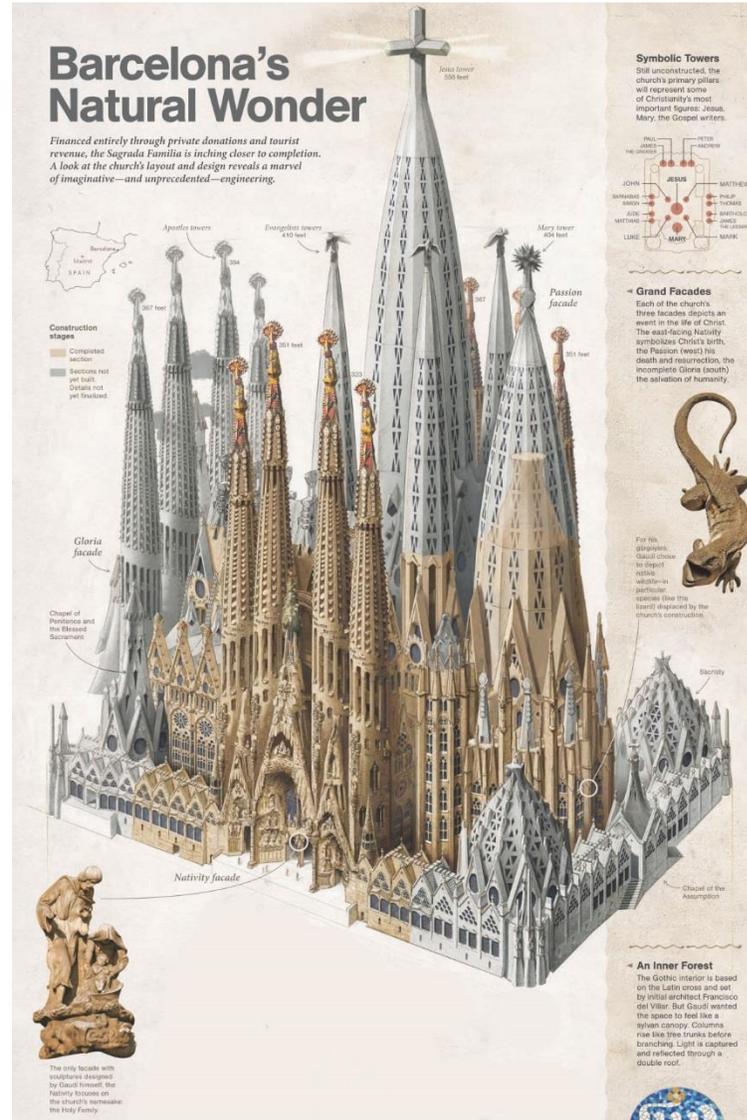
- Twelve apostles
- Four inner towers:
- Four evangelists

## Tower over apse:

- Dedicated to Our Lady

## Tower dome:

- Dedicated to Jesus Christ
- Our Lord (170m high)



## CHRONOLOGIE

- 19 mars 1882 Début du chantier de la Sagrada Família, d'après les plans néo-gothiques de l'architecte Francisco de Paula del Villar y Lozano
- Fin 1883 Gaudí est chargé de la construction, une tâche qu'il poursuivra jusqu'à sa mort, en 1926
- Juillet 1936 Au début de la Guerre civile (1936-1939), la crypte est incendiée et l'atelier du chantier détruit. Les plans et les maquettes sont perdus
- La construction, exclusivement financée par l'aumône, pourrait prendre fin à l'horizon 2030

## ARCHITECTURE

Gaudí a pensé une grande église chargée de symboles architecturaux et sculpturaux, surmontée de hautes tours et dessinant au sol une croix latine

Gaudí ambitionnait de créer une nouvelle architecture et d'améliorer la structure gothique des grandes cathédrales européennes

L'architecte prévoyait de combiner différentes figures géométriques dans l'édifice, hyperboloïdes, paraboloïdes, hélicoïdes, conoïdes et ellipsoïdes

## LE TEMPLE

Tour du dôme haute de 170 m et dédiée à Jésus-Christ

Tours des quatre évangélistes

La toiture de la nef centrale, terminée récemment, va permettre la célébration d'offices

La façade frontale, dite de la Gloire (sud), sera la dernière à être construite

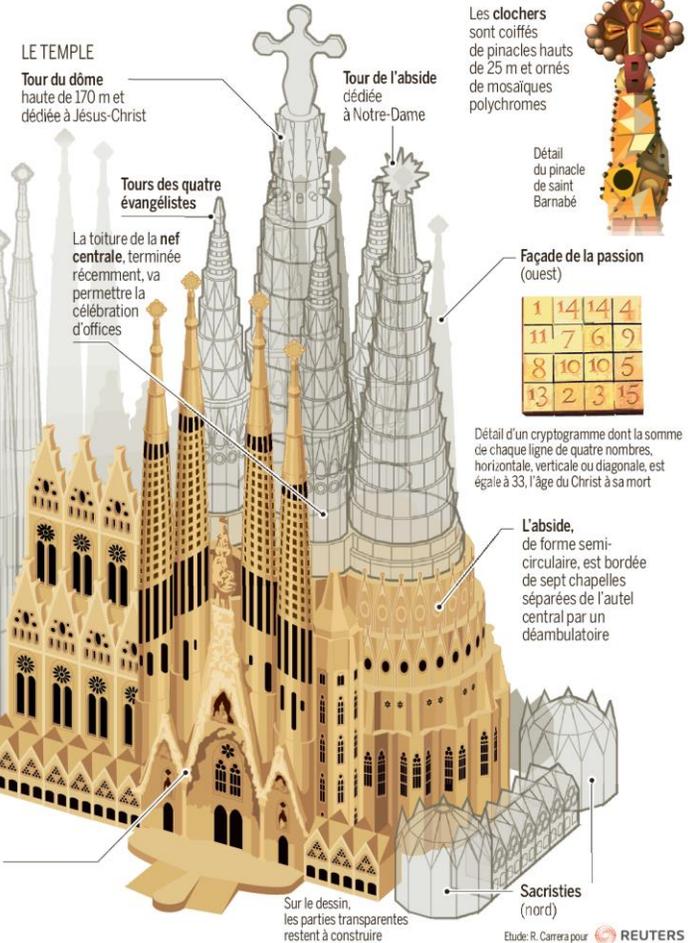
Cloître extérieur

La façade de la Nativité (Est) a été la première construite sous la direction de Gaudí

Sur le dessin, les parties transparentes restent à construire

Sacristies (nord)

Source : www.sagradafamilia.cat



# Sagrada Família Basilica



*Mysteries of the  
Holy Rosary*

JOYFUL MYSTERIES  
(Monday, Thursday)

<i>Annunciation</i>	<i>Humility</i>
<i>Visitation</i>	<i>Fraternal Charity</i>
<i>Birth of Our Lord</i>	<i>Esteem of spiritual values</i>
<i>Presentation in the Temple</i>	<i>Purity and Obedience</i>
<i>Finding of Our Lord</i>	<i>Fidelity to one's duties</i>

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES  
(Tuesday, Friday)

<i>Agony of Our Lord</i>	<i>Sorrow for sin</i>
<i>Scourging at the pillar</i>	<i>Mortification of the senses</i>
<i>Crowning with thorns</i>	<i>Love of humiliations</i>
<i>Carrying of the Cross</i>	<i>Bearing of trials</i>
<i>Crucifixion</i>	<i>Forgiveness of injuries</i>

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES  
(Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday)

<i>Resurrection</i>	<i>Faith and Hope</i>
<i>Ascension into Heaven</i>	<i>Desire of Heaven</i>
<i>Descent of the Holy Ghost</i>	<i>The Gifts of the Holy Ghost</i>
<i>Assumption</i>	<i>Devotion to Mary</i>
<i>Crowning of Our Blessed Lady</i>	<i>Perseverance</i>

800-047

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The mysteries of the Holy Rosary are depicted in the main façades of the Sagrada Família:

The Joyful Mysteries on the Nativity façade, The Sorrowful Mysteries on the Passion façade and The Glorious Mysteries on the Glorious façade.

# Sagrada Família Basilica

The nativity façade <http://www.sagradafamilia.org/en/symbolic-visit/>

Faith

Hope

Charity



# Sagrada Família Basilica

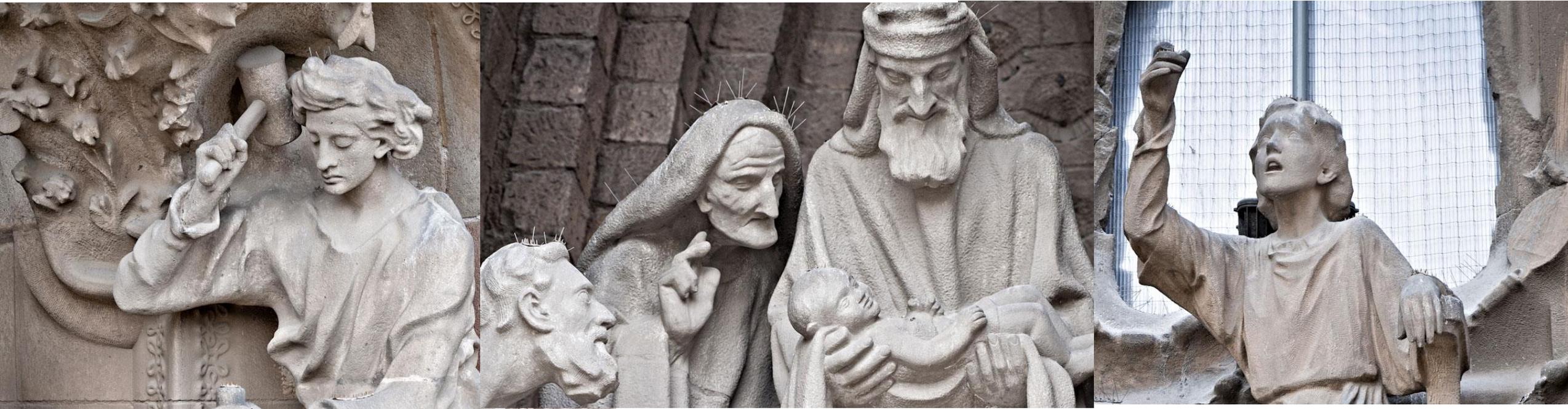


**Left:** The Portal of Faith

**Centre:** The Immaculate Conception, Rv 12; Lk 1: 26-32

**Right:** The Visitation, Lk 1: 39-56

# Sagrada Família Basilica



**Left:** Christ the Worker, Lk 2: 51-52

**Centre:** The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, Lk 2: 22-38

**Right:** The Finding in the Temple, Lk 2: 46-50

# Sagrada Família Basilica



**Left:** The Portal of Hope

**Above left:** Marriage of the Virgin, Mt 1: 24-25

**Above centre:** The Massacre of the Innocents, Mt 2: 16-17

**Above right:** The Flight into Egypt, Mt 2: 13-15

# Sagrada Família Basilica



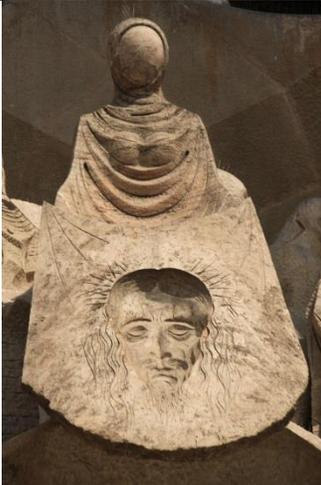
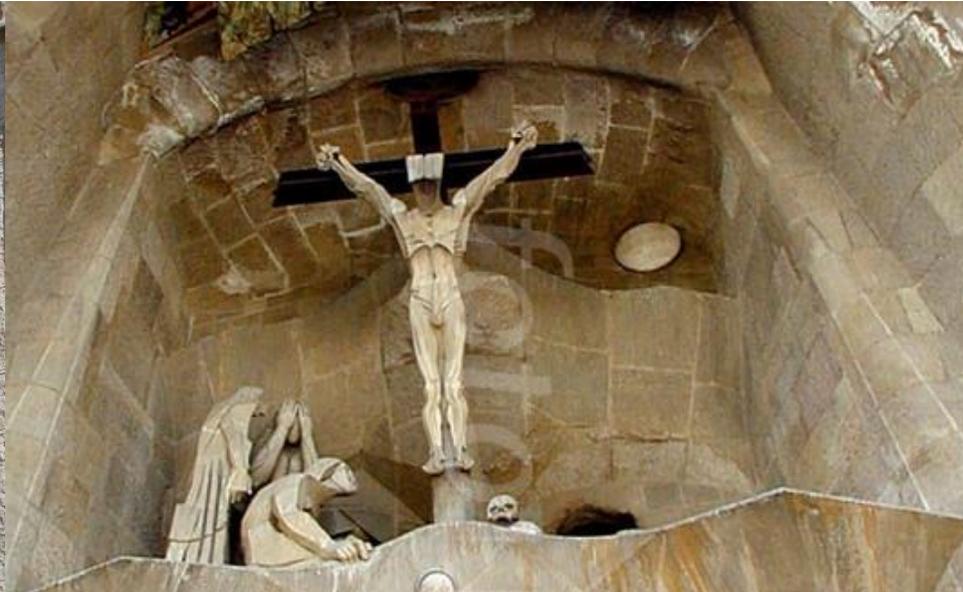
**Left:** The Portal of Charity

**Above left:** The Adoration of the Magi, Mt 2: 1-12

**Above centre:** The Coronation of Mary, Lk 1: 32-33

**Above right:** The Nativity of Our Lord, Lk 2: 6-7

# Sagrada Família Basilica



Passion façade (far left) and scenes from the Passion and Crucifixion.

# Gaudí's forms: inspiration and geometry



**Natural forms are sources of inspiration in structural elements found in Gaudí's buildings:  
seashells, tree foliage and trunks**

**Motifs of seashells, pebbles and leaves also found in rococo styles in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe**

# Gaudí's forms: inspiration and geometry



**Left:** hyperboloids, found in openings of windows and vaults to allow light in, symbol of God in Gaudí's iconography. **Centre:** paraboloids, used to create linking surfaces between vaults and columns in the Passion façade; symbol of the Blessed Trinity. **Right:** helicoids, rising movement linking earth with heaven, as in the spiral staircases.

# Gaudí's forms: inspiration and geometry



**Left:** ellipsoids, rounded capitals of main columns where they divide into branches. **Centre:** branching double-twisted columns formed by two twisting helicoidal columns for slenderness and greater stability. **Right:** best example of coinoids found in walls and roofs of school building at the Basilica. <http://www.sagradafamilia.org/en/geometry/>

# Sagrada Família Basilica: light and colour



# Sagrada Família Basilica: light and colour



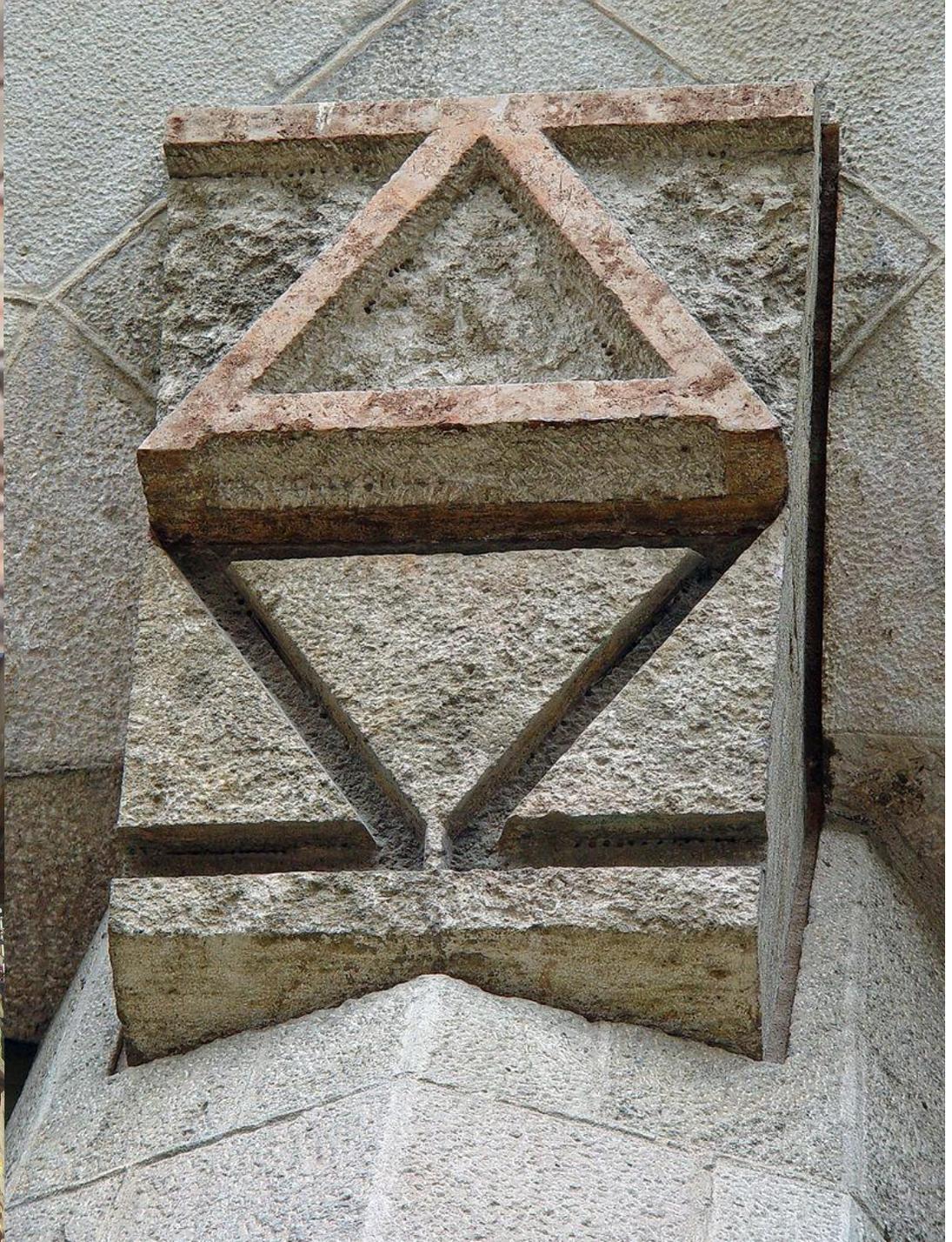
To Gaudí, colour was the expression of life and he made sure presence of colours was felt in the Basilica. Colours were used in pinnacles, in crowning elements of towers and rooftops and on façades: as stained Venetian glass, enamelled ceramics, bricks and stones.

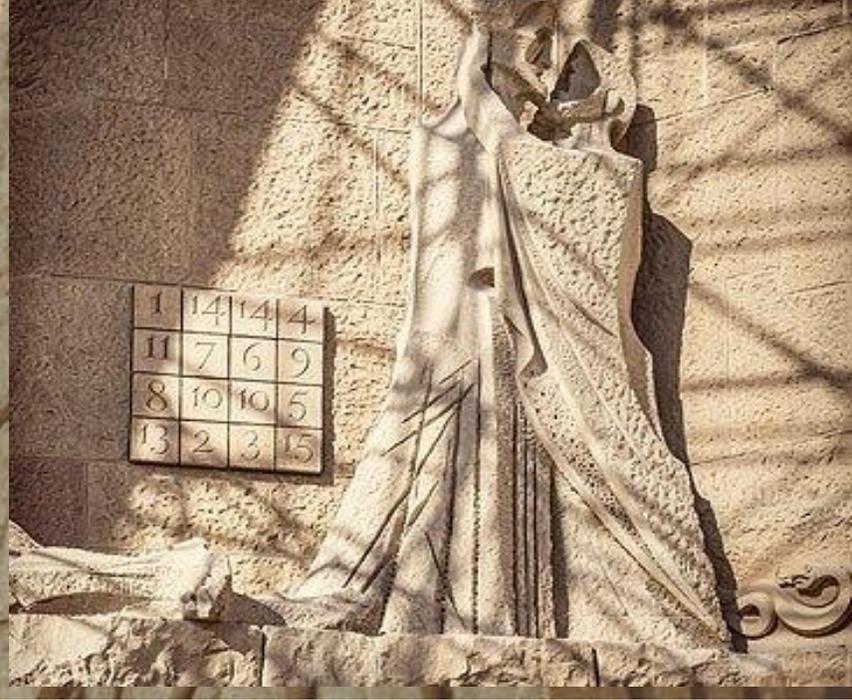
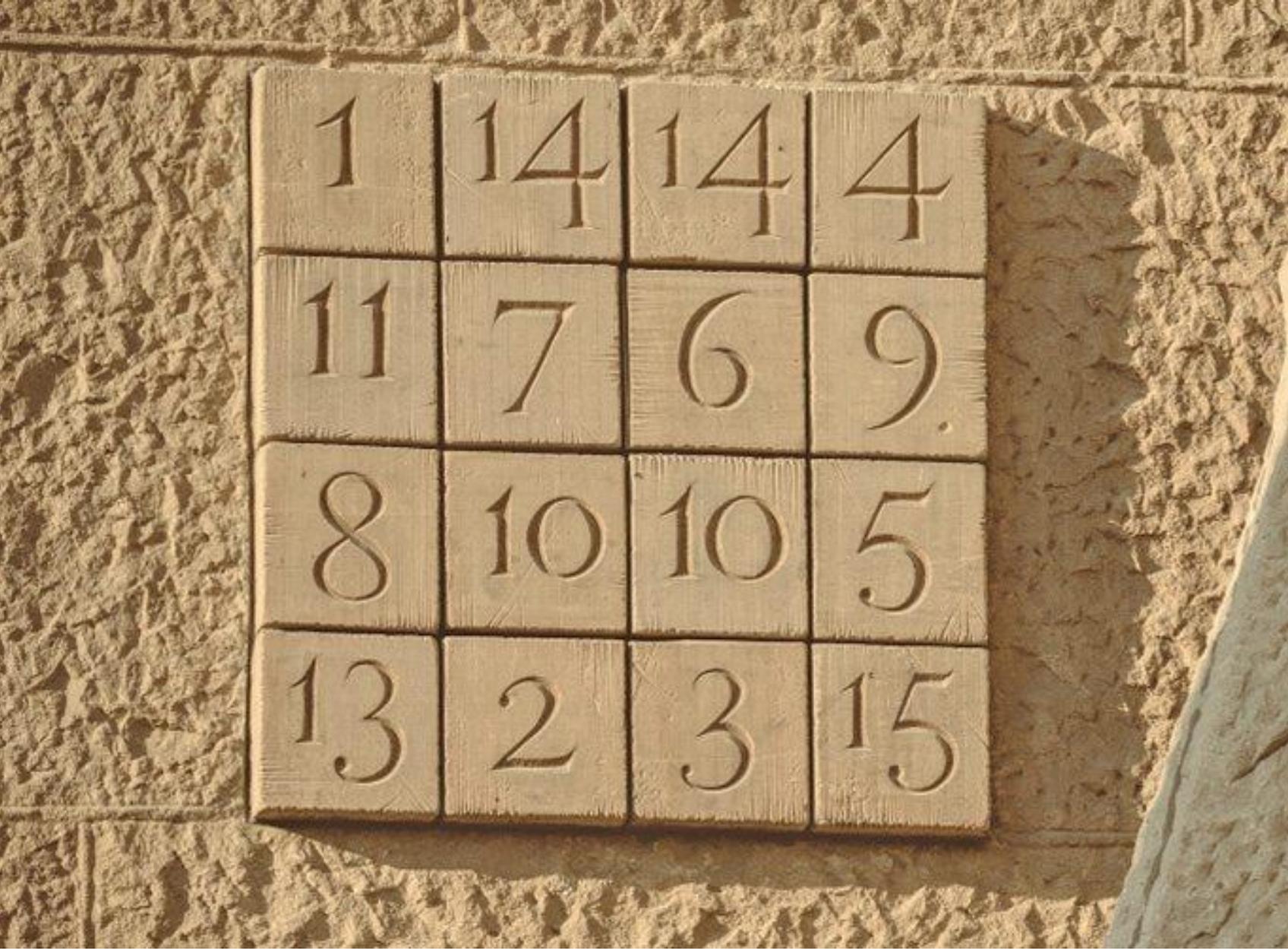
# 'Gaudí is a total one-off.'



**If Gaudí's buildings were misunderstood, so was he. Gaudí as a man was a fascinating catalogue of contradictions: he was both revolutionary and deeply conservative; massively ambitious yet also humble; at the cutting edge yet deliberately medieval; pig-headed and irritable, yet also patient and kind; he was almost the epitome of the Franciscan – happiest when meditating and communing with nature; yet he was also a passionate Catalan nationalist but, paradoxically, at the same time always reaching out towards the universal in his aspirations and ideals.**

Gijs van Hensbergen – *The Sagrada Família: Gaudí's Heaven on Earth*; London, 2017, Bloomsbury





**Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat!**

## Websites and links

[www.sagradafamilia.org](http://www.sagradafamilia.org)

[www.sagradafamilia.cat](http://www.sagradafamilia.cat)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada\\_Fam%C3%ADlia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada_Fam%C3%ADlia)

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## Photo credits

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**THANK YOU!**