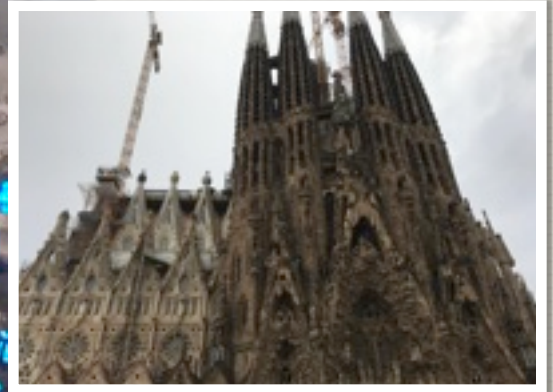


ONCE A YEAR, GO SOMEPLACE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE. DALAI LAMA

BARCELONA, SPAIN



ANTONI GAUDI
BASILICA DE LA
SAGRADA FAMILIA

An experience that changes you to the core!

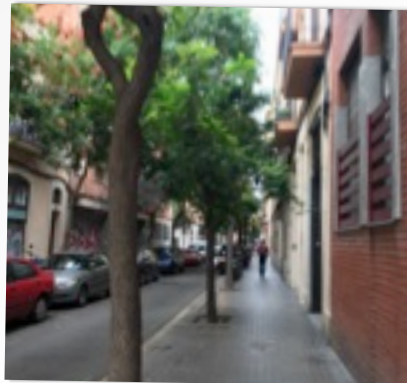
Barcelona is a place that wasn't really on my radar to visit, so when the opportunity popped up to travel there I was pretty surprised. I jumped at the opportunity as I feel that all things happen for a reason. This trip has turned out to be one of my very favorite for so many reasons: proving to myself that I could navigate around a

city where English isn't the primary language, seeing things that are a magical contrast between "completely foreign" and so familiar that it almost feels like I am at home, and finally learning about things that I honestly am embarrassed to admit that I had never even heard of before- namely everything related to Antoni Gaudi!

Now, I am obsessed with his story. If you are paddling along life in the same clueless boat, let me begin with saying that Gaudi IS Barcelona! I was quick to notice his unmistakable architectural touches on just about everything I set my eyes on; it was awe inspiring to see his genius way of symbolizing the world that is too often taken for granted.



VIEW FROM HOTEL



STREET VIEWS



CHECK OUT THE DWARFS ON THE FENCE POSTS!

CASTELL DE MONTJUIC - 17th-century hilltop fortress-

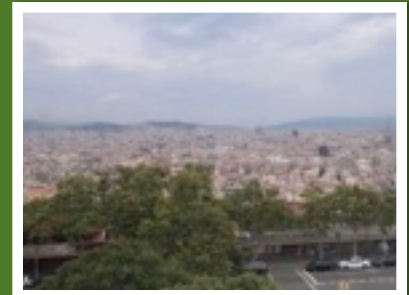
As with every new city I visit, I hit the ground running, almost literally! Rule number one- LIVE IN THE MOMENT and don't allow yourself to think about what time it is anywhere else other than where you are at the moment! I started my day with a walk to the Montjuic cable car that travels 750 meters up the hill from Barcelona to the top of Montjuic hill, giving a fantastic view of the Catalan Capital. The prize at the last stop is the 17th-century hilltop fortress and former prison, Montjuic Castle (Castell de Montjuic). It was built during the

Reapers' War in 1640 because its location provides 360-degree views of the city below. It was also used as one of the key defense points during the War of the Spanish Succession between 1705 and 1714. I was surprised to learn that on October 15, 1940, the castle was the site of the execution, by firing squad, of the president of the Catalan government, Lluís Companys. As recent as 2007, the castle came under the ownership of the Barcelona City Council and is now a popular tourist attraction.

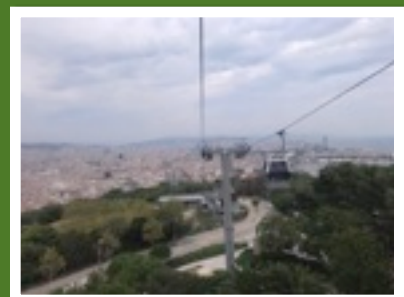
WHAT AN IMPRESSIVE STRUCTURE!!



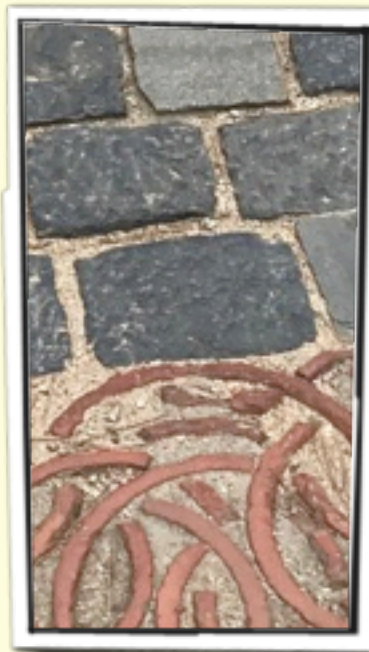
MONTJUIC



THE VIEWS OF THE MASSIVE CITY BELOW ARE AWE INSPIRING.



The beauty of the castle isn't limited to the building itself; the stone work on the path surrounding the castle is equally as unique and beautiful. When you travel, don't forget to look down.



WHAT IS UP WITH THE APE DRAWING ON THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING?



ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE CASTLE ARE VIEWS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND THE HARBOR WHERE MANY CRUISE AND CARGO SHIPS DOCK.



NEXT STOP--- TRAVELING THROUGH TOWN ON MY WAY TO THE FAMOUS SAGRADA FAMILIA. THE JOURNEY WAS AND ADVENTURE ALL IN ITSELF.



POINTS OF INTEREST

1. OUTDOOR PATIO BARS WHERE YOU CAN PICK UP A COLD CAN OF BEER TO GO!
2. A VERY BUSY DOWNTOWN WITH STREETS RUNNING IN EVERY DIRECTION AND A TAPA BAR ON EVERY CORNER.
3. GIRLS ON MOTORCYCLES WEARING SUPER HERO CAPES!
4. VEGAN RESTAURANTS SERVING AMAZING SANGRIAS!

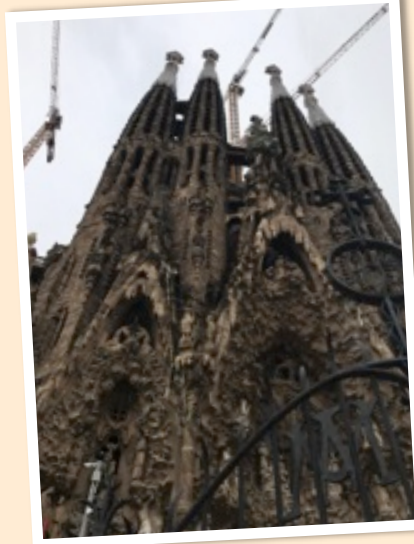
"Then one day, when you least expect it, the great adventure finds you." – Ewan McGregor

I was a little nervous about attempting to navigate my way through the town after viewing how densely packed together every thing seemed from the Montjuic Castle. I was able to use my mobile maps and, as my mom would say, my "homing pigeon skills" to find my way. I made a few stops along the way- lunch at an amazing vegan restaurant ranked up there with my favorite excuses for a respite. I also took a detour down a street that had a few theaters with really cool marque signs. I felt like I was walking around in the middle of a movie set and Gene

Kelly would pop out and ask me to dance! As I got closer to the Sagrada Familia I noticed many more people that I had been warned about- the people that approach tourists and try to cause even the slightest distraction in an effort to pick pocket the unsuspecting and rob them blind. I was prepared for this and was on high alert. I always carry my bag strapped across my chest and my valuables are strapped to me under my shirt. I am lucky that my "I'm a local" act has worked and I have never been bothered by anyone.

Sagrada Familia

The temple is named Sagrada Familia because it is dedicated to Jesus Christ and his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary; they represent the ideal model of the Christian family. Gaudi considered churches to be the most representative buildings of a people. Gaudi wanted them to “produce a spatial and figurative synthesis of its symbolic imagination”. Gaudi took the expansive architectural form and covered every nook and cranny with emblems and figures of patron saints. He formed key elements to give an explanatory sculptural narration of biblical episodes and texts.



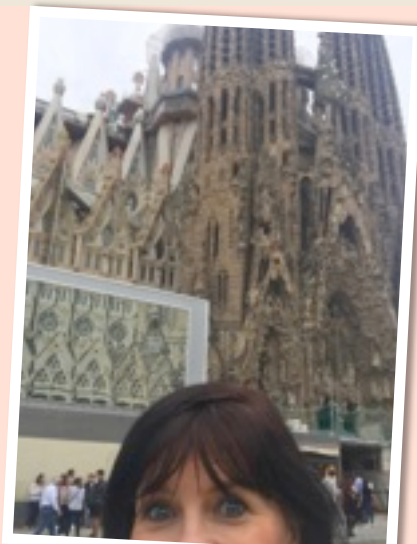
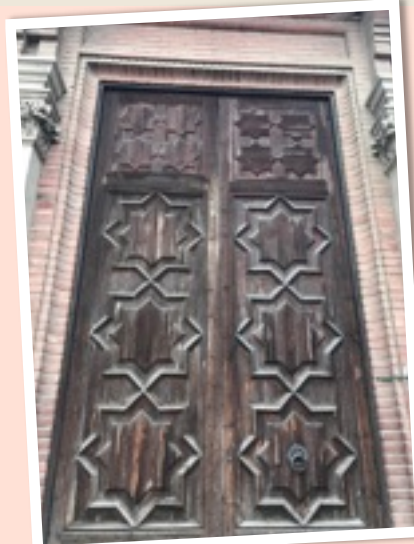
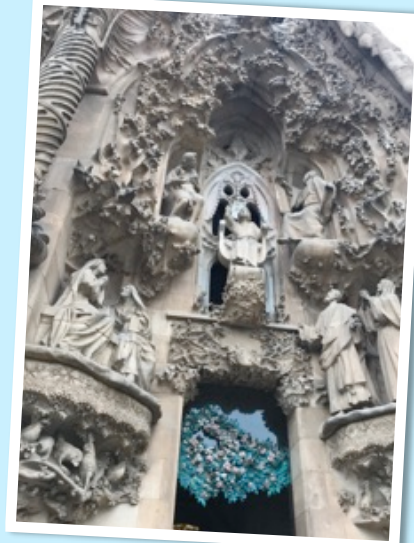
There are no straight lines or sharp corners in nature. Therefore, buildings must have no straight lines or sharp corners.

Antonio Gaudi

The journey begins way before you step inside.

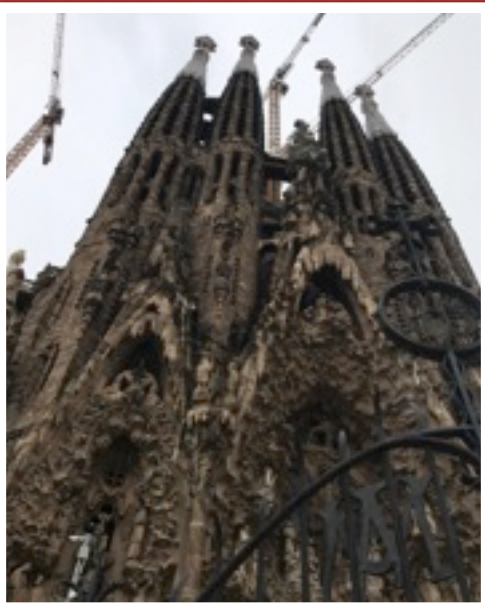
The queue to get into the Sagrada Familia is extremely interesting- Why? Because people come from all over the world to experience the impressive structure. The structure literally changes every day, as it is still under construction. There are cranes positioned around the structure that are working on the towers that are expected to be complete by the 100th anniversary of Gaudi's death.

The wonder and awe that comes naturally when standing in the shadow of something as amazing as the Sagrada Familia isn't limited to the structure itself. I found myself wondering what each person in line was comparing the structure to in their minds based on where they are from. Was the man from Australia comparing this to the Sydney Opera House? Was the couple from China thinking about the Great Wall? I wish I would have stopped and talked to some of the people in line, however I was too busy cranking my neck back trying to take in the massive amazement before my eyes. I kept asking myself how I had never heard of this place before. The reason for my trip became abundantly clear.



"Nothing is art if it does not come from nature."

-- Antonio Gaudi

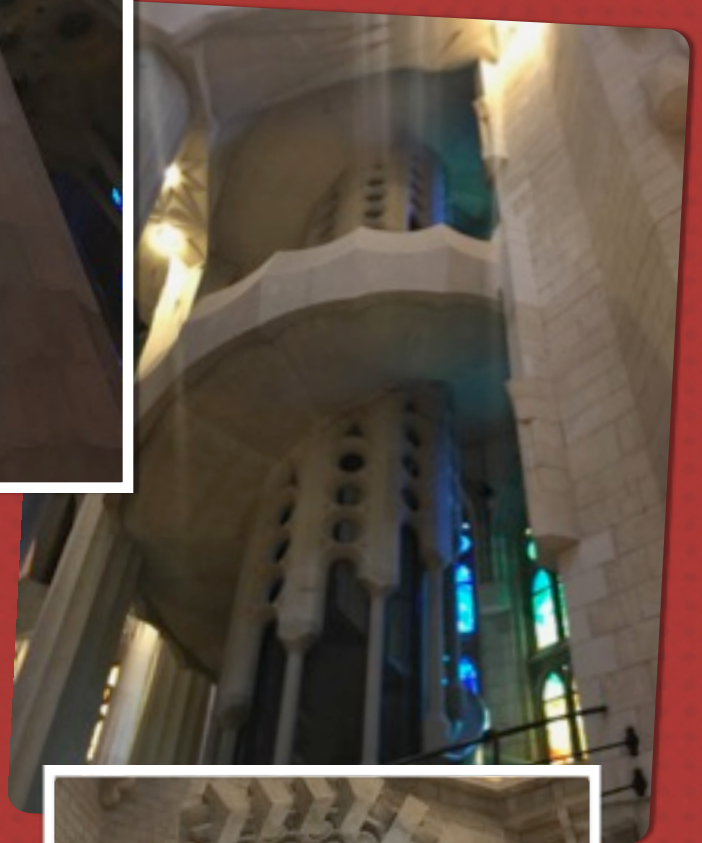
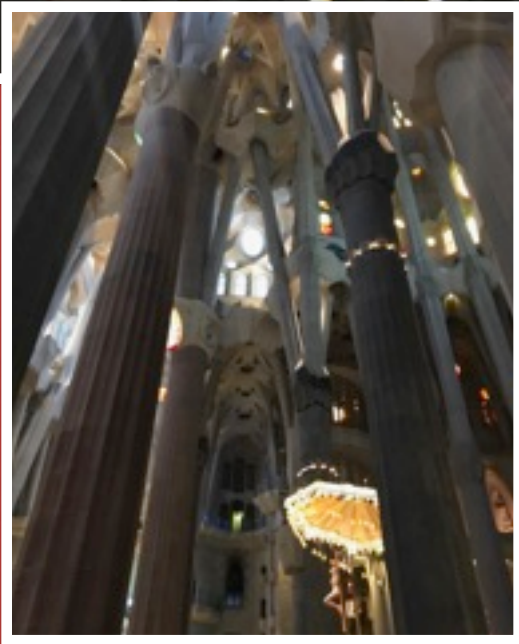
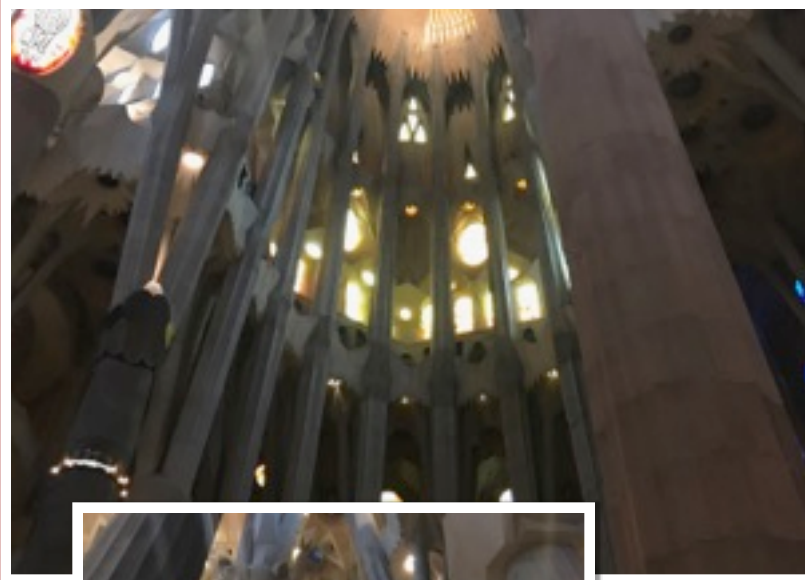


My favorite quote about Gaudi comes from The Sagrada Familia, The Astonishing Story of Gaudi

" Gaudi 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 deliberate 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 was reaching out towards the universe in his aspirations and ideals."

“The expiatory church of La Sagrada Família is made by the people and is mirrored in them. It is a work that is in the hands of God and the will of the people.”

-- Antonio Gaudi

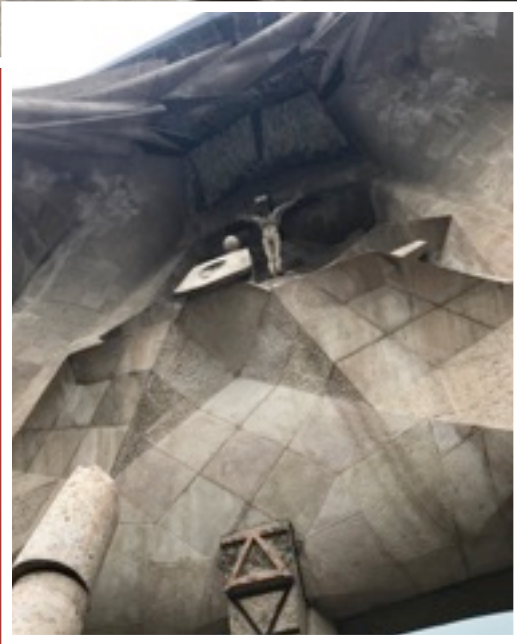
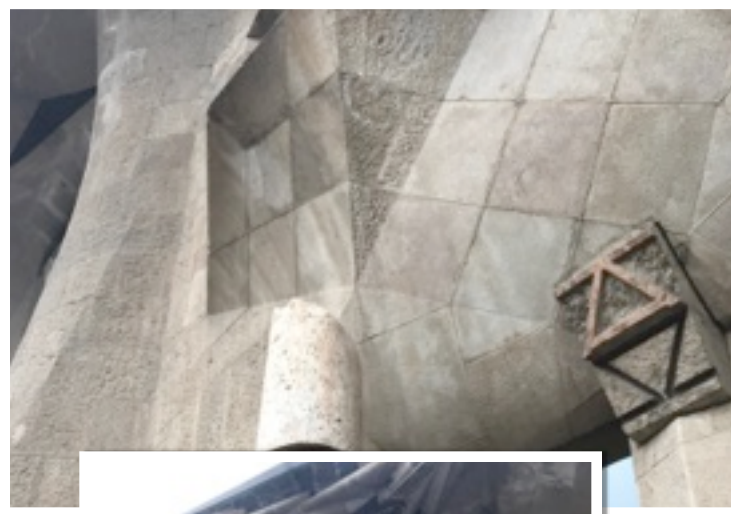


THE PILLARS ARE DESIGNED IN A WAY THAT REPRESENT THE TREES IN A FOREST. LOOK AT THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AND YOU WILL NOTICE HOW THEY BRANCH OUT AT THE TOP LIKE BRANCHES ON A TREE.

TO THE LEFT- THIS CLEARLY REPRESENTS JESUS AND HIS RISING. LOOK UP AND YOU WILL SEE A GLITTERY DOME IN WHICH HE IS ASCENDING REPRESENTING GOD.

“Originality consists of returning to the origin. Thus, originality means returning, through one's resources, to the simplicity of the early solutions.”

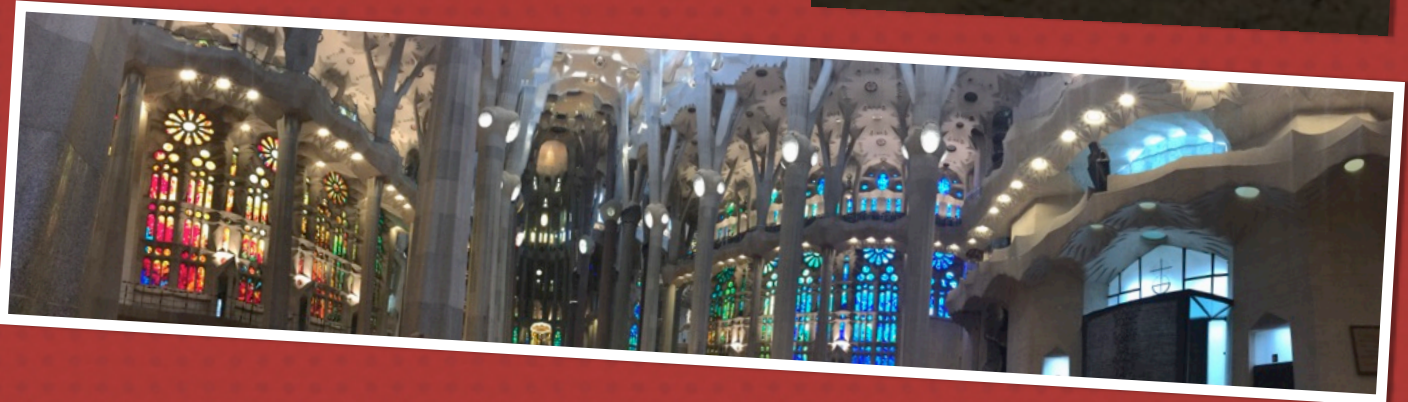
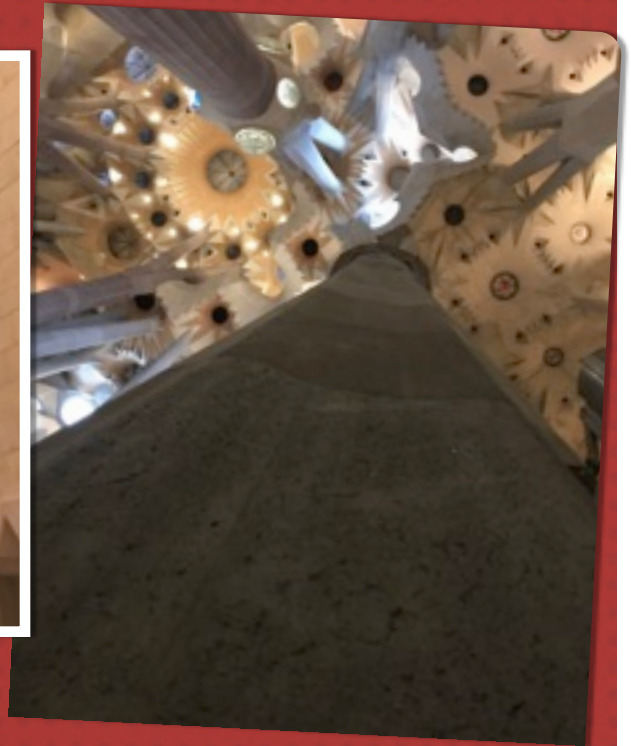
-- Antonio Gaudi



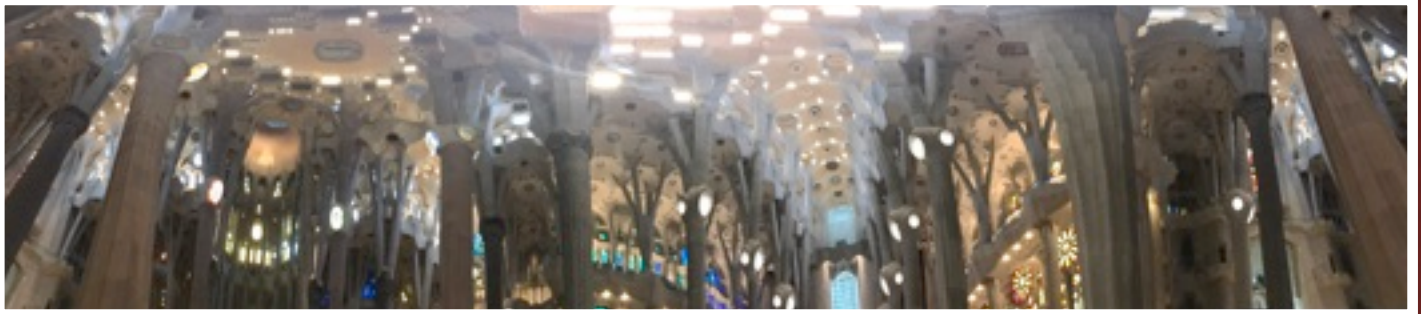
THIS SIDE OF THE BUILDING REPRESENTS THE PASSION OF CHRIST. LOOK AT ALL OF THE DETAILS CAREFULLY INCLUDED IN EACH SCENE. GAUDI USED ACTUAL PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IN THE TOWN AS MODELS FOR EACH OF THE SCULPTURES AND STATUES. THE PEOPLE HAD TO AGREE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED FROM EVERY ANGLE SO THEY COULD CAPTURE PRECISE DETAILS TO USE IN THE STATUES.

"In the Sagrada Familia, everything is providential."

-- Antonio Gaudi



ANTONIO GAUDI USES STAINED GLASS AND THE LIGHT COMING THROUGH THE WINDOWS AS A PAINTBRUSH TO CREATE A BREATHTAKING AFFECT AROUND THE ENORMOUS STRUCTURE. HIS INNATE ABILITY TO USE NATURE TO SYMBOLICALLY REPRESENT HIS MESSAGE IS MESMERIZING. HE PURPOSELY SET UP THE STAINED GLASS TO BE BLUE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COOL MORNING SUNLIGHT AND THE ORANGE AND REDS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE STRUCTURE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WARM AFTERNOON AND THE SUNSET. THE LIGHTING EFFECT ON THE INSIDE OF THE STRUCTURE NATURALLY CHANGES THROUGH-OUT THE DAY DEPENDING ON THE LOCATION OF THE SUN AS IT CASTS ITS RAYS OF LIGHT THROUGH THE STAINED GLASS PAINTING A MOOD. THE WINDOWS ARE ALSO SET UP IN SPECIFIC POSITIONS TO CAST LIGHT ON DIFFERENT SPECIFIC PARTS INSIDE. THEY ACT AS SPOTLIGHTS TELLING A STORY THROUGH OUT THE DAY. THE DETAILS ARE ASTONISHING!



Camí de la litúrgia

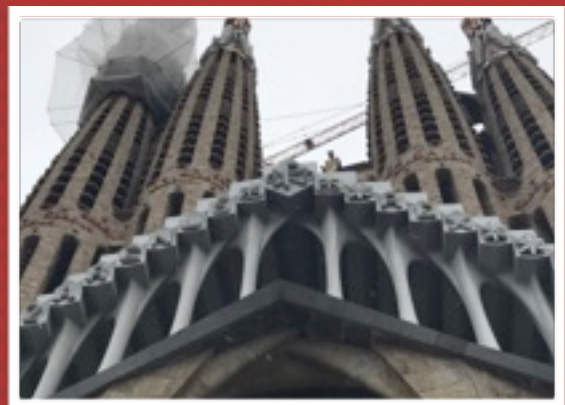
Gaudí sempre atorga molta importància a la litúrgia, per això la seva intervenció a la Sagrada Família no es va limitar a l'arquitectura i va incloure el disseny d'alguns mobles i objectes necessaris per celebrar. Totes les còpies concebudes per Gaudí actualment per la seva forma inusual i van ser creades per ser útils en la pràctica de les cerimònies religioses i per facilitar el confort a sacerdots i fel·les.

Camino de la liturgia

Gaudí siempre otorga mucha importancia a la liturgia, por eso su intervención en la Sagrada Família no se limitó a la arquitectura, sino que incluyó el diseño de algunos muebles y objetos necesarios para officiar. Todas las obras concebidas por Gaudí actualmente por su forma inusual y fueron creadas para ser útiles en la práctica de las ceremonias religiosas y para facilitar la comodidad de sacerdotes y felices.

Liturgical path

For Gaudí the liturgy was always very important. This is why his involvement in the Sagrada Família wasn't limited to its architecture, he also designed pieces of furniture and objects for practicing. All of the works Gaudí conceived stand out for their unique shapes and the fact that they were designed to be used in religious ceremonies, and to make both priests and parishioners more comfortable.



After visiting the Sagrada Familia and listening to the self-paced audio tour while walking through the impressive structure, I became fascinated with Gaudi's art and impressive interpretation of the world around him. (I HIGHLY recommend that you include the audio portion to your experience!) I have picked up several books about Antoni Gaudi and continue to be impressed with the way his mind worked. I have included a list of the books that I have been reading at the end of this blog.

**AS MUCH AS
GAUDI'S WORK IS
MISUNDERSTOOD-
SO IS HE!**

My friend, Albert, upon learning that I was about to travel to Barcelona, strongly suggested that I visit all things "Gaudi". His enthusiasm was contagious and I am so happy that I had his views to focus on before

hearing others impressions of Gaudi. (Thank you, Albert!) One woman I spoke to in the hotel lobby wasn't as enthusiastic about Gaudi and specifically pointed out that his name matched his work. She said that Gaudi is pronounced "gawdy" and it is where the term we use describing something that is full of clutter and no meaning-over-the-top and senseless originated. I couldn't disagree more! His work, in my opinion, is the result of pure genius; a combination of his extraordinary interpretation of history and the world with his incomparable creativity and talent. Every book that I picked up in my research started with the same general preface: "Gaudi's work is misunderstood. People focus on the face value and categorize it as "...an orgy of colour", "Outrageous and daring", "Gingerbread houses made as if copied straight from the nightmare pages of Grimm's Hansel and Gretel". As much as Gaudi's work is misunderstood- so is he!



ANTONIO GAUDI



1852-1926



"Gingerbread houses made as if copied straight from the nightmare pages of Grimm's Hansel and Gretel"



9 Stunning Facts About La Sagrada Familia

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/65027/9-stunning-facts-about-la-sagrada-familia>

1. The first completed facade is titled *The Birth of Christ* and within this facade are three portals: "The Portal of Hope," "The Portal of Mercy," and "The Portal of Faith." The faces on "The Portal of Mercy" are actually sculpted from the death masks of diseased Barcelona citizens, as well as builders of La Sagrada Família—it was Gaudí's way of paying tribute to these people.

2. La Sagrada Família will take longer to complete than the Egyptian pyramids. It started in 1882 and is hoped to be completed in 2026 (the centennial of Gaudí's death), though it might not be finished until as late as 2040. The Great Pyramid, by comparison, only took 20 years.

3. The project was first commissioned for Francisco Del Vilar by the Spiritual Association of Devotees of Saint Joseph. He built the crypt, but after creative disagreements he dropped the site and it was passed over to Gaudí.

4. Gaudí disliked straight lines and angles because they don't often appear naturally. Instead, he based his design on the swirling curves of nature.

5. There is endless natural symbolism within La Sagrada Família. The interior structure is supported by large pillars that look like trees. One pillar

has a turtle at its base, and another a tortoise in order to show the balance between land and sea.

6. Gaudí didn't just use the natural world for inspiration; he used it to develop architectural techniques. Gaudí analyzed plants, animals, and geothermal formations to see how they naturally supported shapes and weight. The orbit of the stars was used to design the helicoidal columns.

7. Gaudí believed that no man-made object should be constructed higher than the work of God. Therefore, La Sagrada Família, when completed, will tower at 170 meters (560 ft), which was intended to be one meter less than Barcelona's highest point, Montjuïc hill.

8. In 1936, a group of anarchists and revolutionaries set fire to the crypt and destroyed the workshop which contained all of the plans and models—thankfully a scarce few were saved.

9. The holy place was built to be seen from all points of the city. It has glass mosaics at its highest points, which when reflected by sun or moonlight act as beacons to guide seafarers home.

Other Research Sources:

[Gaudí: Introduction to his Architecture](#)

Ciriot, Juan-Eduardo



[Gaudí \(Taschen Basic Architecture\)](#)

Crippa, Maria Antonietta

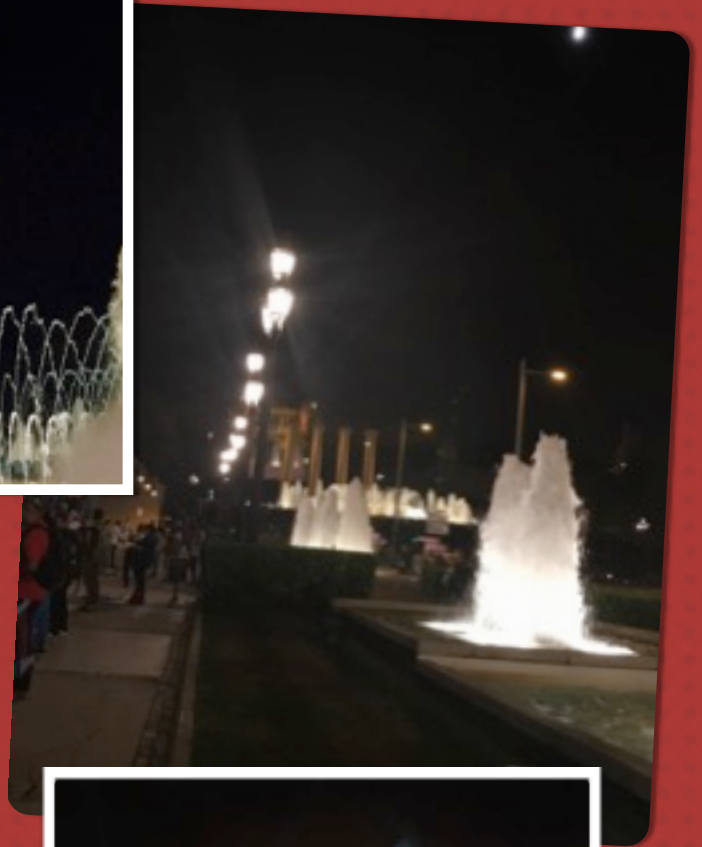
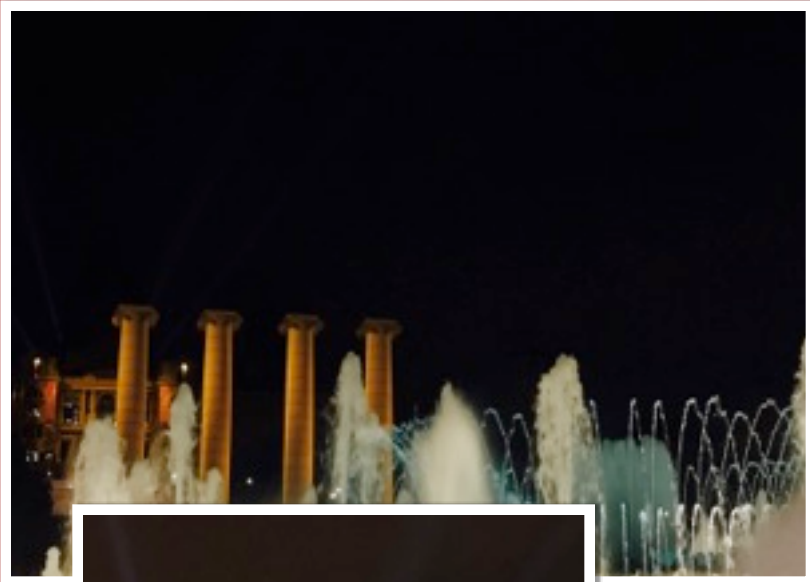


[This is Gaudí](#)

Claypool, Mollie



THE BEST WAY TO END THE DAY!



THE TRIP TO BARCELONA WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN COMPLETE IF I HAD MISSED THE SHOW AT THE FAMOUS FOUNTAIN! IT WAS BEAUTIFUL!