ENGLISH

INFORMATION BOOKLETS

Basílica Sagrada Família

7

Basílica Sagrada Família

Passion façade, cloister and sacristy

The Passion façade is in essence dramatic because it expresses the pain and sacrifice of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and by extension that of all humanity.



Jesus carrying the cross, by Josep Maria Subirachs.

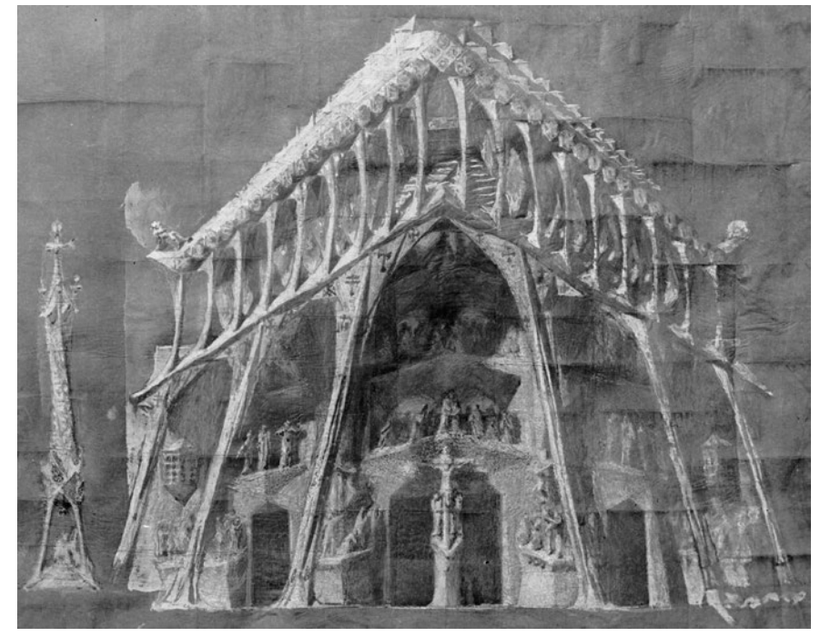


View of the whole Passion façade.

The façade of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ

While the Nativity façade celebrates the joy of Jesus' birth, the Passion façade remembers the last days of his life. So, it isn't happy; it allows us to feel his pain.

The façade on Carrer de Sardenya is dedicated to the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. For its location, it is also known as the western façade. In a theological sense, it is considered the façade of redemption. The Nativity façade, on the other end of the transept, represents incarnation, theologically. The Passion façade has the same structure as the Nativity façade (a narthex and four bell towers, the latter devoted to the apostles James the Less, Bartholomew, Thomas and Philip, completed in 1977) but, unlike the Nativity façade that exalts the joy of life, this façade is in essence dramatic because it expresses the pain and sacrifice of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and by extension that of all humanity. Gaudí left a drawing that describes this façade in great detail, explicitly indicating that it should be "harsh and cruel, as if made of bones" and even noted that some may find it "too extravagant". The architect wanted it to inspire "fear", and to do so he said he would use plenty of "chiaroscuro, recesses and protrusions, all of which gives it a gloomy effect." He also said: "What's more, I'm willing to sacrifice the building itself, to break arches, cut down columns, in order to give people an idea of how bloody the sacrifice is."

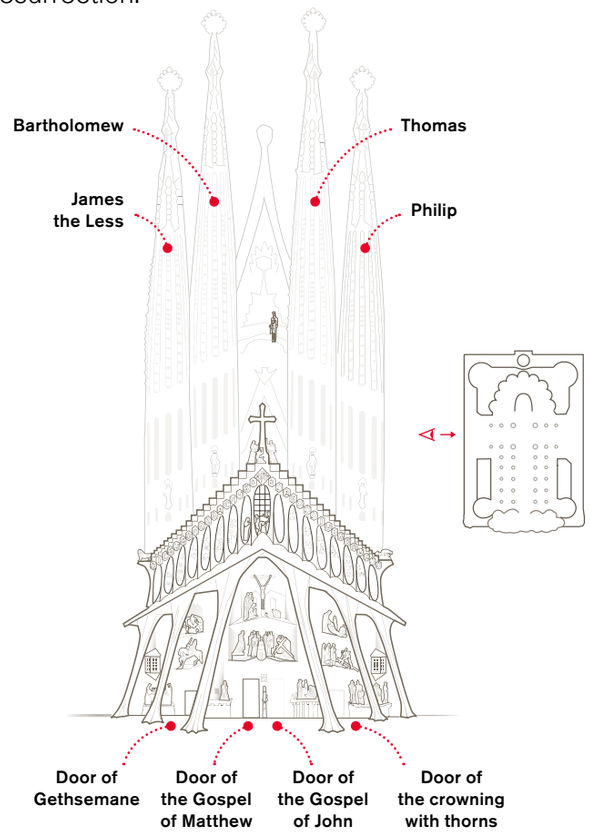


Drawing from 1917 in which Gaudí laid out what the portal on this façade should look like (original drawing).

Structure of the façade

Like the Nativity façade, the Passion façade has three portals and four bell towers. They differ, however, in that the Passion façade has a pediment. The lower narthex represents the passion of Christ and the upper narthex, his resurrection.

According to the project Gaudí began to design in 1911, the façade portal has a great narthex held up by six columns that slant inwards and towards the centre, on top of which there is a pediment or second narthex that includes a gallery. This second narthex, in turn, is supported by eighteen columns, nine on either side, which in groups of three rest on each of the six columns on the lower narthex. These eighteen columns, also slightly slanted inwards and to the centre, hold up a cornice. The lower narthex has three doors into the Basilica and features scenes of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. The upper narthex, however, shows the prophets and patriarchs addressing the resurrected Jesus, who is present here in the sculpture group of the Empty Tomb and the central stained-glass window on the façade. The shape of all the columns on the portal of this façade is reminiscent of huge tree trunks, which flare out at the bottom, for greater stability, and at the top, to better support the weight above them.



The pediment gallery

The pediment gallery is covered by a series of hexagonal prisms supported, at one end, on the columns (evocative of bones) and at the other, on a wall adjacent to the towers. The wall, however, is not at the centre of the narthex so that, from the street, the sculpture group showing the Empty Tomb in travertine and Floresta stone by sculptor Francesc Fajula can be seen between the two central columns. In this sculpture group, an angel sits on the round stone that covered the entrance to the tomb, announcing the resurrection to Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome. The open space in the Empty Tomb contrasts with the colourful stained-glass window of the Resurrection, designed by stained-glass artist Joan Vila-Grau. Above the prisms, following Gaudí's designs, there is a cornice or crest made of cubes and paraboloids, ascending up towards the centre. Here there is also an acroterion, made up of a cross created using the double twist geometry (see "double twist column" in booklet 9) in tensioned stone. The cross is 7.5 metres tall (7.5 is the model used as the geometric base of the floor plan and height of the whole Temple - see booklet 9), 4.25 metres wide and weighs 18 tonnes. **At the foot of the cross, there are three angels** sculpted in Italian travertine by Lau Feliu. The sculpture group, given its shape, helps further elevate the façade towards the cross. Each of the hexagonal prisms has one letter from the Latin phrase "Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum", meaning "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews". On either side of the crest, there is an acroterion alluding to the Lion of Judah on the mountain end and to Isaac's sacrificial Lamb, on the sea end. The acroterions are also the work of Lau Feliu, who sculpted them in granite from the French region of Tarn, just like the cross and pediment.



Close-up of the base of the column, reminiscent of a tree trunk.



Two important elements, although they are not visible from outside the Temple, are the quarry and the garden. They occupy the space just behind Jesus' tomb and in front of the window. The quarry represents the place where the tomb was dug. The garden, representing the one that was next to the tomb according to the Gospel, is planted with Mediterranean vegetation. This is a quiet space, set aside for contemplation and prayer. From here, the Cross of Glory, stained glass window of the Resurrection and, even, the resurrected Christ are visible.

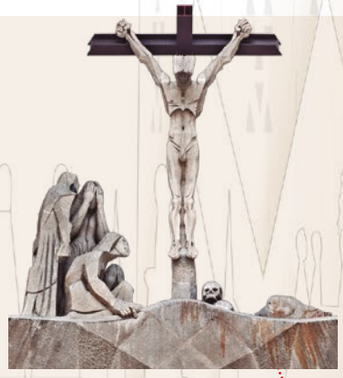
The lower narthex

Inside the lower narthex on the Passion façade, as if a huge altarpiece, there are representations of the events Jesus experienced on Holy Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The scenes were created by sculptor Josep Maria Subirachs between 1986 and 2010, using his own language of sharp edges and exaggerated volumes, with great expressiveness.

The hexagonal prisms covering the pediment gallery are inscribed with the phrase "Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum".

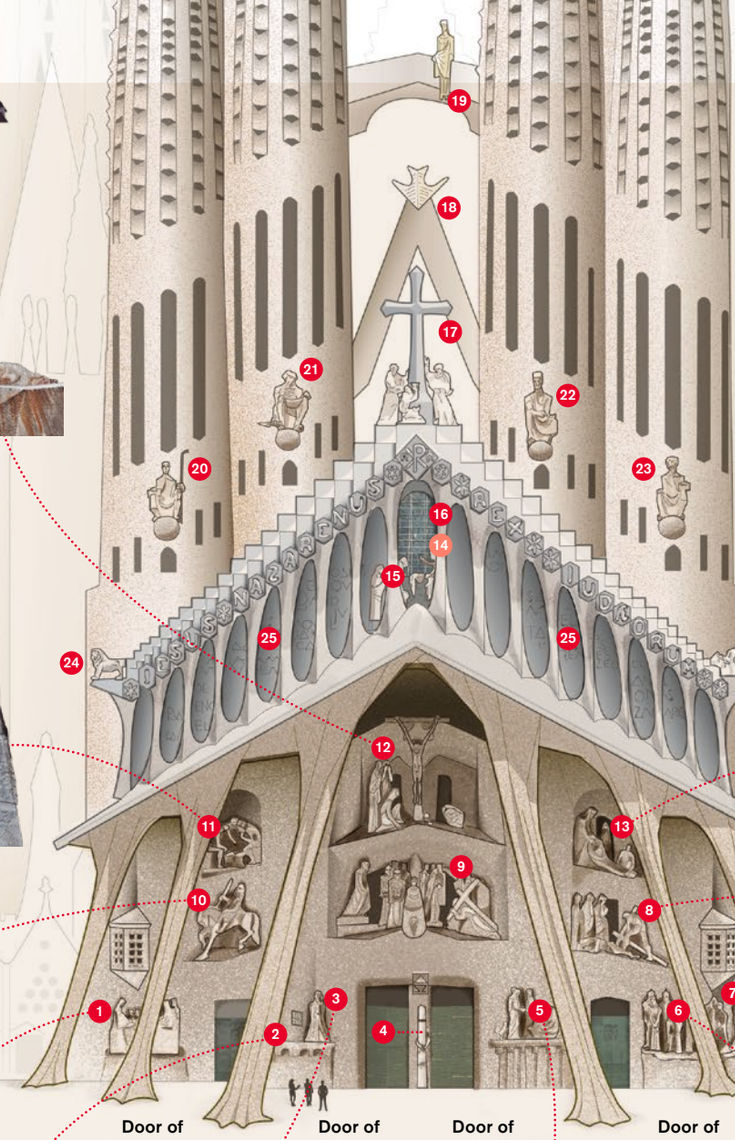
Symbolism of the façade

1 The Last Supper. Jesus and the apostles seated around a table for the first celebration of the Eucharist.
2 Arrest of Jesus. A group of armed men go in search of Jesus. Peter cuts off the right ear of the high priest's servant.
3 Betrayal of Judas. Judas hugs Jesus and kisses him.
4 The flagellation. It expresses Jesus' suffering and solitude, betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter.
5 Peter's denial. Peter hides from the women and denies that he is a disciple of Jesus three times.
6 The *Ecce Homo* (behold the man). Pilate takes Jesus to the Jews to decide his future.
7 The judgement of Pilate. Pontius Pilate washes his hands, while his wife Procula leaves because she believes they are condemning a just man.
8 Jesus falls before the three Marys (Virgin Mary, Mary of Clopas and Mary Magdalene) and Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus lift the cross.
9 Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem, while an Evangelist (who Subirachs gave Gaudí's face) watches on. The soldiers behind them wear helmets inspired by the chimneys at La Pedrera.
10 Longinus on a horse, with the lance thrust into Jesus' side.
11 Soldiers throwing dice to win Jesus' tunic.
12 Christ crucified, with Mary, John and Mary Magdalene kneeling at the foot of the cross. The cross is made up of laminated steel pieces placed horizontally, and the Christ hangs on an incline so it can be seen head-on from below.
13 The descent from the cross and the entombment.
14 The quarry *(not visible from outside).*
15 The Empty Tomb.
16 The stained-glass window of the Resurrection.
17 Cross and angels.
18 Holy Spirit.
19 The ascension of Jesus.
20 James the Less.
21 Bartholomew.
22 Thomas.
23 Philip.
24 The Lion of Judah.
25 The patriarchs and prophets.
26 The sacrificial Lamb of Isaac.



















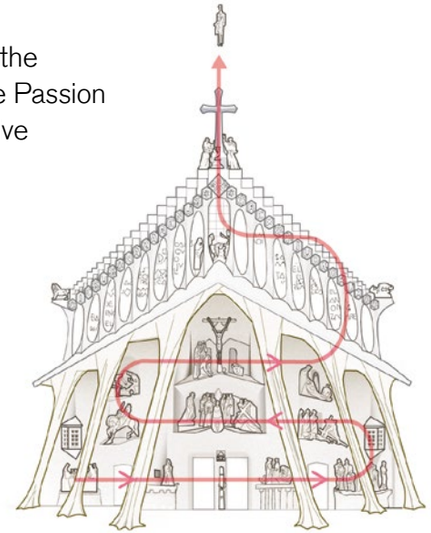






Symbolic meaning

We have already said that everything at the Sagrada Família has meaning. And on the Passion façade, all the architectural and decorative elements have an evangelical meaning.



The lower narthex

The passion of the Christ is presented on the façade in a chronological journey that begins at the bottom left of the façade and carries on upwards in an S-shaped path. In making this work, sculptor Subirachs was extra careful in integrating the sculpture groups into the architecture. The figures, in travertine and sandstone from La Floresta, feature hard, severe lines, at times Brutalist and at others soft, expressing the course, even gloomy effect that Gaudí wanted to represent the pain of the Passion and death. Above the group of the Crucifixion, like a baldachin, Subirachs placed bronze plaques to represent the veil at the temple of Jerusalem that, according to the Gospels, was torn in two when Jesus died. This eliminated the separation between the holy place and the rest of the tabernacle, opening this section up to everyone.





The pediment gallery

The gallery on the upper pediment, located behind the eighteen columns, symbolises the path or steps taken by the patriarchs and prophets to the resurrected Christ (represented here by the **sculpture group of the Empty Tomb** and the stained-glass window of the Resurrection), which is why the name of these individuals sent by God to announce the coming of Jesus are inscribed on the back wall. Next to the quarry that, as we've said, is located behind the sculpture group of the Empty Tomb, there is a **garden** where vegetation grows, symbolising life after death. At the centre of the pediment, a cross rises up expressing victory over death, with three angels at the foot of the cross praising it.

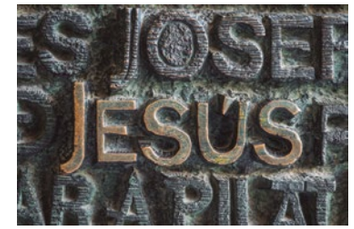
The magnitude of the Sagrada Família makes it impossible to take in all the details at first glance, which is why it is important to explain them.



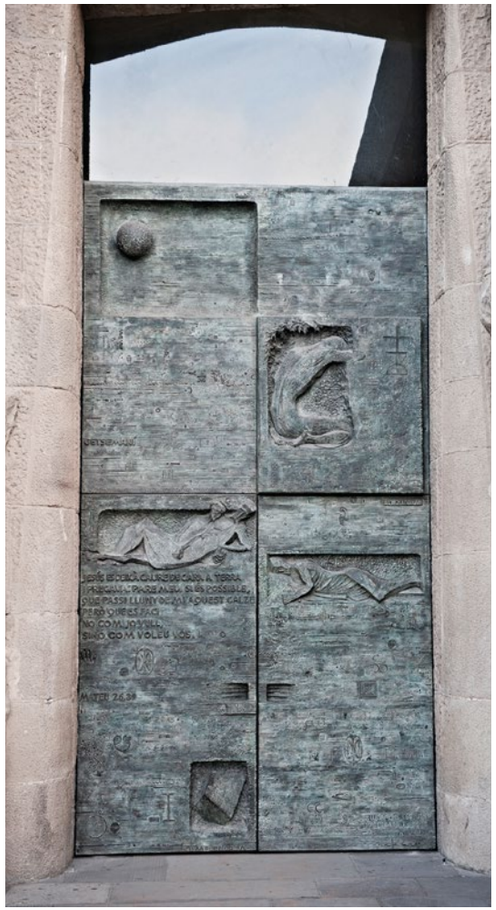
Additionally, on either side of the pediment there is a sculpture representing the symbols of Jesus Christ from the Old Testament: on one side, the Lion of Judah, and on the other, Isaac's sacrificial Lamb. The first symbolises Christ who, with his strength, overcame death and the second, Jesus sacrificing himself for the sins of man. And further up, on top of the narthex and above the central window on the façade, we find the Holy Spirit, represented by a dove, and a bit higher, on the bridge that connects the two central bell towers, a figure in gilded bronze of Jesus' ascension, also by Subirachs.

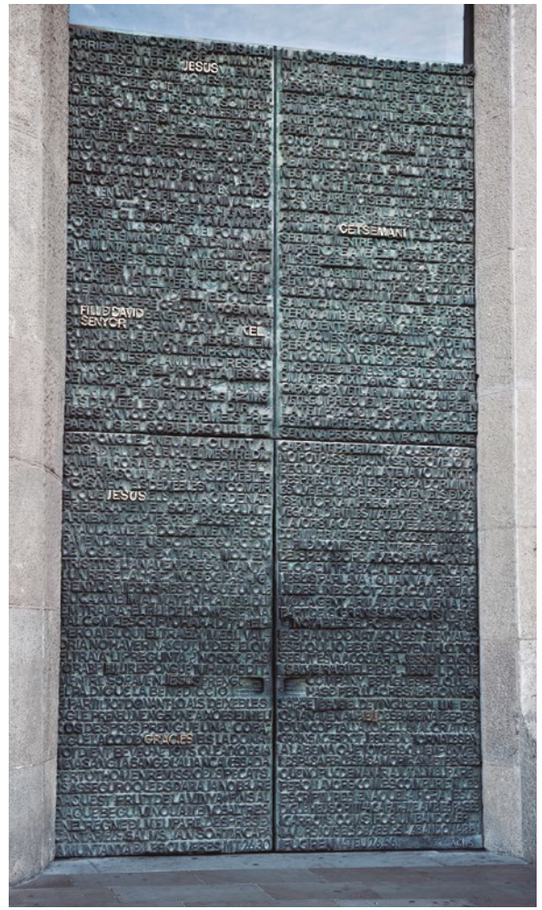
The doors on the Passion façade

The strength of the sculpture groups on the Passion façade contrasts with the austerity of the bronze doors, despite being created by the same artist, who consciously chose this option.



Some bits of bronze in the narration of the passion of Christ have been polished to highlight particularly meaningful words or phrases.

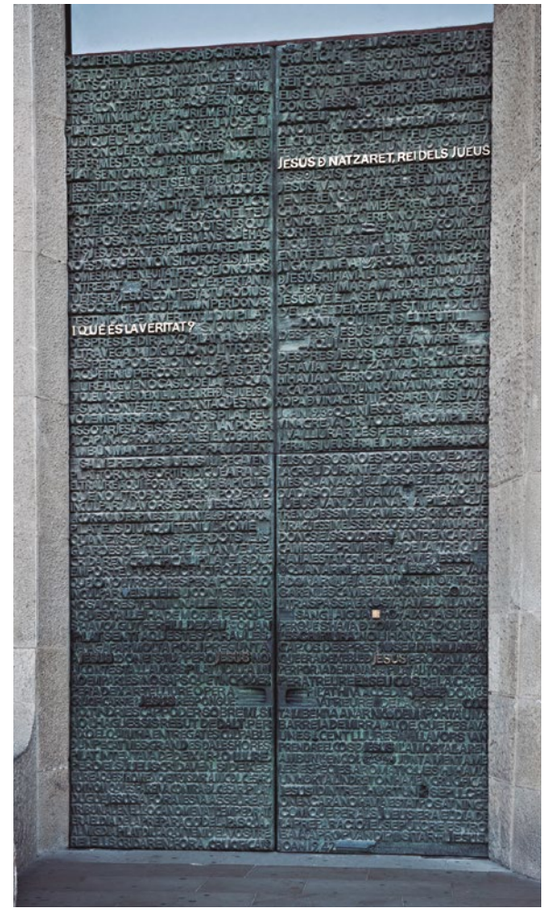


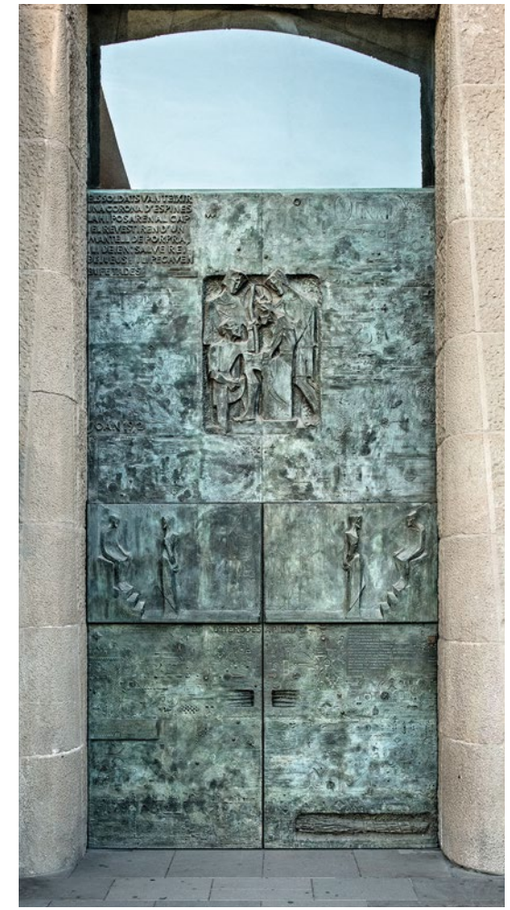


The three portals on the façade that lead into the Basilica have double-leaf bronze doors, also by Subirachs. The central doorway has two doors, with ten thousand letters in relief spelling out fragments of the Passion narrative from the Gospel of Matthew, on the left door, and from the Gospel of John, on the right door. Some bits of bronze in the narration have been polished to highlight particularly meaningful words or phrases, like Pontius Pilate's question: "And what is the truth?".

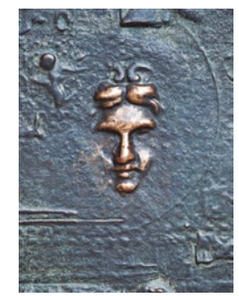
The north door, on the left-hand side, represents the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus praying while the apostles sleep. The south door, on the right-hand side, is dedicated to the crown of thorns and when Jesus was taken before Pilate and Herod.

On the left, the door of Gethsemane, and on the right, one of the two doors of the central portal, the door of the Gospel of Matthew.





On top, the second of the doors of the central portal, the door of the Gospel of John, and above it, a close-up. On the right, the door of the crowning with thorns and below it, two close-ups of this door.





The cloister

Both on the Nativity façade and on the Passion façade, the sections of the cloister are dedicated to the Virgin Mary.



The sections of the cloister on the Passion façade, and especially the portals leading into the chancel, are dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy and Our Lady of Dolours, as per Gaudí's project. Mary is ever-present at the Basilica, especially in the cloister, because she is the one who watches over the new paradise.

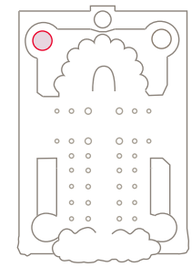
The cloister of Our Lady of Mercy, on the Passion façade, and the cloister of Our Lady of Montserrat, on the Nativity façade, have been fitted for use in ecclesiastical, catechistic, educational and popular events. While the cloister of Our Lady of Dolours, on the northern end, is home to the Liturgical path. The floor of the chancel of the portal of the Passion, which lies between these two sections of the cloister, features a piece referencing Palm Sunday, by Domènec Fita. It is a bas-relief carved in red porphyry and filled with white resin, showing Jesus entering Jerusalem.

The floor of the chancel of the portal of the Passion features a piece referencing Palm Sunday, by Domènec Fita.

Sacristy

The Sagrada Família will have two sacristies, on either side of the apse. The first to be built is the one on the western façade, which is already in use.

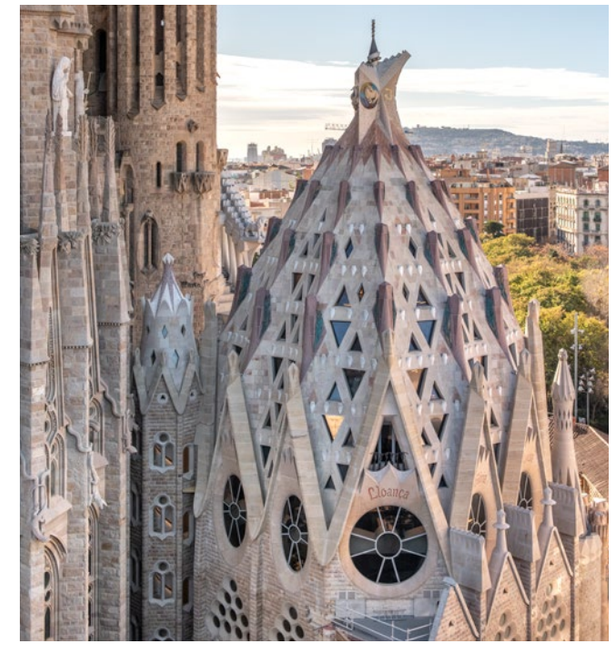
The space for the Basilica sacristy itself (surrounded on two sides by the cloister) has been fitted with an oak and glass structure that, with rhomboidal windows, encloses the space while still letting light in and a view in from the cloister. The sacristies are used to store the objects needed for mass and for priests to prepare for liturgical celebrations. For this purpose, two wood and wrought iron wardrobes designed by Gaudí have been put in this area. Despite having been damaged in the uprisings of 1936, they have been returned to their original state, restoring the pieces that were left and remaking those that were lost, after conducting detailed studies of the remains and photographs from that time. It is the cupboard for vestments and liturgical items. The sacristy also has copies of the chairs of honour Gaudí designed for the crypt presbytery.



Floor plan of the Basilica with colours showing the location of the western sacristy.

On 8 November 2015, on the fifth anniversary of the consecration of the Basilica, Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, then Archbishop of Barcelona, blessed the sacristy, which was then used for the first time for this purpose.

View from above of the western sacristy and inside of the sacristy showing the wardrobes for vestments and liturgical items.





Liturgical path

The section of the cloister of Our Lady of Dolours, including the part of the cloister that penetrates the sacristy building, features a display of original and reproduction liturgical items designed by Gaudí for the crypt at the Sagrada Família (see booklet 5) and the prayer chapel at Casa Batlló.



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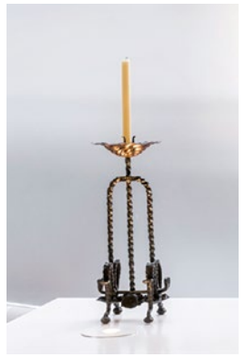
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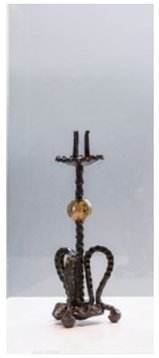
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10

Pieces

1 **Tenebrae hearse**, c. 1898
Wrought iron with gold
247.5 x 179.5 x 104 cm

2 **Two-legged candelabrum**, c. 1898
Wrought iron
166 x 197 x 32 cm

3 **Candlestick**, c. 1883
Stone, iron, brass and wood
185 x 54 x 54 cm

4 **Table-top candelabrum with cross**, c. 1890
Wrought iron
135 x 56 x 22 cm

5 **Table-top candlestick holder**, c. 1890
Wrought iron
55 x 21 x 18 cm

6 **Candlestick holder**, c. 1890
Wrought iron
31 x 12.3 x 11 cm

7 **Lectern**, c. 1925
Wrought iron
33 x 31.5 x 24 cm

8 **Pew**, c. 1898
Wood and iron
141.5 x 188 x 60 cm
Reproduction from c. 1942

9 **Pew with moveable backrest**, c. 1898
Wood and iron
92 x 180 x 70.5 cm
Reproduction from c. 1942

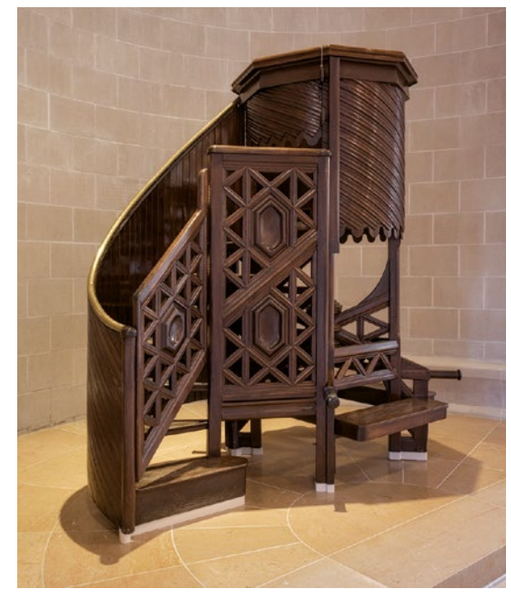
10 **JMJ Monogram** (Jesus-Mary-Joseph), on the ceiling of the prayer chapel at Casa Batlló, 1909
Plaster with iron core
98 x 98 cm

11 **Moveable pulpit**, 1898
Wood
273.5 x 257.5 x 210 cm
Reproduction from c. 1943

12 **Altar-card frames from Casa Batlló**, 1904–1906
Polychrome plaster
19 x 20 x 4 cm (two copies)
21 x 46 x 4.5 cm

13 **Presbytery chairs**, 1898
Wood
93.5 x 70.5 x 50 cm
Reproduction from c. 1943

14 **Prie-dieus**, 1898
Wood and velvet
85.5 x 60 x 50 cm (each)
Reproductions from c. 1943



11



12



13 14

Glossary

Acroterion Decorative element that, in classical architecture, was put on either side or at the top of a triangular pediment.

Altar-card frames Stands or frames that contained the unchanging sections of the mass, placed on the altar to help priests follow the recitation while celebrating the Eucharist. After the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), they were no longer used.

Candlestick Candelabrum for candlesticks, or large, thick candles.

Chancel A space, generally with a rectangular floor plan, located inside the entryway of the building, which often has one or more doors to prevent air and noise from outside from entering the interior space.

Fajula i Pellicer, Francesc (Sant Joan de les Abadesses, 1945) Architect, sculptor and PhD in Fine Arts and expert in heritage sites. He has worked with the Sagrada Família on several sculpted images.

Feliu i Maspons, Lau (Barcelona, 1957) Trained as a painter at Barcelona's Escola Massana and in sculpture at the workshop of Cinto Casanovas, he combines these disciplines with jewellery, illustration and teaching art. In terms of sculpture, his religious work is particularly noteworthy.

Fita i Molat, Domènec (Girona, 1927–2020) Artist trained at the fine arts schools in Olot and Barcelona who defended the integration of art forms, which led him to experiment with sculpture, drawing, painting and ceramics. He also taught art.

Gethsemane Garden located at the foot of the Mount of Olives, current day Jerusalem, which the New Testament says Jesus and his disciples visited before the Last Supper. It was, therefore, the place where Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus.

Lion of Judah Judah, one of Jacob's 12 children (and, therefore, Isaac's grandchildren and Abraham's great-grandchildren) was given a lion by his father, who also bestowed upon him the sceptre of power even though he was not the first-born child. So, it became the symbol of the tribe of Judah.

Narthex Vestibule, portico, in front of the door of a church or temple.

Pediment Triangular or curved finishing element on a façade or portico.

Pulpit Elevated platform used for reading the holy texts or for preaching.

Redemption Action of redeeming oneself. In Christianity, with his passion and death, Christ saved humanity from sin and offers them eternal life.

Sacristy At a church, the place, generally off the presbytery, where sacred vessels and vestments are stored, and where the priests change for their liturgical functions.

Subirachs, Josep Maria (Barcelona, 1927–2014) Sculptor, illustrator and engraver. From a Noucentisme style, he evolved towards expression through sharp, angular shapes and exaggerated volumes, which his work is known for. He created the first abstract sculptures to be on display in public in Barcelona and devoted himself exclusively to working on the Sagrada Família from 1986.

Tenebrae hearse Large candelabrum, triangular in shape, that holds fifteen candles, previously used while holding Tenebrae mass during Easter week.

Tensioned stone Stones compressed with steel rods. The pieces of stone are held together with these cables, which run through the centre of the blocks and are then tensioned (pulled taut). This makes the rows of stone pieces one single element, making them stronger as a whole.

The sacrificial Lamb of Isaac Symbol of Jesus, who sacrificed himself for the sins of humankind, like the lamb God gave Abraham so he wouldn't have to sacrifice his son Isaac.

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