

Gaudí

God's Architect



Gaudí

**God's Architect
(1852 - 1926)**

© Associació pro Beatificació d'Antoni Gaudí
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5
Life of Gaudí	6
His Christian Virtues.....	14
His Reputation for Holiness	21
The Process of Beatification.....	26
Private Devotion and Favours	29
Prayer for Private Devotion.....	31
Bibliography	32

INTRODUCTION

In autumn of 1982, the Holy Father, John Paul II, visited Barcelona and, standing before Gaudi's magnificent church, the Sagrada Familia, he said, "This church, while it is not yet finished, has a solid foundation. It brings to our thoughts another construction made of living stones, the Christian family, where faith and love are born and cultivated endlessly. *May God bless your families.*"

Gaudi's masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, has become the emblematic symbol of Barcelona. Its silhouette is known all over the world and daily attracts thousands of visitors from every continent. Symbolic of Gaudi's deep religious philosophy, its highly original architectural form and unique sculptured decorations blend the sacred symbols of nature with those of the Christian faith.

The Servant of God, Antoni Gaudi i Cornet, the creator of this masterpiece and many others, both secular and religious, (some of which have been declared World Works of Art by the United Nations) was a profoundly Christian man. Throughout his long life he continuously demonstrated his ability to create incredibly original architectural designs that combined fine art and his deep religious convictions. Of the great architects of the modern world, Gaudi stands alone in the way he integrated his work with his faith for the glory of God.

In 1915 Monsignor Ragonesi, Papal Nuncio to Spain, visited the Sagrada Familia while it was in the early stages of construction. After listening to Gaudi's explanation of his architectural concept, he said, "Maestro, you are the Dante of archi-

ecture. Your magnificent work is a Christian poem carved in stone.”

LIFE OF GAUDI

Antoni Gaudi was born on the 25th of June 1852 and was baptised the following day in the parish church of St. Peter of Reus in the Diocese of Tarragona. He was the son of Francesc Gaudi (from Riudoms) and Antonia Cornet (from Reus). From childhood he seemed destined for the profession of architecture. While still a boy he worked in his father’s boiler-making shop in Reus where he was fascinated by the inter-relationship of shape and volume and the artistic potential of wrought iron. His boyhood vacations were often spent at his family’s farm in Riudoms, deep in the Tarragona countryside. Here he learned to love the images of nature, the forms of trees and flowers, of animals and insects. For him nature became the essence of God’s design and he made it his teacher.

In childhood Antoni suffered rheumatic fever, the after effects of which adversely affected his health throughout the rest of his life. In spite of this, he retained the outward appearance of robust health. At the age of seventy-three he was run down by a streetcar and died as a result of those injuries. Were it not for this accident he might have lived as long as his father, who retained his full faculties until his death at age ninety-three.

Gaudi began his schooling in Reus, where he attended grammar school and then a high school run by the Piarist Fathers. It was here that he acquired his rock-solid religious



Antoni Gaudí, coming out of the cathedral of Barcelona in the procession of Corpus Christi in 1924, he was then 72 years old.

formation. From Reus he moved to Barcelona to study architecture, a subject that had already become the passion of his life, and enrolled in the Escuela Tecnica Superior de Arquitectos de Barcelona. During his years at the university he earned for tuition working as a draftsman for friends who were engineers and architects. The University awarded him a degree in architecture in 1878.

While at the University, Gaudi had a strong interest in all the humanities and frequently attended classes in philosophy, history and aesthetics. He was also a regular attendee at concerts and during one period was a member of an amateur theatrical group. Always an ardent student, he read poetry and the classics and during weekends and vacations travelled throughout the provinces getting to know the beauty of the landscapes, mountains and rivers as well as the country's unsurpassed architectural monuments. This wide-ranging aesthetic investigation contributed tremendously to Gaudi's ability to produce architectural masterpieces in the broadest and most complex sense of the word.

Gaudi came to see the designs of nature as the masterwork of the Creator and his own life's mission as producing beautiful artistic creations that incorporated these themes and, in so doing, to glorify God's work.

There have been several hundred books written about Gaudi, yet almost nothing written by him. Nor did he give lectures. Fortunately, he guided many visitors, both famous and ordinary, around the construction site of his beloved Sagrada Familia and in so doing explained in graphic detail his philosophy of design.

He was also generous in his advice to disciples and collaborators, advice that was full of human and Christian wisdom. Following Gaudi's death, his many disciples gathered together and published a collection of his statements, maxims, principles of design and philosophy of life. This collection preserves for posterity the main body of Gaudi's intellectual concepts.

As a young man Gaudi developed a reputation for being a bon vivant, enjoying elegant clothes, expensive restaurants and fashionable society. However, he never married and at no time treated lightly the Commandments or teachings of his Church. His household consisted of his father, who lived to be over ninety, and a chronically sick niece who had been orphaned. In his dealings with people he was always generous and kind, and with those involved in his projects -his colleagues, collaborators and the construction workers themselves, whom he personally directed- he generated long-term friendships and a faithful devotion akin to worship.

Gaudi's masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia (The Church of the Holy Family) was originally begun by another architect. The project was initiated by a pious bookstore owner, Jose Maria Bocabella, who after a visit to the Holy Land conceived the idea of forming in Barcelona a "Spiritual Association" of people devoted to St. Joseph and the Holy Family. The purpose as stated in his prospectus was "to awaken the lethargy of sleeping hearts, exalt the Faith, and to call upon the mercy of our Lord for our country." Soon after the Association was formed the members decided to build a private church dedicated to their idea of the Holy Family, the Sagrada Familia. Little

did they know that before it was finished it would become one of the most famous Catholic churches in the world.

The Association thrived; however, in its initial years it accomplished very little toward the building of its church. Then in 1883 they selected as their architect Antoni Gaudi who, at the age of thirty-one, had attracted considerable attention in Barcelona for his highly imaginative architectural designs. From the beginning, Gaudi was given complete authority over the project. It would seem the Association was taking something of a chance with such a young man; however, Gaudi had already attracted the notice of some of Barcelona's leading patrons of the arts and had completed several major projects for them. Already, he had established a reputation as both a technical genius and a devout Christian. The Association felt he was the man for the job, and they were correct.

For Gaudi, to receive complete control over the design and construction of such an immense undertaking was the opportunity of a lifetime, the kind of commission all architects dream of, a gigantic project, no limiting time frame for completion and the freedom to express his own unique concept of God's relationship to art.

In the initial years the Association's funds were limited and work on the Sagrada Familia proceeded slowly. During this time Gaudi accepted commissions for a number of other major projects in and around Barcelona. However, as the years passed, he began to see the Sagrada Familia as the culmination of his life's work and devoted more and more of his time to it. Finally, thirty-three years after beginning the project, he decid-

ed to refuse all other commissions and concentrate his whole energy on what he termed “God’s Work.” For the last ten years of his life he gave his total dedication to the Sagrada Familia.

Gaudi maintained close friendships with a number of eminent clerics, among them Bishop Torras i Bages of Vic, his spiritual director, Bishop Campins of Palma de Mallorca and Bishop Grau of Astorga. Other close friends were Father Enric d’Osso, founder of the congregation of St. Teresa of Jesus, and



Gaudi’s workshop in the Sagrada Familia. This is his drafting table where he habitually ate his frugal lunch.

nowadays Saint Enric d'Osso, Monsignor Gil Pares, the parish priest of the Holy Family and Father Agusti Mas, a member of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri and his confessor. These good churchmen were responsible for guiding his spiritual thinking and instilled in him the principles of the liturgy and the social doctrine of the Church.

From an early age Gaudi felt a deep concern for the social problems of his age, especially those having to do with the living conditions of factory workers, which in many places were deplorable. He was able to apply his spiritually derived concepts to workers housing when he designed the buildings of the Workers Cooperative of Mataro, the first employee-owned factory in Spain. Initially an idealist, Gaudi came to realize that the acute social problems of his times could not be solved by material means; that the only permanent solution was for people to put Christian social doctrine into practice.

During much of his professional life, Gaudi's home was the house he had built for himself in the Colonia Güell, the model village he designed for his friend and patron Eusebi Güell. Following the death of his niece and housekeeper in 1912, Gaudi continued to live alone in the house under increasingly austere conditions. Finally, in October of 1925, he closed the house and moved his few personal effects to his studio and workshop in the basement of the Sagrada Familia.

Part of Gaudi's philosophy was that all artists had to make personal sacrifices in order to create great art. In keeping with this he dedicated himself to an austere life of prayer, penance, and detachment from material goods. Living in his workshop,

eating at his drafting table, he eschewed the comfortable life of a famous artist. When soliciting donations for the ongoing construction of the Sagrada Familia he was outgoing and forceful. However, on most other occasions he avoided society and lived like a hermit, his only contacts being his spiritual advisors and his construction workers. He dressed in workmen's clothes of the poorest kind and permitted himself only the simplest food. His daily regimen was to rise before dawn and walk to the cathedral where he attended Mass. He then walked back to the Sagrada Familia where he supervised the construction until five thirty in the evening. Next, he walked back to the cathedral to visit the adjacent Church of Saint Philip Neri where he made his personal prayer and chatted with his spiritual director. He felt the physical exertion of these long walks was necessary to relieve the ever-present pain of his rheumatism.

On Monday, June 7, 1926, while walking from the Sagrada Familia to the cathedral, he was run down by a streetcar while crossing the Gran Via at Bailen Street. Unconscious as he was, and dressed in the most humble of workmen's clothes, passers-by failed to recognize Barcelona's most famous architect; thinking him to be just another poverty case, they took him to the charity ward of the Hospital of the Holy Cross, housed in a nearby Medieval building.

Several times during his life Gaudi had expressed a desire that when he died, it would be as a poor man in a charity ward, received only by the love of God. His desire was fulfilled. The following day he recovered consciousness and, surrounded by a few of his most intimate friends, he received with great devo-

tion the Last Rites and was able to speak a few words. Two days later, on the tenth of June 1926, he died. His last words were, “*Amen. My God! My God!*”

As soon as the city discovered that Antoni Gaudi had died, all Barcelona went into mourning. His funeral was a gigantic manifestation of civil mourning involving masses of people from all walks of life, from high government officials to the lowliest workers. He was buried in the chapel of Our Lady of Carmel, deep in the crypt of his eternal monument, the Church of the Sagrada Familia. There his remains rest today, constantly visited by those who pay homage to his memory and plead for his intercession.

HIS CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Antoni Gaudi knew well his human nature and was fully aware of his shortcomings. Most difficult of these for him to control were strong will and quick temper, a characteristic of the inhabitants of the Tarragona countryside. He always attempted to achieve evangelical perfection, which he equated with the love of God and service to others, and had to continually struggle to control his sharp tongue when dealing with those who affected a pompous or elitist manner. Throughout his life he faithfully adhered to Christian morality, and from the time he dedicated his life exclusively to the construction of the Sagrada Familia he totally abandoned the socially attractive life of a famous architect with great professional prestige.

His baptismal **FAITH** was nourished by the piety of his family —his mother was devoted to Our Lady of Mercy, the

patroness of Reus— and from the solid religious formation he received from the Piarist Fathers. From them he learned the value of the divine history of the salvation of men through Christ, incarnated and given to the world by the Virgin Mary. This spiritual view, Christ like and Mary-like, he was able to materialize in stone in his most important architectural monument, the Sagrada Familia.

The **LOVE OF GOD** made Gaudi's sensitive soul resonate when he participated in the Mass and other liturgical ceremonies or in manifestations of popular piety. This love of God he translated into **LOVE OF OTHERS**: the members of his family, his friends, his fellow workers and his fatherland, its language and its culture. He greatly enjoyed excursions, which put him in physical contact with the people, the scenery, the monuments and the customs of the far corners of his Catalan land. Both loves were rooted in his generous sacrifice and his love for the **CROSS** —that cross which he placed on top of all his buildings, whether religious or secular.

From a human perspective, some might call Gaudi's life a failure, since some of the major works he designed were never constructed, none of those works that were, was ever entirely finished, and he was often the target of vicious criticism by the art critics and pundits of his time. His main support came from a handful of his "visionary" friends and artists and from a host of simple people and children who loved his work.

Gaudi was a very **PIOUS** man: he attended daily Mass and received Communion. His frequent reading of the Holy Gospel was reflected in his sculptured representations of the mysteries

Etsuro Sotoo, the Japanese sculptor who has dedicated many years to the Sagrada Familia, explaining the Nativity façade to the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Behind him is Jordi Bonet, the current architect of the basilica. To the left of Etsuro is Professor Joan Bassegoda who holds the Gaudi chair at the University of Barcelona and is a prestigious authority on Gaudi's architecture.





of the life of Jesus which ornament the Nativity façade of the Sagrada Familia. He also designed the ornamentation of the two other façades, one of the Passion, the other of the Glory. Whenever Gaudi explained the design of the Church to visitors his explanation was a marvellous **APOSTOLATE OF DOCTRINE**. The way in which he explained the scenes of the Gospel impressed everyone, no matter how mediocre their religious life may have been.

He loved the **LITURGY**, which as an architect he considered to be the primordial purpose of the churches he designed. In relation to this everything else should be arranged. He had a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph. The final signature of Gaudi's works, whether religious or secular, was a four-armed cross at their summit. In many cases his cross bore an anagram of the Holy Family: "JMJ" Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

One of his major works, the Casa Mila, popularly known in Barcelona as the La Pedrera (the stone quarry), was conceived as homage to our Lady of the Rosary. It is decorated with Marian legends engraved on the columns and pious and poetical inscriptions on the interior ceilings and the external cornices of the top floor. In the original design a large statue of Our Lady flanked by the Archangels St. Michael and St. Gabriel was to crown the buildings façade. When the owner of the house, for politically expedient reasons, refused to let him include the statues, Gaudi abandoned the project. He said that had he known beforehand of this possibility he would never have accepted the commission.

The theological and moral virtues he practiced were founded on a deep **HUMILITY**, lived with naturalness and conviction. His extraordinary artistic talents, most importantly his highly unusual capacity to conceive original forms in space, he always considered to be a divine gift and never boasted about it.

We have a testimonial letter from a Mr. Lluch, a cabinet maker and decorator, who tells us about his father who, when a student at the school of fine arts, visited the Sagrada Familia with a group of fellow students. Gaudi himself guided the group around the project giving them innumerable details and explanations. During the tour Mr. Lluch's father approached Gaudi with the intention of taking a photograph of him. Gaudi stopped him with a sudden gesture and said, "*Please, don't seek the glorification of man; the glory is only for God.*"

Another testimonial tells how a friend of Gaudi's had the idea of making a list of Barcelona's leaders in politics, art, science, etc. who could be offered as role models for the city's youth. The list he prepared was very long; however, each time he learned that one of these leaders had some shortcoming, he deleted their name with the comment, "That's one less."

One day the man ran into Gaudi and told him about his disappointing experience.

"Look," he said, "of the many people I started with, only two remain as totally upright."

"*Who are they?*" asked Gaudi.

"You and the musician, Lluís Millet," the man replied.

"Then," said Gaudi, "*you can also cross off our names. Don't you know that in the Gloria of the Mass we say Tu solus sanctus. (You alone are the Holy one)? There is only one who is Holy.*"

We have more testimony from the teacher, Rosa Pares, age 87, who was the niece of the parish priest of the Sagrada Familia and knew Gaudi personally. She tells us that one day her father went to the church to tell his brother, Monsignor Gil Pares, that his sister-in-law was expecting another child. She already had a large number of children.

‘Would you believe it, Gil, our Paquita is expecting another baby, the poor thing!’

Gaudi, who was present, immediately corrected him saying, “Why poor thing? When Our Lord sends us children, he knows what he is doing.”

Gaudi was a man who lived Christian **HOPE** at every moment and completely trusted Divine Providence.

Gaudi’s only moral shortcoming was his tendency to fits of anger, which sometimes found expression in cutting words. He had little tolerance for pedantic and presumptuous people and, when he met this type, had to fight to keep his temper under control. But this didn’t keep him from being **JOYFUL**, happy and always ready to enjoy a joke. He felt tremendous sympathy for the working class; they sensed this and it endeared him to them. He was especially loved by children.

Rosa Pares tells us, “Whenever Don Anton saw us, children of the neighbourhood, playing, he would come to us and would talk to us. Seeing such a good man with his hands in his overcoat pockets, the overcoat which he was always wearing, gave us confidence. We couldn’t help but run to him.”

Aunt Maria, the pastor’s sister and housekeeper, would scold us, saying, “Please don’t disturb Don Anton!”

But Gaudi always countermanded her instructions, saying, *“Don’t you know that our Lord wanted the little ones to be always here?”*

He loved **POVERTY** in a special way. He used to state that “poverty leads to elegance and beauty; while riches lead to opulence and complications, they cannot be beautiful.”

He was a **HARD WORKER** (we might say industrious) to an heroic extent. Commenting on work well done, he said, *“In general, when most people are working on a project and near its termination, they tend to hurry and are satisfied with the results. This is a mistake; when a project is on the way to perfection, we must squeeze it until it is perfect.”* Consequently, Gaudi never hesitated to modify the course of a design if he believed that changing it would produce a better result.

He was very **AUSTERE** in his habits of living and dining because he was convinced that when any family has a flourishing life it is because one of them is a mortified person, making generous sacrifices. For this reason he was radical in his penances and fasting, especially during the Lenten season. During Lent of 1894 he nearly died of starvation.

HIS REPUTATION FOR HOLINESS

At the time of Gaudi’s death, there already existed in Barcelona a strong belief in his sanctity due to the heroic character of his virtues. Immediately following his death an important publishing house produced the book, *Antoni Gaudi, His Life, His Works, His Death*. This was a collection of articles by seventeen writers in praise of the departed artist. Monsignor

Manuel Trens, the director of the Diocesan Museum, entitled his article: ‘God’s Architect’ and drew the profile of a professional man who had come to the realization that his work on the Sagrada Familia was inspired by God. The architect J. F. Rafols concluded his article with the concept that Gaudi’s works could never be fully understood outside of the Faith.

One of the nuns who, as a novice, took care of the house-keeping of Gaudi’s residence in Parque Güell, declared, “He was a saint. Each year that passes I am more convinced of it. Now, in the year 1962, I believe that he deserves to be canonized.”

Monsignor Francesc Baldello, a diocesan priest who founded *Amics dels Goigs* (Friends of Popular Religious Songs) and an eminent musicologist, had many contacts with Gaudi after 1915. *In April 1971 he published an article in the Temple magazine in which he repeated the closing words of a lecture he had delivered to the Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD) in homage to the famous architect: “I ardently hope that my next contribution in favour of Gaudi might be that of making a declaration in the process of his beatification.”* Many in his audience shared that desire.

It might be asked, why has the beatification of Gaudi, who died in the odour of sanctity, not been promoted earlier? The answer seems to be that few laypeople are ever beatified. Unlike the secular clergy and members of religious orders, lay people seldom have the support of a permanent institution willing to dedicate time and financial resources to the long and laborious work that the process of beatification entails.



Gaudí receiving Communion at Mass in expiation for blasphemous speech, celebrated under canvas placed in the central nave of Sagrada Família.

Hence, when the **ASSOCIACIO PRO BEATIFICACIO D'ANTONI GAUDI** was created, public reaction was enthusiastic. This enthusiasm was echoed in the Spanish media as well as in that of many foreign countries.

The first donation to the cause was received from Joan Marti, Bishop of the See of Urgell and Co-prince of Andorra, to which he attached a letter expressing his full support of the initiative.

Joan Carrera, Auxiliary Bishop of Barcelona, declared in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* of October 20, 1992, "From the beginning I have considered this action a legitimate and reasonable proposal. I look upon it with true sympathy. With Antoni Gaudi, a great lay Christian, art and faith are inseparable."

Cardinal Narcis Jubany, former Archbishop of Barcelona, has written in the foreword of the book *Temple de la Sagrada Familia* by the architect Jordi Bonet, "This church was conceived... by a genius of architecture whose name was Antoni Gaudi, whom Le Corbusier called the great builder of this century. He was a man totally given to what he was doing and whose soul was profoundly Christian. Because of this, the major portion of his work was symbolic religious buildings, objects and Catholic churches. This one, the Sagrada Familia, is certainly the ecstasy of a mystic."

The living example of Gaudi's life and his reputation for sanctity have had, and continue to have, an inspirational influence on many people. After visiting Barcelona and studying Gaudi's work, the famous Japanese architect, Kenji Imai, was converted to Catholicism. More recently, another Japanese artist, the sculptor Etsuro Sotou, moved to Barcelona in order

to work on the Sagrada Familia. He also converted from Shintoism to Catholicism and was baptised by Bishop Carrera.

In September of 1997 the Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Korean city of Pusan visited Barcelona to arrange for an exhibition of Gaudi's work in Pusan. Though a lifelong Buddhist, he was so moved by Gaudi's spirituality and the holy love of nature he saw in Gaudi's work, that on his return to Korea he began taking Catholic instruction and a few months later, on Christmas Eve, he was baptised.

Charles Teetor, an American convert to Catholicism and author of the guidebook *Strolling through Barcelona*, in an interview published in *Catalunya Cristiana*, (11-26-1992) said, before his conversion, "In my book I summarize the life of Gaudi as that of a completely holy man. To me he is best described as a mystic. He was Barcelona's most famous architect during a time when architects were lionized. He could have lived a life of wealth and privilege surrounded by adoring patrons, but instead chose to live as a monk in very humble circumstances. Eschewing fame and material possessions he dedicated his life to prayer, which he considered to be God's work. I can think of no other artist in the last two centuries who has been so dedicated to a virtuous life. Far too many of today's artists have fallen into the dangerous underworld of Existentialism and Bohemianism, with disastrous moral (and artistic) results."

To all who believe in God, it is evident that the church of the Sagrada Familia is a song to His glory and a constant reminder that the peace of the great human family -as John

Paul II said in his message of the Day of Peace in 1994- can only spring from the families where peace is achieved by following the example set by Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth.

THE PROCESS OF BEATIFICATION

On June 20, 1992, the sixty-sixth anniversary of our architect's death, a small group of Christians fond of the personality and work of Gaudi, founded the Association for the Beatification of Antoni Gaudi. Shortly afterwards they had small cards printed with the Prayer for Private Devotion- in Catalan, Spanish, English and Japanese; and later in French, Polish, Portuguese and other modern languages. These prayer cards bear the *imprimatur* of the Archdiocesan office of Barcelona.

On May 13, 1994, once they had gathered the appropriate information on our architect, the Association officially requested that the Archbishop of Barcelona —the diocese where Gaudi died— open the Process of Beatification. The Association is the agent of that process, that is, it is responsible for expenditures and for proceeding through the steps that canonization entails.

On March 19, 1998, through donations, the Association restored the marble slab that covers Gaudi's tomb in the crypt of the Church of the Holy Family. It also placed an alms box there. The box, made by the Japanese artist Etsuro Sotoo, is fashioned in the shape of the schools that Gaudi designed and built for the children of the parish: the three overlapping hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. On April 18th. of the same year

1998 the Cardinal -Archbishop of Barcelona approved the nomination of Fr. Lluís Bonet Armengol, the parish priest of Holy Family, as vice-postulator for the Cause of Beatification of Antoni Gaudí. Bonet has efficiently conducted negotiations so as to move the process along according to canon law.

In order to promote the canonization of a world-famous figure, the norms of the Holy See require that quite a number of bishops, especially from neighbouring dioceses, give their approval. On May 5, 1998, the bishops of Catalonia gave their unanimous approval for the beginning of the process of Gaudí's canonization. Hence in September 1998 Cardinal Ricard Maria Carles, Archbishop of Barcelona, appointed two commissions: one made up of historians and another of theologians, whose mission was to study the life of Gaudí from these two points of view. A tribunal "ad casum" was appointed to hear the testimonies of surviving personal acquaintances of our architect (with due attention to their age).

Once the report of the theological commission was ready, the Archbishop of Barcelona sent the Holy See the complete list of requisite documents and requested approval for beginning the Process. The petition was made on December 22, 1999 and the "nihil obstat" ("no obstacles") came back from the Vatican with unusual speed, on February 22, 2000.

Then finally, once these formalities had been taken care of, the process of beatification was solemnly and officially started at the Bishop's palace, presided by Cardinal Carles. The judge delegate, Fr. Josep Maria Blanquet, of the religious congregation of Sons of the Holy Family (S.F.), the promoter of justice, Msgr. Jaume Riera, the vice-postulator, Fr. Lluís Bonet i

Armengol, and the rest of the members of the tribunal were sworn into office.

Since the beginning of the diocesan process the judge-delegate, with the aid of the secretaries and the vice-postulator have carried out all tasks comprehended in this ecclesiastic action, as stipulated by canon law. All of the necessary documentation about the Servant of God has been compiled and some thirty witnesses have been questioned and heard in accordance with a broad questionnaire. Once this was accomplished the vice-postulator requested Cardinal Archbishop to close the process. The act took place at the Archbishop's palace on March 13, 2003 presided over by Cardinal Ricard Maria Carles. The paperwork (1024 pages) was presented on May 28, 2003 to the Sacred Congregation for the Saints in Rome. On July 9 of that same year the opening act of the process —the Roman phase— took place presided over by Monsignor Michele di Ruberto, sub-secretary, with the aid of Cardinal Carles and the president of the Association for the Beatification of Antoni Gaudí, Mr. José Manuel Almuzara. Prior to this —on March 25, 2003— Dr. Silvia Correale was named postulator of the cause. On February 29, 2004 the Ordinary Commission of the Congregation made up by Prefect Cardinal Monsignor José Saraiva Martins, the secretary, sub-secretary, the general promoter of the faith and the general relater decreed the validity of the process as instructed by the Barcelona Diocese on the life, virtues and reported sanctity of the Servant of God Antoni Gaudí. On April 23, 2004 Monsignor José Luis Gutierrez was named relater. Work thus continues in the Sacred

Congregation. Also, Gaudí devotees ask for his intercession in favour of those who ask for miracles that only God can grant.

PRIVATE DEVOTION AND FAVOURS

A lady tells us of her daughter who had finished her studies of architecture but failed for several years to finish her final project. The longer the project was delayed the more difficult it became for her to face it. One day a prayer card for the private devotion to Gaudi came to her hands and she decided to ask God, through the intercession of His architect, to solve the problem. The solution came in a short time. Thankful for it, the lady sent a letter explaining this favour to the Association.

Two friends, Aurora and Maria Teresa, write: “Maria Teresa felt the urge to visit the tomb of Gaudi in the Chapel of our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the crypt of the Sagrada Familia. On entering the crypt she felt the presence of an unknown force and a great

interior peace came over her. Together, we verify that Gaudi has granted us a double grace; one to have a kidney stone painlessly expelled and the other to find meaningful employment. Thankful for this double grace, we are sending a donation toward the beatification of Antoni Gaudi.”

The wife of an architect from Valencia presented to Gaudi a petition that her husband might be granted an important architectural award, promising a substantial donation to the Cause of Beatification. It was granted, and she sent the money along with an explanatory letter.

A university student of architecture from Innsbruck, Austria, had lost drawings for the project she was supposed to present in order to be recognized as the best student of her class. She had not kept a copy of her project. She ran to Gaudi's intercession and, in an unexpected way, the drawings appeared, lost among a bunch of papers in the secretary's office at her school.

A Madrid architect, who had obtained his degree at the School of Barcelona, returned to this city and went to pray before Gaudi's tomb. He says "Upon coming back to Madrid, I recited the Prayer for Private Devotion, for a brother-in-law who had been operated on but had to undergo another operation because of intestinal hemorrhages. At this moment, he is already well and ready to go home..."

Another gentleman, this one from Barcelona, writes: "I am 49 and have been either laid off or with an unstable job. I found myself in the Church the day after the inauguration of the Process. While watching the construction, I recalled the news and I promised on the spot that if I could get a stable job I would inform the Association for the Beatification of Gaudi. After a few difficulties were overcome, I have got the work I applied for".

A lady from Salta, Argentina, writes in her letter, "I would like to publicly acknowledge the intercession of Antoni Gaudi in my life. I asked him to please find a house for me. After less than two years' search I got the apartment. My son Pedro, besides, was finally able to meet his father after 13 years. Antoni, please, intercede for my son's studies and my operation for fibroid tumour..."

We hope that the readers of these pages will also be motivated to ask Gaudi's intercession for their personal needs. One might pray a novena repeating for nine days the words from the Gaudi prayer card which we reproduce below.

PRAYER FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

God our Father, you instilled in your servant Antoni Gaudi, architect, a great love for your Creation and a burning desire to imitate the childhood and passion mysteries of your Son. Grant, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that I also may learn to dedicate myself to well-done work and glorify your servant Antoni, granting me, through his intercession, the favour I request (here make your petition). Amen. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, grant us peace and preserve the family. (Three times)

Those who obtain favours and wish to help us with their donations, or would like to have additional Gaudi prayer cards, please write to:

Association pro Beatification of Antoni Gaudi
PO Box 24094
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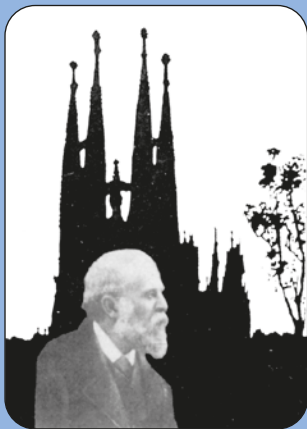
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