

SERVANT OF GOD ANTONI GAUDÍ

1852-1926

Antoni Gaudí was born June 25, 1852 in Catalonia. In the 1870s, he studied architecture at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura in Barcelona. When Gaudí received his degree in 1878, the director of the school, Elies Rogent, said, "Who knows if we have given this diploma to a nut or to a genius? Time will tell." His work was initially ridiculed, and for much of his career, his main support came from one patron, the Catalan industrialist Eusebi Güell. Gaudí once supposedly said to Güell, "Sometimes I think we are the only people who like this architecture." Güell replied, "I don't like your architecture, I respect it."



It was his work on his masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia Church in Barcelona, that intensified Gaudí's religious devotion. He dedicated himself to a life of penance and voluntary poverty, subjecting himself to such severe fasting during Lent in 1894 that he nearly died. From 1911 on, Gaudí dedicated his working life exclusively to the Sagrada Familia, leaving all other work behind. Active in political matters, Gaudí was arrested on Catalan National Day in 1924 when he tried to enter a church that had been closed by authorities to prevent demonstrations.

In his later years, Gaudí walked to Mass every morning before going to work at the Sagrada Familia, and every evening after work, he stopped at the Oratory to pray and to meet with his spiritual director, Fr. Agustí Mas, C.O. It was on the way to the Oratory on June 7, 1926, that Gaudí was struck by a trolley, then left for dead by cab drivers who did not think he could pay them. He was finally taken to a hospital, where he died three days later. He was buried in the Sagrada Familia.

Gaudí's architectural works were among the first five sites in Spain listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, in 1984. On the sixty-sixth anniversary of his death, in 1992, a group of four laymen and a priest began promoting the cause of his canonization. After many years of perseverance, the cause received the nihil obstat from the Holy See in 2000. The diocesan phase of Gaudí's process was completed in May 2003, and his cause was taken up by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in Rome that July.

The Sagrada Familia is still under construction, with a planned completion date of 2026. Regarding the length of construction, Gaudí is said to have once remarked, "My client is not in a hurry."