The magazine EN BLANCO is intended to diffuse knowledge of the best works of architecture and civil engineering made nowadays in concrete, preferably white or coloured. It is our intention to meet the interest of those who want to know the latest innovations in the field of concrete architecture and at the same time, to serve as a disseminator of research emerged in the same field.

The purpose of EN BLANCO is to publish the results of formal, theoretical, technological and scientific research related to the production of buildings and engineering works that help define our environment, built in concrete. In this issue reflection revolves around sacred architecture and the role of apparent concrete in the definition of these spaces.

The magazine meets the formal and conceptual requirements that allow recognition as scientific publication. Thus the magazine follows a strict editorial policy, both in the selection of works and articles and in the periodicity and linguistic field. It is described in the opening pages of each issue and published on the web.

Compliance with this policy in the past two years, has enabled the magazine to be assessed favorably and it appears indexed in the catalogs Latinindex, DICE and RESH, as well as databases ISOC and Dialnet. In MIAR ranks 12 of 37 national magazines and 118 of 183 international journals in the area of architecture, with a visibility index IDCS-2012 of 3,102. Currently still under evaluation and incorporation into other international quality indices.

Vicente Mas Llorens

PLACES OF CONTEMPORARY SACRED ARCHITECTURE: LIGHT MEDIA VERSUS TIME OF MEDITATION

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Art and religion: letters versus sciences

“The elk that man in the Stone Age drew on the walls of their caves was a magical instrument.”

W. Benjamin, 1936

The questions of primitive man sweeping the earth, only seemed to find an echo when rising into the sky, where they are lost and perhaps where the gods lived. These two directions have been established since the dawn of time: horizontal, gaze of search and vertical of prayer; both: with an eagerness to learn. There is broad consensus that art is rooted in religious beliefs. In the origin: the magic gaze of search and vertical of prayer; both: with an eagerness to learn. There is an imaginary sacred space that bestows rhythm and manages light. Some good examples are: S. Lucas Evangelista (1956-58) by V. Fausto and L. Passarelli, of Gregorio VII (1958-61) by G. and M. Paniconi, and S. Policarpo (1946-67) by E. Vichi, among many others. The naves undress as if, by following the same decomposition process as physical matter or artistic materials, it could reach the essence of space. An essence that is reduced to its basic elements: order, structure and light and with these, the old symbolisms of the sky are modernised with more abstract images. An imaginary sacred space that would lead to more figurative metaphors of astral or abysmal depths.

As a zenith to these experiments, we cite the peak of the temple that with only concrete elevating above the congregation, a miracle that was possible, thanks, above all, to the reinforced plates and shells that characterised the sacred spaces in the middle of the last century. The works by P.L. Nervi, B. Spence, M. Breuer, G. Michelucci, E.Dieste and F. Candela is a prime example of the trend that equally affected the Catholic and Protestant enclosures in which the existential anguish seems to liberate itself in the lightness of the structure and space where the light is manipulated to generate supernatural effects. In the opening homily of the church of St. Nicholas [1959-62] by E. Torroja, in Gandia, the priest sermonised: “the congregation of today and tomorrow […] I will see […] this modern and wonderful temple of God […] with its sober lines and its walls illuminated in light”, on screen in theaters where the light provides the show.

Light and Faith: media spectacle for the masses

“Why are there false prophets facing the church? They even allow them to have their own television programs.”

Don Dmar, 2003

Obviously, religious architecture was modernised despite the archaic faith or conservation of hierarchy. A new step is taken for pollution from audiovisual mass media. That is, humans are more visual in cognitive processes, dependent on any other obvious way from the ‘bison’ of Altamira to the medieval ‘pantocrátorels’. The advantage of the media is to reach the masses, accompanied by the word of God with images that seduce. The filmmaker Abel Gance pointed in 1927 that: “All legends, all mythology and all myths, all founders of religions and all religions … await their resurrection even in light”, on screen in theaters where the light provides the show.
That the services are conducted with ostentation and splendor is an ancient rite for special occasions. However, the tendency to turn these into a Sunday show, as a rule full of felicitousness between actors and audience come together so that the celebration is a party is reproduced when all the space is likely to be flooded by the light: then the function is moved from the altar to the room packed with congregation. Enlightening are the words of Oscar Niemeyer about what happens in these sacred interiors when explaining the route inside the cathedral of Brasilia (1959-70), a path that leads the parishioners through a tunnel to reach the glowing center, a promenade that prepares them for the renewed liturgy: "aerial structure born of the land, a shout of faith and hope; then the gallery located in the shadows to prepare the congregation for the words of Oscar Niemeyer about what happens in these sacred interiors when explaining the route inside the cathedral of Brasilia (1959-70), a path that leads the parishioners through a tunnel to reach the glowing center, a promenade that prepares them for the renewed liturgy: "aerial structure born of the land, a shout of faith and hope; then the gallery located in the shadows to prepare the congregation for the...
contemplation and shows the passing of time. This aspect of contemporary sacred spaces combine West with East, taking place in the shadows, has a secular vocation and precipitates ancient traditions of remote hermitages to invoke the sense of existence projected onto nature. But why an architecture that engages with nature? In part, because we have become aware that nature is limited and is in danger. And in part, because it contains all the mysteries of life and thus of the existence: listening to it is to listen, feeling it is to feel, knowing it is to know. Between God and nature there is no gap, but an identity, the same as that of architecture whose space contains time. In short, the sacred architecture of the twentieth century has renewed its symbolic imaginary of its spaces and, simultaneously, developed two trends: that of an architecture that caters more to the visual and crowds and the other that favours the sensory and the intimate. These are certainly two sides of the same necessary coin: media light versus time for meditation as an expression of community life, festive, and the certainty of the loneliness of the individual.

Illustrations

**IMG. 1** St. Antonius (1926-27) by Karl Moser, Basel

**IMG. 2** St. Johannes church (1934-36) by Karl Edenberg and Ernst F. Buchhardt, Basel

**IMG. 3** St. Pelagio church (1964-47) by Giuseppe Nicosi, Rome

**IMG. 4** Our lady of Guadalupe church (1961-67) by Félix Cândida and others, Madrid

**IMG. 5** A church in Harlem (c. 1938), unknown, New York

**IMG. 6** Metropolitan Cathedral of our Lady Aparecida (1959-70) by Oscar Niemeyer, Brasilia

**IMG. 7** Crystal Cathedral (c. 1975-81) by Philip Johnson, Garden Grove

**IMG. 8** Church of our Mucurit Father (1995-2001) by Richard Mauer, Rome

**IMG. 9** Holy Cross Chapel (1935-40) by Gunnar E. Asplund, Stockholm

**IMG. 10** Notre - dame - du - Haut (1950-55) Le Corbusier, Ronchamp

**IMG. 11** Hill of meditation in the chapel of the Holy Cross (1935-40) by Gunnar E. Asplund, Stockholm

Endnotes


8. **CITED by:** QUETGLAS, Josep. “Hacia Ronchamp.” En: MARTÍNEZ, A., GUTIÉRREZ, M. E.;...
elements of a type of building which is extremely far removed from sacred architecture and all of the usual references to the intense architectural debates in those years: the military bunkers.

- Parent and Virilio used reinforced concrete almost entirely for the volumetry of the church. Concrete does not only assume its usual structural mission, but floors, ceilings, enclosures, or even furniture, are solved with this unique material. It was the characteristic morphology of the bunkers, intended for military purposes and by removing the recognisable silhouette of the building in the landscape, through the use of soft geometry, curvilinear, continuous without edges, it is recuperated for the configuration of all the volumetry of the project.

- The location and singular characteristics of the access points, the circulations, the lighting and the ventilation of the defensive structure spaces conceived as fractures or minimum movements among several protective shells, is also incorporated into Nevers.

- Imitating even its implementation of floating over the land which despite the heaviness of its mass, appear as floating objects, without foundations. Posed in the landscape rather than being anchored to it.

This unmistakable morphology of the church of Nevers comes from, without a doubt an intense obsession in Paul Virilio, whose childhood was marked due the drama of the Second World War. The signs left in the landscape of the French Atlantic coast by the German defence of the Siegfried and Magnot lines, has been an indelible and recurring memory in all of the thinkers’ activities: ‘I arrived to architecture through the beaches and not through school’.

Without any academic training in architecture, Virilio had been since 1958 (five years before meeting Parent) studying and documenting those enigmatic bunkers. The influence of this research on the overall work of the Architecture Principe group is manifested. They dedicated edition Nº 7 of its journal, “Bunker Archéologie” exclusively to these singular military constructions.

Nevers uses a morphology and a constructive vocabulary whose richness had been sensed by Virilio, and Parent, feeling the passion of his colleague, translates the architectural codes, already far removed from the strict military function. Despite the evidence of these formal references, Parent had always defended that its adoption should be contemplated as a secondary element in the project. It may well be. However, it is also probable that this clarification of the architect, responded above all, to the intense discrepancies which ended their collaboration on 1968.

To understand the fascination that this military architecture produced in Parent, it would be insightful to have a look at the previous career of this multi-faceted architect. Years before they formed a partnership, Parent was immersed in trying to find an architectural answer to the plastic informality of André Bloc with whom he diligently collaborated. As an expressive reaction to the extreme rigidity that had degenerated the International Style, the usual sculptures of Bloc, searched with difficulty its translation to architectural space in the projects he designed together with Parent of the chapels in Paris or the proposal of the Dakar theatre. Another of Parents’ projects such as the Hotel in Corsica which he designed with Gérard Mannoun in 1962 had undeniable connection to his confessed reference in that period, the Infinite House by Frederik Kiesler in 1959. Within the framework of these investigations, it is not understood how this risky encounter with the architecture of the bunkers presented by Virilio, provided architecture new and unexpected keys in order to complete this connection between architecture and plastic arts within the murn expression of the universe, so long sought after.

The adaptation, for religious use, of a type of antagonistic architecture with the predictable, both in its aim and its ideals, also responded to the unquestionable polemistic vocation and the publicity characteristics of the French team. But what is certain is the decided use of the architectural military vocabulary in Nevers aimed at an ambitious and a double objective, related on one hand, to the individual careers of the authors, and on the other, the joint proposal that they were developing:

The conclusion to the previous two investigations, personal and independent: Virilio and the catastrophe of the war; Parent and the architectural translation of the informality streak of Bloc. The invention of some news bases for a new constructive and architectural dictionary, not contaminated in its origin by trends and previous styles that allowed them to give form to their new proposed oblique.

Contemplating the materialisation of the church of Nevers with the critical advantage that the passing of time provides, it is easier to evaluate how the singular work was able to reach both objectives. The expressive capacity of the volume mass of the church and its itinerary of interior space is undeniable. On the contrary, the capacity of the project to clarify a paradigmatic physical particularity of the function of the Oblique is less evident. Its conclusive value as a condenser of the previous considerations of the two authors is much more evident than its purpose value as an example of the new theoretical speech in training.

A simple, temporary analysis of the collaboration between the two authors, explain in large part this difference. The Nevers project was developed between the years 1963 and 1966. That is to say: It began immediately following the meeting of Parent and Virilio and ends co-insiding with the public presentation of the oblique theory in the journal. Hence, the project is developed at most simultaneously to the new theory which they were giving form to. With the obvious difficulties that involved checking the mathematical hypothesis, already closed (construction, programme, functionality, technology, etc.) and adding the urgency of the timeframe, it is understandable the discrepancies between the practical and the theory. However, this distortion or lack of agreement between the theoretical speech and its only significant materialisation generated a certain confusion and lack of understanding with specialised critics. Work and theory were framed in the environment of the diverse groups of the time in function that the interpreter would put the emphasis on some of the aspects of the misunderstood team in which they both formed.

Michel Ragon situated himself in the French group, in the environment referred to architectural Brutalism. This critical interpretation could be correct from a particular view, in some aspects concerning the work of the church of St. Bernadette. But in any case could be applied to the function of the oblique. Its principles, its position facing the masters of the Modern Movement, its relation with the construction industry and, in short, the theory of the oblique as a whole, was in opposite poles to the vague formulation of the elusive current annotated by Reyner Banham.

Bruno Zevi, with some doubts, classified the proposal of Architecture Principe in what he called the Informal Current. Zevi’s doubts were not limited to the French’s doubts. It extended to the current as a whole and the possibility that it could be formulated within the field of architecture. Despite this, the Italian critic exemplified this qualifying epigraph with the Nevers church and the Infinite House by Kiesler. Again, it could be validated for the work built by the French team but does not seem to be applicable to the oblique theory. The name of the French group is an unmistakable symptom of the intense vocation to discipline and rigor that the proposal contained. Questioned by Michel Ragon about the origin of the group’s name, Paul Virilio confirmed the last intention of the proposal: architecture is the beginning of organisation. Parent is even clearer: it deals with finding new principles to respect, in order to oppose the uncontrollable fantasy.

In France, its peer group linked the work with the Church by Firmy who saw that light in those same years, and were quickly labelled as post-Corbussian. The overwhelming presence of the church of St. Bernadette situated it, without difficulty in what is called expressionism. Both its dark and cavernous interior and well as the heavy mass of its exterior are correctly interpreted as a cry, decidedly facing the expressive asepsis towards what had evolved in the more orthodox, rationalist language.

Effectively, the theoretical development of their oblique theory was found in the notion of comfort, both psychological and physiological, the profound cause of verticality and horizontally maintaining the old Cartesian order. A notion of comfort that according to them, urged getting out of, to rise from the drowsiness that human beings were submerged in, to wake up to new sensations, curiosity and possibilities, to take apart the false sensation of balance and stability that were instilled in them.

However, unlike the work of the late Le Corbusier, Saarinen, Candela, Utzon or Niemeyer who traditionally contemplated from a will of expressive origin, the images that illustrate the theoretical ideas of Architecture Principe, was the consequence of the application of a new and rigid spatial theorem. In them, there was no initial iconic and gestural will. There was no premature enmity with the regularity. There was no arbitrary act searched for or found. Rather the opposite. Having been questioned about the dramatisation and monumentality of their proposals, the French team defended themselves affirming that the singularity and expressiveness of their spaces were but a perceptive consequence in addition to applying the principles of the oblique.

Five short years and only one work Parent and Virilio had to prove their great oblique hypothesis. Work and theory, both have exceptional architectural values. However, against what the authors and the specialised critics made an effort to point out had very little in common. The distortion that appeared between the function of the oblique and the Nevers church, go far beyond the timely difficulties, temporary urgency, technological limitations or programmatic restrictions. A large part of the misunderstanding that one another suffered was a consequence of forcing these interpretations into only one creative impulse.

The church is the result of a collision between Virilio’s childhood fascination with the German bunkers, those small enclaves in the landscape that condensed human control over the land and the plastic and the non-conformist Parent, who searched for new spaces to develop architecture contrary to the International Style. Both approaches co-inside in one point: a conception of architecture as...
sculptural object and mildly autistic. The slight inclination of the frameworks of the main nave of the church is the only element of the project that could be linked to The Function of the Oblique. The oblique theorem does not contain any consideration that made obligatory the physical precision of its principles with an architectural language so severely monolithic.\(^{10}\) and heavy. What is more, the oblique solution sees severely limited its effectiveness due to the superposition of the singular defensive and secretive morphology of the bunkers: the segregation of urbanism and architecture, between circulation and living, instead of being dissolved, it is made more definitive; the interior and exterior space, the public and private, are brutally separated and its relation is limited in the minimum fractures of the massive protective covering of the magnificent spiritual refuge that makes up the church. Its overwhelming and unmistakable morphological exterior converts it into a unique totem, sacred and an historic symbol of the 20th century. The project reaches maximum proportions of expressiveness in its interior space. It is impossible not to be shocked facing the potential of the spiritual nucleus of the reinforced concrete that Parent and Virilio built in the centre of city in Nevers. This expressive vocation was the real creative vector leading the project. Apart from the timely coincidence, supporting their interpretation in the oblique theory did not help in the understanding of the true values of the work. Nor, of course, in the theory. \(^{12}\)_

For the materialisation of the theoretical principles of The function of the oblique, it seems more appropriate to anticipate a more ethereal, lighter morphology, an architectural form that focuses its mass on the manipulation of the oblique in the floor plan, assuring the dissolution, the dematerialisation or the camouflage of the rest of its constructive surfaces. However and curiously, Parent himself remained anchored to the massive constructive dictionary of Nevers in subsequent projects to his collaboration with Virilio in which he did attempt a real materialisation of the oblique principles, such as the supermarkets of Reims or Sens in the beginning of the 70’s. In order to prove the misunderstood oblique theory in the year 1966, was effectively materialised in projects of important scale he had to wait almost three decades, when appeared buildings such as the Kunsthal of Rotterdam (opened in 1992) and the Educatorium of Utrecht [1997] by OMA, the terminal port of Yokohama (2002) by FOA, the opera house in Oslo (2008) by Snohetta or more recently, the Rolex Learning Centre of Lausanne (2010) by SANNA. But this is another story.

Illustrations

1. Idiogram of the function of the oblique by Paul Virilio in 1966 and published in issue N° 3 of Architecture Principe, April 1966
3. Claude Parent, Paul Virilio: St. Bernadette of Nevers, photograph of the model of the original project, published in the journal New Form 1968, in which appear the two corresponding volumes of the church and Parish (not built).
5. From left to right and top to bottom: exterior and interior of the Infinite House by Frederik Keisler(1959), model of the project for Hotel in Cersa made by Claude Parent and sculptor Gérard Mannons (1963).
9. From left to right and top to bottom: group scheme, use and configuration of the residential space made by Parent for his book Devins à (Bokeqiёd) [1970], model-prototypes of the group of oblique residential units made by Claude Parent and Paul Virilio (1967), perspective of use of exterior public space of the oblique residential units.
10. Claude Parent, Paul Virilio: set up plans and model of the installation project of the pendular destabilising, conceived by the authors in order to carry out a monitored experiment dedicated to the study of life on inclined slopes, lasting one month in the University campus of Nanterre in 1968.

Endnotes

1. Paul Virilio, Architectura Principe n°2 Le Troisieme Ordre Urbain, March 1966
2. For a more complete and detailed analysis of the Function of the Oblique and its singularities, consult, Diego Pullaudo: Burjas de Dalmau, La inversion de la Funcion Oblique [the inversion of the function of the oblique], doctoral thesis of the Department of architectural design of the Escuela Técnico Superior de Arquitectura, Madrid in March 2012
3. According to Frédéric Migayrou in his article “The definition of a critical architecture”, note 4, of the book “The function of the oblique” published by the Architectural Association, 1996 pg 63, in which he cites the words of members of Archigram, Dennis Crompton, related to the transformation of Parent and Virilio’s project during the congress IDEA International Dialogue of Experimental Architecture: “Parent and Virilio immediately stood out for their black suits in contrast to the more psychedelic fashion preferred by most of the architects of that time. They took to the stage and presented a series of drawings of oblique cities unfolding in the landscape. When finished, the audience stood up and dedicated an energetic Hitler salute”
6. Claude Parent, “Interview with Claude Parent. Irénée Scialbert and Mohsen Mostafavi”, The function of the oblique, 1966 pg 51. “The military vocabulary of the bunkers dominated our initial projects, the church and cultural centre of Chartellite. Virilio saw the bunker as the apothecary of twentieth century architecture. I and his enthusiasm was contagious. I began to realise that they were a splendid form of architecture. I liked the continuity of shapes, size and clarity of the concrete shells, and how they responded to the landscape. Some bunkers also had a sense of movement. If you contemplate for long enough, they seem to advance toward you, like tanks. Both Virilio and I decided to use the military vocabulary to start a formal dialogue.”
7. Michel Ragon, “Rapport de Claude Parent à Paul Virilio”, Monographie critique d’un architecte, Claude Parent, 1982, pg 199. “Our decision to use this language to the form of the church was produced in the final stages of project development. Sometime after defining the fractured hexagonal, the double reverse stage inside the nave, the slight inclination of the walls and the side and central entrances.”
8. The University riots of 1968 lit the fuse that destroyed the unity of the group, making manifest and irrevocably the differences in the attitudes facing the architecture of its two components. While Virilio committed and actively participated in all the events of May 68, Parent was much more distant. Claude Parent, “Interview with Claude Parent. Irénée Scialbert and Mohsen Mostafavi”, The function of the oblique, 1966 pg 55. “I was not at all as I expected. I had expected the movement to be beyond the simple removal of the established regime, and to propose a new way of thinking, a new order. I don’t think being a fascist speaks of order. From my point of view, this word implies consistency, a system of thought accepted by most of the population. But those who were involved in the French movement in 1968 just looked at everything without proposing any realistic alternative. Virilio’s experience at that time was very different. It was close to the heart of things. He wrote an article for a special issue of the magazine L’Express, and joined the group that occupied the Odeon. When I went to see him, he told me that he had now called himself “Comrade Paul.” These people took themselves very seriously, forming sub-committees and revolutionary committees. I have no stomach for that sort of thing. It reminded me of the riots in the liberation of southern France, where gangs of teenagers armed with guns went in search of revenge.”
9. Michel Ragon, Monographie critique d’un architecte, Claude Parent, 1982, pg 181. “If there is a movement to which we can get close to the built work of Claude Parent, this is the brutalism. That brutalism presented in the Drusch house (1965-1966), reaching its full extension in the Bordeaux-Le Pec House, which becomes Mannerism in the Nevers church (1966), and takes up again a staggering amplitude with the supermarket in Reims (1969)?”
11. Michel Ragon, Monographie critique d’un architecte, Claude Parent, 1982, pg 164. “Virilio states that the Architecture Principe group predated his meeting with Parent and it was he who chose that name because he understood that before a work, architecture is an organizing principle.”
12. Anower from Claude Parent to Michel Ragon, in Monographie critique d’un architecte, Claude Parent, 1982, pg 164. “Architecture Principe, because it dealt with discovering principles for architecture capable of being applied to different cases. In short, a coherent architecture, obtained through principles to respect, which opposes the “fantasy” unbridled and undiscovered”
13. Claude Parent, “Interview with Claude Parent. Irénée Scialbert and Mohsen Mostafavi”, The function of the oblique, 1964 pg 52. “I think Firminy was a good and mature work, possibly the best Corbus building, but it did not express the oblique function. The effect created by Corbus was a cantilevered mass, which is not the same as the ground plane physically floating. There are some elements in the church of Nevers that are not of Corbus: the tiny holes drilled into the walls to allow the light through. But, really, I do not like those holes. It was not my idea, and never showed them in photographs.”
14. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, “Mouvement et Monumentalité”, L’architecture d’aujourd’hui, n° 139, September 1968. If architecture [of the oblique function] re-appears oversized in relation to man, it is neither to a mere plastic end nor a willingness to dramatise. There is no authoritarian intention here; this monumentality is inherent to moving space. This space of movement specifically oblique requires the monumentality, because it brings in its depth of field perception. There is an implicit symbiosis between the oblique space and monumental space.”
The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the spirit. [2]

The words spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus, “Master in Israel”, shows in a certain way, the crux of the matter in the design of sacred architecture.

The specific characteristics that gives a sacred quality to certain spaces in relation to liturgy, that is to say, the execution of actions of ritual character and with prayer.

One of the aspects of all ritual action, perhaps one that has more to do with architecture, is the need for symbols. All important realities that affect liturgy, all those that are contained in fundamental liturgical actions, possess a quality, or put this way, a fatality. It is not seen, they are spiritual realities.

Sacred architecture must be skilful in order to strengthen the experience of the sacramental symbols.

Liturgy, therefore, needs the ingredients that go beyond the strict functional requirements, what is more, I dare to say, that often a purely functional design is converted into the enemy that threatens the suitability of the architectural space to respond to the demands of the liturgy. How many times has the strict functionality killed liturgy? How many times have we sacrificed the symbols on the altar of functionalism, under the flag of comfort?

However, this does not mean to say that a church does not have to be functional, but it’s the liturgy function and its contents, especially its use of the symbol that will arrange and organise all the functional characteristics.

For example, the seat in which one presides over a celebration has to be comfortable, but above all, whether it is or not, its suitability depends on if it adequately serves the liturgy experience and the understanding of the symbols of the ritual action.

This article tries to reflect around a specific place of sacred architecture, the most representative of all of them, the one which is more in the origin of this architecture, in short, that which receives the Christian assembly, gathered with the purpose of celebrating the sacrament of Eucharist.

Thus, these two approaches will be made in parallel, understanding them as complementary and not contradictory, in order to result in the complete picture of the congregation and liturgical activity.

In this place that is commonly identified with the term church, the reflection will be mainly based on the approach this place has in the Catholic Church and in the theoretical basis that, in it, sustain the distinctive features of its form, its peculiarities, although on occasion could surpass this sphere.

Background - The incorporation of other sacred places

Although I propose to focus the analysis on the present day, a brief journey through history would be useful, to gather some facts that could be helpful in the purpose at hand, which is no other than to draft a reflection, necessarily concise for its size, on the characteristics that today, the place of the Christian liturgy assembly must have.

As stated, the place we call church and more specifically its main liturgical hall, that which has as its main purpose to receive the gathered assembly around the celebration of the Eucharist, is the Christian liturgical place of origin.

What is more, before the peace of Constantine that happened in the beginning of the 4th century, the meeting places were the houses of the Christians and more specifically of an affluent Christian that allowed, for the spatial generosity of a particular room, the gathering of the community. Take into account that the communities were not made up of many members.

During these three decades, give or take, in which the church was forced by persecution by the Roman power limited to specific regions or more generalised in others, alternated by periods of calm, a second liturgical place starts to make its appearance: the baptistery.

In effect, the most primitive place for baptism does not have architecture; it was a river-bed or water from fountains. However, in the 1st decade or the beginnings of the 2nd place built for this purpose began to appear: the baptismal pool, which is nothing more than a translation to Christian theology from the Jewish Mikwah or pool for the ritual bath of purification.

The church would adopt the baptismal pool and incorporate it gradually into its sacred architecture in a way that the primitive basilicas were built by the Roman emperor Constantine after the Edict of Milan (year 313 or 314) or for his mother in Jerusalem, the baptistery appears as a specific building for the baptismal liturgy and housed the pool in its interior.

The baptismal pool would evolve into the baptismal font as in the baptism by immersion was replaced with baptism by affusion above all with the incorporation of baptising children from the 3rd century onwards.

It is interesting to observe the ruins of the Paleochristian basilica of San Peretó in Menorca, 5th century, that contains two baptismal pools, one excavated in the floor and another similar located on a podium which shows what could be an example of the evolution of the pool towards the baptismal font.

However this evolution, the baptism by affusion and the baptismal pool would endure as a main form of administrating baptism at least until the 8th century. [3]

It is known that in the 10th century its use was very uncommon.

Another place that is present in all primitive basilicas in Christendom is the Nartex. This is a place of meeting and gathering that fulfils a double function: one the one hand it establishes a functional distance between the liturgical hall and the exterior space and on the other, contributes to the verbal exchange between united people that through deep bonds of friendship, which inevitably, are given in each previous meeting, but above all after the mass, does not take place inside the hall, preserving in this way, its calm and secluded atmosphere.

In the tradition of Nartex, Christianity inherits from Judaism, its place of origin (Jesus was Jewish as well as most of his disciples) and more specifically the Temple of Jerusalem where in reality is a richer set and articulated by portico – atrium – Nartex that reproduce the primitive Constantine basilicas becoming, in great, a model for all Christendom. (In the East the model is more concentric than in the basilica but continues to incorporate the Nartex).

It must be said that the places being described, exterior to the liturgical hall itself but generally linked to it are superimposed on a set of places that have always been located in the interior, [the altar, the place for proclaiming the Word, the presidential Seat, the place of preaching or the homily, the assembly of the congregation, patrician, ambulatory, ...]

Others are linked to certain “special” types of Eucharistic assemblies, as in the case of the choir for the mass in the hours when the monastic or conventual communities join.

In this sense it should be pointed out that it is a common mistake, when reflecting on churches; that of putting in the same group buildings which have little or nothing to do with each other from the point of view of their strict functionality, this highlighted by the fact that a set of characterisitcally extensive (cathedrals, basilicas and sanctuaries, pilgrimage temples, parish churches, conventual and monastic churches, chapels, prayer room, hermitage, ... and many more).

Forget for example that Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp is a pilgrimage church and take from it some elements as a model for a parish church could lead us to making a very big mistake.

Many other specific places have been incorporated throughout history, either to satisfy certain practical needs (in the case of the sacristy, from the place for the orchestration of song or the bell tower for summoning) or in relation to the appearance of certain devotional practices (the side chapels, for example or the Stations of the Cross) or with the transformation of the liturgy.

In this last sense, a case rich in consequences is what is known as the Chapel of the Communion, a place that emerges as a result of the controversy introduced by Luther and take form in the years following the Council of Trent.

In effect, facing the affirmations of Luther with respect to the modality of the presence of Jesus Christ in both kinds of the Eucharist, the Catholic Church opposes its worship. And so this is how the reservation of the Eucharist becomes a central role in the liturgical space and the tabernacle is converted into the epicentre of the same, unchained, by the hand of notable conciliars and post-conciliars such as, Carlos Borromeo and the expansion of the Order of the Jesuits, the appearance of a new space: the Chapel of the Communion, that is moderately derived from the Ferial Chapel or place for the Eucharist gathering on the day of less people.

Guidelines issued by the II Vatican Council

After this quick tour to extract some of the episodes that will be useful in subsequent reflections, what remains is to take a look at the guidelines outlined by the teachings of the church and in particular by the documents of the II Vatican Council and those that derive from them, in order to analyse some of the most significant churches in the last decades to see in which way they responded to or adjusted to the guidelines, but above all, the way they embrace or not the sense that pulses behind this orders.

It is precisely the first and early Conciliar decree: the Sacrosantum Concilium promulgated on the 4th of December 1963, which take the first but important step that led to the complete liturgical transformation in the last decades.

This fact should be of no surprise because the Liturgical Movement, appearing officially in Maláks in September 1909, but having roots dating back to the first third of the 19th century, had already laid the foundations for it, leaving ripe and urgent the need to revise all the aspects that affected the liturgy and with that, and could not be in any other way, the transformation of the architectural space destined to house it.
If we take a global look at the liturgical doctrine of the Conciliar the first thing that strongly stands out is the insistence on highlighting the participation of the congregation, lay persons in the liturgy, which is but one of the many aspects that try to return to the source, since the liturgy, throughout the decades had become notably clerical.

The head, the Chancel that presides over the liturgy is fundamental; it acts in the person of Christ, but not in the body. The II Vatican Council wanted to increase the value of the concept of the church as a body.

Article 14 of the cited Decree manifests the intense wish of the fathers of the Conciliars who had expressed the active participation in the liturgy “the church of the Holy Mother ardently wishes that the congregation take to that full, aware and active participation in liturgical celebrations”. The underlined is mine.

It is not limited to the Decree in expressing this “burning desire” in the article but it is repeated at other various times, with the occasion of speaking about the Eucharist, or sacred music and others [1] but it is advisable to look at Article 19 since it adds a hint of accuracy. In effect, it says: “The shepherds of souls encourage with diligence and patience the liturgical education and active participation of the congregation, internal and external”.

What is interesting here is the internal and external because it means that the participation involving the mind, the attention is not enough, nor does it deal with seeing and hearing well but includes the “action”, namely, that the people gathered for the liturgy have to move from a spectator attitude to an attitude of actor.

Another important aspect of the liturgical reform, full of implications for the architectural space implies a new perspective on the altar.

There are several features that are expressed in this place. Among them, two have remarkable architectural consequences: that the altar is the centre on which the liturgy converges and everything surrounding it [2] and that the╥uality of the prayers.

Needless to say, if the approach of the assembly is theatrical in nature, if the congregation is a mere spectator, the altar and the sanctuary have all the features of a scene. Later, we will delve into this subject and the way they respond to such orders.

Finally, before taking an in-depth look at the architecture and being aware of not having touched on more than a few aspects of the possible, I would like to make two brief descriptions of two key elements, both found in the presbytery: the See and Ambon.

Regarding the first, the See, the essence of post-Conciliar doctrine lies in understanding its role not only as a functional element but mostly symbolic, and the figure that presides the celebration as the head of a body, that is to say, presiding but being part of the assembly.

Regarding the Ambon or the place where the Word is proclaimed, it deals with the understanding of it as the true throne of the Word, a stable and dignified place, reserved for certain liturgical actions surpassing its functional characteristic as a support and lectern.

Notwithstanding, it shall maintain the qualities of such that one must see well from all the assembly and to hear well what is proclaimed, an acoustic question, of course, very much neglected in many churches today.

A look at some contemporary sacred architecture

The documents issued by the Church from the Conciliar that affect the liturgical space are numerous and generally develop a progressive itinerary, usual in policy processes, some general concepts that define the meaning of things in order to establish more precise and concrete standards.

For a start, all this implies an organisational scheme to the assembly.

The liturgical action is developed mostly in the area we call presbytery, which usually contains in the first place, the altar, also the presidential See and sub-See for when the con-celebration is given and thirdly the Ambon or the place where the Word is proclaimed, contained in the Holy Scriptures. But the essential element in the organization is above all the assembly of the congregation itself.

This is an aspect that we don’t often find reflected in new churches, given the importance of the post-Conciliar church grants.

A church, for example, like Santa María de Marco de Canaveses, the flagship of sacred architecture by Alvaro Siza, designed and built between 1990 and 1996, thirty years since the Conciliar, and certainly a remarkable piece of architecture in respect to certain issues such as space, the handling of light or implementation in the place, and even sensitive to certain aspects of the renewed liturgy, born strangely insensitive to the aspect we are discussing about schema.

Rudolf Schwarz in 1938 [3], in the epicenter of the Liturgical Movement, had noted that the organisational structure of the assembly gathered to celebrate the Eucharist should have a balance between centrality and linearity.

In Marco de Canaveses, it is not just that the assembly is placed in groups but its distribution is in proportions that make the liturgy. Therefore, the song does not come from a specialist group somewhat removed from the assembly, and the choir, as a
special space separated from it, is meaningless. Only in special celebrations for its solemnity and lack of cohesion of the congregation can the presence of that choir make sense.

In communities that have such a specialist group consisting of members of the same, the challenge is to minister clearly showing, that by its position, belong to that community.

The galleries, in any case, have a more matronum sense or places of expansion of the capacity of the assembly for moments of special capacity but, even so, it is appropriate that we plan them in such a way that maximises that it is understood as being linked to the liturgical assembly.

Also the position of the sacristy that often, for convenience is linked to the Presbytery runs the risk of detracting from the processional character of the Church as a body, the designer but the importance given to the sign, to authenticity, returning to the necessary, forms without giving the feeling of leaving the assembly. Justifies and advises the dissociation of the main hall is applicable to this.

The reservation of the Eucharist continues to be linked to the adjacent ferial chapel, in this case, the chapel of the Communion (not the solution because the same argument that the reserve and already blessed bread is kept is nonsensical.)

Eucharistic bread is blessed during the celebration of the sacrament and where expressed by many liturgists: The co-existence between the place where the Eucharist is given a turnabout and that the schemes implemented before the council lost its relevance in many aspects. The architect who is not informed of the meaning of the new liturgical guidelines or is well advised will do nothing but base their church designs on issues that are meaningless for the Church today.

Illustrations

IM. 1 Luis Barragán. 1952. Chapel of the Capuchins. Tlalpan
IM. 2 Sibilla. Tunisia. Paleocristian Basilica of San Vittalo. Baptismal pool
IM. 3 Baptismal pools of the Paleocrstian Basilica of San Peretó. Menorca
IM. 4 1998 - 2001 Franck Hammouet. Our Lady of the Pentecost, Paris The Ambon, symbolising the burning bush of Moses and in a very unusual position protected by the assembly.
IM. 5 Alvaro Siza. Santa María. Marco de Caravazes (Portugal)
IM. 6 AND 7 2004.-2008. Andreas Mock. San Nicolás de Neuried. Germany. An example of a very well resolved church in many aspects, above all, for its functional scheme. Gifted with Atrium and Nartex, its assembly scheme in cross inserted in a unified space, strengthens the concept of participation and of belonging. The danger of this scheme of residual space in the corners is warded off through and adequate layout of accesses.
IM. 8 AND 9 1996 - 2006 Ignacio Vicenc and José Antonio Ramos. Santa Mónica. Rivas Vaciamadrid
IM. 10 2004 - 2009 Jesús Leach and Fernando Tabuenca. San Jorge. Pamplona (Navarra). This other church recently resolved with a scheme that could be qualified as post-conciliar. The proportions of the halls, however, the distance between congregation-presbytery is not excessive for the capacity it holds. The interesting and useful atrium is one of the many virtues of this proposal that has been improved with an appropriate Nartex
IM. 11 2004 - 2009 Rafael Mono. El Realejo. San Sebastian. Rafael Mono had opted to highlight in this church, clearly, the altar as a table. His scheme in cross despite placing the assembly around it, does not strongly affirm this meaning since the corners of the section presents a global reading of the assembly.
IM. 12 1978 - 1982. Malia Dal Prato and others. San Bartolomeo In Tuto. Scandicci. Italy Assembly.Nucleate Humankind. The altar possesses a strong symbolic responsibility as a table, for its dimensions and position. The baptistery, at the feet of the assembly but integrated in it and resolved as a baptismal pool, appears covered outside the baptismal rite.

Endnotes
1 Gospel of John, chapter 3, verse 8. (J 3.8)
2 It is known that baptism by affusion was still more frequent in the 13th century as St. Thomas of Aquinas in his Summa Theologica state: It needs to be said that baptism by affusion represent with more expressiveness the symbol of the burial of Christ; and so, this way of baptizing – affusion is more frequent and laudable. ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS. Summa Theologica. III. q. 66, a. 7, ad 2. Cited by DEL PALACIO PÉREZ-MEDEL, José Luis. The baptismal pool and the catechumen. Bilbao. Grafite Ediciones. 2000. 162 pages. ISBN 84-95042-40-1 page 135
3 See: I l Vatican Council. Sacrosanctum Concilium constitution, on the sacred liturgy, numbers: 14, 19, 27, 30, 50, and 114.
4 Among the post-conciliar documents that occupy the place for developing the liturgy, three are important for delimiting the characteristics of the altar: 1964. Instrucción Inter Oecumenici for the strict application of the constitution of the sacred liturgy. 1966. General ordination of the Roman missal. (Pablo VI) 1977 Roman Pontifical.
6 SCHWARZ, Rudolf. Von Bau Der Kirche (The construction of churches). Heidelberg. 1938. 167 pages. Includes ideological schemes on the organisation of the liturgical assembly. The introduction was by Mies van der Rohe. Rudolf Schwarz 1897-1966 was the architect of the Liturgical Movement in Germany and together with the theologian Romano Guardini, with whom had a close relationship, developed the theoretical and practical basis for new liturgical spaces.
8 FARNES SCHERER, Pedro. Construir y adaptar las iglesias. Orientaciones doctrinales y sugerencias prácticas sobre el espacio celebrativo, según el espíritu del Concilio Vaticano II. 1ª Edición. Barcelona. Editorial Regina, 1989. 272 pages. ISBN 84-7109-193-5. See in particular the chapter dedicated to the altar. On page 27 it states: “But facing this conception of the altar as an altar Stone there is another that has begun to resurface again: the altar as a table, the table of the Lord, in the house of God. Seeing the altar as “a stone in the temple” responds to a common religious conception of humanity, from paganism to Judaism to the temple of Jerusalem. See it, in turn, as “the table in the house” it is something exclusive and proper to Christianity. Today, the Missal of Pablo VI openly and officially recognises this bipolalic of the Christian altar, and again, the Pontifical Dedication to the altar does it again, highlighting, as will be seen later, that the priority corresponds to the character of the table of the Lord, and not to the stone or the sacrificial stone. The altar is, therefore, Stone, but above all table”

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE SACRED SPACE. CHURCH OF BARANZATE 1957
Guillermo Mocholi Ferrándiz, Bartolomé Serra Soriano, Pedro Verdejo Gimeno
Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera
In 1957 a unique opportunity is presented to the architects Angelo Mangiarotti and Bruno Murasutti which they seized and made into a successful “debut”. Due to the expansion of the Catholic Church in Milan, and by order of Archbishop Giovanni Battista Montini who proposed building more than a hundred new places of worship in the growing working class neighbourhoods and linked to industrial expansion.

Adding to the selection of the group of architects who joined the study were Mangiarotti and Morassutti for the building of the Church of Baranzate. This fact, together with the respective experiences of the architects during their tour in the U.S., and the audacity to include in the study the Engineer Aldo Faini, led to very favourable conditions for designing a magnificent work.

As a team, they found themselves faced with the possibility of experiencing the relationship between technique, technology and new materials, laying the foundations of a building system that allowed for the prefabrication of a “prototype” Church. A rigorous metric and industrial structure, ready to make flexible a replicable model in search of “a new design methodology in line with the new...
means of construction, depersonalisation and objectification of the product as an indispensable means to reach the greatest possible number of users and what is essential for the implementation of a complete fabrication system”. A position very similar to the reflections of Ignacio Gardela on the objectives of prefabrication in series and, “the necessary freedom to be creative is achieved through a modular system, rather than mechanically rigid, wonderfully flexible.” Four freestanding pillars supporting a roof executed with prefabricated sections with post-tensioning, freeing the façades of any mechanical conditioning to become a lightweight limit. A glass wall gains the intimacy required for use when introducing a sheet of polystyrene in the multilayer construction. A dialogue between the lightweight and a thin light box and the structure with texture and concrete volume.

The Church is conceived as a pure volume of floor and rectangular section whose metric is defined in its two directions by a covering element, self-supporting and prefabricated with ribbed shaped blades and approximate dimensions of 2.40 m x 0.94m. its grouping generates the order of the grid cover. This grid is supported on six load lines which rest on two beams resting in situ on truncated cone pillars lightly bush-hammered. Each of these six lines is formed by the addition of post-tensioned prefabricated pieces, again, with a bladed section, in the way of a skeleton framework. The reinforced concrete of these responds consistently to the definition of its external form strictly designed with the minimum required thickness. Its design, in addition to performing the structural role, reinforces the formal expression consistent with the overall texture of the ceiling plane.

There is a will to demand accuracy in each technique hence the pillar desires the nailing of its surface as a Brutalist expression of manual labour as opposed to the refinement and perfection of the prefabricated element.

The resultant unitary space, confined by the light captured in its perimeter and the supporting structure of the roof plane. The pillars comply with the same time by the distributive organisation of a free floor plan.

The scheme responds precisely to the functional, structural and constructive task of the prototype. The growth potential of the system allows to have studied the option in which this repeated floor design is transferred in parallel on its long side, recovering again its proportions and facilitating the growth of the nave in perpendicular to the prefabricated naves.

The volume is placed in the vacuum created by the perimeter wall of the curved section on its exterior face and flat canvas on the interior, where the figures in low relief of Gino Cosentino announces the route of the Stations of the Cross. A wall made by manual means and materialised with stones from the river Po. Opened on its front to reveal the entrance forcing the gaze to below the forger of a language based on the tectonic of steel and glass. The projects by Mangiarotti and, fascinations comparable to the drawings of Boullée or Piranesi. The testimonies of the time. The Mies towers were never built, feeding an aura of definitiveness in their era and the aura of relevance that it is after they are no longer than the faintest echo. Now our land begins to flourish and in doubt the brick architecture. Stone buildings make for stone hearts.

Ignacio Gardela with the motive of an exhibit of prefabricated houses in 1946 made emphasis on three reflections: the risk that the word “prefabrication” had for its use as a trend resulting in doubtful practises; in the second he insisted that the problem lies in the production of the architecture itself, indicating that “the industry is a fact and not only uses technique, but that it is an architectural fact, that included and goes beyond the pure technical”. And, the third, showed that the prefabrication in series should give way to “a system in which the necessary freedom to be creative is achieved through a modular system, more than a mechanically rigid, marvellously flexible, as a base of the limited scale of musical notes.”

PROMENADE IN THREE MOVEMENTS. ABOUT THE CHAPEL IN NEVIGES BY GOTTFRIED BÖHM

José Ángel Hidalgo Arellano. Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera.

One: The expressionist utopia.

Destroy the built vulgarities!

Stone buildings make for stone hearts

Now our land begins to flourish

Bruno Taut, the dissolution of the city, (1920)

The face of the earth would experience a profound change from the moment that crystal architecture superseded completely the brick architecture.

Paul Scheerbart, glass architecture, (1914)

The first expressionist impact would leave, especially in Germany, some unforgetable examples of glass such as the Leipzig pavilions (1913) and Cologne (1914) and Tuat (1916) or the skyscrapers of Mies (1922). The Pavilions built for the Expositions, will be destroyed immediately, leaving for posterity the images and the testimonies of the time. The Mies towers were never built, feeding and aura of fascination comparable to the drawings of Boulée or Piranesi.

Germany, however, will be the pioneer in using glass. What is more, it will be the forger of a language based on the tectonic of steel and glass. The projects by Gropius for Bauhaus (1919) and the work of Mies in America are clear examples of
of this. These works will collect the apparent utopia of the Glassarchitektur by Scheerbart [industrialisation and assembly, image of a new modernity, experimentation of new techniques...] synthesising it with the classic Legacy that had its roots in Schinkel or Behrens: material and language creating a new style. 4

The confidence in a new future, that will come from new techniques, is a patent in all the texts of Scheerbart and find his most eloquent expression in the drawings that Bruno Taut published in Alpine Architecture [1919] Der Weltbaumeister (1919) 5. Here, marking a distinct route that was proliferated in the architecture of steel and glass, leaving open the utopia of an architecture that synthesises the forms and the social character of the gothic, the conquest of space and the emulation of nature [Image 4].

Some decades later, Scharon [that had experimented with the inherited language of Mies and Gropius] and Böhm resumes all the imaginary of the expressionists' texts to build an architecture that, far from utopia, will serve man and the city in a sensitive, pleasant and personal way.

Böhm will capture this outlined language in the expressionist texts, and strip it of the futuristic rhetorical and transform glass into concrete: a concrete with a plastic character that assumes its structural condition and relate it to stereotomy and stone effect tradition of German religious architecture [Images 5 and 6]. He will know how to give a new citizenship card not only to concrete but he will use it relating it the rest of the materials inherited from the tradition: geometry, scale, language and symbolism.

Two: the traces of history

Although the chapel is clearly new and of our time, it has formed a bond with the other buildings in the neighbourhood—it seems to have been there all the time. Despite its small size, it and the others form a living space.

Gottfried Böhm, Acceptance Speech Pritzker Prize 1986

The translucent and light nature of the concrete and its use linked to a surrounding was the first point in the connection with material and place. Böhm would have been very rigorous with the use of this material. In some projects, such as the church of St. Gertrud [Köln 1960–65] Image 1 trusting the differentiation of uses to geometry. In others, he relied on the use of, at least two materials. The brick, in the case of the church of Melanten [1960] Image 8, was used in the base with a double function: the dialogue with the annex buildings and the sublimation of the material of the temple raising it in a concrete that would acquire lightness not only for its position, but for its geometry, much more angular and free.

Also, in the Bethanien complex [Bergisch Gladbach 1962–68] Image 7 brick was used to distinguish between the profane and the sacred, which was always concrete. The brick, with a short modulation, gave the buildings a certain absence of representation that was reserved for the chapel, in concrete, located in a central position.

The Neviges complex is solved with two textures of one single material. The use of the brick was out of place in an environment where it would have been an exception. The existence of the convent in the 18th century, in stone and white rendering, and the necessity to give unity to the whole demanded of Böhm to work the new building only in concrete. 6 In this way, he used a heavy and deep formwork, of wooden slats, for the contention wall, the lower areas and the buildings adjacent to the church, while confining the volumetry of the temple to a concrete that was as smooth as possible – “metallic” –, Scheerbart would have said. 7 Image 10

The material is joined together like so, hand in hand with geometry. Fragmentation was the key used by Böhm to develop the complex. Firstly, Böhm established the bases of the proposal: the church on high, the contention wall freeing the program, the open and portico square, on the other side of the street, the college and the convent existing in a discreet background. Once these parameters were set, the form is settled heavily in the lower part and rise with lightness in the upper part of the volume [Images 11 and 12].

Three: the rebirth of the liturgy

What drove the southern Renaissance to the dome was not the longing for the “heavenly city”, for the “eternal Jerusalem,” but rather a humanistic way of looking at things. They wanted the consummate measure, the monument of the free human being and thus at bottom they wanted the structure of a new world-cause.

Rudolf Schwarz, The Church Incarnate (1938) 8

Rudolf Schwarz has probably designed and built more churches than any other architect 9. It is not only the quality that is awarded a place in history but the depth of the treatment of the theme and the capacity to theorise about the sacred space while we toast in essential churches. Very much influenced for the person and the thoughts of Romano Guardini (“the same as other architects of the time”),

were able to synthesise in their works the new tendencies of liturgical thought with modern architecture. Schwarz, was a friend of the Bohm family, and had from the very beginning a great affinity with Gottfried. Despite the fact that their language differed on numerous occasions, in both pulsed a restlessness to give a new meaning to the sacred space that since the 30’s, Schwarz has been publishing articles in which he spoke about the religious fact or the specific questions of architecture and the catholic liturgy.

This restlessness, which was already extensive in many religious spheres 10, take form in constitutions of the II Vatican Council where the church opens a new dialogue with architects and artists for the configuration of the liturgical spaces 11. The church of Neviges presents some important novelties in this line.

It is not a directional plane. Despite being – for its program- the goal for a pilgrimage, the interior of the building itself is configured as an extension of the procession. There is not one focal point only, rather, the end of the path takes place in the centre of the space, around which the congregation meet.

This meeting of the congregation around a central point changes the perception of a linear space where the congregation look toward an altarpiece and stirs them to focus on the altar, where the Eucharistic sacrifice takes place, while producing an encounter among all those present, creating the sensation of a surprised community in a directional plane. In this way, the absence of the aspe and the proliferation of the “aspes” can be understood.

On the other hand, the church offers a multitude of paths thanks to the naturalness with which the secondary chapels, the crypt and the choir are set in a radical way to the central space. The visitor crosses the threshold, becomes aware of the spatial richness while, at the same time recognising the clarity of the path. Finally, it is worth mentioning the introduction into the architecture itself of the images: sculptures, candles, glassware, furniture… are integrated into an all inclusive that gives the work an extraordinary unity thanks to the inclusive geometry, using only that one material and the continuity in section that is produced between the central space and the perimeters [Image 11a].

Endnotes


3 If we want to elevate our culture to a superior level, for good or bad, we will be forced to transform our architecture”. Paul Scheerbart, work cited page 85.

4 Speaking about the proliferation of the German models of steel and glass architecture, Giuliano Chelazzi expressed it like this: “The stereometric and glass parameters of Mies van der Rohe, who immigrated to America for a long time, were hunted by the ruthless and greedy German avant-garde. Each project of the great master was examined in every detail. CI. CHELAZZI, Giuliano. Dúna presenza espressionista: Gottfried Böhm. L’architettura: cronache e storia. Rome, 1974. N. 222 [9th century, n. 12, April 1974]. Pages 703–704.


10 Above all in two key Works. GUARDINI, Romano. El espíritu de la liturgia. Barcelona: Araucalia, 1958. 197 pages and GUARDINI, Romano. “Sobre la esencia de la obra de arte”, in Obras. Tomo I. Madrid: Cristiandad, 1981. 350 pages although used editions are cited, the first text was published in 1918 and the second – originally, a conference- took a complete and definitive form in a writing from 1947.

11 Neumeyer affirmed in his biography on Mies that surely, the architect met Guardini in Alos Riehl’s house, where he came in contact with other intellectuals such as, Werner Jaeger, Heinrich Wölfli and Eduard Sprangler. Cf page 81 of NEUMEYER, Fritz. Mies van der Rohe. La palabra sin articulo. Reflexiones sobre arquitectura Madrid: El croquis, 1995, 524 pages.

In 1963, the Finnish architect Peikka Pitkänen (Turku, 1927) was the winner of, with his proposal “triaedi” (triaed), the competition to build the Chapel of the Holy Cross in the cemetery of Turku (Finland). The commission makes up part of the extension towards the south of the cemetery, which at the time only had the Chapel of the Resurrection, built by Erik Bryggman (1919-1994) between 1938 and 1941. Pitkänen decides to build the new construction on the limit between the extension and the old cemetery, so that it also functions as a kind of threshold devoted to mourning on the way to the cemetery.

The programme consists of three chapels, with a capacity for 160, 50 and 12 people respectively that should hold the liturgical acts previous to burial or incineration. In addition, the building should house a sacristy, a room for funeral wreaths, another for the delivering of the ashes and a series of vertical planes that extend towards the surrounding landscape. Walls shaped as an inscrutable mass above a natural composition of horizontal and vertical planes that extend towards the surrounding landscape. Walls shaped by panels of prefabricated concrete identical to the slabs of paving bonded by way of ashlers – on a simple skirting board formed in situ - it extends beyond the strict limits of the built volume, enclosing laterally an exterior space appertaining to each of the chapels and pointing unequivocally to building’s main access.

Two powerful horizontal lines – the first, clearly visible in the main façade; the second, on a lower level, favours the natural slope of the land- cover the secondary chapels avoiding the encounter with the walls through a narrow perimeter fissure that illuminates the interior.

In this way, the Pitkänen project appears to consist of a canonical exercise in composition that, if removed from the mere aesthetic speculation, is but the symbolism detached from the ritual covering of each line of the floor, each reflection if its contained form in a significant way. Where do they lead, if not, the walls that are lost in the distance? Perhaps its expressive strength does not reside so much in the clever slipping as in the inexorable destiny that they point to.

The Chapel of the Holy Cross is a building with one entrance and many exits; one enters accompanied but leaves definitely alone. Indeed, the sequence of approximation begins long before; when passing the flower kiosk, a winding path that crosses a gentle slope of natural ground clear of vegetation. Then, the construction appears as a back drop and beyond, the bell tower of the Chapel of the Resurrection from the depths of the forest.

Pitkänen’s building is located on the corner of a meadow, beyond a portico access that initiates a dialogue with the crossed raised in the distance ensnired in a tree-covered background. The cross that gives name to the chapel is also believed to be ambushed, discovered only from the furthest point of the meadow. Not in vain, in this along with many other churches built in Nordic countries, nature is identified as a deity according to pantheist belief which will also have an effect on the interior space.

The portico separates from the Chapel, leaving a margin, while quite generous, recalls those that Sigurn Lewerentz (1885-1975) planned in the chapel of the resurrection (1922-25) and Erik Gunnar Asplund (1885-1940), or even Bryggman in the neighbouring chapel in the cemetery of Turku. This is the tradition of Pitkänen: despite the obvious differences in style, these buildings share a similar mechanism of approximation to that of the portico – hardly separated from the main building – the cross and the path.

But where the influence of Bryggman is felt in a more obvious way, is in the interior of the chapel, where nature bursts in through a front window that bashes the calafaleghe laterally in light. A door points to, in all cases, to the path that this could follow once the ceremony has ended: the funeral in the forest. Significantly, as Ismael García Ross points out with respect to the chapel by Bryggman, this door is not an entrance but an exit. The alternative path for the coffin consists in disappearing underground where the crematory is located.

The lateral opening of the interior space is a characteristic common in the Finnish churches and which the chapel of the resurrection was an important reference. Paloma Gil, whose vital contribution would consist in clouding the idea of the traditional nave, explains: “What Bryggman does with the glazed panels is annul the existence of an opaque limit in the side nave and provoke a symbolic reading through the presence of the exterior in the interior: the forest that is seen from the mourning place represents the hope in the resurrection.”

The truth is that Pitkänen clarifies this solution by compensating said opening – to the west, whereby enacting the drama- through the narrow area of the opposite face, where a bench receives the morning sunlight of an extended skylight; similar to this, another, oriented to the north, bathes in diffused light the background of the main chapel behind the overhead loft destined for the choir. Finally, two small skylights (one of them deliberately slanted towards the south-east) point respectively to the position of the calafaleghe and the altar. Under the revealed light by this unknown hidden source, the biered contemplate through transparency a land (a holy field) close to its fragile existence, more akin to their limited understanding of the world.

Illustrations

Endnotes

1 Collaborators in this Project: Ilpo Raunio, Ola Laho, Arto Kuukkaniemi, Esa Pirronen and Hannu Kussela.


4 BEAMS OR ANTI-ARCHITECTURE
Eva M. Álvarez Isidro
Department of Architectural Design Universidad Politécnica de Valencia

"I think the main activity of the human being should be communication. Where does man think he exists? In which space does the individual exist? In the space of the interlocutor: in the eyes of the interlocutor. It is there where existence is really felt. [...]"

It is not incorrect to say that Solano Benítez is a good communicator. If we value the fascination his discourse causes in the attendees in his conferences, we can affirm – without a doubt- he is a magnificent speaker, vehement, that with diligence mixes all types of narrations to provide the clarity to his task. Work that architecture explains with generosity, in detail, and that in the language- above all the Guarani, but also that of construction – is presented as "that other memory" that stores a common past and promises an unfinished future; a language that is understood as the crystallisation, throughout time, in its own and local way of inventing the universe and whose necessary element is "imagination" that keeps it active, useful and expressive, facing new meanings and necessities of everyone, for all.

In these chats by Benítez and with deliberation, he usually exhibits presenting his work -"4 beams"- his father’s tomb in Piribebuy (2001)- which he explains with the most energy; similar to which he uses to talk about the "AbúFont" house – his mother’s house in Asunción (2004) – both, in Paraguay. This circumstance is not accidental, since both spaces represent the head and tail of the same anxiety.

The tomb in Piribebuy is located in the Pilunchos – the branch of the sky – in a fifth property belonging to his family, fulfilling the wishes of his father to be laid - his last resting place- precisely there, beside a stream that forks into two branches and comes back, in a place somewhat dark and fresh, with generous vernacular vegetation.

According to Benítez himself, he pondered for 10 years about what and what not to do, "going through all the stages of melancholy"; in our opinion, as a result of this long and deep thought, invented - acting on a portion of space as his only tool - the "anti-architecture".

For this, the architect imagined- and built – a square space of nine metres to the side, using four pieces of reinforced concrete, whose exterior formwork was covered - with the help of his son – with Amambay leaves, a type of local fern; the side, using four pieces of reinforced concrete, whose exterior formwork was covered – with the help of his son – with Amambay leaves, a type of local fern; the interior space of the enclosure, which also has a turbine. The geometric centre of these squares is made of concrete.

In the position of the pieces, we see a special preoccupation for breaking the corners, using the access to the enclosure as an excuse; as we also see a negation for the symmetry, belonging to the language of the abstract. This skill in the disposition of the pieces invite, in addition to imagining the inventiveness as a machine whose movement has been frozen in the instant of turning. This movement, in the case that it had not been suspended, would spread the interior space of the enclosure towards the infinite, in a movement similar to asteroids in the universe.

However, the tactic of the disposition of the spiral pieces is not the only thing that produces a solemn impression in the place. The artefact in itself – the space surrounded by the four beams, the tomb and the seat-, are built on a plot whose necessary element is "imagination" that keeps it active, useful and expressive, facing new meanings and necessities of everyone, for all.

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Perhaps this is a vision somewhat cosmic – belonging to clear night skies and the sophisticated viewpoint - but the windmill or the spirals and their rotation have often been used as images of the eternal.

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"The interlocutor is the mirror to the subject that speaks. In such a way that the human being is the subject of the other, the interlocutor reclaims to the absent an unfinished conversation in the hope – for both- of not ceasing to exist."

Several of these notions are transferred to his mother’s house. The interior enclosure to the 4 beams turns, in the house, into a wide and generous space on the ground floor –two Viendeel beams provide an opening of fourteen metres without pillars – located between the street and the back patio, mixing with the vegetation of the urban surrounding, apt for all kinds of meetings and events, where it is possible to chat, share, understand. Events that easily pass to the memory of the people that enjoy, contributing to the notion of communication, keeping in the memory, of eternity.

On the other hand, the home, the house, is the natural place for the repeated care of people, an action that happens without an end in time, and whose repetition, generally, is the minimum base for immediate happiness that we feel. Benítez indicates in his conferences "it is sacred to eat breaded meat on Sundays in my mother’s house" the moment in which the whole family comes together. The architect seems to make reference to Arendt, when he indicates that the human labour – that includes chores – should follow the circular motion of the cycle of life, in an infinite repetition.

"Man produces what is vitally necessary to feed the process of life of the human body. And, given that this vital process, despite taking us to a rectilinear process of decline from birth to death, it is in itself circular, the activity of the labour should follow the cycle of life, the circular movement of our bodily functions, which means that the labour activity never takes us to the end while life lasts. It is indefinitely infinite [...]. Given that the labour corresponds to the condition of life, not only does it participate in the fatigue and the problems of life, but the simple happiness that our being alive can experience."

The characteristic of this human labour – so visible in the chores, in his mother’s house – "indefinitely infinite", so understandable to the infinite, is incorporated by the architect in his father’s tomb through the recovering with a mirror of the interior surface of the four beams of concrete.

This repetition of images has, as an immediate consequence – like immediate happiness- the fact of exterminating our "1" and place far away from ourselves a place that makes us equal to the rest of our fellow man that we also see reflected, together with us, all occupying a common space, perhaps a common origin.

"I left various fortunes (not all) my garden of forking paths I gave back in silence the leaf. Alberto continued: – Before exhuming this letter, I had asked myself how a book can be infinite. I couldn’t think of another possibility other than cyclical, circular. A volume whose last page was identical to the first."

Moreover, from this common future, Benítez – through the repetition with no end of the images in mirrors parallel among them- achieves the dissolution of the signs and signals of the space to, in reality, build a circular, cyclical, infinite volume; perhaps, the artefact would be like a watch that eternally measures time.

"Precisely, said Albert. The garden of forking paths is an enormous puzzle or parable whose theme is time; a hidden cause that prohibits the mention if its name.

The images not only multiply. From this moment, the place surrounded by mirrors becomes liquid; the shine and reflections, the change in the relationship in the distances, produce an effect of translucent liquid: it is possible to feel as if you are submerged - diving - in a swimming pool - or in the sea, - an element that is often used as an image of a final destiny –", where the light darkness, the difference refraction of light and the distinct transmission of increases the strangeness facing the homogenous pressure of the water. And this sensation, considering is an allusion to the pressure that the passing of time exerts – and the accumulation of the events- on the memory. The mirrors in Piribebuy increase the feeling of pressure that exerts on our conscience. The time, once again.

But the ingenuity of Benítez does not only seem to be a metaphor: we don’t know if, in the same way we long to preserve memories – many of them, family: of the children, parents, - through photographs and videos, Benítez, wouldn’t have wanted to imitate Morel "and he wanted to create a machine – still unfinished – that faithfully stored complete impressions, real as well as unreal, in order to be able to reproduce them as many times as we want, to infinity. We don’t know where the ‘power plant’ would be that would produce the energy with the force of the waves, or how the images would be transcribed. But, despite this, we can understand the four polished beams as a machine that we still don’t know how to make it work, ‘a work of reasoned imagination’ whose functionality could store memory, perhaps the sky.

Perhaps, it is a lot to assume... but the most important of the examples that have been mentioned here, is that through his ingenuity, Benítez demonstrates that reasoned imagination can be- and should be – an effective mechanism to define and address the problems that humanity has planned – and in which architecture has an important role – that need new ways of understanding and acting.

With these works, Benítez exposes a new discourse with which he combines the central aspects of the discipline with the peripheral: he speaks about basic and sophisticated constructive processes simultaneously; about imaginative solutions, about recycling, about people, about the Guarani, about architecture, about a change in focus.
“...the antipoetry has something to do with science, but also with other things that are not science; it also has to do with religion, and sport. I would then, try to allow it to open doors and windows, in a way in which the complete reality incorporates into the academy. [...] The academy has to be deconstructed, and how perhaps an embryonic prototype of the “reasoned imagination”, of the anti-architecture, that like the antipoetry “has opened doors and windows in a way that the complete reality incorporates into the academy”...” Maitei! 25

Endnotes
2 Solano Benítez was born in Asunción (Paraguay) in 1956. He received his degree in architecture from the Universidad Nacional de Asunción (FAUNA) in 1986, and in 1987 founded the Cabinet of Architecture, the professional society that he currently shares with Alberto Marimón and Gloria Cabral. Among the prizes that Benítez has received the following distinctions are highlighted, “Outstanding Youth” by the Junior Chamber of Paraguay for his contribution to Paraguayan culture (1999); the BSI Swiss Architectural Award, an international prize directed at architects under 56 who have made a significant contribution to contemporary architecture (2008); and an honourable mention from the Paraguayan National Congress for contributions to the Nation (2011). He was also elected “Bicentenary Architect” by the Paraguayan Association of Architects (2011) and honorary member of the American Institute of Architects (2003). For its part, the Cabinet of Architecture was recognised, among others, with the prize. Work of the Decade 1989-1999 from the College of Architects Paraguay (1999), he was a finalist in the second edition of the Mies van der Rohe prize for Latin America (1999), and represented Paraguay in the biennial of Venice, San Paulo and in Lisbon, Latin American capital of Culture (1996).
4 Solano Benítez cites with frequency the literary Works by Borges, by Bioy Casares, by Nicanor Parra, entre among others.
5 BORGES, Jorge Luis, Ficciones, Alianza Editorial S.A., Madrid, 2008, page. 201: “without a sacred book that brings together like the Scriptures to Israel, without a common memory, without this other memory which is the language, scattered on the face of the earth [...] extracted text from the story” “The sect of the Fenix”
6 BORGES, Jorge Luis, Ficciones, Alianza Editorial S.A., Madrid, 2008, p. 55. [...] all man should be capable of all ideas and understand that in the origin it will be “text extracted from the story by “Pierre Menard, author of Quixote”
7 Described by the architect in this text http://www.anoterragra/reader/view/1985/SOLAND_BENITEZ_A_GARDEN_A_TOM
9 Width of the walkway, 1.5 metres
10 BORGES, Jorge Luis, Ficciones, Alianza Editorial S.A., Madrid, 2008, p. 157. [...] its 9th attribute, eternity – that is to say the immediate knowledge – of things that will be, that are and have been in the Universe [...]” text extracted from the story “Death and the compass”
11 BIOY CASARES, Adolfo, La invenicion de Morel, 1940 http://redescolar.icee.edu.mx/redescolar/memorias/entrale_2000/pdf/morel.pdf Page 3: “I don’t agree, being reminded of it in this diary, I am not ungrateful to... The defence facing survivors leave no doubts: as in reality, in the memory of men: where perhaps is in the sky – Ombrelliners will have been charitable to a neighbour unjustly persecuted and, until the last memory appears, he would treat him with kindness.”
14 ARENDT, Hannah, De la historia a la accion, Ediciones Paidés Ibérica S.A., Barcelona, 1995, page 93
18 TOYO, Ito, Tarzans in the media forest, Architectural Association, London, 2011, page 116. “But the transparency of the Barcelona Pavilion is not that of clear air. Rather, it makes us feel as if we were looking at things deep underground, and would better describe as translucent. The infinity fluidity we sense in the pavilion must arise from this translucent liquid-like space. What we experience here is not the flow of air but the sense of wandering and drifting gently underwater. It is this sensation that makes the space distinct and unique”
19 BIOY CASARES, Adolfo, La invenicion de Morel, 1940 http://redescolar.icee.edu.mx/redescolar/memorias/entrale_2000/pdf/morel.pdf On the island there was a piloto or swimming pool
21 Luis Mansilla, Playgrounds http://luis-mansilla.tunyon.blogspot.com.es/2012/02/blog-post.html ‘I am starting to think that space is not a significant part of our preoccupations in life. Just time, that spills and slips between our fingers when we try to catch it.’
23 BORGES, Jorge Luis, Prologue: La invenicion de Morel, 1940 http://www.literatura.org/BioyMore/prologo.html ‘In Spanish, works in reasoned imagination are infrequent and even rare. The classic practised on the allegory, the exaggerations of the satire that sometimes, is mere verbal incoherence. [...]’
25 In Guarani, ‘Maitê!’ means ‘greetings!’ Guarani interactive dictionary http://www.uni-mainz.de/cgi-bin/paranapi/2diccionario.pl

Cemetery

The graves float like slightly raised islands in the surrounding meadow landscape. Tree groves consisting of a variety of indigenous species such as birch and pine, oak and hornbeam, cherry and crab apple, lend the graveyard its own special character. On the inside the graves are enclosed by dry walls and permit a view only into the distance. The graves integrated into the lawns are reached via sealed paths.

The burial route connects the islands with each other, with the mortuary and the old section of the cemetery. The sharp bends in the paths are accentuated by water points.

Viewed from the outside, the cemetery has a park-like appearance: the landscape embraces the islands with blossoming dry meadows and single fruit trees with footpaths and bike trails leading further afield. Framed by a dome of lime trees, the mortuary stands between the old and new sections of the cemetery.

Mortuary

Opposite the entrance to the old cemetery, the new cemetery buildings are arranged as an austere, almost monastic quadrangle in the otherwise flowing Riem country park.

Together with the rough-cast surrounding walls, these unassuming structures with their clear outlines create a haven of peace and tranquility. The complex features three courtyards. The central, peaceful entrance yard is the starting point for visitors proceeding to the cemetery, mortuary, private chapels of rest and the entrance to the old cemetery precinct.

The buildings were conceived as solid bodies emerging from the ground: oak, Corten steel and stone [concrete and natural stone] set the tone. All materials are solid and untreated. Their natural aging is symbolic for the cycle of life.

The mortuary is protected by a natural stone roof: a smooth oak cube presents a complete contrast to the rough quarried stone surrounding walls and the stone floor.

The mood in the mortuary is set by the warm colour of the wood enclosing walls and an introverted, sacred character due to the avoidance of a direct view to the outside. A golden water surface as a meditative focal point bathes the walls and an introverted, sacred character due to the avoidance of a direct view to the outside. A golden water surface as a meditative focal point bathes the fluidity we sense in the pavilion must arise from this translucent liquid-like space. What we experience here is not the flow of air but the sense of wandering and drifting gently underwater. It is this sensation that makes the space distinct and unique”

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From the mortuary the burial route leads through the roofed forecourt adjoining the pool, past the mortuary bell and over the crunching gravel to the cemetery, the “large cross” and the graves, which resemble islands in the landscape.

The materials

The complex is conceived as a heavy-weight element “rising up out of the earth”. Oak, weathering steel and, primarily, the “stone” [fair-face concrete and natural stone] determine the overall appearance.
The sculpted forms radiate tranquility, dignity and composure. Visible from afar in this open landscape, the long-span “stone” roof is a distinctive element.

The sculpted buildings with their homogenous surfaces are built in reinforced concrete, the properties of which correspond ideally to the concept of this structure because this material can be moulded into virtually any shape. Large spans are also no problem in reinforced concrete. The image of the longspan “stone” canopy can only really be achieved with this material.

Concrete provides the chance of differentiating surfaces according to architectural requirements—another material property crucial to the realisation of this design.

Different types of surface finish can be achieved depending on the type of formwork panels used and the subsequent treatment of the concrete, enabling a rise in quality from outside to inside, and from rough to smooth.

The external surfaces of the chapel of rest and the adjoining central courtyard are in coarse, homogenous fair-face concrete, which has been given its texture by means of bush-hammering. This mechanical treatment exposes the aggregate in the concrete so that the surfaces are given a uniform appearance. The increased concrete cover to the reinforcement must be considered at the design stage, otherwise such subsequent mechanical treatment is not possible. By revealing the aggregates in the concrete, bush-hammering gives a concrete surface the character of a gravestone worked by a stonemason.

The concrete surfaces facing inwards have a board-marked finish - a linear pattern achieved by using a formwork of boards with a highly absorbent surface. The imprint of the rough-sawn boards lends the concrete a vigorous texture and creates a visual reference to the more noble oak wood lining to the chapel of rest.

Inside the chapel, the materials are used differently depending on their visual and haptic qualities. Both the timber and the concrete here haves smooth surface. The concrete was cast against smooth formwork panels with a mildly absorbent surface.

In the passageway to the laying-out cells, the concrete

DE LA PIEDRA CHAPEL. CIENEGUILLA, LIMA, PERU

The de la Piedra Chapel is located at the margin of the Lurín river and beside the Lomas de Castilla hill, in the district of Cieneguilla, east of the city of Lima. The area is characterized for a natural context of desert vegetation, in contact with the foothills of the Andes mountain chain.

The commission was to design, within a rural lot, a private chapel for a couple who values social altitude.

The placement, away from the preexisting dwelling, isolates from everyday and induces a long walk in order to reach the project. The generating line of this hike derives from a form of nature: the seashell.

This continuous spiral creates an enclosure within the vastness of the plot, and by means of reflection and surprise, values the transition from the “profane” of everyday life to a profoundly “sacred” space where verticality is dissolved in the experience.

Its orthogonal geometry allows to differentiate stages throughout the pilgrimage. The first approximation takes place in contact with nature, accompanying the visitor to finishing the visual towards the valley.

Further ahead, the water appears as a purifying element, whilst allowing the confrontation with one’s self.

The patio provides the necessary pause for reflection. An enclosure is created which completes the surroundings: the height of the visual determines a new horizon, gathering nature (exterior) and architecture (interior) on a same plane.

The verticality of the interior attempts to approach the divine, underlined by a skyline which is hidden behind a suspended plane. No typological or symbolic references which manifest a religious character are deliberately used. The materials are austere and elemental in order to dissolve in the experience.

The project is solved as an abstract object, although the multiple lecture underlies in all of its components. When discovering the interior, a cross is configured on perspective between the vertical of the open door and the horizontal of the exterior bench. The altar has a dual function: on the inside for individual meditation and on the outside for mass ceremonies.

The artist Mimmo Paladino created the 14 stations along the Via Crucis.

The program included the building of a church for 400 people, within which, a chapel could allow up to 100 people daily use. The parish center was completed with offices, multipurpose rooms, classrooms catechesis, two houses for priests and a guest room.

Urban planning provided the situation of the building in the center of a space surrounded by residential buildings of up to eight plants height: A difficult situation to deal with. This situation provides two sub-squares on each side of the site. The relationship between these squares and their connection were the fulcrum when designing the building.
The church stands perpendicular to the main street of the neighborhood, the sequence of its accompanying buildings, thus assuming some rules that help to fill the site with ease and discretion. A large atrium acts as the outer hall, linking the squares mentioned, adds an interesting urban episode for those who simply cross, and serves as a meeting and gathering place as a preamble to the entrance into the temple, connecting it at the same time with the parish center.

Concrete specifications

The design of the temple walls contemplates the simultaneous construction of two sheets of poured concrete that host an insulation layer between. Given its thickness (17.5 + 17.5 + 5) texture provided both in the socket, made with vertical slats in low relief every 5 cm, as in the higher levels and the corresponding armor, on proposal of the construction company, it was decided to do it with concrete with components and additives for self-compacting. This technique, used regularly in civil and engineering, is less known in building small scale, as in this case. The Abrams cone is flat, ensuring that the material flows between the formwork fulfilling the formwork texture and coating the armor without vibration, not losing the required mechanical requirements. To improve control of mixing and kneading, a concrete mixer was ensured that the material flows between the formwork fullfilling the formwork.

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Three pieces (atrium, temple and parish center) that are melt under a unique reference point. In this occasion the expectation for the architecture was primarily to help configure a space capable of contributing to the life of a community that feels Christian in the midst of a plural and diverse society.

The church came into being with a will to serve as the threshold of a new residential neighborhood that through its park establishes continuity with the city. The church is by no means the dominant volume in the way that a steeple turns it in ground floor for all purposes, they are accessible from the locals.

The main room of the temple was conceived primarily as a meeting place for the people of God for the joyful celebration of the Sacrifice. Thus, the architectural layout should emphasize the communal and the festive character of the area meeting, symbolic references with a rich tradition.

To meet these assumptions, the central form of the temple, especially suited to contemporary liturgical assumptions, combined with traditional cross layout, respecting the centered position of the presbytery. This solution is revealed particularly effective in two aspects: first, it allows the people surrounding the place of sacrifice, on the other, provides a differential setup, but always centered, the altar, ambo headquarters and, with perfect visibility from any point.

Another important topic of study has been the claim of finding an architectural arrangement that combines the requirements of the Blessed Sacrament chapel, a place of eucharistic reservation and adoration particular, with a perfectly recognizable presence and star in her temple.

Here again the recurrence types tested in the long and rich Christian architectural tradition has proved fruitful. The reference is to the altarpieces now Aragonese late-Gothic and Renaissance-like the Basilica del Pilar, Damian Forment, or the Cathedral, Cathedral of Teruel, Huesca Cathedral, San Pablo de Zaragoza, etc.—or Baroque altarpieces—custody.

Thus the Blessed Sacrament chapel, which is also used as daily chapel, provides sufficiently high on the dimension of the presbytery to allow the tabernacle that houses visible from the entire temple, chairing the group without interfering in liturgical. Under this chapel, sacristry is located.

Direct access is from the north street, higher than the corner from the main entrance of the temple.

Seven large skylight spread colored light inside the temple, qualifying spatially distinct areas. The skylights are images of the seven sacraments by which the Church illuminates the life of the faithful and manages Grace. At the entrance of the temple, on her atrium, a different one, which combines the steeple with the sign of the Cross, and serves as a call and as an urban reference point.

Taking advantage of the morphology of the land and ancient carbon deposit required to be excavated in its entirety, the parish center and priestly houses are arranged on two floors. One, the access floor at the level of the street, and the other, the lowest floor at the level of excavation. Gardens at this level turn it in ground floor for all purposes, they are accessible from the locals.

The parish center structure is reinforced concrete with ceramic floors, while the temple was resolved with steel trusses. The entire assembly is coated with a veneer precast rough concrete.

CHURCH AND PARISH CENTER "EL BUEN PASTOR" PONFERRADA LEON. SPAIN

Fundamental premise of the project was the most faithful compliance of all functional and symbolic requirements demanded by the new provisions adopted by the liturgical reform. The temple is presented as the protagonist of the whole. It is located at the site of maximum visibility and better access to the front garden of the "Rosaleda" ride.

"IESU" CHURCH IN RIBERAS DE LOIOLA, SAN SEBASTIAN, SPAIN

Building a church for the Bishopric of Donastia-San Sebastian in the new neighborhood of Riberas de Loiola along the bend of the river Urumea River was a new experience for the architect in the stormy territory of religious architecture. If in the Cathedral of Los angeles the architect felt intimidated by the symbolic content needed for the Cathedral and by its scale, in the church in Riberas de Loiola, this weight was lifted. In this occasion the expectation for the architecture was primarily to help configure a space capable of contributing to the life of a community that feels Christian in the midst of a plural and diverse society.

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