

PARISH COMPLEX OF SANTA
ANA Y LA ESPERANZA.
MORATALAZ, Madrid



Background

Don Casimiro Morcillo González was appointed the first Archbishop of Madrid, in 1964. The creation of the new parishes in the neighborhoods of Madrid was among his first decisions of the Archbishop and that included also the neighborhood of Moratalaz.

Among the new parishes erected, there were two: Nuestra Señora de Esperanza and Santa Ana

Both the parishes were established in 1965. The first was initially housed in a simple barracks, and later a more solid church was constructed. However, in 1988 it was destroyed when a crane from a nearby construction site collapsed over it. In 1989, a decree was issued erecting the new parish of Santa Ana y la Esperanza through the union of the two former parishes, with its See maintained at the original church of Santa Ana.

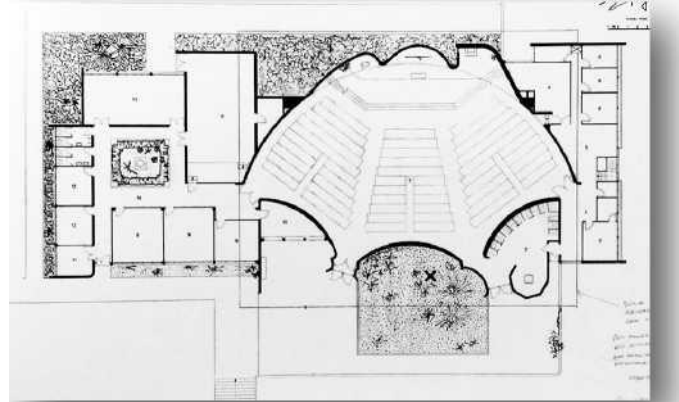
Church of Santa Ana

The church was designed by the architect Miguel Fisac Serna and inaugurated in 1966.

It was one of the first churches in Spain to be designed after the Second Vatican Council, reflecting a radical transformation in the spatial conception of the church building.

It is therefore a key work for understanding the transition from the traditional church model to modern liturgical architecture.

Its guiding principles are centrality and participation.



The project reflects a new way of celebrating the liturgy: the priest no longer stands with his back to the congregation, while the community gathers around the altar. The space ceases to be longitudinal and becomes centralized and dynamic. This completely transforms the traditional church typology. The idea of a “journey toward the altar” is abandoned and replaced by that of a communal assembly.

The architecture is a direct reflection of the liturgy. The church features an organic, radial floor plan with a non-axial form, reminiscent of a fan or the shape of a fish/ bat.

Construction system and structure

The dominant material is reinforced and prestressed concrete, expressed in a Brutalist architectural language.

A distinctive element is the roof, formed by “hollow beams” (vigahueso), invented by Miguel Fisac Serna, which enable large structural spans of approximately 20 metres.



The apse is composed of three functional re-
the presider’s chair.

The structure of the building is left exposed; the material itself defines the space, without additional decoration. It is a clear example of expressive functionalism and structural honesty. The structural calculations were carried out by J. Badell.

On either side of the church are located the parish office buildings.

Light and atmosphere

A lattice structure located in the ceiling above the altar allows for intense overhead lighting on the altar, while the nave remains in relative dimness.

The altar becomes both a visual and symbolic focal point, and the contrast between light and darkness creates a sense of spiritual drama.

The light replaces traditional decoration.

Acoustics

The entrance walls, with their convex curves, are designed to disperse sound.

The word (liturgical words spoken) becomes central after the Second Vatican Council, and the architecture is adapted accordingly.

The sculptures



The sculptor José Luis Sánchez Fernández worked in collaboration with the architect Miguel Fisac Serna, integrating artworks into the architecture. He created the main sculptures of the church: the crucified Christ, the sculptural ensemble - of the Virgin, Saint Anne and the Child, and the elements associated with the tabernacle. The sculptures are made of metalised concrete.

The stained-glass window accompanying the Blessed Sacrament is the work of Agustín Úbeda.

Altar, Baptismal Font, and Seating

Both the altar, the baptismal font, and the presider's chair were designed by Miguel Fisac Serna. They are intended to be purely functional, with straight lines predominating and no additional ornamentation.

The pews for the faithful were also designed by Miguel Fisac Serna. The metal supports holding the wooden elements are shaped like a capital "A," in memory of his daughter Anai'ck, who died at the age of six. In her memory, the architect designed the church.

Relationship with the Faithful

A new spatial experience is created. The proximity to the altar provides greater visibility and fosters a stronger sense of community. The faithful ceases to be a spectator; but becomes an active participant.

Architectural Language

Key characteristics include extreme sobriety, absence of ornamentation, the prominence of concrete, and organic forms. It is close to Brutalism, but with a more human and spiritual approach.

Contributions

Typological innovation in religious architecture, integration of liturgy and space, advanced use of concrete, and careful control of light and acoustics.

Conclusion (Architectural Synthesis)

The Church of Santa Ana y la Esperanza in Moratalaz is a manifesto of modern religious architecture, where form arises from liturgical function, space is organized around community and light, and sound and structure replace ornamentation.

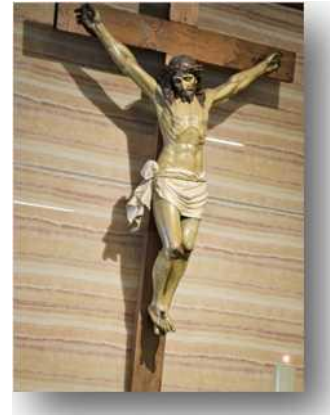
Urban Integration

The church is located in a working-class neighbourhood that was initially in expansion (Moratalaz) but is now fully consolidated. It stands on an irregular plot with a slope, surrounded by residential blocks.

The site has a 6-metre drop on its western side, which the architect resolved by designing a three-storey structure housing the priests' residences and parish offices.

On the opposite facade, a courtyard organises access to meeting rooms. Caritas facilities, and a Winter Chapel under the patronage of Saint Augustine.

This chapel is presided over by a Crucifix that originally came from the demolished church of Our Lady of Hope.



In response to the lack of educational facilities in a developing neighbourhood, these premises housed a girls' school from 1968 to 1989, run by the Mercedarian Sisters of Charity.



A sculpture modeled in white clay by Esperanza Martín de Diego and donated to the parish.

It is located in the parish office area.



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