

| compartir |

The magazine of healthcare co-operativism

MONOGRAPH
Gaudí in Rome

HEALTH
The timeline of puberty

HEALTHCARE CO-OPERATIVISMO
2012, International Year
of Cooperatives

CULTURE
Light of simple song

| Always the warmest approach



As well as knowledge and the best technology to care for the health of our clients, a very important therapeutic element is the doctor-patient relationship.

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Assistència Sanitària supporting organ and tissue regeneration and transplants



ICA General Assembly

MONOGRAPH



The genius of Gaudí captivates Rome

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CULTURE



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It is no easy task for an artist to find a niche in the city of artists. Much less so if the figure in question is Gaudí, who died in the mid-20th-century having never left his country, and the city in question is Rome, *caput mundi* of art throughout history. That is, though, exactly what happened with the exhibition about Gaudí in Rome which showcased the work of the multi-faceted artist and architect before a major international audience.

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Director: Carles Torner Pifarré

Contributing Editor: Sergi Rodríguez

Contributors to this issue: Dr Adolf Cassan, Dolors Borau, Dra. Perla Luzondo, Elvira Palencia, Oriol Conesa, Jose Pérez, Antoni Valcells, Sergi Rodríguez, Glòria Carrizosa, Carme Munté, Josep M. Ferreiro, Montserrat Abelló, Sam Abrams, Dr Viola, Miquel Àngel Llauger

Photography and illustration: Glòria Vives, Jordi Negret, Edmon Amill, Elvira Palencia, Joan Gabarró, Jose Pérez, Josep Valls «Pepo», © Pep Daudé/
Basílica Sagrada Família, Carles Torner, Pep Herrero, Mar Aguilera, Manuel Espuch, Keith Adams, Joma

Translations and corrections: Aba Congress and Jason Garner

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Basílica Sagrada Família

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Espru Foundation.

Av. Josep Tarradellas,
123-127, 4a planta
08029 Barcelona
Tel.: 93 495 44 90
Fax: 93 495 44 92

Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena, 10, 3^a
28027 Madrid
Tel: 91 595 75 52

NIF: G-59117887

www.fundacionespriu.coop
compartir@fundacionespriu.coop

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| compartir | is published on recycled paper and wishes to express its growing concern at the squandering of natural resources.

EDITORIAL

2012 is International Year of Cooperatives. Amid the economic crisis in Europe, it is highly revealing that the United Nations should have chosen to place the co-operative movement centre stage in the year that has just begun. This fact was emphasised by Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the Qatari President of the UN General Assembly who told the Assembly that «Enterprises run on co-operative principles reduce poverty, create employment and promote social integration». He said this prior to introducing Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) who addressed the plenary assembly of the UN. Green reminded her audience that the 300 leading co-operatives in the world are engaged in the most competitive economic sectors in 25 countries, and that taken as a whole they amount to a volume equivalent to the world's ninth-largest economy. These sectors include health care, as has been repeatedly demonstrated on the pages of [Compartir].

It is highly significant that, weeks before the launch of International Year of Co-operatives, the most recent General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance was attended by a record number of delegates: more than 2000 representatives of co-operatives in 80 countries worldwide gathered in Mexico. If the only benefit which can possibly be derived from the economic crisis is in helping us separate the wheat from the chaff (economically and also morally), then the co-operative enterprise model emerges as one which could offer solutions for a more just and more dignified future for humanity.

At the start of the ICA assembly, the UN's Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, addressed co-operative members worldwide: the solidarity and values promoted by co-operatives foster global peace and well-being. Or to put it succinctly in the words of Juan Somavia, President of the International Labour Organization (ILO): «The evidence demonstrates that co-operatives are highly resistant to crises». Somavia also called on the international cooperative movement to provide an efficient enterprise development model, to commit to extending social protection and raise as far as possible the profile of its conception of a just economic system. The Espriu Foundation was there, showing the world the vitality and sound health care services offered by the doctor and patient co-operatives which form the basis of ASISA, Assistència Sanitària Col·legial and SCIAS.

The President of the world's co-operatives addressing the UN, and the Secretary General of the UN addressing the international assembly of co-operatives: a clear sign of the vital and necessary co-operation between states and the co-operative world. The Espriu Foundation itself promotes such dialogue in the field of health care. All these efforts intended to provide a response to the devastation of an economic crisis engendered by the model which has dominated recent decades, offering dignified, just and sustainable solutions from the perspective of the social economy..

The timeline of puberty

Dr Adolf Cassan



Puberty is a critical period in life when numerous organic and psychological changes take place, marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. Through mechanisms which remain a mystery, in a region of the brain known as the hypothalamus a «biological clock» begins ticking, triggering the release of various hormones which act on a child's organism, leading to the far-reaching physical and intellectual transformations which correspond to the initial stage of adolescence. It is during this period, then, that the process of bodily growth comes to an end, sexual development reaches fruition and the nervous system achieves its greatest point of maturity. At this time in a boy's or girl's life, with such a range of changes taking place, it is vital that their parents should have access to appropriate information about what is happening, in order to allow them to recognise normal transformations and avoid any worries or misunderstandings.

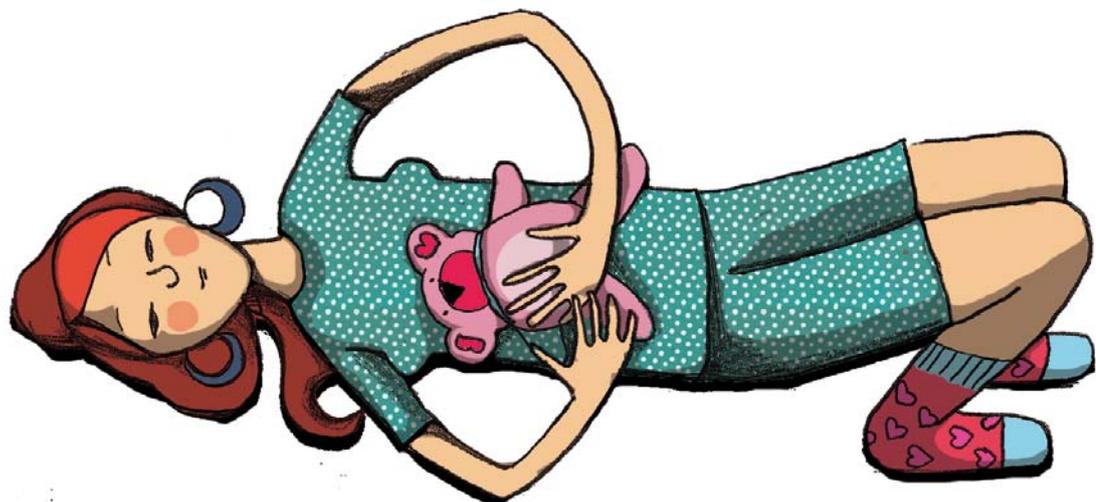
The first point to be made is that there is no given age marking the onset of the changes of puberty. It may begin at any time over a lengthy period, depending on the inherent constitutional characteristics of each individual, and will also generally begin earlier in girls

than boys. In general terms, and in our world, in girls the changes of puberty typically begin around 9 years, although it is completely normal for them to start at any age between 8 and 13. In boys, puberty begins between 11 and 12, although it can quite normally start between 10 and 14.

However, although there is no specific age which would in general mark the onset of puberty, the various changes which progressively occur in a child's body do follow a precise timeline. Parents should be aware in advance of the pace and characteristics of the changes, in order to explain to their son or daughter what is happening to them and be able to provide them with information about what is likely to happen next, in order to avoid any uncertainty, embarrassment or fear which such sudden and unexpected transformations might cause. The early changes focus on the initial activity of the reproductive system, with the emergence of the sexual characteristics of each gender.

In girls, the first change will be an increase in the size of their breasts: from a given point onwards, the breasts will begin to get larger, to a greater or lesser

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Gibria Vives

extent and at a faster or slower rate, essentially in accordance with individual constitutional characteristics. A fine hair will begin to develop on the pubis at the same time as the breasts develop. Over the following months, as the breasts grow, the pubic hair will grow into the triangular form typical of the female sex. Hair will also progressively appear in the armpits. Later, as more general physical growth occurs, there will be a progressive thickening of the thighs, a broadening of the pelvis and an accumulation of fatty tissue in the different parts of the body which give a woman's figure its typical outline.

While these external changes are occurring, there are also changes to the internal genitals, which increase in size and reach functional fruition. Its very important to bear in mind that although a girl may experience gradual as well as obvious changes up to this point, soon she will have to face more rapid changes which, if she is not prepared for or aware of their coming, could affect her negatively, whilst if she is well informed, these could prove positive experiences, showing her that she advancing to adulthood. In short, when the ovaries begin to function, reproductive activity commences. Over a period of between 2 and 3 years after the breasts begin to grow in size, then, the first menstruation, or menarche, occurs. In general, a few months later, although this may go unnoticed, the first ovulation will occur, the starting point of a lengthy stage of fertility. Over the first few months or years periods are generally irregular, both in terms of their frequency and abundance; little by little, though, they will settle down into an inherent pattern.

In boys, the first changes occur in the genital region. At a certain moment there will be an increase in the size of the testicles, and wrinkles will appear on the scrotum. A light pubic hair will also emerge at this initial stage. After a period of 1 or 2 years, during which the testicles continue to grow and folds appear in the scrotum, a notable growth will be seen in the penis, which increases in length and thickness. Progressively, along with general growth, there will be a particular thickening of muscle mass and an increase in bone size, the typically rhomboid form of the male pubic hair will take shape, while hair will also grow in the armpits and on the face, first the moustache and later the beard. There is also a change in the voice, which becomes deeper.

In the case of boys also there will be a sudden and clear signs of the maturity of the internal genitals, as reproductive testicular function begins. Boys need to know this, as they could otherwise be surprised by their first spontaneous ejaculations: they might worry that

they have done something bad, or even feel a sense of guilt and be too ashamed to ask what is happening; it is the parents who must make sure that they explain at the appropriate time. Approximately 1 year after the sudden growth in the penis first ejaculations will begin: the first are generally nocturnal discharges which occur spontaneously while sleeping. Mature spermatozooids are generally produced at the age of around 14 or 16 years, while peak fertility is reached at around 18 or 20.

Throughout this period both boys and girls will register a constant increase in body weight and size, albeit with considerable variations. At a particular moment there will be what is known as the «growth spurt»: in just a few months the child's body will increase in size considerably, taking on an adult form. This accelerated growth typically begins earlier in girls, and will last for around 1 or 2 years, decreasing in intensity during early menstruation. In boys the onset will generally come a year after the growth in the testicles, and last for 2 or 3 years. As this more intense growth begins earlier in girls, it is quite common that at the age of, for example, 11 or 12, they will be significantly taller than their male classmates of the same age. Nonetheless, as the growth stage is longer in boys, by the age of 16, once girls have practically reached the end of this process, the boys will nonetheless continue growing. In general terms, then, the girls will grow first, but are later matched and even overtaken in size by the boys.



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The Obesity Laparoscopy Surgery and Metabolism Unit at Montpellier Clinic

| Elvira Palencia

When an obese patient arrives at the second floor of the Montpellier Clinic, home to the Obesity and Metabolism Surgery Unit, and once the decision to operate has been taken, the first procedure is a study to establish which surgical technique to apply. This is followed by pre-operative and supplementary tests, and a date is scheduled for the operation.

An endocrinological, psychological and anaesthetic test will first be required, followed by post-operative metabolic and endocrine monitoring. Once the patient's weight has been brought down and has stabilised, the required plastic surgery will then be proposed in order to achieve the best possible aesthetic outcome.

A precise follow-up process will likewise take place after the operation. Recovery is generally a progressive process, and under normal circumstances patients will be able to resume their normal activities after two weeks.



The epidemic of developed societies

The process described above in fairly simple terms is increasingly common, as illnesses such as obesity and diabetes are increasing considerably in developed countries, and leading to a fall in quality of life and a rise in mortality.

This is why the Montpellier Clinic set up its Obesity and Metabolism Surgery Unit in 2005. The Unit has two main goals: to begin with, to provide an effective response for the treatment of obesity and to control metabolic syndrome, in both obese and non-obese patients; and secondly to provide medical, scientific and research support for metabolic surgery, which includes obesity surgery, with the associated pathologies, and also diabetes surgery.

A multidisciplinary view

Obesity and metabolism surgery must be performed from a multidisciplinary perspective. This is why the Montpellier Clinic Laparoscopy Surgery Unit, which holds accreditation from the Aragonese Regional Government's Department of Health, is made up of a team of surgeons and anaesthetists specialising in advanced laparoscopic surgery, headed by Dr Joaquín Resa. A team specialising in endocrinology, internal medicine, anaesthesia and radiology, along with the clinic's support staff, also assist the unit.

The decision to operate and choice of technique

The BMI (body mass index) is the index used to establish whether surgery should be performed for morbid obesity. Surgery is performed if the BMI (weight in kilograms / height x height in metres) is above 35.

If the patient's BMI is not above 35, he or she will be referred for more appropriate treatment, which could range from a controlled diet with or without pharmaco-



All the professionals of the Clinical back the unit

logical and psychological support, plastic surgery for some specific part of the body, or the use of a gastric balloon to create the sensation of satiety and so help modify eating habits.

«Depending on the BMI and the characteristics of each patient,» explains Dr Resa the Unit's director, «the most appropriate approach will be chosen». «At our unit,» continues Dr Resa, «we only recommend restrictive techniques in highly selected cases, and we will first of all opt for mixed approaches, as we feel that they achieve better slimming results and represent the only way of maintaining weight loss in the long term. The options could include a gastric bypass, combining a significant reduction in the stomach (preventing the patient from eating at will) and a slight diversion of the intestine (the food does not pass through the whole intestine), or a biliopancreatic diversion, which involves a slight reduction to the stomach and a substantial diversion of the intestine. Both techniques enjoy good results, although in my opinion the biliopancreatic diversion is preferable, as it allows patients to eat as much as they want, as they will not absorb any surplus. It offers patients considerable quality of life. With this last technique, the ideal operation is a laparoscopic biliopancreatic diversion without gastrectomy, which is similar to the previous procedure but does not involve removing the stomach, and so is much less aggressive for the patient, is a shorter operation, and offers a better possibility of recovery with fewer complications. As the stomach remains in place it can easily be reversed if necessary».

Dr Resa, the unit's coordinator, was the first surgeon to present the Scopinaro and Larrad biliopancreatic diversion without gastrectomy at the World Obesity Surgery Congress in 2001, and is currently one of the most experienced surgeons in the practice of biliopancreatic diversions while maintaining the stomach.

For Dr Alfredo Pérez, the Montpellier Clinic's medical director, «the philosophy of the Montpellier Clinic's Laparoscopic Obesity Surgery Unit is to offer each of our patients the technique best suited to their case, and at the earliest possible opportunity. That is why we have received accreditation from SALUT, the Aragonese Regional Government's Health Department, to perform all anti-obesity techniques by laparoscopy. This accreditation requires that each year we clarify our attitudes and aptitudes in obesity surgery, along with the resources available to the clinic in order to handle any technique and any contingency which could result. In other words, we are audited by our own Regional Health Department».

«The figures vouch for and confirm our leading position,» concludes the clinic's medical director, «for as may be seen in the report on surgical operations for morbid obesity in Aragon in 2010, drawn up by the Aragonese Regional Government, of the 278 operations involving the condition, 146 were performed at the Montpellier Clinic. Lastly, we closed 2011 (which has not yet been audited) with a total of 232 operations, demonstrating how positively the unit has been received by patients, and further underpinning our capacity and experience».

Neurology: a little-known medical speciality

| Dolors Borau



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Neurology is a medical speciality which is relatively unknown to much of the population. Most users know that neurologists are the physicians responsible for disorders of the nervous system, and that makes us somewhat wary. It is, though, a speciality which covers much more: the study, diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the brain, the spinal cord, the peripheral nerves and muscles (given that proper muscular activity requires that messages be received

from the nerves, which are responsible for muscular contraction and relaxation).

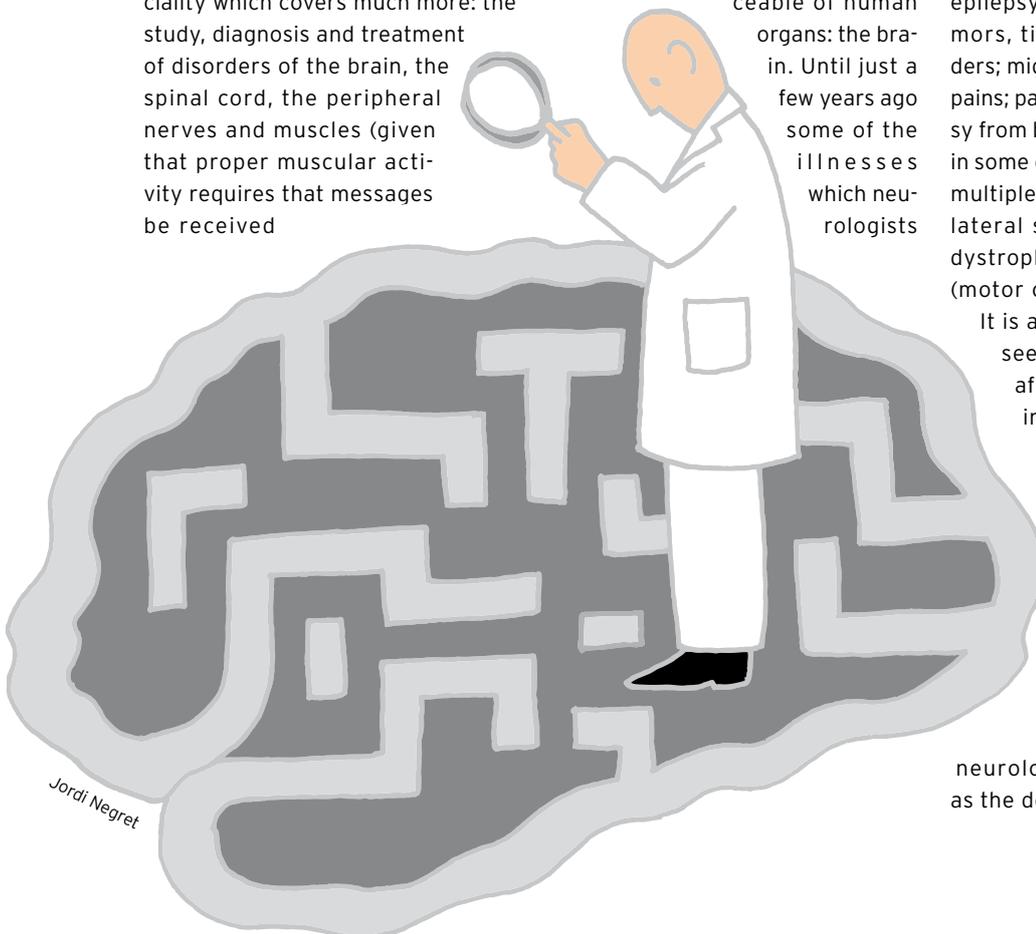
Research and technological advances have given us a much better understanding of the functioning of the least known and most irreplaceable of human organs: the brain. Until just a few years ago some of the illnesses which neurologists

now deal with were either unknown or untreatable. These specialists treat cerebral vascular disorders (such as strokes); brain tumours; dementias (Alzheimer's and others); infectious diseases of the nervous system (meningitis, encephalitis); epilepsy; Parkinson's disease, tremors, tics and other motor disorders; migraines, neuralgia and other pains; paralysis (such as cerebral palsy from birth, or conditions acquired in some other way); illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); muscular dystrophy, polyneuritis and ataxia (motor coordination deficiencies).

It is a long list which, as may be seen, includes illnesses which affect physical development, independence of movement, processes of pain and the loss of mental faculties.

It is, though, very important to stress that neurology does not cover the treatment of mental or psychological disorders, which would require a psychiatric approach.

An appointment with a neurologist can take some time, as the doctor will need to establish



Jordi Negret

a great many details about the patient. Clinical records will often provide the greatest source of information. During the first appointment an evaluation is performed of the individual's cognitive capacity, assessing language, intellect, memory and sensory capability. Patients will therefore be asked questions about their current condition and any other illnesses they may be suffering or have suffered over the years, along with information about their lifestyle and daily activities. If necessary, physical tests will be performed, such as an examination of the inner eye; an evaluation of muscular strength; an assessment of mobility and balance; an examination of sensitivity in the limbs, or a test of reflexes.

In some cases the doctor's questions will themselves provide enough information to establish a diagnosis. Ideally in the case of an initial appointment patients should be accompanied by a trusted companion so they can discuss the doctor's explanations with them. Physicians do not always have good news to give. It is therefore important to go prepared to raise any queries that the patient may have.

If on the basis of the information obtained in drawing up the clinical record the neurologist cannot establish a clear diagnosis then some supplementary medical tests will be required. These are generally: campimetry, a CAT or MR scan, an electroencephalogram or an electromyogram. Campimetry serves to assess any loss in the field of vision. Computerised axial tomography (CAT) and magnetic resonance (MR) are non-invasive examinations which can display internal organs, soft tissue, bones and internal structures of the body with great precision and

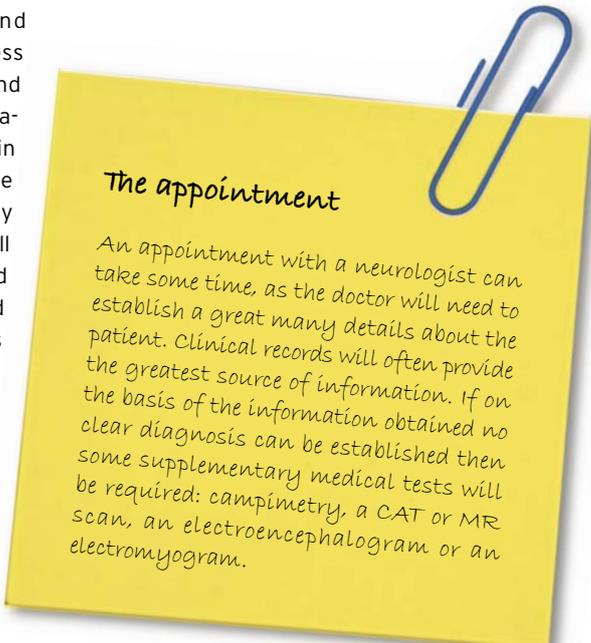
NEUROLOGY IS A SPECIALITY WHICH PERFORMS THE STUDY, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF DISORDERS OF THE BRAIN, THE SPINAL CORD, THE PERIPHERAL NERVES AND MUSCLES. IT COVERS ILLNESSES WHICH AFFECT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, INDEPENDENCE OF MOVEMENT, PROCESSES OF PAIN AND THE LOSS OF MENTAL FACULTIES

detail. These are image diagnosis tests. In the case of tomography, the examination is performed with a scanner and a source of x-rays which transmits the information to a special computer which transforms it into an image. Magnetic resonance is performed using a powerful magnetic field. Electroencephalograms (EEGs) examine electrical activity in the brain which they capture by attaching electrodes to the head, while an electromyogram (EMG) examines electrical activity in the muscles, although the test causes greater pain as a needle has to be inserted into the muscle.

Assistència Sanitària and Asisa policyholders have access to a long list of neurologists and neurosurgeons (surgeons specialising in operations on the brain and nervous system) to arrange an appointment whenever they may need. They can also have all supplementary tests performed in accordance with the required process. When an individual is awaiting a diagnosis then the burden of doubt can be eased by means of a rapid testing and administrative procedure. The support of the chosen specialist during treatment and its follow-up can be a great help,

whilst in the case of a chronic disease it is particularly comforting to know that the physician can be easily contacted.

Neurology is one of the specialities which has seen the greatest development over recent years and which will be most in demand in the future. We are living longer, but we also want to enjoy quality of life.



The appointment

An appointment with a neurologist can take some time, as the doctor will need to establish a great many details about the patient. Clinical records will often provide the greatest source of information. If on the basis of the information obtained no clear diagnosis can be established then some supplementary medical tests will be required: campimetry, a CAT or MR scan, an electroencephalogram or an electromyogram.

Migraines: a real headache

| Dolores Borau

My cousin works for the same company as me, where the pressure has been building up for a while: the recession is taking its toll. And to make matters worse, for a few months now when Saturday comes around she feels terrible: she suffers from severe headaches. She is young so used to look forward to the weekend, when she could sleep in without worrying about the alarm clock and then head out and get things done, now she spends the whole time shut up at home feeling rotten. The

first few times it happened she took a painkiller, went to bed, in a darkened room with the door closed to keep out any noise, and didn't eat anything. Initially this only occurred from time to time, but for a couple of months now it has been almost every week, and even on weekdays. The worst of all is that recently she has also had nausea and vomiting. A really unpleasant experience!

One day recently when she was unable to come to work her partner took her to casualty he was so worried. She was retching violently although her stomach was empty, and she felt really dizzy. The doctor who attended her asked a whole list of questions: where the pain was, how long the headache had lasted, if it had appeared suddenly or after some kind of physical exertion, how often the episodes occurred, where the centre of the pain was and how intense it was, if any other members of the family suffered headaches... Then she was made to perform a series of exercises and movements after which the doctor told her that she was most probably suffering from a

migraine attack. She was prescribed an anti-emetic to stop the nausea and vomiting, and an anti-inflammatory which was more specifically for the migraine. My cousin told me that when they got back home her partner said:

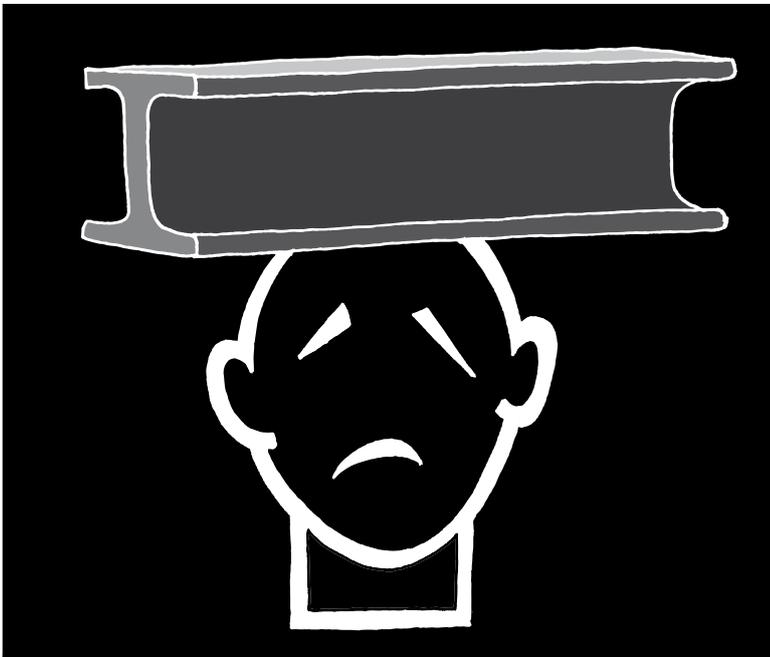
- All that performance, just for a headache? I was really scared!

To be honest she did not know whether she should be pleased that he didn't seem to realize how painful it was. She wanted to explain how awful she felt, that she could not go about any of her normal business, but she didn't feel up to it and went to have a lie down until the new treatment took effect. The doctor told her to arrange an appointment with a neurologist, the specialist responsible for following up on such cases. As she gets a little nervous about these things, she asked her partner to go with her. It was a long appointment and the neurologist asked a host of questions which he noted down on her clinical record. He gave her an examination and said that all the signs were that she was suffering from migraine. And then he explained what that means. Most people who receive medical attention for a headache are diagnosed with a primary cephalgia, in other words a

What to do?

The recommendations are quite simple: take the treatment as soon as the pain occurs; avoid episodes by trying to avoid changing your sleeping patterns or going too long without food, and maintain regular mealtimes; eat a healthy diet excluding any foodstuffs which seem to cause headaches; regularly take moderate exercise and avoid stress.

Jordi Negret



SOME 12% OF THE POPULATION SUFFER FROM MIGRAINE, AND OFTEN DO NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THE PAIN OR THE DISCOMFORT IT INVOLVES. A MIGRAINE IS A NEUROVASCULAR DISORDER WHICH CAUSES THE INFLAMMATION AND DILATATION OF CERTAIN ARTERIES IN THE BRAIN. IT OCCURS IN THE FORM OF REPEAT ATTACKS LASTING BETWEEN FOUR HOURS AND THREE DAYS

pain not caused by an infection, tumour, haemorrhage, etc. Some 12% of the population suffer from migraine, and often do not give any great importance to the pain or the discomfort it involves. Here my cousin did feel that her partner was being understanding, and was very happy that he accompanied her. A migraine is a neurovascular disorder which causes the inflammation and dilatation of certain arteries in the brain. It occurs in the form of repeat attacks lasting between four hours and three

days, with varying frequency, practically throughout the patient's life. It is influenced by hormonal and hereditary factors, and is more common among women than among men. The treatment involves taking the right medication and rest, above all if it is accompanied with photophobia (aversion to light) and phonophobia (aversion to noise). There may on occasion be other factors involved, such as nausea and vomiting, while in some individuals the event is preceded by an aura indicating an immi-

nent attack, with visual abnormalities such as spots and flashes of light. The pain is intense and pulsating, in the form of twinges in one part of the head. Various factors can serve to trigger the vascular inflammation, such as menstruation, ovulation, oral contraceptives in some women; intense exercise; changes in temperature and altitude; stress and anxiety (for personal reasons, at work...); long periods without eating; too little or too much sleep; exposure to the sun and some food and drinks, such as red and sparkling wine, mature cheeses, beer, citrus and acidic fruits, bananas, chocolate, dried fruit and nuts, ready-made sauces and meat products containing monosodium glutamate (sausages, bacon, Chinese food...).

Migraines cannot be cured, but can be alleviated, and each individual may understand his or her particular triggers. In some cases preventive pharmacological treatment is required.

- In your case - the neurologist told her - you are now getting what is known as weekend migraine, which occurs when you sleep more and there is a change in rhythm. The recommendations are quite simple: follow the treatment prescribed as soon as the pain occurs in order to prevent the arterial and neurochemical processes from taking hold; avoid episodes by trying to avoid changing your sleeping patterns or going too long without food, and maintain regular mealtimes; eat a healthy diet excluding any foodstuffs which seem to cause headaches; regularly take moderate exercise and avoid stress.

My cousin has signed up at the gym, no longer skips any meals and takes more care with her diet. She listens to her own body, and is learning to understand herself better. All she needs to do now is to not get so stressed out at work.



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Headaches and diet

Dra. Perla Luzondo

Baked salmon with yoghurt and ginger mouseline

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- a slice of peeled ginger



Edmon Amill

Use tweezers to remove the bones from the salmon fillets, season with salt and pepper, sprinkle a few strands of dill or oregano on top and place the fish in an oven dish. Preheat the oven to its highest temperature and cook the fish for 10 min or a little less.

Remove the fish, drizzle with olive oil and serve the salmon with a sauce made of beaten yoghurt, grated ginger and the juices from the salmon. An alternative would be to add oil, salt and a few drops of lemon juice together with the ginger and to thin down the yoghurt texture with a little water.

Headaches are the most common cause of pain in middle-aged adults. Frequent headaches may indicate a serious lack of vitamins and minerals. Low levels of niacin (vitamin B3) and vitamin B6 can cause headaches, while all vitamins in the B group, in particular B12, are important in combating stress and avoiding tension-induced headaches.

Foods rich in proteins, such as chicken, fish, beans, milk, dried fruit and nuts and peanut butter are rich sources of niacin and vitamin B6.

Calcium and magnesium help prevent headaches, in particular those associated with the menstrual cycle. Calcium-rich sources include dairy produce, tofu, curly leafed cabbage, broccoli, beans and peas. Magnesium can be found in dark leafy green vegetables, dried fruits and nuts, bananas, wheatgerm, seafood, beans and peas.

The factors triggering a migraine vary from patient to patient, and over the course of the condition the causes involve both neuronal and vascular factors. Atmospheric changes leading to variations in atmospheric pressure worsen migraines, and many patients say that they feel discomfort in their head on foggy days.

Migraines are often triggered after eating foods containing tyramine, such as bananas, chocolate, cheese, wine and citrus fruit. There is no need to remove a long list of foods from one's diet, but simply to avoid those which each individual patient has identified as triggering an attack. Fizzy alcoholic drinks are one of the key culprits, along with monosodium glutamate.

Monosodium glutamate is found in its natural form in many foodstuffs, but is extracted from seaweed for use in Far Eastern cuisine as a flavour enhancer. It is now produced on an industrial scale and added to ready-made and processed savoury foodstuffs, frozen produce, mixtures of spices, packet and tinned soups, salad dressings and both meat and fish products. It can often be difficult to locate in packaged foods as it goes by different names in different countries, which means that those who are glutamate intolerant would be well advised to do their research as it is very widely used in the food industry.

Some neurologists recommend that when patients sense the onset of an attack they chew thin slices of fresh ginger, which dilates the cranial blood vessels and reduces the suffering during a migraine episode. A cup of chamomile tea a day also seems to help reduce the intensity of the attacks.

Those patients who do not sense an aura before an attack would be well advised to include ginger in their diet as a spice, infusion, or in jams and preserves. Ginger and cinnamon biscuits are eaten all across Europe at Christmas time, while ginger ale can easily be found on retailers' drinks shelves.

Ginger is used in Indian curries and North African *ras-el-hanout*. It is commonly employed in the cuisine of India, Indonesia, Japan and the Caribbean in salads and with meat, fish and seafood.

Today's recipe is simple and tasty; you could also add grated ginger to the fish before baking, or mix it into the yoghurt sauce served as a condiment.



ASISA dresses synchronised swimmers as mermaids

Elvira Palencia

The Olympic synchronised swimming team was happy to cooperate with its official sponsor on a new image campaign. They agreed to be the stars of a television commercial using mermaids to show the ASISA's commitment to improving the quality of patient care.

And five members of the team (Andrea Fuentes, Ona Carbonell, Alba Cabello, Thais Enríquez and Marga Crespi) became mermaids for a day, as they recorded the new ASISA advertisement. The sequence shows these fairytale beings emerging, disorientated, from the water, before returning swiftly to the water in good health thanks the efforts of ASISA's doctors.

The slogan for the scene is «At ASISA we work to return people to health», which also relates to those situations where someone's health can suddenly take a turn for the worst. It is precisely in such situations that users discover that ASISA is always on hand to respond to its customers' needs through the very finest professional staff.

The ad, which was filmed in Barcelona and at the Sant Cugat del Vallès High Performance Centre, demanded highly complex recording and photography techniques to create the underwater images for the campaign, which had a great impact on tv audience.

ASISA, which has been sponsoring the national synchronised swimming

team for more than 6 years, has opted to maintain its support during the year of the London Olympics, in which the national team will be competing with a completely new lineup as it strives to win medals in the pair and team events. First, though, are a further two competitions: the Olympic classification tournament and the European Championships.



The campaign slogan, «At ASISA we work to return people to health», strengthens the image of the company's commitment to patient care

The national Olympic team star in the new ASISA ad in the year of the London games.

The ad was filmed on 3 and 4 January in Barcelona after a long make-up and costume session to transform the hardy swimmers into mermaids amid intense cold, exacerbated by the fact that they had to be kept wet, to look as if they had just come out of the water.

The water scenes, which were staged at the High Performance Centre, also proved fairly challenging, as the swimmers were required to spend 5 hours in the water wearing mermaid tails which hampered their movement.



ASISA strengthens leading position in Castile-La Mancha

E.P.



His Grace Ciríaco Benavente Mateos, Bishop of Albacete, and Dr Francisco Ivorra, Chairman of ASISA, together with Councillors Llanos Navarro and Federico Pozuelo of Albacete City Council



Dr José Vilella, ASISA Medical Director; Dr Francisco Ivorra, ASISA Chairman; Juan Ávila, Mayor of Cuenca; José Miguel Pérez, Provincial Representative for Cuenca; Carlos Navarro, Health Representative; and Julián Huete, Vice-President of the Provincial Authority of Cuenca, at the opening of the new site

10 January saw the official opening of the new provincial office for Albacete, located right in the heart of the city. The event was attended by Dr Francisco Ivorra, President of ASISA, and Dr José Manuel Colmenero, provincial representative for Albacete, along with His Grace Ciríaco Benavente, the Bishop of Albacete,

who blessed the premises. Following the opening ceremony the City of Albacete Convention Centre was the venue for a piano recital given by the Shalomov Duo and organised by the Albéniz Foundation and ASISA.

The Mayor of Cuenca, Juan Ávila, meanwhile, formally opened the new office for the province on Calle Prin-

cesa Zaida on the 11th. Dr Ivorra also attended this event together with the ASISA representative for Cuenca, Dr José Miguel Pérez López, along with other dignitaries from the province.

ASISA strengthens presence in Madrid

E.P.

ASISA has embarked on an ambitious plan for growth in the Greater Madrid region based on intensifying the company's presence in those towns within the metropolitan area which are experiencing considerable population expansion.

As well as the existing customer services offices in San Sebastián, new sites have opened in in Terrejón de Ardoz, Alcalá d' Henares and Móstoles and future openings include Pozuelo de Alarcón and Getafe.

The development of dental care is the second stage of this expansion, with the opening of new clinics in Alcalá, Las Rozas/Majadahonda, Móstoles, Pozuelo, Coslada Valdemoro and Torrejón, along with the four in place in the capital itself.

ASISA already had ten offices in operation in the Madrid region, in addition to eight medical centres and Moncloa Hospital. The company has also expanded its medical lists and range of services.



Vicente Ferrero (Regional Manager), Dr Mayero (Provincial Representative for Madrid), Dr Colmenero (Madrid Office Medical Director) and Enrique Gallego (Madrid Commercial Director)

ASISA promotes research and training during new academic year

E.P.

Support for research in the field of medicine in general, and health care and administration in particular, are the aims which ASISA shares with chairs at three different universities in Madrid.

For the past seven years the ASISA at the autonomous university been promoting research and dissemination of knowledge in the fields of health economy and health care management. During the ceremony to mark the 7th edition of the programme, held on 17 November, Dr Francisco Ivorra handed the 2010



Mr. Calvo, Dr Porres, Agueda de Benito, María Blasco and Dr Tormo

award for the best doctoral thesis to Marian Bas, for her work on *Remote monitoring of implanted devices in cardiology patients*.

The ASISA Chair at the European University of Madrid was set up in 2006, and has since last year given an award for the best academic record at the Biomedical Science and Health Science faculties, along with a bursary to pursue a University Master's course at the institution. The award was handed out on 20 December to Podology student Miguel Ángel López. The event was hosted by the Director of the CNIO (National Centre for Oncological Research), María Blasco.

The ASISA Chair at King Juan Carlos University was founded in 2010, with a particular emphasis on Humanitarian Medicine. The two awards for the best research project and best academic record were announced last September, the winners being Alicia Ahijado for her research



The members of the Jury together with the 2010 award-winners

project into the *Effectiveness of preventive measures in combating Buruli ulcer*, and the Nursing student Nuria Díaz Blázquez.

Both the awards and the creation of the University Chairs which sponsor them form a part of ASISA's commitment to continue to improve medical care by training the health professionals of the future.

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Agreement with Association of Journalists of Catalonia

| o. c.

Members of the Association Journalists of Catalonia and their direct relatives will now have access to an ASISA Health policy at a special premium, thanks the agreement signed at the end of last year by the Association's Dean, Josep Maria Martí, and the ASISA provincial director for Barcelona, Dr Antonia Solvas. An estimated total of 5000 people will be able to avail themselves of the finest quality health care with unrestricted choice from an extensive list of medical professionals, and private rooms if they are admitted to hospital.



Dr Antonia Solvas i Martinez, ASISA Representative and Director for Barcelona; Mr. Josep Maria Martí i Martí, Dean of the Association of Journalists of Catalonia

Josep Ma Contel

SCIAS Social Participation Department ends 2011 with increased activity

Oriol Conesa

One of the strengths of the SCIAS co-operative, run in accordance with the health care model created by Dr Espriu, lies in the considerable work undertaken by the Social Participation Department, with ongoing activities helping to consolidate the organisation and its internal membership structure. Over recent months various initiatives have been created in a range of fields.

Medical conferences, delivered in an accessible way in order to give members a greater insight into a range of conditions, proved in terms of audience numbers how many people are interested in them. Dr Joan Lluís Aliaga spoke on «Chronic bronchitis, prevention and current treatment», while Dr Joan Llevadot clarified ideas about acute myocardial infarction, with reference to alarm signals and prevention, the best approach

in averting the most common health problems. Dr Cavalleria, a specialist in Digestive Medicine, gave a talk on chronic liver disease at the Assistència Sanitària regional office in Sabadell.

In sessions concerning cultural issues, expert musicologist Xavier Chavarria spoke of the outstanding figure of Pau Casals on the 50th anniversary of the first performance of the Anthem of the United Nations at its headquarters. As well as the session about fire prevention given by Antón Zapater from the Barcelona Fire Brigade, there were other on the peoples of Central Europe and their culture, courtesy of Francesc Lozano, a lecturer at Ramon Llull University, and another on the literary and fantastical sources of Modernism given by Maria Àngels Cerdà. Lastly, Núria Andreu gave an address on Eusebi

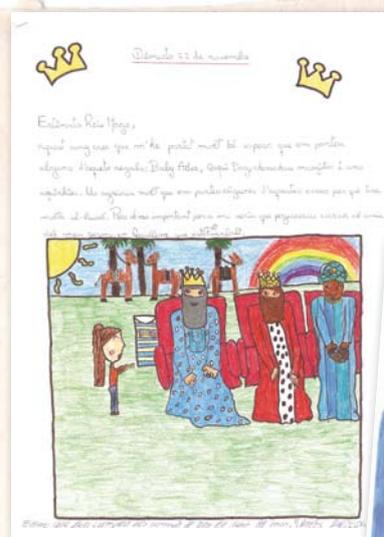
Güell the patron and instigator of Antoni Gaudí's architectural work. Two of the most recent cultural trips, to the Sagrada Família and the Palau Güell, also focused on the output of the inspirational architect. Other visits were made to the Barcelona Sport Museum, the city of Lleida and the Ebro Delta.

On a festive note the Social Participation Department also staged a number of more playful events. Christmas time as usual featured the presentation of letters to the Three Kings by the royal page boy, and the children's letter-writing competition followed by the prize-giving ceremony. A comedy cabaret evening was also staged, as well as the Christmas Party, with a choral concert held at the parish church of La Concepció, a poetry reading and the fellowship buffet.

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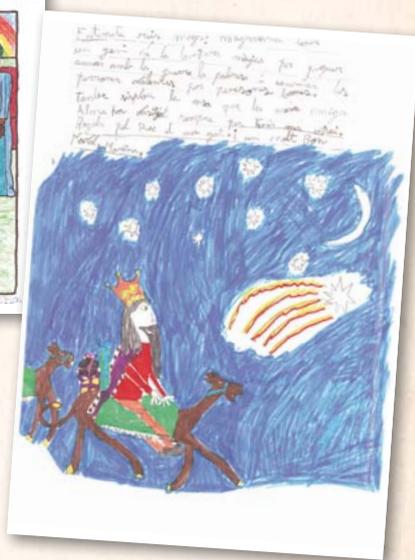


1st PRIZE (AGE GROUP UP TO 6 - DRAWING)
PERE ESTEVE VALLS



2nd PRIZE (AGE GROUP 7 TO 10 YEARS - DRAWING)
ANNA AGUILAR BLANCO

1st PRIZE (AGE GROUP 7 TO 10 YEARS - TEXT)
MARINA ESBRI CORBELLA



1st PRIZE (AGE GROUP 7 TO 10 YEARS - DRAWING)
NORA ROJAS BALLETBÓ

Assistència Sanitària supporting organ and tissue regeneration and transplants

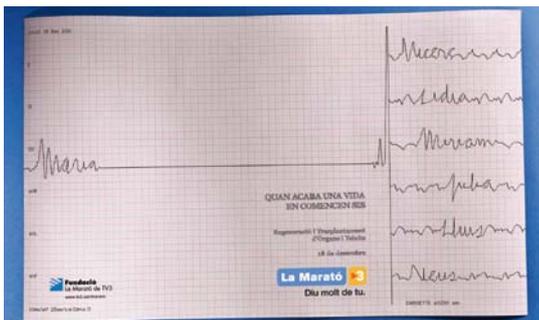
| o. c.

Assistència Sanitària was involved in the 2011 edition of the TV3 fundraising telethon «La Marató», which will be spending the money raised on research into developing new advances in the fields of surgery, pharmacology, organ and tissue preservation, as well as making progress in regenerative medicine applications. On 18 December, with the cooperation of the insurer, numerous activities were organised to raise awareness, mobilise the public and promote research with the aim of achieving and exceeding a total of 100 million euros overall in donations since 1992.

Assistència Sanitària was one of the main partners of the 20th edition of TV3's La Marató, which this year raised 7,231,628 euros for organ and tissue regeneration and transplants. The programme gets huge support from the general public, and for the first time on this occasion it received huge support from Assistència Sanitària. The organisation and the La Marató de TV3 Foundation share the same values of solidarity, social responsibility and a commitment to improving health care and quality medicine, the keys to a future in which

the population's quality of life will take a decisive step forward. In Catalonia Assistència Sanitària and La Marató are leaders in their respective fields: awareness-raising and support for research and health. They therefore have a shared desire to improve the quality of Catalan civil society.

La Marató de TV3 is Catalonia's key public-participation charitable event, a telethon which focuses each year on a different illness and raises an average of seven million euros per year with the main emphasis on medical research and awareness-raising for an illness or group of illnesses. Over the years the event has won increasing prestige, donations and public participation, and the La Marató de TV3 Foundation is now responsible for administering its funds, selecting the best scientific projects for its grants and the corresponding awareness-raising campaigns. La Marató 2011 was the twentieth edition and broke the 100 million euro barrier, an investment which has over the years funded the work of 3000 scientists. For many patients the advances achieved improve the quality of their life, or even in some cases to save it.



Assistència Group meet for family Christmas dinner

| o. c.



The occasion for the annual gathering of the whole family of «sibling» companies of Assistència Sanitària was once again the traditional Christmas dinner, which this year was held in the Palau de Congressos de Catalunya at the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I. For one day colleagues had the chance to dine altogether, enjoying a traditional festive menu followed by speeches given by the President of SCIAS, Ms. Teresa Bar-surte, and the President of Assistència Sanitària, Dr Ignasi Orce. Despite the difficult times we are now facing, an emotional but realistic message was optimistic about the future and was warmly received by those in attendance. The most festive moment came with the traditional holiday prize draw for those belonging to the Assistència Group family, a reward for a job well done, day after day, in making each of the companies an example of leadership and good practice in the sector.

Master's in Social Economy and NPOs presents SCIAS as case study

Oriol Conesa



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The closing session of the 12th edition of the Master's in Social Economy and NPOs held last November featured Dr Gerard Martí, Deputy Medical Director of Barcelona and trustee of the Espriu Foundation. Organised

jointly by CIES (the Centre for Economic and Social Research) and Barcelona University, the programme includes support in research, teaching and promotion of the social economy and corporate social responsibility.

The seminar on «Models of Cooperation and Intercooperation» included a range of debates and roundtable discussions as well as a masterclass. In his address Dr Martí explained the health cooperative model created by Dr Espriu. Experiences were shared, management methodologies compared and innovative ideas put forward in the field of corporate social responsibility and social economy and the audience were keen to learn more about the current situation in the sector. The aim of the master's course, which is run each year, is to offer a forum for debate and reflection on responsible

management models at social enterprises and non-profit organisations. Those participating such as business leaders, executives and university students have the opportunity to present case studies through a range of sessions and seminars.

Barcelona Hospital, which opened in 1989, is owned and managed by the SCIAS user cooperative. Assistència Sanitària is an exponent of healthcare cooperativism, the self-management model devised by Dr Josep Espriu some fifty years ago, based on the concept of doctors and users being equal in their participation in decision-making and management groups. The organisation now has some 200,000 policyholders who can call on the services of a list of more than 4000 doctors. It is also the official medical care provider of Barcelona Football Club.

Assistència Sanitària launches bursaries for 2011-12

| o. c.

Assistència Sanitària is once again demonstrating its commitment to the medical and university community by offering 30,000 euros in study grants this year for policyholders, doctors on its medical lists and their children. In what is now the fourth edition of the grants programme, bursaries covering 50% of matriculation costs will be awarded. All students in the third cycle in the field of Health studying at the University of Barcelona (UB), the Autonomous

University of Barcelona (UAB), Pompeu Fabra University (UPS), Ramon Llull University (URL) and the International University of Catalonia (UIC), or at any of their affiliated institutions, can request a form on which to submit their application. The programme covers a total of close on 500 master's and postgraduate courses. The deadline for submissions is 8 April 2012. Further information available on the Assistència Sanitària website (www.asc.es).

Assistència Sanitària, sponsors launch of FC Barcelona's La Masia

| o. c.



Sergi Roberto, Oriol Rosell, Javier Espinosa, Marc Muniesa, Sergi Gómez

In October, FC Barcelona opened its new centre for young players which is sponsored by Assistència Sanitària. On a happy and emotional day for the Barça family the club and the company strengthened their ties even more and celebrated with live music, screenings and speeches from various people from the world of sport and from other institutions.

On 20 October, Assistència Sanitària, FC Barcelona's official medical provider for more than six seasons, helped to make this gala opening possible. The new Oriol Tort Training Centre is the new base for the club's academy, known as La Masia. Those attending the event included executives, trainers and players from all FC Barcelona teams as well as national dignitaries and others involved with the club. The celebration was followed worldwide on social networks, with a potential audience of 46 million people. The new residence is impressive in terms of its functionality, the comfort it offers sportsmen and women, and its capacity to expand in order to meet changing needs. It covers an area of

6000 square metres and this year it will be home to 83 residents.

Assistència Sanitària provides FC Barcelona with medical insurance and hospital services. The club is also able to draw on Assistència Sanitària's facilities at Barcelona Hospital and at the FC Barcelona-Assistència Sanitària Medical Centre. The latter centre is based at Camp Nou Stadium

and focuses on sports medicine and traumatology and is also open to the organisation's policyholders. The partnership between the two organisations, who are leading institutions in the fields of sport and health, has gone from strength to strength due to their shared values which are based on the common desire to develop Catalan civil society.

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Barça stars at Barcelona Hospital

| o. c.

On the night of the Three Kings, the presents arrived early for the children at Barcelona Hospital. As is now traditional, the directors and stars of FC Barcelona turned up to visit patients, bringing with them gifts and above all excitement. The delegation was headed by the club's chairman, Sandro Rosell, and included Maxwell and Mascherano, who were more than happy to meet their young fans' requests.

Assistència Sanitària values at heart of new advertising campaign

| o. c.

Assistència Sanitària launched a new advertising campaign in November, employing Twitter as a new way to convey a message which highlights the company's distinctive values: solidarity among policyholders, commitment to high-quality medicine and joint management by doctors and users. Following on from the launch of this new ad, the campaign has been deployed on television and radio, in the press, and on buses, the metro and billboards in the street.

Assistència Sanitària has chosen to emphasise the fundamental principles of its operation, bringing them to the attention of the wider public through a large-scale advertising campaign. The central theme of the ad and the pieces designed for other advertising media focuses on the sense of belonging to the organisation and the satisfaction of being different, on protection and support for policyholders throughout their life and belief in a non-profit health system jointly managed by doctors and policyholders. The key role played by physicians within the organisation and the spotlight highlighting on their work, as well as solidarity among users and their ability to influence decision-making, are the arguments set out in a Twitter thread. The various figures involved tweet a range of opinions about Assistència Sanitària and their shared experience.

Innovation is essential in medicine, just as it is in communication among people. Millions around the globe today use social networks, one of the key channels of communication in the modern world. Aware of this, Assistència Sanitària chose to use

Twitter as a tool to convey its message to the public in an accessible manner.

The medical insurer Assistència Sanitària is an exponent of healthcare cooperativism, the distinct self-management model devised by Dr Josep Espriu some fifty years ago, based on

equality of doctors and users on decision-making and management bodies. The organisation now has some 200,000 policyholders who can call on the services of a list of more than 4000 doctors. It is also the official medical care provider of Barcelona Football Club.

A més de la millor qualitat assistencial, tenim valors propis. I això ens fa molt diferents.

Truca'ns al 902 120 122 o entra a asc.es



LA MILLOR ASSISTÈNCIA DE LA TEVA VIDA



Barcelona Hospital opens refurbished paediatric emergency room

| o. c.

Work was recently completed on the specific paediatric ER at Barcelona Hospital, as a separate facility from the emergency room for adults, with the equipment needed to cater for child patients. This development represents a substantial reduction in waiting times, offering children a more effective and accessible service. Completion of the project marks the end of a process intended to refocus maternity and children's facilities at the institution with a series of measures aiming to strengthen its leading position in the sector.

Barcelona Hospital recently opened its refurbished new paediatric ER, operating separately from the emergency room for adults and providing younger patients with a more responsive service. A number of internal studies conducted among patients revealed the opportunity to offer a separate paediatric emergency service in order to offer an indi-



vidual response for child patients. The seventh floor of the building now has a new, expanded paediatrics department, staffed round-the-clock by

dedicated professionals for each discipline: allergology, gastroenterology, nephrology, pneumology and other paediatric specialties.

Thanks to this new paediatric emergency unit, registration and waiting times on arrival in ER have been considerably reduced, along with an increase in Barcelona Hospital's ability to deal with medical emergencies, with more individual observation and immediate treatment bays. A new waiting room has also been set up, equipped with toys and materials to offer children a more pleasant environment. All these measures, including the paediatric emergency room, are intended as a development of maternity and children's facilities so that more efficient care can be offered. This initiative also includes Grávida, the pioneering assisted reproduction centre based at the hospital.



Universal Public Health

The new General Public Health Act extends Spanish national health system coverage to all citizens

Jose Pérez

Health is not only achieved thanks to healthcare or scientific progress. The family environment, education, material goods, social and economic inequalities, access to employment and the quality of jobs, the design and services of our cities, the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the animals we live with, the physical exercise we do, people's social and environmental settings, etc. are factors that influence people's health to a greater or lesser extent. The new General Public Health Act, which was approved in September, in taking these issues on board aims to promote the necessary changes in the structure, organisation and operation of our communities to limit as much as possible any processes that pose health risks.

It is a law that recognises public health as an agent with its own personality, capable of mediating between the care side of the health system and other stakeholders that influence health such as industry or government that influence health factors with their regulations.

Of the specific directives established by the law, the one related to psychologists is very relevant. University psychology graduates who work in the healthcare sector will be considered certified healthcare professionals and will be regulated under the name general health psychologists as long as they hold a university psychology degree and have obtained the official master's degree in general healthcare psychology. Psychologists who work in Spanish National Healthcare System centres and services or officially approved centres, must hold the official clinical psychology degree. Until now, this group normally accessed the

job market by passing a competitive public examination and completing a three-year internship as an internal psychology resident (IPR).

One of the other main aspects and, perhaps the part that has been most widely covered by the media, is the universalization of public healthcare in Spain which was wi-

The new law will effectively extend free public healthcare to the long-term unemployed which had stopped receiving benefits



Josep Valls «Pepo»

dely thought to have been achieved years ago but in all reality had certain legal gaps. Specifically, according to Social Security sources, some 300,000 citizens may have suffered the consequences of this hole in public healthcare. This figure included three groups of people without public health coverage: the long-term unemployed who were no longer receiving unemployment be-

nefits, members of professional associations and people who had never paid into the Social Security system. The reason for this failure in the system was linked to the historical connection between public healthcare coverage and employment and Social Security contributions which left out other, perhaps more appropriate criteria such as legal residence and nationality.

The new law will effectively extend free public healthcare to the long-term unemployed which had stopped receiving benefits as of 2012, in a measure that according to the Ministry of Health will cost 100 million euros. On the other hand, the law provides for the creation of a State Health Centre for the purpose of providing technical and scientific advice as well as to evaluate administrative public health actions. It also provides for the creation of a public health surveillance network with the capacity to issue alerts and provide quick responses twenty four hours a day.

The legal text places particular importance on preventive and community health initiatives in medical services, especially in primary care and proposes action aimed at coordinating health promotion and disease and injury prevention under the National Health Care System. Best practice will be established and the impact of the initiatives on the population's health will be evaluated in order to guarantee the utmost quality.

In short, the law includes broad objectives and has an enormous potential to improve the quality of life and welfare of our citizens, but it must be completed with adequate regulations in order to make these objectives a reality.

Co-operatives and Development

The Espriu Foundation, an example of how health co-operatives contribute to development

| J. P.

On 17 November, the International Health Co-operative Organization (IHCO) and the International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Co-operatives (CICOPA) organised a conference entitled *The Way Forward: How Industrial, Service, Health and Artisan Co-operatives Contribute to Development*. More than 200 people participated in the event, which was held in Cancun, Mexico as part of the General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and structured as a roundtable session of 30 experts on development cooperation policies and projects. Representatives from the United Nations, the UNDP, the Brazilian and Mexican governments, development NGOs, the International Federation of Trade Unions, co-operative organisations involved in development and various regional and sectoral bodies of the ICA openly debated relevant topics related to the co-operative movement's contribution to development. Dr Oriol Gras represented the Espriu Foundation at the conference.

The President of the ICA, Pauline Green, who opened the conference, praised the IHCO and CICOPA initiative and stated the importance of the role ICA sector organisations play as drivers of co-operative development. Green also emphasised that international development is one of the crucial topics that the co-operative movement should closely follow and defended the need to intensify its efforts worldwide and define a global profile.

After contributions by government and United Nations representatives, the debate focused on three areas: the *micro* level in relation to individual co-operative enterprises' experiences, the *meso* level which



30 experts in development and cooperatives at the debating table

refers to the sharing of resources through supporting institutions, financial mechanisms, co-operative groups, etc., and the *macro* level, reserved for national and international topics such as the legal framework or inter-cooperation between co-operatives.

Each one of the three levels was illustrated by a video presentation on how co-operatives contribute to development with specific case studies, fo-

Co-operatives offer people the opportunity to have an active role in economic, social and environmental decisions

llowed by debate among the experts. The Espriu Foundation was presented in the *meso* level block as an example of health co-operatives.

Some of the most relevant ideas that came out of the debate emphasized not viewing the decline of the economic system as inevitable, but rather as an opportunity to implement the co-operative values of solidarity and mutual responsibility,

working together to build a better world. Co-operatives offer people the opportunity to have an active role in economic, social and environmental decisions through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises.

The debate was also concerned with the need to promote inter-cooperation to support co-operatives that can create jobs and generate wealth in less developed areas of the world. To this end, it is also important to gather resources within the co-operative movement and seek support from governments to work on fostering new co-operatives that favour development.

At the end of the conference, the roundtable participants drew up an agenda of the main points to be included in development policies on all levels such as the importance of promoting cooperatives through legislation based on the cooperative identity and standards, the importance of fostering a strong public policy for the development of cooperatives, the promotion of a more democratic governance by stakeholders in economic activities and the importance of sustainable long-term employment for development.

ICA General Assembly

The international co-operative movement inaugurates the International Year of Co-operatives during the ICA General Assembly in Mexico

José Pérez

The General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) was held the week of November 14-18 in Cancun (Mexico) with more than 2000 co-operative delegates from more than 80 countries participating, establishing a record in the history of co-operative movement assemblies. Dr Oriol Gras represented the Espriu Foundation. The central focus of the events and meetings that took place that week was the launch of the International Year of Co-operatives to be celebrated in 2012. «Since the United Nations declared 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives, our global movement has been given a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to take a massive step forward, and lead the growth of the co-operative movement in all parts of the globe» said the President of the ICA, Pauline Green as she officially launched the Year during the assembly's opening ceremony.

The President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón, told those attending the assembly that the host country shares the values of the co-operative movement and thanked them for «having helped develop the capacity of those less fortunate and for making it possible for millions of human beings to overcome poverty and discrimination». Calderón renewed his government's commitment to the International Year of Co-operatives to spreading the co-operative message among the Mexican population.



Dr Oriol Gras, patron of the Espriu Foundation, participated in the ICA assembly

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, addressed the assembly in a video message and said that «co-operatives are a unique and invaluable presence in today's world». He also stated that the solidarity and values that promote co-operatives foster peace and welfare throughout the world. The international diplomat congratulated the co-operative movement for its contribution to the community and underlined that co-operative enterprises enable social integration and help reduce poverty by generating dignified employment.

The Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Juan Somavia, also addressed the assembly in a video message as he emphasized that during these times of crisis, co-operatives have an

opportunity to shine more than ever as the central role players in a more just, more balanced and more productive society. «The evidence shows that cooperatives are highly resilient in times of crisis,» said Somavia. In response to the crisis, he called upon co-operatives to promote financial inclusion, provide an efficient model for enterprise development, commit to expanding social protection and to give their opinions on what a fair economic system is about.

The delegates participating in the assembly approved a resolution that will allow mutuals to be full members of the ICA. This decision is the result of two years of work done by the group that was created for this purpose at the assembly in Rome. The group declared in its recommendation that encouraging appropriate mutuals to be members of ICA will strengthen the representation and solidarity of the organisations that adhere to co-operative principles and also acknowledges that there are already mutuals among the ICA members.

Another resolution approved at the assembly is concerned with establishing and developing the Co-operative Institute for the Promotion of Peace and Social Cohesion for a three-year trial period. The Institute must act as both a framework for the development of peace and social cohesion related co-operative programmes as well as a forum for reflection, analysis and research and it

will be assigned the responsibility of raising funds to finance the projects it embarks upon.

One of the resolutions approved at the assembly by an overwhelming majority was the one declaring the city of Rochdale, situated 16 km to the north of Manchester in Northwest England, as the World Capital of Co-operatives. It was in this borough where the *Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers*, a consumer co-operative considered to be the first modern co-operative, was created in 1844. Its relevance is also due to the fact that the principles the «Rochdale» pioneers adopted more than a century and a half ago are the basis for the current co-operative principles that set co-operative enterprises apart from all others.

Rochdale is also the name of the awards the ICA hands out every two years in recognition of a person or co-operative organisation that has carried out innovative and econo-

**«The evidence shows
that cooperatives
are highly resilient
in times of crisis»**

mically sustainable activities that have significantly benefited their members. This year, the award was shared by Florencio Eguía, the driving force behind the credit unions in Mexico, and Jong-Koo Lee, representing Korean co-operatives in the fishing sector.

Besides ratifying the appointment of the Director-General of the ICA and the presidents of some sectoral organisations, the co-operative members gathered in Mexico also named two new members to the ICA Board - the Iranian Albolhassan Khalili from the Persian agrifood co-operative sector and Janusz Paszkowski from Poland, President of the worker co-operatives in that country.

Finally, the delegates were summoned to participate in the extraordinary assembly to be held 29 October to 2 November 2012 in Manchester. The primary objectives will be to decide upon the legal formula the organisation must adopt as per Belgian law after it is transferred to Brussels, to establish a new strategic plan which will come into force in 2013 and to adapt the membership subscription formula to the current needs.



ICA president, Pauline Green, addressing the delegates that participated in the ICA assembly

The UN launches Co-operative 2012

The international co-operative movement and the United Nations Assembly launched the International Year of Co-operatives

José Pérez



«Pauline Green, ICA's president, addresses to UN's General Assembly»

operative principles reduce poverty, create jobs and promote social inclusion» and added that «the co-operative movement has played an important role in moving the United Nations development agenda forward.»

Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, intervened in the session and emphasized that co-operative enterprises are a reminder that economic viability and social responsibility can co-exist. The 300 leading co-operatives in the world are estimated to be worth 1.6 billion dollars (1.23 billion euros) and operate in the most competitive industrial sectors in 25 countries. All of them together equal the turnover of the ninth world economy. However, «there's a need to spread awareness for the importance of co-operatives and people in decision-making positions should know about the size, scale and scope of cooperative business model,» highlighted Green.

The leader of the co-operative movement ended her intervention with the hope that a 2012 marked by the successful promotion of co-operative enterprises will be followed by a decade of international co-operative growth.

30 |

The 66th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and specifically, the plenary meeting held on 31 October in New York, will be remembered as an important milestone in the history of the global co-operative movement. In compliance with the UN's resolution 64/136, Member States launched the International Year of Co-operatives to be celebrated throughout 2012.

The International Year of Co-operatives seeks to increase public awareness of co-operatives, the benefits their members obtain and their contribution to development as well as promote information about the

worldwide network of this business model. This message is summed up by the slogan *Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World*.

The UN session was preceded by a roundtable session featuring the participation of representatives of the Member States as well as organisations representing the co-operative movement, non-governmental organisations and international observers. They debated the contribution of co-operatives to sustainable development.

Upon opening the session, the President of the Assembly, stated that «enterprises that are governed by co-

Co-operative Development Fund

The co-operative movement is launching a 50 million dollar investment fund to support the creation of new co-operatives in developing countries

| J. P.

On the occasion of the International Year of Co-operatives 2012, declared by the United Nations, the global co-operative movement has set up an initiative to support and finance the creation of new co-operatives, mostly in less privileged countries. It is a fund called «Global Co-operative Development» (GCD) with a total of 50 million dollars aimed at facilitating access to low cost loans for co-operative projects that need capital or infrastructure investment.

The GCD was presented at an event organised on 1 November by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in New York. This event gathered the leaders of the 300 largest co-operatives in the world, which along with United Nations representatives, officially launched the International Year of Co-operatives.

The new fund has been developed by the Co-operative Bank, which is the financial section of the largest consumer co-operative group in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the ICA and with financial support from the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing of Co-operatives, the French bank group *Credit Cooperatif*, the Indian co-operative group IFFCO, which is dedicated to the agricultural sector, and the Mid-Counties Co-operative, which is the

second largest co-operative group in the United Kingdom.

The objective of the fund is to provide financing, mainly to experienced brokers, to be distributed according to established percentages considering different loan categories with 50% reserved for established co-operative lenders, 20% to second-level co-operatives and apex, 15% to credit unions and the rest, directly to large, established co-operatives businesses.

Although not exclusively, the fund will focus on the most widely spread co-operative sectors such as agriculture which represents half of the worldwide production, or the financial sector which provides services to 13% of the world's population. The interest rates on the loans will be set at 2-5% annually with instalment terms of up to seven years. This interest will be used to cover management and administration costs and the social benefits obtained will be the exclusive performance indicator.

The President of the fund, Paul Flowers, said that «against a backdrop of a financial crisis exacerbated by corporate greed and speculation, the co-operative model has proved to be one of the most enduring and successful ways of running a business for the last 150 years.»

Barcelona supports Co-operatives

The City Council of Barcelona approved an institutional declaration of support for the International Year of Co-operatives

| J. P.

On November 30, Barcelona became the first city in the world to support co-operatives as a social and economic development model with an official declaration which was approved during the Council Meeting with votes from all of the municipal groups. The declaration came on the eve of 2012, the International Year of Co-operatives, declared by the United Nations in resolution 64/136 which aims to spread awareness among citizens that co-operative enterprises build a better world.

The city's declaration, promoted by the Federation of Worker Co-operatives of Catalonia, highlights the importance of co-operatives as sustainable enterprises based on principles and ownership by the people who are members. The City of Barcelona stated that «in the current economic and social context, enterprises that fulfil the principles and characteristic features demonstrated by co-operatives on a daily basis are needed more than ever».

The text of the declaration stated that co-operatives are «democratic enterprises that promote stable and quality employment, social responsibility, community roots and the greatest of involvement in the economic and social development of everyone including the most underprivileged».

This declaration is a commitment by the city of Barcelona to collaborate with the organisations representing the co-operative spirit to spread awareness for the International Year of Co-operatives and support the activities promoting the co-operative spirit that take place in 2012. Moreover, the municipal government has stated it will include co-operative organisations in consultation and discussion forums on economic and social issues.

Currently, more than 800 co-operatives are doing business in the Catalan capital city in all sectors and, according to the Federation of Worker Co-operatives data, 4807 co-operatives operate throughout Catalonia and are responsible for 4.5% of Catalan GDP.

IHCO General Assembly

IHCO members approved the new statutes of the health's sectoral organisation

José Pérez



«Participants at the IHCO General Assembly»

The International Health Co-operative Organization (IHCO) general assembly was held in Cancun (Mexico) on 16 November with the participation of delegates from Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Japan, Canada and Sweden. Dr Oriol Gras represented the Espriu Foundation.

After the debates held through the IHCO board and among the ICA sectoral organisations, the statutes modification proposal was presented

to the assembly in an effort to adapt to the directives from the extraordinary ICA assembly held in Rome in 2008, also seeking to unify sectoral regulations. The new statutes will facilitate the development of the organisation and the extension of the membership including new health co-operatives.

The members of the organisation welcomed the recently created Japanese Health and Welfare Co-

operative Federation (HeWCoop). Shuitso Hino, Vice-President of the new organisation, outlined their main projects and experiences in their first few months of activity. The inauguration in March 2010 of the co-operative hospital Minami Seikyo in the Nagoya City with nearly 1300 operations completed last year is worth mentioning.

The Canadian delegation also announced that during the month of July the constitution of the Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada had been drawn up. The Federation aims to gather and represent the network of health care co-operatives that meet the healthcare needs of their members throughout Canada.

The President of Unimed Brazil, Dr Eudes Aquino, who presided over the meeting, presented the Brazilian initiative to make the Portuguese language the joint official of the co-operative movement and obtained unanimous support from the delegates. The President of Unimed also invited the IHCO board to hold its spring meeting at the offices of the Brazilian co-operative in Sao Paulo.

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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

2012

2012 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES

Throughout 2012, the international co-operative movement will be celebrating the International Year of Co-operatives, as declared by the United Nations. The aim of the International Year of Co-operatives is to create awareness among citizens and for them to understand that co-operatives are people orientated organisation that compete efficiently in the market, and also provide their members and society with added value, such as the creation of sustainable and worthwhile employment and social integration. A number of events and activities have been foreseen throughout the world.

34 |

8-11
OCTOBER
2012

INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT OF CO-OPERATIVES

Titled *The Amazing Power of Co-operatives*, the Co-operative Group Desjardins, International Co-operative Alliance and the University of Saint Mary, will organize an International Summit of Co-operatives in **Quebec** to bring together leaders and co-operative company managers from all over the world to debate the challenges, threats and opportunities facing this business model.

29-3
OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
2012

ICA EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The International Co-operative Alliance will hold an extraordinary general assembly in **Manchester**. The main objective of this meeting is to decide the legal formula that the organization must adopt based on Belgian legislation, after moving to Brussels. Also, a new strategic plan needs to be established, which will come into force in 2013 and adapt the membership formula to the new requirements.

31-2
OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
2012

ICA EXPOCOOP 2012

The 3rd International Co-operative Trade Fair will be held in **Manchester**. All kinds of products and co-operative services will be presented in an effort to strengthen the image of the co-operatives and offer business and inter-cooperation opportunities.

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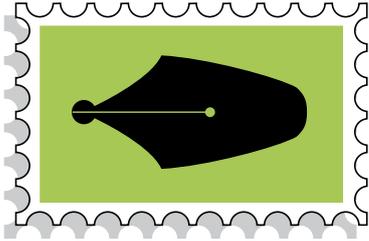
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MAILBOX

Dear Editor,

There are people who never die!

I am delighted to tell you that I had the honour of being a close friend of Dr Josep M. Espriu (RIP), who dedicated his life to establishing health co-operativism within our society. During his day this was a novel, and even fairly revolutionary concept. Today it has thankfully become a firmly ensconced phenomenon.

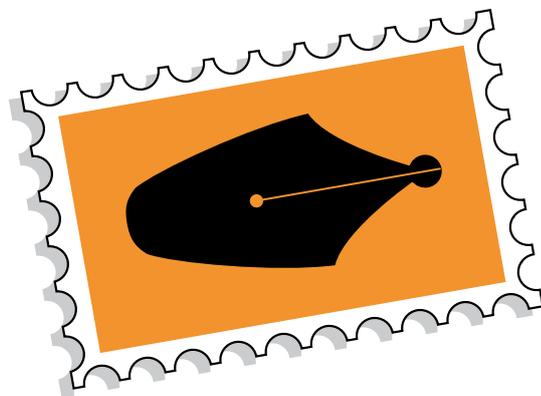
Just a few hours ago, though, I left Barcelona Hospital following an illness which is itself irrelevant, as the point I wish to make is that my time at the institution proved an experience which allowed me with great satisfaction to see the spirit of solidarity, service, patient care and

generosity to sufferers which fills the air of trust throughout the hospital.

From the welcoming and reassuring smile of the doctor who assesses your problem to the friendly and efficient nursing staff, along with all the ancillary services who assisted me, I cannot but express my thorough satisfaction and gratitude at the truly established philosophy to be found there.

Which is why it moves me to believe that our beloved Dr Espriu will live on among us forever through the message of neighbourliness which he handed down to healthcare professionals, and which they have so successfully assimilated and maintained.

Antoni Vancells





To reproduce nature, as the primordial and unsurpassable paradigm of construction. That is the central strand running through the architectural work of Antoni Gaudí, the creator of some of the most original and significant architectural pieces of the 20th century, who combined architecture itself, interior design and urban planning. Forms and colours merge in structures and objects to give visitors the sense of a return to the natural world amid an urban setting. Among his works, the Basilica of the Sagrada Família is perhaps one of his most world-famous creations.

Strolling with Gaudí around Roma

Josep M. Ferreiro



Carles Torner

What does the statue of Giordano Bruno do standing there, motionless all day? How does he amuse himself? That is what I wonder to myself as I have breakfast on the Campo dei Fiori, where the friar was burned as a heretic by the Inquisition back in the year 1600. Now the Dominican brother is unaware of the market stalls, the Japanese tourists and the desperate housewives of American TV series filling his square with their huge, multicoloured advertisements. One might imagine that, under his cowl, his gaze firmly fixed, Bruno drifts away from his surroundings and once again discovers the infinitude of the universe.

I have before me on the cafe table *The Sagrada Família according to Gaudí*, the book in which Armand Puig provides the key to understanding how Gaudí translated his experience of

nature, of art and of faith into architectural works. I am right now learning that the book of Genesis (the creation of the world and life) is scattered throughout the church: the Sagrada Família is full of all manner of plants (corn, grapes, figs, pomegranates, thyme, rosemary, palm trees, laurels...), schools of fish and flocks of birds, a slimy window of reptiles and amphibians (chameleons, newts, lizards, frogs, salamanders...). But I am expected at the Gaudí exhibition on St Peter's Square, and must leave the lesson unfinished.



On my way, as I head down the Via Giulia, I pick up a copy of the *Corriere de la Sera*, two Roman newspapers, *Il Messagero* and *Il Tempo*, and the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano*, which are all full of news about the Gaudí exhibition in Rome. Opposite the news stand, from the graffiti on a wall, an angel who looks to have

had a heavy night warns me not to dally, in case I am late for the guided tour. But it is a pleasantly sunny winter's day in Rome, and I decide to take a leisurely stroll to the Vatican along the banks of the Tiber. The first thing that surprises me is that in all three newspapers Gaudí's ambassador, the individual presenting his work with such emotion and warmth, is an Italian cardinal, Gianfranco Ravassi.

In the article in *Il Messagero*, for example, Ravassi begins by saying that Gaudí reminds him that Goethe defined architecture as crystallised music. Seen through these eyes, Gaudí's basilica contains a pentagram of harmony, is a kind of parchment on which the message has become porphyry, crystal, precious stones. The Sagrada Família then appears as music which must be listened to, or text which must be interpreted. Ravassi quotes Joan Miró in saying that art is the representation of the invisible which is also contained within the visible. As I head along the banks of the Tiber two girls jog past, another is taking her child and her dog for a walk, while beneath a bridge a tramp pokes his head out of his sleeping bag and asks me for a cigarette. I tell him that I am terribly sorry, but that I do not smoke. He asks me the time, and I tell him it is nearly nine in the morning. I need to get a move on. But I switch newspaper with a smile on my lips, because the idea of a Roman cardinal serving as Gaudí's ambassador and quoting Joan Miró has cheered up my morning.



Il Tempo carries the headline «God's Architect Conquers Vatican», while *Il Corriere de la Sera* speaks of Gaudí's as «a profoundly spiritual life». In *L'Osservatore Romano*, Cardinal Ravassi is once again quoted, as the President

of the Pontifical Council for Culture: «The architecture of the Sagrada Família is both a monument and a high-wire act; it challenges the laws of nature and describes the ascent towards the Mystery, while creating a landscape of endless mutation».

I head up the stairs and leave the river banks behind me, before crossing the Tiber on the Sant'Angelo Bridge. As I walk along the Via de la Conciliziano I see St Peter's of the Vatican standing majestically there in the background. If I hurry I will still get there on time. At a traffic light I see a man dressed in clerical garb, with a cross hanging in the middle of his chest, and seem to recognise him from the photo in the newspaper: «Cardinal Ravassi?» I ask. He greets me most affably. He tells me how happy he is with the exhibition on the Sagrada Família being staged in St Peter's Square. «Poor architecture,» he says, «goes with poor anthropology, generates dissatisfaction, anguish, a lack of hope. And so architectural beauty is not simply a great cultural contribution, but a social one as well».



I arrive out of breath for the tour of the exhibition *Gaudí. The Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, science and spirituality*. I am not surprised that, at the entrance, above the welcome sign, there is a group of builders with their hard hats on working on a scaffold. As we all know, the most optimistic forecasts do not expect Gaudí's basilica to be finished before 2026.

THE EXHIBITION ON THE SAGRADA FAMÍLIA IN THE VATICAN SHOWCASES THE GLORIES OF CATALAN CULTURE. AT THE BRACCIO DI CARLO MAGNO IN THE VATICAN CITY MORE THAN 16,000 PEOPLE HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO VIEW THE WORKS DESIGNED BY THE ARCHITECT ANTONI GAUDÍ IN BARCELONA, WITH THE BASILICA OF THE SAGRADA FAMÍLIA AS THE CENTRAL AXIS AND CULMINATING POINT. *THE EXHIBITION GAUDÍ; THE SAGRADA FAMÍLIA IN BARCELONA. ART, SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY* WAS ON DISPLAY FREE OF CHARGE FROM 24 NOVEMBER UP UNTIL 15 JANUARY 2012.

Gaudí, genius of a new architecture

Glòria Carrizosa

On the day of the formal opening, the 150 journalists and a score of senior Vatican officials gathered in the Neri Room in the vestibule of the Paul VI Hall in the Vatican, emphasizing the great expectations aroused by the venture, organised and produced by the Construction Board of the Temple of the Sagrada Família of Barcelona and the Joan Maragall Foundation, together with Spanish Cultural Action, and the financial support of both public and private bodies. The business of organising the exhibition began following the dedication of the Sagrada Família by Pope Benedict XVI in November last year. The show was intended as a way of repaying the Holy Father's illustrious visit, bringing the figure of Antoni Gaudí and his work to the Vatican. The close ties between Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, the Archbishop of Barcelona, and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravassi, the President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, played a key role in bringing Catalan culture in all its glory to the Vatican, courtesy of Antoni Gaudí, one of its most universally recognised geniuses.

«Antoni Gaudí represents a strange and wonderful combination of science, spirituality and sensitivity. His presence, right at the heart of the Holy See, is a wonderful piece of news, an opportunity to showcase the good



Pep Herrero

and the best of our cultural heritage in such a cosmopolitan and universal setting as Rome,» says the philosopher and theologian Francesc Torralba, married and father of five children who was recently appointed consultant to the Pontifical Council for Culture. The Director of the Ethos Chair of Applied Ethics at Ramon Llull University, Torralba highlights the Sagra-

da Família as a masterpiece which «captivates and surprises visitors, inspires admiration and awe not only in believers, but also in non-believers. In this regard the new basilica is a meeting point, a monument which expresses in physical terms the quest for the infinite to which all human hearts aspire».

Since the dedication of the Sagrada Família by the Pope the number of visitors has increased by 40%. It is the most visited landmark in Spain. According to estimates, in 2011 three and a half million people visited the basilica. It was opened for religious services following its dedication by the Pope, although mass is held there only on rare occasions given its considerable capacity of between 8,000 and 10,000 people.

Antoni Matabosch, the organiser of the exhibition and emeritus president of the Joan Maragall Foundation, also wants to add to the liturgical ceremonies «high-level cultural events which help bring faith and culture together, such as for example conferences and concerts». Torralba is also in favour of new cultural and religious ventures focused on the Sagrada Família, such as for example «the Atrium of the Gentiles, an intelligent initiative with a broad perspective which allows us to bring together different spiritual sensitivities, including both believers and non-believers».

When you step inside the nave of the Sagrada Família your eyes have to strain to capture the full majesty of the interior; the nave is immense, a forest of columns raising their branches up to the heavens. The 27 stained glass windows by Joan Vila, drawing inspiration from biblical themes, are an explosion of colour. Gaudí wanted to recreate nature in all its splendour, its forms and volumes, and aimed to sculpt stone with the marvels of creation. «We all aspire after beauty, and in this

case,» according to Torralba, «the beauty of the Sagrada Família represents an opportunity to transcend, to raise one's spirit and project us towards the intangible».





Art, science and spirituality

The exhibition, divided into five sections, explains Gaudí's life, with a particular focus on his project and the Sagrada Família. A timeline of the cathedral's evolution and the different stages of its construction is presented. The architect Jordi Bonet (Barcelona 1925), who is in overall charge of work on the basilica, is of the opinion that «the construction of the Sagrada Família is a miracle. The foundation stone was laid some 130 years ago for this expiatory temple, meaning that it has always been built through donations from the people. Financial contributions now arrive from worldwide». His father, Lluís Bonet, was an architect and a student of Gaudí himself, whom he «admired and revered». Gaudí knew that he was building a monumental work which he would never see completed. Jordi Bonet believes that he also will fail to see its completion, although construction work should be finished in the not too distant future. One possible date mentioned is 2026, marking the centenary of Gaudí's death. In any event Bonet, who has been in charge of construction for the last 26 years, is aware that he still has plenty of work to do. Ten towers have still to be built: the four Towers of Glory; the four evangelists, which are now beginning to rise up; the tower dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the tower of Jesus Christ, the highest at 174 metres. It has grown by 15 metres since last year, but there are another one hundred to go. Work is also now beginning on a 40-metre high building which will house a new sacristy and the bishopric's administrative offices.

The exhibition also features a selection of Gaudí's other landmark projects, such as the Park Güell and the Casa Batlló. It includes fragments which explain how Gaudí employed colour, textures and the forms which he created himself or with the help of craftsmen. His aim was always to achieve the highest registers offered by wrought iron, glass and ceramics.

A third section highlights the spirituality evident throughout the Sagrada Família. Gaudí was in fact aiming to create a space which would invite visitors to reflect and prayer. Hence the fact that we find throughout the

The foundation stone was laid some 130 years ago for this expiatory temple, meaning that it has always been built through donations from the people. Financial contributions now arrive from worldwide

Basilica references to Christian faith, from the facades themselves, dedicated to the Birth, Passion and Glory of Christ, to the structure of the cathedral itself, with its bell towers dedicated to the apostles, the evangelists, the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. The walls and facades feature jaculatories, while the stained glass windows draw their inspiration from biblical themes.

Daniel Giralt-Miracle is the curator of the exhibition and responsible for its design, which was commissioned from Croquis, while the graphic design is by virgili.com. The galleries feature original models, photographs and explanations of Gaudí's technical innovations. There is also background choral music provided by the Escolania de Montserrat, while the tour finishes with an audiovisual recording of the basilica's dedication. A bust of Antoni Gaudí has also been taken to Rome, along with liturgical objects, ranging from lamps to candelabras and the pews themselves, helping give visitors an idea of the atmosphere inside the place of worship.

The works of sculptor Josep M. Subirachs are also very much in evidence in the exhibition, which features some of his original drawings. He continues to supervise the creation of the bronze doors for the Gateway of Glory, despite his delicate health.

Gaudí reinvented architecture

At the press conference which launched the exhibition, one of the journalists asked how one could remain true to Gaudí's work with new materials and technological advances.



The reply given by the chief architect of the Sagrada Família, Jordi Bonet, was: «Gaudí was a genius, he created a new architecture when he invented a new system of structural calculation. He for the first time used surfaces found in nature, and applied them in his work. He invented proportions based on geometry (hyperbolics, conoids). Thanks to this system we have been able faithfully to follow the instructions which Gaudí left in writing».

In the section dedicated to technology, the exhibition explains the way in which all the details of Gaudí's work are carefully thought out. His architecture is not the result of chance but is very precisely generated, based on a method of trial and error which allowed him gradually to adjust his discoveries. Which is why he always set up a workshop right there on site, where he would continue creating his models, photographs and plans. This is

the method still employed on the Sagrada Família, although the architects now work with computerised aids. The vast possibilities provided by new technology have allowed the schedule of works to be accelerated. Jordi Bonet is proud of having been among the first in the world to cut the hardest materials, such as porphyry and basalt, using computerised tools.

The exhibition's great success, thanks to the attention it has been given and its privileged location (all those leaving the Basilica of St Peter inevitably pass in front of it, and many have found themselves drawn inside out of curiosity), have led the organisers, aware of the appeal it represents in terms of tourism in Barcelona, to consider putting it on display at another venue, in order to allow more people to discover the wonders created by Gaudí.

COLLOQUIUMS ON THE FIGURE OF GAUDÍ

To coincide with the exhibition on Gaudí and the Sagrada Família, the Joan Maragall Foundation and the Foundation of the Construction Board of the Temple of the Sagrada Família organised two academic events dealing with the architecture and historical context within which Gaudí developed his work.

Architecture: symbol and sacred A century after Gaudí was staged on 12 December at the National Museum of 21st Century Art, with contributions by Monsignor Gianfranco Ravassi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and the architect Mario Botta. Ravassi was in fact actively involved in promoting the exhibition. From his episcopal office he felt that the dedication of the Minor Basilica by the Pope, which meant that religious services could begin there, offered an excellent opportunity for the Vatican City itself to show this «new cathedral» to the world, a place of worship under construction right in the heart of Barcelona. «The Sagrada Família is increasingly a sign of an evangelising presence in the heart of the city,» explains Antoni Matabosch, who aims at the Joan Maragall Foundation to promote a dialogue between faith and culture, and has been working alongside Cardinal Ravassi

in organising what is a hugely significant venture in promoting Catalan culture. Matabosch believes that «the Vatican is aware that what we have here is a hugely valuable instrument, and that we must all make an effort to bring to fruition a revitalisation of Christian faith».

It was Matabosch himself who presented the second of the academic events, focusing on Gaudí's era in Spain and Italy, staged on 14 December at the Spanish Embassy close by the Holy See. Giovanni Maria Vian, Director of the *Osservatore Romano*, and the essayist, literary critic and President of the Verdaguer Society, Ricard Torrents, analysed the historical context within which the architect lived. «Geniuses do not spring up like mushrooms, but are rather particularly tall trees amid a surrounding forest,» suggests Matabosch. Within the context of the Catalan Renaissance, the industrialisation of Catalonia and the upsurge in craftsmanship at the time helped Gaudí's genius on its way.

The closing ceremony bringing to an end the academic and institutional events and the exhibition itself featured a splendid farewell in the form of a concert given by the Escolania de Montserrat choral school in the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome.

«I understood the Sagrada Família in depth when I saw the completed interior»

Daniel Giralt-Miracle, curator of the exhibition *Gaudí: the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, science and spirituality*

Carme Munté



Pep Herrero

For us the awakening of Gaudism is associated with a particular figure, namely the critic and art historian Daniel Giralt-Miracle, not only because he was the general curator of International Gaudí Year (2002) or because he has set up exhibitions and delivered conferences worldwide, but also because he himself in a way embodies a step-by-step approach to the complexity of the persona, architecture and work of Antoni Gaudí. A whole process gradually brought to fruition which he now sums up as the curator of the exhibition *Gaudí: the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, science and spirituality*. When the Sagrada Família Construction Board and the Joan Maragall Foundation commissioned him to create this first exhibition about Gaudí and the Sagrada Família in the Vatican, Giralt-Miracle was quite clear that it would be the educational and instructional expression of his own personal journey.

Art, science and spirituality. Was that your path towards discovering Gaudí?

Yes, because I initially developed an interest in the artistic side of Gaudí. When I was studying Art History at university the artistic element seemed to be the essence: the forms, the colours, the symbology, etc. The second stage came when I discovered the scientific basis of Antoni Gaudí, the structural calculations and the study of forms. Computers have helped us interpret the internal mathematics of his work, which is not the product of a random aesthetic, but of measured and precise calculation. When the Catalan Technical University published its computer-generated study of Gaudí's geometrical and constructive approach, the scientific dimension became much more understandable. We recently published the book *3D Magic of Gaudí* (Editorial Angle), but the fact is that in the early 20th century Gaudí was already working in three dimensions, which is why he didn't produce drawings but models. Lastly, the spiritual dimension cannot be overlooked. He was a man who read the Scriptures, who took an interest in theology, liturgy, who lived the final years of his life completely dedicated to the Sagrada Família. I wanted to highlight these three essential dimensions of Gaudí's cosmological vision in the Vatican City exhibition.

To what extent is the exhibition also a summary of the long time you have spent trying to explain Gaudí?

It is certainly a curious and picturesque story. During my university days the figure of Gaudí and his work was undervalued and minimised. He was seen as an artist on the fringes of the Modernisme movement, more exuberant, exaggerated and effusive, and so did not tally with the organicist, rationalist approach of the time, with much more contained trends. Gaudí, who broke with the rules of European art nouveau, was not understood, and no attempt was made to understand him. In the Eighties and Nineties, with the arrival of democracy and a re-evaluation of our own heritage, Modernisme began to be seen in a different light. That is when I began to adopt a more rigorous approach to studying the

People were only familiar with the facades of Gaudí's work, and we brought them inside, to stroll around the courtyards, the rooms, the salons, to go up to the roofs and down to the basements

whole magnitude of Gaudí: the Gaudí who created ecological architecture (Parc Guëll), who experimented with new architectural formulae (the crypt of the Colònia Guëll), who explored new residential forms (La Pedrera and the Casa Batlló), and Gaudí the designer, working with furniture, iron, glass, wood, in other words Gaudí the master craftsman for whom the details are just as important – a doorhandle, a peephole, a chair – as they are in the large-scale architecture. When the Caixa Catalunya Foundation purchased La Pedrera (1986) and I was commissioned to create and direct the Gaudí Space, that is when I became truly committed to Gaudism. It was in creating the Gaudí Space at La Pedrera that

I became interested in understanding and learning more about Gaudí, but also demystifying the negativity which had been attached to him up to that time, and explaining in an attractive way how he was a true architectural innovator of the 20th century and of what came later.

In 2002 you were the general curator in charge of International Gaudí Year. What did that process of rediscovery involve?

It involved a change in opinions regarding Gaudí, who was dismissed as a reactionary, a petty nationalist, a sculptor and artist rather than an architect... *The exhibition Gaudí. The quest for form. Space, geometry, structure and construction*, which was staged at the Saló del Tinell, allowed us to explain through highly visual and comprehensible models the huge geometric and structural load involved, how Gaudí shaped space and forms. We placed the greatest emphasis on presenting Gaudí as a scientist. As has now been confirmed with the central nave of the Sagrada Família being covered over, revealing a whole set of structures, columns, trees, branches, skylights... which in truth are the opposite of the baroque spectacle of the outer facade. The Facade of the Birth, and also of the Passion, although to a lesser extent, present a spectacle of forms which do not allow you to see the structure, the skeleton. We made an effort to explain that Gaudí should not be viewed from the outside in, but from the inside out. People were only familiar with the facades of Gaudí's work, and we brought them inside, to stroll around the courtyards, the rooms, the salons, to go up to the roofs and down to the basements, to touch the window grilles, to understand how Gaudí dealt with light, furnishings... The Gaudí Year allowed people to discover a figure who already existed, to bring him into the light, give him credit and prestige, show that he was a man of research, a highly artistic and creative figure who was ahead of his time.

Did reconciliation with the Sagrada Família, though, become possible only following its dedication?

The reconciliation with the Sagrada Família had two key moments. The first was when the AVE train tunnel was dug and the building did not collapse; the second came with the ceremony of dedication presided over by Pope Benedict XVI, which enjoyed a huge media profile. I understood the Sagrada Família in depth, and was able to appreciate its scale, when I saw the completed interior.

Why?

Because I have a rationalist background. I studied Design in Germany, I come from a family of designers, I've always studied architecture as a concept of construction, and always been thrilled by structural architecture. I found the Gaudí of the Facade of the Birth difficult to understand, but the Gaudí inside the Sagrada Família sends me soaring to the heavens. Because it is there that I understand all his effort and endeavour: in his geometrical innovation. The paraboloids, the hyperboloids, the sinusoidal and conical forms... it is the dual curvature geometries which show us how Gaudí worked to begin with. He ignores planes, straight lines, triangles, circles, in other words the simple forms of historical Pythagorean geometry, and begins to work with double curvature geometries, discovering that they offer rigidity, beauty and a new way of working with forms. The facade of La Pedrera, for example, breaks with all the straight-line forms of in the buildings of the day.

And so would it be fair to say that you too have become reconciled with the Sagrada Família?

I never signed any declaration against it, out of politeness and respect for those working on the Sagrada Família, but to be honest I never really believed in it. And so one of the most moving events in my life was when 2011, as

We today have the theoretical and practical instruments and enough examples of work to affirm that Gaudí was no ordinary individual, Gaudí was extraordinary, and represents a key chapter in the history of world architecture

a member of the Barcelona City Awards jury (organised by the City Council) we honoured the team of architects led by Jordi Bonet, who pushed forward work on the Sagrada Família because he was able to understand that it was what Gaudí had wanted, despite the obstacles of wartime, the lack of financial resources and the limits of his own lifespan. In that sense, to answer the question, I wouldn't say that I've become reconciled with the Sagrada Família, but rather that it is only now that I have fully understood it.

Have architects as a whole followed a similar path to yours?

It is in the architectural world that the most dramatic change is found. Once the interior of the Sagrada Família had been finished, Jordi Bonet, Joan Rigol and I invited the group of architects to visit. One could say that the process culminated in an article by the architect Òscar Tusquets, published in the *El País* newspaper, in which he acknowledged how wrong he had been over the years. I don't know if it is historical determinism or predestination, but it is clear that the force of the personality, the architecture, the power of Gaudí's work is a phenomenon which has overcome all barriers. It is perfectly reasonable to like it or dislike it, but what you cannot deny is that we today have the theoretical and practical instruments and enough examples of work to

Bearing in mind that as chance would have it the AVE train line passes right in front of the Sagrada Família, just as in Paris there is a stop which gives you direct access into the Louvre, there will also be a Sagrada Família stop on the AVE line

affirm that Gaudí was no ordinary individual, Gaudí was extraordinary, and represents a key chapter in the history of world architecture.

Gaudí had thought about all the details, in the area around the Sagrada Família as well. What will be left, though, of his initial plans?

The City of Barcelona and its public authorities have never understood, nor could have predicted, the phenomenon of the Sagrada Família, and nor have they found a way to reconcile two clearly opposing worlds: on the one hand, the straight lines of the Eixample, designed by Ildefons Cerdà; and on the other, the curves of the Sagrada Família design by

Antoni Gaudí. The initial architectural plan was for the Sagrada Família to be visible through fleeting perspectives from all four points of the compass. And so we will have to see how that issue is resolved. What is clear is that, despite the objections of wartime, intellectual manifestoes and Catholics themselves after the Vatican II Council, aiming for small communities not grand cathedrals, the AVE train line... despite all this, it has been the tenacity of its defenders that has proved more powerful than that of its opponents. And now we find that we have a church enshrined as a Basilica, the most visited landmark in Barcelona and in Spain, and yet we have still not resolved its contextual setting. If, as is foreseeable, Gaudí is beatified, and given that he is buried in the crypt, then pilgrimages to the Sagrada Família will take on an international dimension, and the Eixample can go hang. And I also have a theory: bearing in mind that as chance would have it the AVE train line passes right in front of the Sagrada Família, just as in Paris there is a stop which gives you direct access into the Louvre, there will also be a Sagrada Família stop on the AVE line. That is a quite realistic prospect for the future.



DANIEL GIRALT-MIRACLE (Barcelona, 1944) is an art historian and holds a degree in Philosophy and Literature from the University of Barcelona, and another in Communication Sciences from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He has held teaching positions at the latter university, and also at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, Germany, from which he holds a diploma in Design and Communication. He has been the head of the Plastic Arts Division of the Catalan Regional Government's Department of Culture, Managing Director of the Caixa de Catalunya Foundation (1987-1989), Director of the MACBA (1989-1994) and of the Caixa Catalunya Cultural Centre's Espai Gaudí (1995-2000). The curator of more than a hundred art, design and architecture exhibitions, in 2002 he was appointed the general curator of International Gaudí Year. He is a correspondent member of the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid, and of the Sant Carles Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Valencia, a numerary academician of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts of Barcelona, and an academician elect of the Sant Jordi Royal Academy of Arts of Barcelona.

«We have seen the inside, now we will see the power of the outside of the Sagrada Família»

Joan Rigol, organiser of the exhibition *Gaudí: the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, science and spirituality*

Carme Munté



With the exhibition *Gaudí: the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, science and spirituality*, Joan Rigol brings to an end his period as the Executive Chairman of the Construction Board of the Temple of the Sagrada Família. A seven-year period during which he has deployed all his demeanour and skill in order to achieve his established goals. The clearest example was undoubtedly the roofing of the central nave of the cathedral and its dedication, but there are many others which, although less visible, have in particular allowed the construction process to be better administered. Meanwhile, problems requiring a solution have arisen, such as the controversial route taken by the AVE high-speed train line right past the foundations, and the management of ever-increasing tourism. In all these cases, Joan Rigol, a man versed from an early age in the art of politics, has demonstrated that, above all, an attitude of dialogue and compromise is the surest way of dealing with any situation.

For the first time Gaudí and the Sagrada Família have set foot inside the Vatican courtesy of this exhibition organised by the Construction Board of the Temple of the Sagrada Família, the Joan Maragall Foundation and

AC/E (Spanish Cultural Action). Would it be fair to speak of a unique exhibition?

There have been ongoing exhibitions about Gaudí all round the world. However, the exhibition in Rome stands out in particular because it is much more approachable for the general public. Gaudí has technical and architectural aspects which architects themselves understand but which the rest of us find a little difficult, and so Daniel Giralto-Miracle, the curator, has succeeded in creating an exhibition which perfectly explains all the elements which go to make the Sagrada Família a masterpiece.

What features allow one to capture the full meaning of the work?

The Sagrada Família is important on several different levels. To begin with, from the perspective of the general public, it has become an icon of Barcelona and Catalonia. There are few cities in the world that have a building which so strikingly identifies them as does the Sagrada Família. This is a far from trivial aspect, because it generates a huge magnetic attraction. The fact that, at a time of economic crisis, we have an emerging tourism industry is a significant aspect.

Secondly, the Sagrada Família is an absolutely first-rate cultural creation. We all know that one of the main cornerstones of Catalonia

There are few cities in the world that have a building which so strikingly identifies them as the Sagrada Família does in Barcelona

is its culture, and in this regard the architecture and the figure of Antoni Gaudí stand out.

The third level of importance of the Sagrada Família is its Christian meaning. «The best way to serve the country is to make it a temple,» Gaudí used to say. And so he created a place of worship which was far ahead of the construction methods of his time, since for example there are no side altars and all the elements are positioned in the central nave, facing the people, many years before the Second Vatican Council was held.

It still intrigues me that, despite the many tourists who come from abroad to visit it, the people of Barcelona pretty much discovered it on 7 November 2010, when it was actually dedicated...

To be honest, it was when they saw the ceremony presided over by Benedict XVI on television that citizens themselves became aware of what the Sagrada Família means. Following that landmark event, everyone looks at the cathedral with greater respect, understanding its focal power.

Did more reluctant figures among the political class also change their attitude?

The day after the Pope visited politicians who had been in general less open to our requests were asking to visit it and see it, because they understood that most of the people in the country were coming together behind the Sagrada Família, and they could not allow themselves to be marginalised.

The controversial route taken by the AVE train line right past the foundations of the Sagrada Família, protests by locals about increasing tourism, the fire in the crypt... With so many problems in a position like this you will have needed to deploy all your diplomatic nature!

Everyone has their own style, and I have mine. I suppose I was born that way. My aim is to try to convince rather than to conquer, and so I try to get people to understand my moral credibility rather than my authority. I have always tried to act that way, without in any

The day after the Pope visited politicians who had been in general less open to our requests were asking to visit it

way running away from the responsibilities I have been given.

Do you feel a certain regret about the whole controversy with the AVE going right past the foundations of the Sagrada Família?

I have always said that the Sagrada Família will have a future if the city's people and institutions value it. It is ridiculous for us to give it only secondary importance while people from elsewhere place such value on it. And so that was the first key point to be made: to realise that the Sagrada Família required special treatment, bearing in mind also that given the delicacy and height of the structure the slightest movement could damage it. In fact the UNESCO technical staff who supervised the works concluded that a tunnel had never been dug with so many safeguards. Despite the fact that it went right past the foundations of the Sagrada Família, the ground barely trembled.

All in all, what feeling are you left with after the whole experience?

I do not feel that the justice system lived up to our demands. We were not looking for any special favours, but just to be listened to as the citizens responsible for a culturally important landmark. The courts did not view it that way, and when the judgement was handed down, the tunnel had already been dug.

Secondly, I would also make mention of the stubbornness of the public authorities, who in all our conversations always ended up saying the same thing: that if they gave in to us it could jeopardise future public infrastructure projects. Which ultimately is a rather unrealistic argument, because the Sagrada Família is hardly a block of flats, it is a much more complex construction. The best thing would have been to seek out a different option, and there was one, but they stubbornly insisted on doing it this way.

One of the issues for the future regards the area around the cathedral. What role should the Sagrada Família play in this process?

The surrounding area is not appropriate for what is an outstanding work. The type of trade going on around the Sagrada Família is being degraded, and that is bringing down the level of the whole environment. There will come a time when work will need to begin on the Facade of Glory, on Carrer Mallorca, and we will then need to address the issue of what to do

with the buildings opposite. The process will demand highly positive and constructive dialogue, first with the residents, who are people entitled to be receive proper treatment; and then with the City Council, which is responsible for urban planning, and lastly with the Construction Board of the Sagrada Família, which will need to try to seek out a solution and help the whole process along.

To be honest the fact that works permits were granted to build opposite the Sagrada Família was perhaps based on a belief that it would never be finished, along with the voices raised against the ongoing works...

There has been a real lack of understanding at times. The question was whether we should leave the Sagrada Família simply as the work which Gaudí left behind, or should be true to his desire to see it finished. Some wanted to leave it as an empty shell, a commemoration of Gaudí's work, while others wanted to continue it. Gaudí was so clear that work should continue that he left one facade finished. No one begins a construction project by erecting a facade, but it was a way of committing to its continuity. The truth is that some of those who felt it should not be continued now, when they see the building, realise they were wrong.

It is the most visited landmark in Spain, attracting three and a half million people a year. What does that mass tourism involve, bearing in mind that one of the challenges of your time in charge was specifically to manage visits?

It was much more difficult to visit the Sagrada Família when work was going on inside than it is now, when it can absorb a huge number

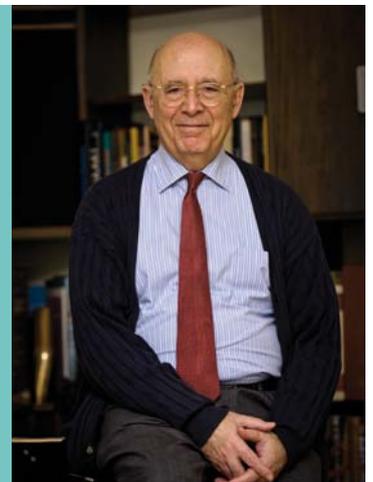
No one begins a construction project by erecting a facade, but it was a way of committing to its continuity

of tourists. However, it does cause considerable problems for the whole surrounding area, and the local residents are inconvenienced both by the tourists blocking the pavements and the coaches. To avoid the queues, you can now buy tickets online, or at ServiCaixa ATMs. The problem with the coaches bringing the tourists in is more that they don't stop but just drive round and round the building so that people can take photos. That, though, is an issue for the City Council to deal with. It is not our responsibility. One possible option would be for coaches to park a few blocks away.

Work on the cathedral is scheduled to finish in 2026, the centenary of Antoni Gaudí's death. How is the profile of the Sagrada Família changing, now that the works are in their final stretch?

If you were to paint the Sagrada Família now, you would undoubtedly paint the four towers which have always been associated with the profile of the building. That is an image which is receding by the day, as the great central tower is now rising up, and that will change the profile and the image of the Sagrada Família as a whole. We have seen the inside finished, and can now see the explosion of meaning in Gaudí's church, with a total of eighteen spires and bell towers, in other words we will see the power which the Sagrada Família has on the outside as well.

JOAN RIGOL (Torrelles de Llobregat, 1943) is a politician, and holds a doctorate in theology from the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia (2008) as well as an MBA from ESADE. He has been President of the UDC political party (1987-2000), a member of congress (1979-1980), a senator (1995-1999), a deputy (1988-1995) and president (1999-2003) of the Catalan Parliament, and the Catalan Regional Government's Minister of Culture (1984-1985). He is the author of *Crisi i país* (1984), *Poble i consciència nacional* (1986), *Propostes i reflexions per al catalanisme polític* (1989) i *Política i comunitat: el meu nacionalisme* (1996). He was President of the Board of Trustees of the Sagrada Família, a position he left in 2011, and President of the Board Trustees of the Mountain of Montserrat. He is a member of the boards of trustees of the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Teatre Lliure, the Olof Palme Foundation, the Institute of Humanities, the Capella Reial de Catalunya and the Ortega y Gasset University Institute.





Gaudí has captivated Rome in death, just as Rome captivated Gaudí in life. The exhibition dedicated solely to Gaudí in Rome has attracted more than 30 thousand visitors to the Braccio di Carlomagno in the heart of the Vatican, and proved both a huge critical success and an international media sensation. The show reveals the personality and work of the architectural genius through his greatest flagship creation, the Sagrada Família, inaugurated by Benedict XVI in late 2010. For with Gaudí, aesthetics have a backdrop of ethics suggesting transcendence.

PAUSE

Montserrat Abelló

BREAK

Today I am proud of my time
and I hate to waste it.

I do nothing, no sewing, no ironing.

I am in a hurry, I go up and down
the same street ten times.

I watch looks on faces,
vacant from so much staring.

I stop at display windows, I see the fashion
in greens and blues.

I am obsessed with abstract painters
and their wordless talk.

I look at my hands, mine and yours;

I eagerly dash to the newstand,
searching for books and names. Above all names!
I ignore the press that blurts out lies—
why truth is always as straightforward
and blameless as a birth.

I am in a rush,
I reach the sea that will carry me far away.
But it is a lie, it is a lie,
miracles no longer take place.

I return home with a surer step,
back to daily life.

Translation by Sam Abrams





MASKS

TEXT: Dr Viola PHOTOGRAPHY: Manuel Espuch

Harlequins, punchinelli, pierrots, columbines and a whole string of other characters drawn from Italy's Commedia dell'Arte and from life itself stroll down the streets alongside dancers and acrobats and, above all, past the canals of the ancient and Most Serene Republic of Venice, in an endless and multicoloured festival replete with elegance, style and luxury.

It was only quite recently that the Venice Carnival recovered some of the ancient splendour which it achieved in the 18th century, when aristocrats and nobles from all around the world gathered there to conceal their social status for just a few days, blending in with the commoners in the general hubbub.

The disguises represented the characters of Italian popular theatre which, unlike that of the nobles, ridiculed high society and allowed the people, if only for a time, to dress as lords, while also hiding in the crowd from the control exerted by the sovereign government.

The Venetians of today, who have successfully preserved the masks and costumes of their long-standing carnival tradition, stroll through the city of St Mark, reviving the spirit of their fellow citizens of old as a source of inspiration for the thousands of tourists and travellers who arrive from all four corners of the globe, flooding the city's canals.

These words are more than enough introduction for Manuel Espuch's exquisite photographs, a compendium of all the magic which Carnival conveys. The sense of reality that emits from the images and the arrangement of the compositions evoke the spirit of period Venice, reflected in characters concealing their true nature behind their masks, just as the citizens of any modern conurbation do today.



Light of simple song

Miquel Àngel Llauger

In one of her books about Espriu, Rosa Delor says that all studies of the poet begin by quoting his description of his own poetry as «a long meditation on death». I will therefore follow suit, and the quotation is duly included: it is difficult to discuss Espriu's poetry without taking the centrality of death as one's starting point. With reference to the poem which I wish to discuss here, there is a second starting point: his friendship with Bartomeu Rosselló-Pòrcel and the profound anguish he felt at the death of the young Majorcan. The ties between the two poets may be summarised in these words written by Espriu to Marià Manent shortly after Rosselló-Pòrcel's death: «No one knew him, perhaps, as well as I. Few can have loved him more». As for the impact of that death on Espriu's spirit, this is recorded in the vast quantity of poems dedicated to the writings of Roselló-Pòrcel which evoke, and echoes of the lines of the Majorcan writer which can be found in the works of the poet of Sinera.

The poem «Prayer on your death» belongs to the first section of *Hours* (1952), which is dedicated to the memory of Rosselló. Over the poems which precede it («Flame», «Night», «At dawn», «On your death») there hovers the memory of the night when the young Salvador Espriu stood vigil over the body of his dead friend: the keynotes (paleness, silence and cold) refer to death as an absolute annihilation. Where it refers to the fact that his deceased friend was a poet, it is implied that his poetic gift has also been snatched away by death: «prince of dead / ashen flowers, words» («Flame») or «cantic / wholly dispelled in rain» («On your death»). I would

suggest that in the case of «Prayer on your death» there is a significant change in tone.

The first four lines could represent an example of the inter-textual dialogue established between the poetry of the two friends, as analysed by Rosa Delor herself. The oak trees, a reference to the landscape of Montseny (Rosselló died in the El Brull sanatorium), would seem to hark after a space where even the four elements (green, sea, dusk and fire) reproduce the atmosphere of «In Majorca during the Civil War», the poem in which the poet best expressed his homesickness for his native island, and which Espriu considered «the culminating point» of his lyrical output.

Against this backdrop there comes the main verb of the poem's only sentence: «I call for / new clarity»: there is a hope of something beyond mere annihilation. In truth it is a plea, more than a hope: as the title suggests, the poem takes on the form of a funeral orison. This explains the context of religious

liturgy, the altars before which something is consumed in flames and reduced to silence: wings which could well be an image of Roselló-Pòrcel's poetic ambitions, as in some poems he employed the symbol of an angel in reference to poetry. Not all, though, is reduced to ash and silence. The voice pronouncing the prayer calls for the dead poet to survive in some way, to be «ruddy crystal, greater flame». The beautiful final line clarifies what the nature of this enduring existence is to be: «light of simple song». If my reading is plausible, it calls for poetry to redeem the poet from the inanity and finitude of life.

The desire to find the meaning of life in words, when faced with the certainty of death, is a common theme in Espriu. The safeguarding of words clearly has a civil sense, given the historical period when the poet was writing: as in the famous lines «we have lived on to save you words / to each thing to restore its name» («Opening of a cantic in the temple»). But Salvation in a word or a song, ultimately in poetry, has a more intimate meaning. In the poem «River», he says of *Mrs. Death*: «I have turned old dreams / into the slight offering / of a voice». In «Diptych of the living», in the same book, we find a clear expression of the concept of salvation in words: «From the sea they must save me / perhaps a verse, some clear / words, while they have worth / for all my life». And in poem II of *End of the labyrinth*, the poet feels he has recovered his human dignity in the face of the immediacy of death, concluding: «and my lips speak... / a few, fragile, clear / words of song».

Saving the words of the country, and saving oneself from death

Prayer on your death

*When plaintive oaks
of ocean green begin
their dusky messages,
wishing you fire, I call for
renewed clarity, for you to be,
before altars where they burn
flaming and winged silences,
ruddy crystal, greater flame,
light of simple song.*

Salvador Espriu
Hours (1952)

ORACIÓ EN LA TEVA MORT

QUAN ROURES ENYOROSOS
DE VERDS MARINS COMENCEN
CREPUSCULARS MISSATGES.
VOLENT-TE FOC DE MANO
NOVA CLAROR QUE SIGUIS.
D'AVANT ALTARS NO CREMEN
ARDENTS SILENCIS D'AIES.
EN CÉS CRISTALL MÉS FLAMA.
LLUM DE CANÇÓ SENZILLA.



in words. This is the mission which Espriu entrusts to the poet: which he entrusts to himself, and in this «Prayer on your death», wishes for the salvation of his dead poet friend. It is interesting to note how, in a much later poem (1962), explicitly dedicated to Rosselló-Pòrcel, he again calls on the dead poet to serve as the poet-prophet, or poet-saviour of the people, as embodied by Espriu himself: «And you, who died young and know how to smile, /.../ make the words we need shine out in the night/ ... / to raise my people to their feet, and restore them to the rightful path». («For an Alghero suite»). Espriu's relationship with Rosselló-Pòrcel is often that of an heir receiving a legacy and taking on the mission of ensuring its survival.

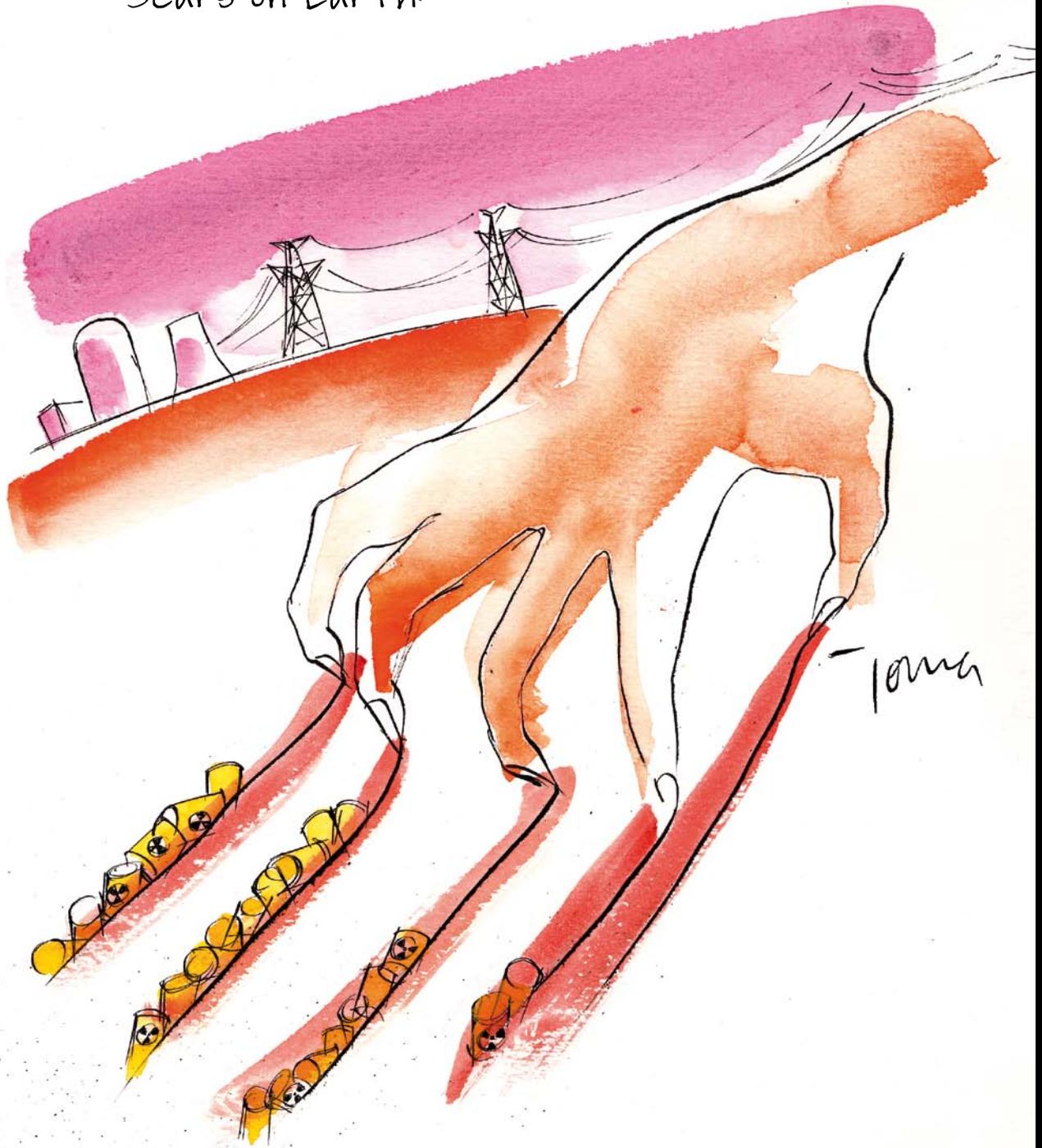
The issue of personal salvation through words again appears in par-

ticularly clear form in these lines: «I have given my life for the hard-earned spoils / of a few stripped words» (*Book of Sinera*, XXXV). It is hard not to hear in this the echo of Antonio Machado, a poet whom Espriu particularly admired, and who in a brief poem of the series *Galleries* relates how, out of the immensity of creation («the hand... / of the seller of stars») there reaches his lips the gift «of a few true words».

The quotation is a meaningful one. Let us look back at the words with which Espriu classifies the words which are to save him: «few», «fragile», «clear», «small», «stripped». And, returning to our poem here, «simple». The word which saves is that which achieves the difficult quality of essence. I believe that Espriu expressed, in this handful of poems, a fairly meaningful

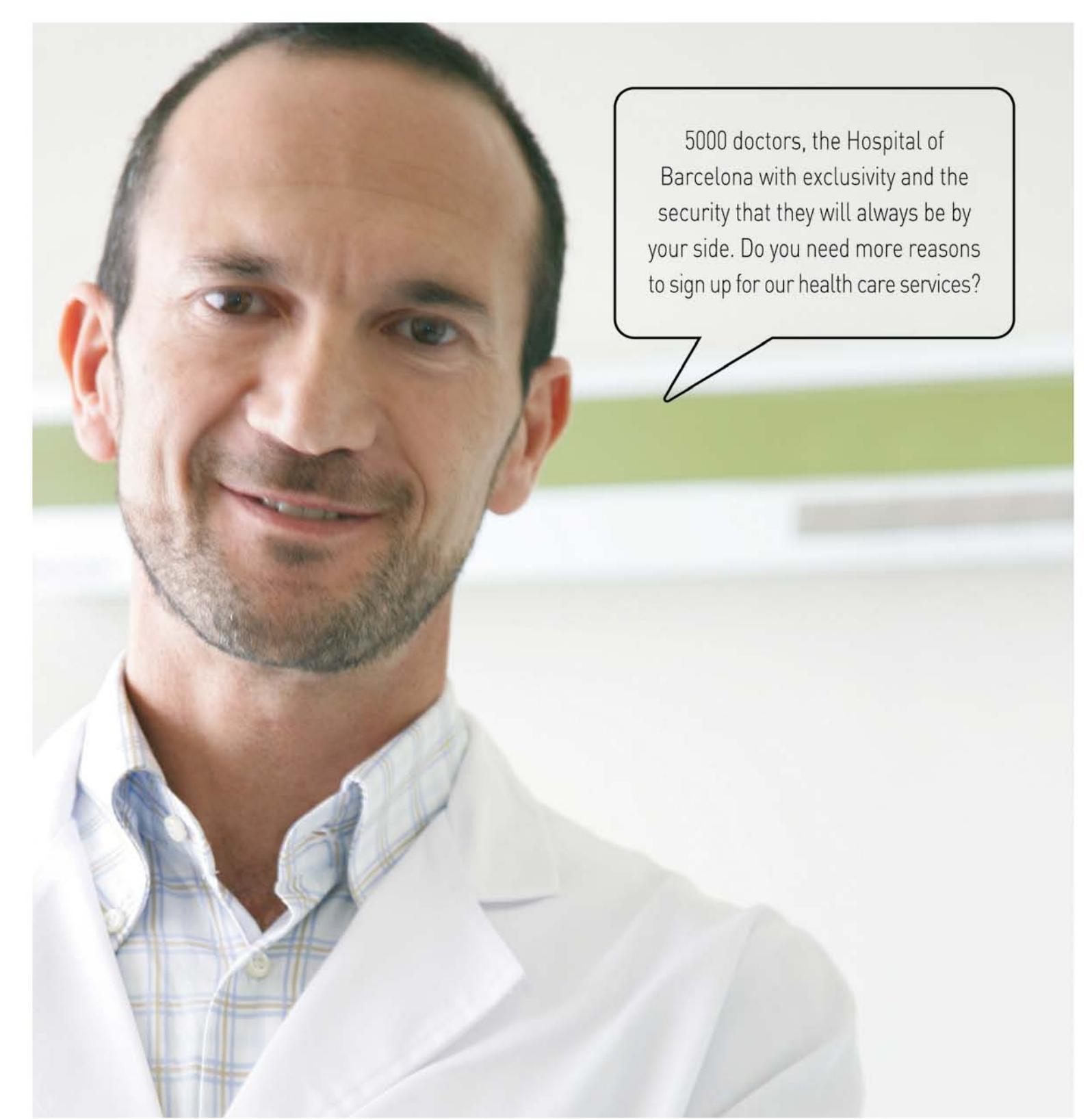
aspect of his philosophy of poetry. Salvador Espriu, a poet at times hermetic and baroque, a poet who often has recourse to difficult and bookish references, felt that the poetry which justifies an existence, which in some way offers redemption from death, is that which achieves the clarity of what is most essential. «With an elemental cry, without artifice» he says in the poem «Such simple things will not please you» (*The walker and the wall*). A philosophy that, if I may be permitted a personal opinion, we can find in his lines which, at their peaks, however difficult they may be, shine with rare transparency. And in those of Rosselló-Pòrcel, who also attempted a range of literary essays, and who was never as fine a poet as in the lucidity of «In Majorca during the Civil War».

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Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena 10 3ª | 28027 Madrid | Tel: 91 595 75 52
fundacionespriu@fundacionespriu.coop | www.fundacionespriu.coop