

Mont
serra



mil anys d'art
i d'història

ENGLISH

Located in a mountain of impressive relief and spectacular shapes, the monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat has lived a long history which has led it to grow as a popular sanctuary, to develop as a very relevant cultural focus, to overcome almost total destruction and to become a point of reference for the country.

Through all these circumstances, it has never ceased to be a community of faith that has faithfully persevered under the rule of Saint Benedict for a thousand years.

The works of art preserved in the monastery take it upon themselves to tell with their testimony this millennial history.

Terribilis est locus iste Before the monastery

The monastery of Montserrat was founded on a mountain that dates back well over one thousand years. Its geology has always amazed those who have lived near it and who have often seen there, just like in other extraordinary natural places, a manifestation of the divine. As in the Thebaid of the ancient Christian monks of Egypt, the stunning relief of Montserrat, along with how difficult it was to access, made it the perfect place for spiritual retreats: different churches have already been documented before the foundation of the monastery of Santa Maria.

– 01

The Montserrat massif rises to 1,236 meters at the top of Sant Jeroni. Until 23 million years ago, it was a valley where sediments from neighbouring mountains accumulated, which compacted to form a pink rock filled with pebbles called conglomerate. Later, changes in the relief and erosion determined its characteristic forms, where still today a varied fauna and flora with some native plants, such as the queen's crown and the bear's ear.

– 02

The orographic and aesthetic power of the Montserrat mountain has fascinated people from all walks of life down through the centuries, from the first hermits and monks to the artists of the 21st century. Many painters have speculated in different ways about its whimsical shapes and the effects produced by the light throughout the day, filtered by atmospheric agents. One of those who got the most out of it was Joaquim Mir, on the other hand, a very characteristic author from the collection of the Museum of Montserrat.

– 03

Among its assets, the monastery of Ripoll, founded in 879 by Wilfred the Hairy, counted the churches located “in the place they call Mont Serrat”, then on the border with the emirate of Córdoba. In 933, the existence of the hermitages of Sant Iscle (preserved with alterations) and Santa Maria was recorded on top of the mountain, which after a century became the seat of a new monastery. It is not impossible that they were heirs of old hermitages already existing in Visigothic times.

– 04

The legend of Fra Garí, the first versions of which date back to the 13th century, is the local adaptation of an old Syriac story that tells the cliché of man turned into an animal for his sins and finally redeemed by God. Wanting to place the events in the time of Wilfred the Hairy (9th century), this pious legend conveys, however, a source of truth: hermitism (and, therefore, monasticism) is a founding fact of Montserrat.

– 05

The church of Santa Cecília de Montserrat was perhaps originally another of the old hermitages on the mountain. The ambitious abbot Cesari, who sought to become archbishop of Tarragona, founded a monastery there in 945 with the help of the counts of Barcelona and the permission of the bishop of Vic: this inscription on stone commemorates it. Santa Cecília appropriated the churches on the southern side of the mountain until the monastery of Ripoll claimed and recovered them in 1022.

Hæc domus est sancta The foundation

A thousand years ago, under the rule of the abbot and bishop Oliba, a small monastic community was built in the hermitage of Santa Maria de Montserrat, dependent

on the monastery of Ripoll. Shortly after, construction got underway on a new Romanesque church where the monks could celebrate mass and sing the Divine Office. This was the dawn of a history destined to last more than a millennium.

_ 06

Saint Benedict of Nursia is considered the father of Western monasticism. Around 540, he drew up a rule for the day-to-day lives of monks that involved working, reading the Bible and praying the Divine Office, which around the year 800, the Carolingian sovereigns extended to all the monasteries of the Frankish Empire. The Rule of Saint Benedict, therefore, was also the reference text for the monasteries of the Hispanic March, such as that of Ripoll and its dependent houses, including that of Montserrat.

_ 07

Oliba (971-1046), the third son of the count of Cerdanya-Besalú, ruled Berguedà and Ripollès before becoming a monk of Ripoll (1003). Five years later, he was elected abbot of that monastery and that of Cuixà and, in 1018, he was ordained bishop of Osona. He was one of the most important figures of his time in the Catalan counties in religious, cultural and political terms. As abbot of Ripoll, in 1022 he claimed the churches of Montserrat in Santa Cecília before the counts of Barcelona, who gave him the right.

_ 08

The figure of Oliba was recovered by writers and historians between the 19th and 20th centuries, projecting to the 11th century the Catalan identity as it was understood in their times. From Montserrat, P. Anselm M. Albareda contributed with a monumental biography published in 1931. It is natural that since then it has been necessary to represent Oliba, usually with the aspect of a 20th century abbot. The numerous contemporary images, the work of different renowned artists, bear witness to this.

After winning the lawsuit against Santa Cecília, Oliba secured possession of the southern side of the mountain by founding a small monastic cell in the church of Santa Maria. In 1025 (and perhaps even the year before) some monks were already known to have lived there, no doubt coming from Ripoll. Ramon de Capmany evoked their arrival in this fresh drawing, which contrasts the imagined simplicity of that foundation with the great significance of Montserrat in the 20th century.

_ 09

A document dating back to 1036 reveals that a new church was being built in Montserrat. It is known that it had a single nave, and it can be imagined with the typical features of the first Romanesque architecture in Catalonia. There is no record of when it was consecrated, but it is certain that some relics were then placed inside its altar, similar to the ones in these lipsanotiques of Santa Maria de Banyeres del Penedès, where Ripoll founded another priory at the end of the 12th century.

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The Divine Office is the centre of monastic life: a donation from 1027 says that masses were already held in the fledgling monastery. The founding monks had to bring the necessary liturgical books from Ripoll; later others arrived, such as the antiphoner and officer that the cleric Amat gave when he became a monk in 1082. None of them have survived, but this Andorran sacramentary dating back to around 1150, preserved in Montserrat, one of the oldest in Catalonia, gives an idea of what they must have been like.

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The mountain of Montserrat was a strategic place even after its repopulation had been ensured because the borders of the counties and bishoprics of Osona and Barcelona converged there. In fact, the hermitage of Sant Miquel, clearly visible from the monastery and the last stop on the road leading up to it from the south, belonged to the bishopric and county of

Barcelona and was the property of its viscounts. Ripoll acquired it in 1093 to protect, consolidate and increase the domains of the cell of Santa Maria.

Stella splendens in monte

The growth of the sanctuary

From the end of the twelfth century, miracles of the Virgin Mary started to be recorded in the small monastery of Santa Maria. The news of these prodigies spread immediately and greatly increased the popularity of the place and the image: in the 13th century, King Alfonso X of Castile dedicated one of his *Cantigas* to it. Pilgrims from all walks of life flocked to it in droves. The status of a Marian sanctuary, then, was also from the first centuries one of the fundamental features of Montserrat, as it still is today.

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Despite the medieval legend about a miraculous find in the 9th century, the Holy Image is actually one of the best Catalan Romanesque carvings, perhaps derived from the one in Ripoll. The face, originally clear, was darkened by the alteration of pigments and the smoke of the lamps until, at a certain moment, it was believed that it had always been black. The child and the hands are restored.

– 13 and 14

Around 1170, a sculpted portal was added to the church (now relocated to the atrium of the basilica), the work of a workshop with links to the

ancient Romanesque cloister of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. This image of Mary and the Child surely presided over the tympanum; in a capital the scene of Original Sin is recognised and, at the beginning of an archivolt, the Annunciation and the Visitation, so that the whole must have presented Mary as the new Eve.

– 15 and 16

Molts fidels compartien el desig de romandre sempre a prop de la Moreneta i gaudir de la seva protecció, ni que fos espiritualment des de casa estant. El 1223 s'erigia oficialment la Confraria de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat, destinada a institucionalitzar aquesta voluntat; la primera inscrita fou la reina Elionor, esposa de Jaume I. Els sobirans de la Corona d'Aragó i, més tard, els reis d'Espanya en van ser membres; molts tingueren a les mans un ciri de Montserrat en el seu llit de mort.

– 17

The many pilgrims who went up to Montserrat to implore favours from La Moreneta or to thank her spent the night in the church or in the atrium, often singing and dancing. The *Llibre Vermell* (Red Book, due to its binding), miraculously preserved over the centuries, was written at the end of the 14th century as a guide for the monks who welcomed them. As well as beautiful miniatures, it contains, among other things, a chronicle of miracles, a treatise on confession and ten songs in Latin, Occitan and Catalan, of which only two are collected in other sources.

– 18

The altar of the Romanesque church where La Moreneta was venerated was soon filled with votive offerings. Oil lamps, documented since the end of the twelfth century, illuminated the space and also made the donors symbolically present, just like candles of a certain weight or, as was customary at the time, of the height of the person. To set the scene for Peter the Great's visit to Montserrat to ask for help from La Moreneta in the war against France (1285), Oleguer Junyent was inspired by the interior of Santa Cecília and painted a sanctuary crowded with offerings and lights.

Pastores dabo vobis From the great priors to the first abbots

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the priors of Montserrat worked to consolidate the monastery's possessions and improve its facilities, in correspondence with the growing fame of the sanctuary. This prosperity gave rise to a long process to obtain the status of a self-standing abbey, independent from that of Ripoll.

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Montserrat had many illustrious priors, such as Bernat Salvador (1284-1299), who started the emancipation movement of Ripoll, or Cardinal Joan d'Aragó (1328-1334), who protected the monastery, but did not live there. His successor, Ramon de Vilaragut (1334-1348), built a luxurious priory residence in Monistrol, founded a chapel at the base of the church bell tower and had spacious porches built in front of it to shelter the pilgrims, later called Cloister of the Lizards (llangardaixos) because of the crocodiles offered as exvotos that could be seen there.

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The notoriety of Montserrat and the devotion it aroused made it even more valuable: Queen Mary of Cyprus (1315-1322) gave a silver image of Mary, made by Duccio of Siena; the cardinal and prior Joan of Aragon, circa 1330, relics of Saint Ursula and her companions; Queen Elionor of Sicily (1349-1375), a chalice with gold paten and enamels; King Joan I and his son Martí, a silver altarpiece. There is nothing left; this silver chalice from Sant Pere de les Puel·les gives an idea.

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The influx of pilgrims and the numerous secondary altars that had been founded forced to expand the church: from 1327 two side aisles and

a choir raised at the feet were added, and from 1339, a new bell tower. The rooms where, at times, the sovereigns resided were also renovated: Queen Elionor of Sicily (1349-1375), wife of Pere III, spent long periods in Montserrat, and her son Joan I (1387-1396) had fireplaces built.

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In 1409, Pope Benedict XIII, to win the support of the community during the Great Western Schism, erected Montserrat as an independent abbey. Among its first five abbots was Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, future Pope Julius II, the only one who never set foot in the monastery because he lived mainly in Italy. However, he favoured Montserrat with the construction of a new Gothic cloister, contracted in 1476 and added to the north side of the porticos of prior Vilaragut, of which two wings are preserved.

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The devotion to Montserrat continued under the Trastámara royal dynasty, also in the collateral branches of the family. Hipolita Sforza, wife of Alfonso II of Naples, grandson of Alfonso the Magnanimous, left this luxurious book of hours in Montserrat, which she had acquired in France. It is the work of Jean Bourdichon, one of the best miniaturists of the time, and one of the few manuscripts from the old library of Montserrat that has managed to survive.

Alius te cinget Under the sign of Valladolid

In the 15th century in Montserrat, just like in other monasteries, political interference and poor income management did not create a good framework for spiritual life. It was thought to correct these problems by having monks from

reformed monasteries come to live there, but in the end the abbey was completely subordinated to that of Saint Benedict of Valladolid. This split the community for three centuries, although at the same time it brought important figures such as García de Cisneros, who renewed its spirituality.

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Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon and Sicily and husband of Isabel, Queen of Castile, shared with Abbot Joan de Peralta (1483-1493) the desire to rebuild and reform Montserrat. However, despite the initial ideas of bringing monks from Montecassino, Saint Justina of Padua or Saint Benedict of Valladolid, the king opted for full submission to the latter abbey, which required it to implement the reform. The arrival of the Castilians, with stricter observance and who did not know the language of the country, made the locals, opposed to subjugation, leave the monastery.

The reformed Benedictine congregation of Saint Benedict of Valladolid was characterised by a more austere monastic life, by the perpetual cloister with strict separation from the laity and by the abolition of the office of abbot in favour of priors chosen for three years. Montserrat immediately obtained the restoration of the abbot's office, but with a three-year election. In artistic representations, the image of the reformed Castilian monk is usually characterised by a particular shape of the hood of the habit, wide and with the tips falling over the chest.

_ 25 and 26

García Jiménez de Cisneros, first abbot of Montserrat under the Vallisoletan regiment (1493-1510) and cousin of the cardinal, inquisitor and regent of Castile Francisco de Cisneros, knew how to adapt the rigour of the reform to Montserrat's own character, with so much success that even revived the spirituality

of the monks. His *Exercitatory of the spiritual life* (1500) is a treaty in line with the *devotio moderna* which proposes an internalisation of the religious experience. It was published in the press that Cisneros promoted in Montserrat itself, which makes the monastery one of the oldest publishing sites in Europe. He also improved its facilities.

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Pedro de Burgos, a member of a noble Castilian lineage with a solid academic background, was the third abbot of Montserrat under Valladolid (1512-1536). During the eight three years of his abbotship, as well as expanding the church and reforming other buildings, he promoted the Montserrat printing house, where he published numerous works of liturgical nature, the Constitutions of the congregation of Valladolid and also the first history of the monastery, together with a collection of miracles of La Moreneta (1514).

_ 28

In 1522, Íñigo of Loyola, a Basque soldier who had become lame, made a pilgrimage to Montserrat. He confessed to the monk Joan Chanon, who introduced him to the *Exercitatory* of Cisneros, and held a vigil on the night of March 25 in front of La Moreneta; after some time he would retire to Manresa. Twelve years later he founded the Society of Jesus in Paris, a key institution in the history of the Church and the world. According to tradition, Saint Ignatius left in the monastery his sword, his clothes and a donkey as a sign of a change of life.

_ 29

Montserrat's contacts with the monarchy's entourage favoured the early arrival of Renaissance art. Joan of Aragon, Count of Luna and Viceroy of Naples, had his own sepulchre, carved in that city (1508), sent and installed in Montserrat, just like the nobleman Bernat de Vilamarí (1516). The observation of Italian works like these influenced the style of the sculptor Damià Forment, author of the high altarpiece in Poblet and also of a new one for Montserrat

(1533-1535), sponsored by the empress Isabel, wife of Charles I.

Ædificavit sibi domum The renovation of the monastery

Despite the internal dissensions of the community, during the Early Modern centuries the monastery of Montserrat lived a period of splendour. At the end of the 16th century, the abbot Bartomeu Garriga began the construction of the current church, starting an impulse that was to culminate in the reconstruction of the monastic buildings in the 18th century. Several monks lived there who became famous for their contributions to spirituality, history, science, art or music.

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In the middle of 16th century, the Romanesque church was unable to adequately accommodate the worship of the monks and the influx of pilgrims. On a platform made at the end of 15th century for an old building project, Abbot Bartomeu Garriga began work on a new church in 1560, which was completed in 1592. The new elevated choir to the west, made by the sculptor Cristóbal de Salamanca, who had to set up his workshop in Monistrol, had backrests decorated with images of saints between columns.

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The lack of understanding between Catalan and Castilian monks, of different cultural and political sensibilities, made the division of the community last. The alternate election of abbots from the crowns of Aragon and Castile did not

manage to remedy this; rather the opposite, because some undid what others had done. During the The Reapers' War (1640-1659) and The War of Succession (1710-1714), attempts were made to expel the Castilians, who, when they returned, used to ask the king to abolish the few prerogatives that the Catalans still possessed.

– 32 and 33

Despite the difficulties and ups and downs, the modern era in Montserrat was a time of intellectual and artistic splendour. The monastery and its dependent houses had a total of around a hundred monks, not to mention chaplains, hermits and students. The venerable Josep de Sant Benet, the archivist and historian Benet Ribas, the naturalists Gerard Joana or Maur Ametller, the musicians Joan Cererols, Anselm Viola, Narcís Casanovas or Antoni Soler and even a renowned painter, Juan Andrés Ricci.

– 34 and 35

The devotion to La Moreneta inside and outside the country brought many votive offerings to the monastery. Only two old ones have been preserved, the only remains of the old treasure of the abbey. The rock crystal one is a gift from Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga of Mantua, known for having protected the poet Tasso, the musician Monteverdi or the painter Rubens. The chalice and cruets were given by Emperor Ferdinand III of Austria as thanks for his victory over the troops of the King of Sweden in 1639.

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For centuries, hermits linked to the community of monks lived in the mountain hermitages. More than 250 are documented between the 11th century and the beginning of the 19th century. They spent their time praying and working in solitude; in the hours of meditation they sometimes performed pious manual work, such as these carved crosses, very characteristic. They disappeared with the destruction of the monastery (1811) and only from the middle of the 20th century were some hermitages occupied again.

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In 1755, under Abbot Benet Argeric, construction on a new residence for the monks got under way –the so-called “mongia”–, which defined the current atrium of the basilica and led to the disappearance of what was left of the old medieval church, except for the portal. The project was completed with new statues for the empty niches on the church façade, commissioned in 1776 and finally installed in 1811, shortly before the sacking and destruction of the monastery.

Consurge hierusalem Destruction and rebirth

The French War caused the destruction of the monastery and attempts to resume community life there were not fully successful until the 19th century. During the second half of the century, under the abbots Miquel Muntadas and Josep Deàs, that new Montserrat gradually became a beacon of the *Renaixença* and Catalan national identity. In the meantime, the church was restored according to the artistic tastes of the time and gradually acquired its current appearance.

_ 38

The revolt against Napoleon's troops in Madrid, on 2 May 1808, marked the beginning of the French War, which would last until 1814. One of its first episodes in Catalonia were the two battles of Bruc (June 1808), where the French were defeated. Later these events, considered a miracle of La Moreneta, gave rise to the myth of the Timbaler or drummer of el Bruc and the capture of a french colour or Eagle, actually a forgery, which for many years could be seen in the monastery.

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The *Junta* of defence against the French invader declared the monastery of Montserrat a place of arms: this made of it a military target and condemned it to destruction. Between July and October 1811 and again in July 1812 French troops looted, burned and demolished the buildings with explosives; they also murdered some monks who had not left. Most of the treasure and archive were lost forever. The scars of this tile panel recovered in the hermitage of Santa Anna, probably originally from the old sacristy of the monastery, are witnesses of that devastation.

_ 40 and 41

After the destruction the monks returned to Montserrat and, despite confiscation laws, they were able to remain there as chaplains custodians of the sanctuary. In 1827, the painting collection of Canon Yglésias arrived, an embryo of the modern museum; this magnificent painting by Antoni Viladomat, from the convent of Sant Agustí in Barcelona, was part of it. Shortly afterwards, between 1829 and 1831, the architect Antoni Cellés restored the church and the upper choir, in a neoclassical style.

_ 42

The Holy Image was profaned but not destroyed by the French troops. In 1822 the Spanish liberal authorities confiscated its jewels and took it to Barcelona. It returned to the monastery two years later, but in 1835, in view of the burning of convents in Barcelona, the community hid the image and left with no prospect of returning. This image remained in the half-ruined monastery, venerated by a lay brother, some scholar and, later, a priest monk. Montserrat's existence was hanging by a thin thread.

_ 43

Civil society collaborated in different ways in the restoration of Montserrat. In 1857, a *Junta de Restauración Artística* was created in Barcelona dedicated to raising funds for the reconstruction of the buildings. La Moreneta came out of her hiding place and returned to public veneration.

According to the custom of the time, the image was complemented with sets of clothing adapted to the shape of the sculpture, such as these from 1862, donated by Queen Isabel II of Spain.

– 44 and 45

With great effort, Abbot Miquel Muntadas (1851-1885) undertook the definitive restoration of Montserrat and managed to convince the authorities to help. In 1844, he occupied the ruined buildings and reopened the school. In 1862, he succeeded in having the monastery join the congregation of Subiaco, a measure that definitively separated it from Valladolid and restored the election of abbots for life. In 1872, Muntadas initiated a comprehensive reform of the church which, broadly speaking, gave it its current appearance.

– 46, 47 and 48

Churchmen such as Jaume Collell, Fèlix Sardà i Salvany and Jacint Verdaguer promoted the identification of Montserrat with Catholic Catalanism. The high point was the millennium celebrations of the legendary discovery of La Moreneta (1880) and her coronation as patron saint of Catalonia (1881), celebrated with the blessing of Pope Leo XIII, who granted the title of basilica to the abbey church. The crown and sceptre that were then imposed on the Holy Image were paid for by popular subscription. With the same ideals, in 1899 Josep Torras i Bages founded the Spiritual League of Our Lady of Montserrat.

– 49

In the reform of the Our Lady Chapel in the church east end (1872-1887), entrusted by Abbot Muntadas to the architects Francesc de Paula Villar Lozano and Francesc de Paula Villar Carmona, father and son, a young Antoni Gaudí also took part, responsible for many decorative details of this exuberant space. The result is a good example of the historicist and eclectic taste of the time, which here mixes neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic features reminiscent of the medieval past. A similar style determined the works of the whole abbey church.

– 50 and 51

Abbot Josep Deàs (1885-1913), butler during the abbey of Muntadas, made an effort to reduce the costs of the restoration of the church and to obtain patronage to help cover the cost, well and often against the criteria of the Villar architects. He unsuccessfully opposed the construction of the zip train line reaching Montserrat, which was then understood as a factor of mundanisation of the monastery and sanctuary. He also travelled to the Philippines with a view to founding a dependent monastery.

– 52

This panel with the image of La Moreneta, still in traditional clothes, adapts to the aesthetics of Art Nouveau, known in Spain as Modernism, a style that flourished in Montserrat under the influence of the *Renaixença* or renaissance of the Catalan culture. It also predominates in the Monumental Rosary that follows the path to the Santa Cova, built between 1896 and 1916 at the instigation of canon Jaume Collell and paid by popular subscription. Its fifteen mysteries are the work of some of the most relevant Catalan architects and sculptors of the moment, such as Antoni Gaudí, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, Josep Llimona and the Vallmitjana brothers.

Stat crux dum volvitur orbis Longings and concerns

Thanks to the fruits of an already consolidated restoration, Montserrat made decisive contributions to the cultural flourishing of Catalonia in the first third of the 20th century, especially in its Christian dimension. However, the civil war crushed it traumatically, in the

first place with the murder of over twenty monks. Despite this and the oppressive post-war climate, the rapid resumption of intense spiritual, artistic and cultural activity in Catalan immediately made Montserrat again a point of reference for the country.

_ 53 and 54

Antoni M. Marcet (1878-1946), elected abbot coadjutor of Deàs in 1912, continued the work of his predecessors: he commissioned Puig i Cadafalch to renovate the library (1917), the cloister and the refectory (1925) and the squares (1926-1930), in addition to a façade project that was not executed (1919). Aligned with the theses of Bishop Torras i Bages and close to the Catalan party Lliga Regionalista, he extended the use of Catalan to all possible areas of the life and action of the monastery, leading to tensions during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1926). His last years were marked by the civil war, in which twenty-three monks died, and by being obliged to side with the victorious regime.

_ 55, 56, 57 and 58

During the abbotship of Marcet and with the efforts of many monks, Montserrat made great strides in Christian culture in Catalan. Bonaventura Ubach (1879-1960), biblical scholar in Jerusalem and Rome, undertook an ambitious translation of the Bible, accompanied by archaeological and ethnological materials that made the Museum grow. Gregori M. Sunyol (1879-1946), director of music in Milan and Rome, introduced Gregorian chant reformed by the Solesmes monks and organised the 1st Liturgical Congress of Montserrat (1915), which introduced the Liturgical Movement to Catalonia. Anselm M. Albareda (1892-1966), historian and archivist, cardinal and prefect of the Vatican Library, promoted the recovery of the Montserrat printing house (1918) and wrote a history of Montserrat still valid and the first modern biography of Abbot Oliba (1931).

_ 59 and 60

At the outset of the civil war, Montserrat was protected by the Catalan government. Later, figures such as Manuel Azaña and Lluís Companys took refuge there and in 1938 the republican Parliament even met there. Now without the monks, a military hospital was installed there and the printing press was used by the *Ediciones Literarias del Ejército del Este*, which published works by César Vallejo or Pablo Neruda intended to train the fighters and give them encouragement.

_ 61

During the war, although the community dispersed, twenty-three monks died. Twenty-one were killed because of their status as Christian monks: they are, properly speaking, the “martyrs of Montserrat”. Two more died serving as priests in the revolted army, sent by Marcet. In their memory, in 1944 this sculpture of the Good Shepherd was commissioned to the sculptor Manolo Hugué.

_ 62

The idea to dignify La Moreneta’s chapel with a new silver throne arose in 1944, following the centenary of the restoration of the monastery, but the festivities for the solemn enthronement of the image did not take place until 1947. Proposed as a sign of national reconciliation with Montserrat as a center, they were the first major post-war public event where the Catalan language was used, which led to great tensions with Franco’s regime. The widespread popular support, moreover, renewed the old custom of offering votive lamps, including that of Barcelona Football Club (the Barça), given that same year.

_ 63 and 64

Aureli M. Escarré (1908-1968), one of the first monks who returned to Montserrat in 1939 in order to guarantee the continuity of the monastery, was elected coadjutor of Abbot Marcet in 1941. He based his government on Benedictinism, Romanism, Gregorian chant and Thomism; he fostered the training of monks, the liturgy and the arts. Despite an initial

understanding with Franco's regime, he distanced himself from it due to the defence of Catalan culture. This, added to health problems and internal issues of the community, caused the election of Gabriel M. Brasó as coadjutor (1961) and, finally, Escarré's exile in Italy (1965).

– 65 and 66

Abbot Escarré enhanced the monastery with a new sacristy (1941-1945), the vestibule with its accesses (1943-1951) and the construction of the façade and beautification of the atrium (1942-1952). His chief artists were the architect Francesc Folguera, with a rationalist tendency, and the painter Josep Obiols, inspired by early Christian aesthetics. Escarré's taste for the splendour of the liturgy was also embodied in numerous ornaments for worship, highly characteristic of the atmosphere of restoration that prevailed during the post-war period.

– 67, 68, 69 and 70

From the mid-20th century onwards, in a spirit that anticipated the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), liturgical innovations took place in Montserrat, not without controversy. With works beginning in 1957 and the consecration in 1959, the area of the main altar was renovated so that it allowed the celebration facing the assembly. The altar was ornamented with a splendid enamelled frontal. In 1965, already under the government of Abbot Gabriel M. Brasó (1961-1966), the II Liturgical Congress of Montserrat took place, which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first one and received the new liturgical guidelines from Rome.

– 71 and 72

Especially at the end of the Franco regime and consistently with the promotion of Catalan culture, Montserrat was also a place of protection for political Catalanism. An event of great significance, in December 1970, was the voluntary confinement in the monastery of 300 Catalan intellectuals and artists, sitting in protest against the death sentences handed down by a court martial in Burgos. Despite the threat of police assault, the event lasted for three days

thanks to the protection of Abbot Cassià M. Just (Barcelona, 1926 - Montserrat, 2008), who governed the monastery in the years of transition and democratic consolidation (1966- 1989).

Mille anni tanquam dies quæ præterit Towards the second millennium

During the last half century, in the midst of a changing world, Montserrat has remained faithful to its character as a meeting place for people from Catalonia and everywhere, from the most notable figures to pilgrims from all walks of life. The relevant cultural role of the Publications, the Museum and the Escolania, the restoration of the church and the organ, the facilities for receiving an always increasing number of visitors and the Fundació Abadia de Montserrat 2025 are some of the ways by which the monastery and sanctuary perseveres at the service of everyone, about to start the second millennium of its history.

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Thanks to the action of many members of its monastic community, over the last fifty years Montserrat has continued to be a cultural beacon of the first order, focused on Christian culture. Many of these contributions and other relevant ones from outside the monastery have been disseminated by the Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, directed by the monk P. Josep Massot between 1971 and 2022. It is one

of the oldest publishing houses in the world, as it has its roots in the printing press installed in the monastery by Abbot Cisneros in 1499; among others, it has been publishing the cultural magazine *Serra d'Or* since 1955.

_ 74 and 75

As in its first centuries, Montserrat continues to attract from international celebrities to the modest person who comes on an excursion or for a votive offering. Among the first can be mentioned the communist leader Dolores Ibárruri, called the *Pasionaria*, Pope John Paul II, who visited the sanctuary in 1982 in the middle of a terrible storm, the Dalai Lama and, more recently, Barack Obama and Steven Spielberg. In 2023, more than two million people visited Montserrat.

_ 76, 77, 78 and 79

Montserrat has always been a place of artistic creation and inspiration for the most prestigious visual artists from Catalonia and beyond. The Museum of Montserrat, under the direction of the monk P. Josep de Calassanç Laplana between 1978 and 2022, preserves works of art dedicated or donated by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies and Josep Maria Subirachs. Recently, the Irish painter Sean Scully presented his work with international resonance in the old monastery of Santa Cecilia, revitalised by the Museum as a centre for reflection on art and spirituality.

_ 80 and 81

For 700 years, the Escolania de Montserrat has been a choir at the service of the monastery's liturgical celebrations made up of around fifty children who study in its facilities. Furthermore, today it is an internationally renowned choir that regularly performs all over the world. The prestige of the Escolania is linked to the musical tradition of Montserrat, which dates back to the Middle Ages, and more recently to the task of regenerating liturgical singing in Catalan, carried out at the end of the 20th century by monks such as Ireneu Segarra, Gregori Estrada or Odiló Planàs among others.

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Having overcome the violent fires of 1986 and the terrible downpour of the year 2000, Montserrat has gone to great lengths to celebrate its first millennium with updated facilities. In 1992, during the government of Abbot Sebastià Bardolet (1989-2000) the church was restored, improving its lighting by removing accessory buildings, and the Escolania facilities were renovated (reopened in 2001). Under his successor Abbot Josep M. Soler (2000-2021), the new organ was built (2010) and the squares were remodelled (opened in 2022). Since 1997, the Fundació Abadia de Montserrat 2025, with its sights set on the millennium, strives to maintain and promote the centuries-old values of the monastery and sanctuary of Montserrat and to guarantee the appropriate reception of visitors and pilgrims.

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“A thousand years
to you are like one day;
they are like yesterday,
already gone”

Psalm 90,4

