

The Long View: Sagrada Familia Church in Barcelona, Spain and Maya Angelou

Myrna Lapres
September 13, 2019



Sagrada Familia (Holy Family Church) in Barcelona, Spain

Recently on a bucket-list trip to the Mediterranean, my husband Michael and I had the opportunity to experience the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family Church) in Barcelona, Spain. An icon of the city, the Sagrada Familia boasts bold, wildly creative, organic architecture and décor inside and out and is still a work in progress. In fact, the term gaudy comes from the name of the initial architect -- Antoni Gaudi.

Begun in 1883 under the guidance and direction of Antoni Gaudi, it is an unusual masterpiece that is set to be finished in 2026. Despite his boldly modern architectural vision, Gaudi was a traditional and deeply religious man who designed the Sagrada Familia to be a place of solid Christian values amid what was a humble workers' colony in a fast-changing city.

When he died, only one section of the church -- the Nativity Façade -- had been completed. The rest of the work has been inspired by his vision, but he knew that he wouldn't live to complete it -- thus allowing space for others to bring their own inspiration and faith to the project.

I am reminded how we need this long view in our families. Investing in our children isn't only for today. It is for who they will become, the families they will have, and the grandchildren that will be born and grow up.

We must challenge ourselves to allow the process to unfold, not micromanaging every detail and over stressing about the future. Rather, like Gaudi, let's provide support, guidance, vision, inspiration and trust for our children, youth and young adults as we imagine the way they will impact the future.

In her book "Letter to My Daughter," Maya Angelou writes about her mother's long view. When Ms. Angelou was twenty-two with a young son, two jobs, rented rooms and very little money, she was also fiercely independent and didn't want to accept support from her mother, Ms. Vivian Baxter. Her mother, a successful businesswoman, was supportive and encouraged Maya's self-reliance. Once a month, they did have a standing appointment to have lunch at her mother's lavish home.

On one such occasion, Ms. Baxter spoke the words to Maya Angelou that reached into the future and guided her towards it, "Baby, I've been thinking and now I am sure. You are the greatest woman I've ever met. You are kind and very intelligent and those elements are not always found together. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, and my mother -- yes, you belong in that category. Here, give me a kiss."

I touch the future, I parent!