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# Milan Cathedral: Interior And Exterior

## Introduction

Duomo di Milano known as Milan Cathedral, is the world's second largest Catholic Cathedral in the world. It is dedicated to Santa Maria Nascente. This building is one of the most famous attraction in Italy. The specialty about this cathedral is its beauty and it is the only building that has the vast amount of statues, over 3400 statues and thousands of individual spires, according to (Mussio, 2014). Including the highest golden statue Madonnina as the main spire. After, the statue of Madonnina installed, the height of the cathedral reached up to 108.5 meters, (Just Fun Facts, 2018). Moreover, this gothic style cathedral can comfortably fit in 40,000 people at a time. Though, there are countless of interesting things about this building, in this writing there will be a research highlight the characteristics and philosophy of exterior and interior of the building.

## Background

In 1387, the construction of Duomo Di Milano began, in Northern Italian city of Milan, which is the center of Milan. This cathedral built slightly as a celebration of new lord, Gian Galeazzo Visconti and he wants to convince people that his authorities are far better than the earlier tyrant Barnabo (WonderMondo, 2012). Therefore, he wanted to build an incredible cathedral that would amazed people by the glory of god and the power of the city. At the time, the new trend of European architecture and art was the greater heights, thus his aspiration was to follow gothic style. Overall, it took thousands of workers, a new canal system and nearly six centuries to fully complete it. When Visconti died in 1402, the construction was halfway build but it has been stopped due to lack of finance and ideas. Then in 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte helped financially to build and flying buttresses, spires and roofs were then added (Study.com, 2013-2018). Due to the bombing in the city, in 1943 impaired the church and had to renovate. The cathedral was finally completed in 1965.

## Analysis

The following chapter is about analyzing the two elements stated in chapter 1. The first point is the characteristics and philosophical thinking of exterior and interior of the building.

### Characteristics and Philosophy of Exterior

The French gothic architecture style is influenced by Milan cathedral. It is easily recognizable of the massive height and straight pointed structure.

Spires are the symbolic of Gothic architecture, especially in churches. The spires in Milan cathedral is filled with statues and monumental elements. The marble spires are made of stones and highly decorated by niches and carvings. The reason why the spires are built in churches is because it derives a spiritual meaning of the heights as its beautiful manifestation is embracing towards to heaven. The exterior wall is built by bricks and covered with pink-hued white marble

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which symbolizes innocence and purity. Also the ritual color for Christmas and Easter is white, thus it gives a clue of Christianity. Furthermore, by the magnificent designs of the gothic style cathedrals have a sense of encouragement of attempting to heaven (Gregory, n.d.).

As there are many spires and pinnacles on the roof of Milan Cathedral, these are supported by various flying buttresses. The use of this buttresses are to prevent from collapsing the weighty fancy walls that have large windows (Gregory, n.d.). The lengthy vertical buttresses that is coming downwards, look like bridges or aisles. At the time, architects were highly competitive about the heights of the buildings, which led them realized the buttresses that has been used on the inside will be even effective for the extensive structure, as stated in (Ignoring Friction, 2008). Thus, buttresses are quite common in those Gothic days, specially, in cathedrals and churches. Besides, buttresses are one of the reasons why the buildings can build up taller and allows natural light from the huge windows. As well as, it carries the weight of the roofs without walls (Designing buildings, 2018).

## **Characteristics and Philosophy of Interior**

The Latin cross shaped structure, which covers 12,000 square meters and has considerable length of 157 meters (WikiArquitectura, n.d.). In Gothic era, the masons have authorized to build massive buildings and floor plans that are highly sophisticated as stated in (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Which are the reasons why gothic architectures usually looks different and complicated on building plans and structures, than the other periods. Milan Cathedral have five naves, including the two sideways on each sides and the central nave. The transepts are horizontally in line with the crossing and followed by the choir and apse.

The three extensive stained glass windows in the apse is well chosen as the most supreme windows in the world (WikiArquitectura, n.d.). Milan Cathedral interior space has dim light, which is natural light prevailing from the stained glass windows. It is highly believed that the natural lights in churches is to meet or to get closer to God. Each window depicts a different story of the history linked to the architect who created the drawings. These figures and natural element drawings with vibrant colors are to give a spiritual and mystic feeling. Also, including the rose windows filled with depicts with various colors and linearity structures are considered to deliver a physical portrayal of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Gregory, n.d.).

The interior has more than 52 pillars which is mostly to avoid from collapsing or to make the structure strong, (Wondermondo, 2012). The ribbed vaults are laid upon these marble pillars and hanged pictures showing the different religious scenes. The height of the pillars reached 24.50 meters long.

In addition, the walls, pillars and statues are constructed with Candoglia marble, which was made entirely to build the cathedral (International Patrons of Duomo Di Milano, 2014). It is chemical free and the one quarried in Candoglia is white, pink, grey and green. Therefore it has a considerable impact on the property and the structure. Moreover, the floor is decorated Candoglia marble. The marble floor is decorated with flowers and some geometric shapes painted with dark colors. For instance, black, red and white, which makes the interior darker. The possible reason why they use darker color is the gothic fashionable style even represents black as their main color and most of gothic architectures are quite dim compared to other styles.

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## Conclusion

Throughout this research of Milan Cathedral it demonstrated how the characteristics and style of the building is related at the time and the ideology behind it. It is firmly believed that Milan Cathedral have its own intrinsic value and gain respect from all around the world, even now and then. Mostly, because of the substantial monumental structure and for the majestic decorations of in and out leads to caught people's attention towards the building. Based on the information highlighted in this article, it is clearly evident that this building should be preserved for this generation and the forthcoming generations, as it world's second largest Catholic Church and a wonderful masterpiece of historical design that has immense values.

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