

CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We were asked to design a Church for a poor community in a peripheral neighborhood of Santiago. Being new to this kind of challenge, the first question that arises is: how do you think a Church? How do you project this? A great coincidence brought a young theologian to our office, she wanted us to design her house. She told us:

“The church is the shape of the community.”

This community is joyful, generous and hard working. They want a circular space, where the altar is closer to the people, with wide aisles to meet and chat, they don't want it to look like a little house, but to actually have the appearance of a temple.

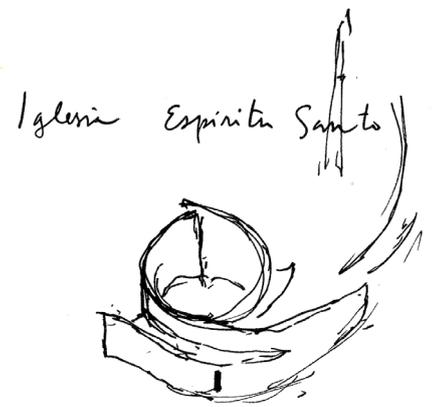
The architectonic gesture that shapes the church, seeks to drive us, wrap us and connect us with the divine.

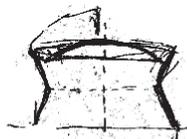
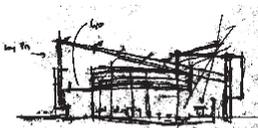
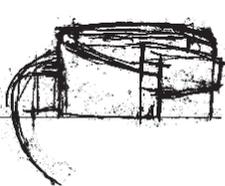
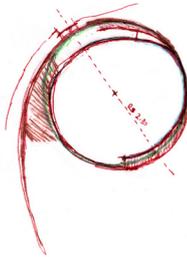
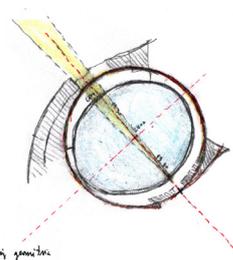
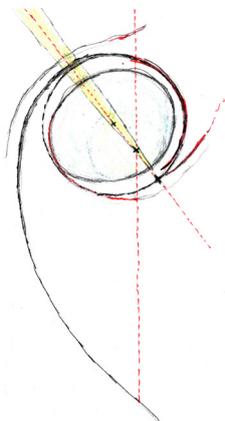
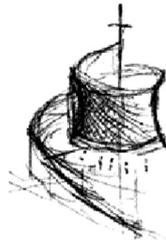
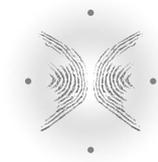
The shape is generated by a single ascending wall that wraps on itself without closing completely, but opening

towards the light, as Father God's hands lovingly welcoming his community.

Two voids are created: the inside void for prayer, and the open void at the atrium, where meetings happen. This voids are connected by a path that starts at the base of the bell tower, and continues towards the highest point of the church. Here, these different magnitudes flow and converse.

The atrium has the geographic magnitude of the Andean landscape, and also carries a divine magnitude. It makes a vertical dimension appear from the urban space, within the context of a short buildings area. At the same time, the bell tower turns into a milestone of the neighborhood, easily noticed from afar. The assembly, interior void where the rite of Mass happens, is a serene, silent and centered space.

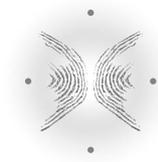




Both spaces flow with the centrifugal force that comes from the path, whose tension unfolds the length of the perimeter, allowing a density of space that lets the different aspects of the catholic rite to happen adequately.

This work was developed from a unique gesture that ascends and unveils itself, to space all the parts of the program. This is the same gesture that was researched years ago at the Calla house, a different scale of a project, where the gesture comes from the soil to the sky to connect with the divine. Opposite to what happens in the house, in the chapel the gesture is ascending, it revolves around itself to open towards the light, with a central roof window that is a symbol of the light of Christ.

The walls come together until a small expansion that lets the light come in, like the hands of God welcoming the community.



The carpentry work, in this case, relates to the negative / positive concept, its the molding that shapes concrete the one that needs a high level of technical knowledge, in order to achieve the continuous curves required by the design, without changing the true nature of the shapes, given that the finishing material is the concrete itself.

An important detail is the latticework on the ceilings, and the laminated wood beams that define the central roof window, and at the same time, give the roof its ascending shape, highlighting the centrality of the altar.

The lattice have a fundamental acoustic function, specially for a space like this, with religious character. Here we shouldn't have sound reverberation, even though the concrete and the shape of the chapel would make it so that it would reverb inside. The acoustics were achieved with this simple lattice system, giving the space with an efficient acoustic comfort.

