

Holiday with a religious connection:
The monasteries, retreats, churches and sacred places of northern
Mallorca
Part 2: The Sanctuary of Lluc



Part of the Rosary Way at the Sanctuary of Lluc.

The second trip to a place of religious significance on our holiday to Mallorca was to the former monastery at Lluc. The sanctuary was founded in the 13th century - the legend goes that an Arab shepherd boy, newly converted to Christianity, discovered a dark wooden statue of the Virgin in a cleft in the rock. The image was placed in the local church. But three times it returned miraculously to its cave, whereupon the villagers recognized a message from God and built a chapel to house it.

Lluc is considered to be the most important pilgrimage site on Majorca. It is also known for its boys' choir, Els Blauets (a name derived from the blue cassocks worn by the boys), which was founded in 1531; the choir holds regular concerts and has gained international fame. A boarding school and numerous tourist-orientated facilities are to be found in the town. Today, the cells of former monks are hired to visitors.



A monument on the approach to the former monastery.



Els Blauets – the famous boys' choir at Lluc.

To begin our visit, we strolled the "Way of the Mysteries of the Rosary" which winds up a hill behind the complex. Five imposing 'stelae' with bronze friezes culminate in a stark cross brought from Jerusalem in 1910.



Steps leading up the 'Way of the Mysteries of the Rosary' at Lluc.



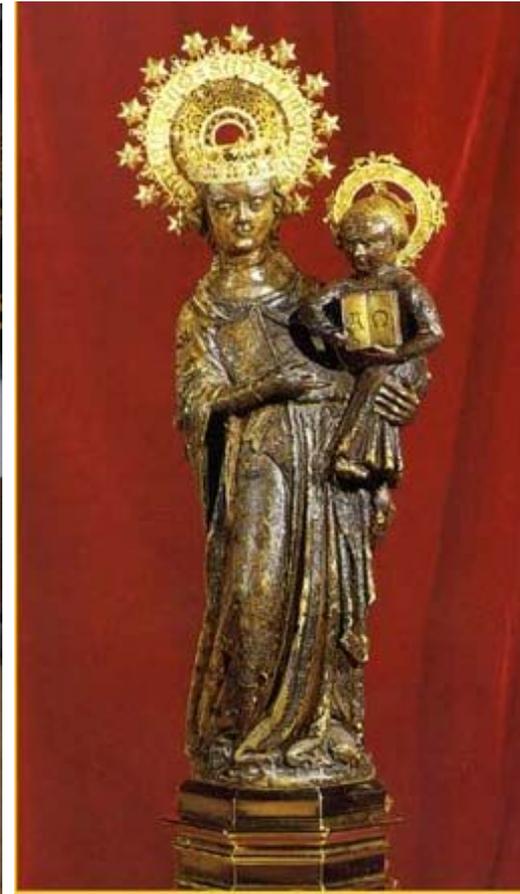
A series of 'stelae' – monuments with relief sculptures – punctuate the Way of the Rosary, depicting scenes from Christ's Passion. Five stone monuments with three bronze reliefs represent the mysteries of the Rosary (joy, pain and glory). These are works of art by the architects Joan Rubió and Guillem Reynés and the sculptor Josep Llimona, overseen by Antoni Gaudí.

The monastery complex includes Els Porxerets, the former pilgrims' quarters with stabling beneath the rooms. You can stay at Lluç, but it is more like a hotel than a hermitage – the 100 'cells' have en suite bathrooms and there are several restaurants and bars.



Rooms can be rented at the Sanctuary of Lluç.

The sanctuary at Lluç is part of the Diocese of Mallorca and since 1891 has been run by the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts, founded by Fr Joaquin Rosselló i Ferrà. With the aid of the religious community and lay brothers, the Prior oversees the administration, pastoral work and the choir school.



The Chapel of the Mother of God. Right: The Morenata 'The Dear Dark One'.

The chapel of the Mother of God is accessed via a doorway in the main church at Lluç, where the transept crosses the nave. The image of the Morenata, which is made of painted local sandstone and dates from the 13th - 14th century, was crowned by Bishop Mateu Jaume in the name of Pope Leon XIII on 10th August 1884.



Interior of the church at Lluç.

The current church, built in the Renaissance style, was begun in 1622 and finished in 1691. The floor is laid out as a Latin cross with one central nave, and 3 chapels on each side, a barrel vault and a dome at the centre of the cross.



The dome in the church at Lluc.



The Art Gallery, part of the Museum at Lluç. It displays some large paintings of the Mallorcan coastline.

We concluded our time at Lluç with a visit to the extensive museum, which includes an art gallery. The art collection includes works by Buades, Mayol, Mestre, Ribas, Cerdà, Hubert and Anckerman amongst others. There are also works by non-Mallorcan artists, including the lovely "Sóller Cemetery" by Santiago Russiñol. Almost all the works are from the 19th and early 20th century, although there are some portraits and still lives from the 17th and 18th century.

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First edit

Next - Part 3: Alcudia Old Town.