

Weekly English Practice



21st May 2015

English Coaching Projects

weeklyenglishpractice.wordpress.com



Woofs and wifi: Is San Anton the world's coolest church?

Nestled among the trendy cafes and shops of Madrid's Chueca neighbourhood is a church like no other, where you can browse the internet, confess via your iPad and bring along your pet poodle. Is San Anton the coolest church in the world?

nestle (v): *be situated in a half-hidden or sheltered position*

roll out (phrasal verb): *the introduction of a new product, service, or policy to the public*

strike (v): *to make an impression on the mind, senses, etc., as something seen or heard*

beam (v): *to smile radiantly or happily*

parishioner (n): *one of the community or inhabitants of a parish*

parish (n): *an ecclesiastical district having its own church and member of the clergy*

ventures (n): *a business enterprise or speculation in which something is risked in the hope of profit; a commercial or other speculation*

San Anton is a 21st century church, excitedly embracing modern technology to make itself as welcoming as possible, to parishioners both of the human and animal variety.

It has recently **rolled out** a range of new technological measures, including free wifi, live-streams on huge wide screen televisions and a special confession App. Not content with pushing tech boundaries, the church is also unique in welcoming animals, encouraging visitors to bring their four-legged friends along to mass.

The first thing that **strikes** you on entering the Catholic church are the signs proclaiming "free wifi", more at home in one of the barrio's coffee shops than in a place of worship.

One of the church's tech highlights is an iPad app to help the deaf and hard of hearing go to confession. People can type out their confession and receive a typed answer from the priest, eliminating any embarrassment that could arise from having to shout.

"The changes are part of a new attitude of openness, of welcoming people," said Brother Marco, a Franciscan monk affiliated with the church. "We want people to feel welcome," he **beamed**. "When you enter most churches you are met with signs telling you not do things: 'silence', 'no pets', for example, whereas here, our signs are much more welcoming," he added.

"We are trying to take a different attitude towards pets; they are more than simply animals, they are one of the family."

Santa Maria Cathedral, in Vitoria-Gasteiz, may not be the coolest church in Spain but it is definitely very cool to visit on a guided tour in English!

Despite embracing modern technology, the church still offers simple comforts alongside its apps and big screens. A little table is set up near the entrance with free tea and coffee, for anyone who would like a warm drink. Visitors are welcome to stay for as long as they like, at any time of day.

And what about the locals; are older Spaniards less inclined to embrace San Anton's more modern outlook? "It's fantastic," said Rosa, a middle-aged **parishioner** using one of the newly installed machines that allows people to make donations, "if the church can help those that are really in need, it's stupendous." Users put five euros in the machines and receive a box telling them they have just donated five kilos of rice to the poor, in yet another of San Anton's new tech **ventures**.

As part of its determination to welcome everyone, San Anton is thinking about offering a mass on a Sunday in English for tourists and residents in Madrid.

Perhaps such measures will help reverse the dramatic loss of faith in the traditionally Roman Catholic nation. [In a recent survey](#) more than half of Spaniards admitted that they were "not religious" with one in five insisting that they were "confirmed atheists".

Now look at the questions on page 2 🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️

Adapted from: <http://www.thelocal.es/20150427/is-this-the-worlds-coolest-church>



“iLook, iThink, iSpeak” Express yourself better!

“Something to chat about”

- What is different about the church in the article?
- What method can parishioners now use for confessions?
- According to the text, are people welcome to bring their pets? Why?
- How do the locals feel about San Anton's new outlook?
- What is motivating about the newly installed donation machines?
- What other ideas does San Anton have for the future and with what purpose in mind?

Ireland will vote this week whether the Constitution should be changed so as to extend civil marriage rights to same-sex couples.

While Spain ranks in top ten for gay rights in Europe, gays are the biggest targets in Spain's hate crimes.

Friday
19TH JUNE
See you there!



You are
INVITED

to our

5TH

Anniversary
PARTY!!

Music, Pintxos, Craft Beer,
Wine, Great Conversation,
Even Better Company and
PRIZES!!

And introducing...



Ideas worth eating pintxos with ;-)

Ask your ECP coach for
more details!



Take me to Church

by Irish solo artist Hozier [Read song lyrics](#)
[Watch the song here](#) [Read about the song here](#)

Big-voiced Irish solo artist Hozier, posted this controversial track in September 2013. The song reached #1 on the Irish iTunes

singles chart and #2 in the official Irish singles chart. Hozier attracted further attention with the song's video, which criticises the repression of gay people in Russia. "The song and video have the same theme," Hozier told Billboard magazine. "Organisations that undermine humanity." Hozier added that the song is not an attack on faith. "It's an assertion of self," he stated. "Reclaiming humanity for something that is the most natural and worthwhile thing. Choosing a love who is worth loving."

Hozier also mentions animals in his lyrics, but what does he mean by the following idioms?

"I'll worship like a dog."

"That's a fine looking high horse."

Find out what these other **dog and horse idioms** mean:

- to be sick as a dog
- to bark up the wrong tree
- to go to the dogs
- to be a dark horse
- to hold your horses
- to look a gift horse in the mouth