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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRED PLACE OF JESUS'
PASSION, DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS



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In the year 2000, the Great Jubilee, Pope Saint John Paul II visited the Holy Land. In the welcome ceremony for this historic visit, he said, "Today it is with profound emotion that I set foot in the land where God chose to 'pitch His tent,' and made it possible for man to encounter Him more directly."

He continued in his address to note his privilege to visit places closely connected with the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, saying "Along every step of the way I am moved by a vivid sense of God who has gone before us and leads us on, who wants us to honor Him in spirit and in truth, to acknowledge the differences between us, but also to recognize in every human being the image and likeness of the one Creator of heaven and earth."

The images in this eBook show some of the sacred sites that St. John Paul II visited during his pilgrimage. May it help you as you walk the footsteps of Christ during the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and may you find that common heart and love of Christ shared among all men and women of faith.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre viewed from the Via Dolorosa.



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**“So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross,
to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.”
– John 19:17**

Lord, as You carried Your Cross on Good Friday, how did You bear the desertion of Your friends? The Apostles were with You for three years – witnessing miracles, hearing the parables, learning about the Kingdom. They saw Lazarus raised from the dead and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. And yet they left You in Your time of need, all except for St. John.

As You faced the pains of Your Passion, they only thought of their own safety. Did that hurt You as much as Your physical pain?

Lord, I am sorry for every time that I have abandoned You as I have fallen into sin. I ask that You help me to never leave You again, to never deny You. Even if I face humiliation, the loss of family, and martyrdom, I ask that You strengthen me with Your grace so that I can always choose You instead of my own comfort, happiness, or safety. Amen.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre viewed from the Via Dolorosa.



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“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.”

– Isaiah 53:4–5

“My Crucified Lord, You suffered and died for me, a sinner. You were scourged. You, Christ the King, had the crown of thorns on Your Head. You were stripped of Your garments, and You had the nails pierce Your Body. This was for the sake of all sinners.

My Lord, Your Love for us is so great. Help me to love You more deeply and to be willing to sacrifice out of love for You.

I know that You did not have to die on the Cross. This was Your choice, a choice that freed us from the chains of death. Whenever I complain, or I am ungrateful, remind me that You died out of love for me. Amen.



The spot where Jesus was crucified.



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“Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.’”

– Luke 2:34–35

Blessed Mother, a sword did pierce through your soul when your precious Son was tortured and crucified. How did you bear this? As you could see the pain that He suffered, did you remember the words of Simeon?

As Jesus was on the Cross, I know that you wanted to take the pain from Him. Just as you cared for Him as a baby – drying His tears when He cried, feeding Him when He was hungry, and getting Him to sleep when He was tired, you wanted to take the pain away from Jesus as He suffered on the Cross.

Our Lady of Sorrows, I ask that you show me how to love your precious Son and enter more deeply into the Mystery of His Passion. Amen.



Part of a mosaic in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



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“Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds’ weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.”

– John 19:38–40

After Your death on the Cross, my Lord, You were prepared for burial. What holy work Joseph of Arimathea did. When You, my Lord, were lying there dead, he carefully prepared You out of love.

Once again, You made Yourself vulnerable. By entering Mary’s womb, You allowed Your mother to carry You. When You were born, all of Your needs were dependent on Mary and Joseph. You are God, and yet allowed others to care for You. How can I serve You today, in imitation of Joseph of Arimathea and the Blessed Mother?

Even though I cannot do the works that they did, I can serve in another way. You said that what we do for the “least of these,” we do for You. So, I ask that You show me how I can serve others without complaint and out of love for You. Amen.



The Stone of Anointing, which marks the spot where Jesus was anointed before His burial.



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“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?’”

– Mark 16:1–3

My Lord, as these women went to the tomb on the first Easter morning, they did not understand that they were going to witness history’s greatest event. Their grief at this moment was profound – their Lord had died. Their hearts could not handle the pain of Your death. But that was not the end of the story, dear Jesus. You rose again, and their tears turned into joy.

In my life, when I face pain and sorrow, help me remember that this is not the end of the story. No matter the problems I face, no matter the state of the world, I should not fear because You rose from the dead. You opened the gates of Heaven for us.

If I ever take Your Resurrection for granted, Lord, remind me that this event is the most glorious in history. You are risen, and nothing is more important. Amen.



Inside the Edicule, you first see the Angels’ Chapel, where Jesus appeared to the three women. The Angels’ Chapel displays a stone that, according to tradition, is a remnant of the stone that was in front of Jesus’ tomb.



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“And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, ‘Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him.’”
– Mark 16:4–6

My Risen Lord, the tomb could not hold You. The deep pain of Your Passion seemed to end in Your death, but then You overcame death.

As You spoke to the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, You opened their eyes to the fact that all of history led to this moment in time. From Adam and Eve to Moses and to the prophets, everything was pointing toward Your birth, death, and Resurrection.

Even though we are all sinners, You made a path for us, a way to enter Your Kingdom. We don't deserve it, but You love us so dearly that You died for us. Now we can be raised again with You in Heaven, and we can proclaim, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). Amen.



Outside the Edicule, which houses the tomb of Christ.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

– John 1:1–5

Lord, You are truly the Light of the World. As the world lives in sin, You are the Light that shows us Truth, Love, and Hope.

Your Resurrection overcame the power of death and darkness, and the Light of Your Resurrection shines throughout the world. Help me to share Your Light with the world. Guide me so that I can be a living witness of Your Love. Show me how to forgive, how to remain courageous, and how to love. Amen.



Light shines on the Edicule.



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“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.’”

– Matthew 16:24–25

My Lord, as You carried the Cross out of love for me, help me to carry my cross for love of You. Sometimes my trials seem like too much to bear, and my resolve seems too weak. I ask that You strengthen me so that I can face the pain in my life.

When I am in physical pain, help me to face it. When I am hurt by my loved ones, help me to show Christian love. When I am treated unfairly, help me to pray for the ones who hurt me. And whenever I say that my cross is too heavy, remind me of Yours.

You understand all of my pain, and You stand beside me through every storm that I face. I am never alone. Thank You for Your love, and help me to love You in return. Amen.



A cross outside of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



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Stations of the Cross from the Holy Land

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The Way of the Cross with St. John Paul II

What Jesus Saw from the Cross

Witnesses to Mystery — Investigations into Christ’s Relics



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