

# GOOD FRIDAY

## Scriptures to Read:

Way of the Cross – Mt 27:1-32; Mk 15:1-21; Lk 23:1-31; Jn 18:28 – 19:17

Calvary – Mt 27:33-56; Mk 15:22-41; Lk 23:32-49; Jn 18:17-37; Isa 52:1 – 53:12

Tomb – Mt 27:57-66; Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:31-42



Street in the Old City of Jerusalem  
along the Via Dolorosa

The chief priests have Jesus brought before Pilate. Unaware that he who is Truth and Life stands before him, and even though he knows Jesus is innocent, Pilate condemns Jesus to death. After being scourged and having a crown of thorns woven upon his head, Jesus carries his cross through the Old City and up the hill of Calvary. Along this Way of Sorrows, the Via Dolorosa, beginning at the Chapel of the Flagellation and ending at the Holy Sepulchre, are marked out the Stations of the Cross. Even though the city has enlarged to incorporate Calvary within its expanded city walls, walking along this Way it is still possible to feel the ascent that Jesus would have made through the city, passing outside the old city gate and up to Calvary. Early in the morning, while the city is still quiet, so as to make our journey more prayerful, we will walk the Via Dolorosa, praying the Way of the Cross as we go, and stopping at each of the stations.

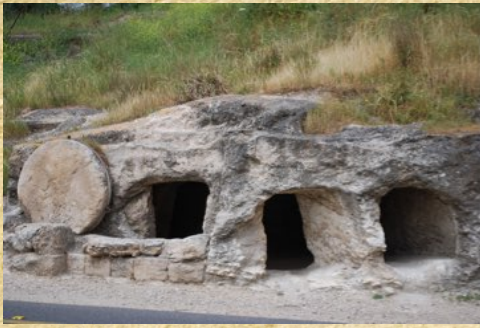


Altar over the site of Calvary

Each Good Friday we recount this Way of Sorrows leading to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that the prophet Isaiah foretold when he wrote: "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. ... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, Yet he opened not his mouth; Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:5,7).

The last steps to the top of Calvary are found just inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Atop Calvary, Jesus is stripped of his garments, nailed to the cross, and the cross is raised and set into the stone. Here Jesus suffers for several hours before giving up his spirit. Here Jesus speaks his last words, asking forgiveness for those crucifying him, giving us his mother, and opening Heaven to the repentant sinner on the cross next to him. While the adornment added by the devotion of Christians throughout the centuries can make it difficult to imagine just how this most holy site appeared at the time of Christ, nothing can lessen the awe of being at

the place where Jesus died for each of us, to open the way for us to eternal life.



Ancient burial tomb unearthed in Galilee

Jesus' body is taken down from the cross with the help of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Because of the approaching Sabbath and Passover, Jesus' body is quickly bound in linen cloth and prepared for burial. Jesus is buried in a tomb nearby Calvary and a stone is rolled in front of the cave. It is to this cave on Easter Sunday, that Mary Magdalene and some women will return, bringing spices to anoint Jesus' body at the first rays of dawn's light. But the tomb they will find empty, and the risen Lord will send Mary Magdalene with the good news of Jesus' Resurrection to Peter and the Apostles.



Entrance to the Tomb of Christ

From very early on this site of Calvary and the empty tomb has been venerated as the location of Jesus' Death and Resurrection. After the Jewish revolt of 132-135AD, the Roman Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the city of Jerusalem, and erected a pagan temple with statues to Venus and Jupiter erected over the sites of Calvary and the Tomb. While Hadrian may have desired to do away with Christian worship at this spot, he in fact marked the site so that 200 years later the Emperor Constantine could order the destruction of the pagan temple and the building of the Christian Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was consecrated in 335AD.

Some thoughts for your reflection and lectio on these passages and events of Scripture:

- “[Jesus] suffered all that he could [on the Cross] - and, being God, how much he could suffer! But he was loving even more than he was suffering ... And, after dying, he consented to let the lance open another wound, so that you and I might find refuge next to his most loving Heart.”

*Reflection of St. Josemaria Escriva on the 12th Station of the Cross*

- When Jesus encounters the disciples on the road to Emmaus, St. Luke tells us that “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Lk 24:25-27) Certainly one of the prophetic passages Jesus would have reminded the disciples of was Isaiah 52 and 53, so that they might better understand his suffering and death. Read Isaiah 52:1 - 53:12 and reflect on Jesus' fulfillment of these words.



Dome of the Holy Sepulchre