



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Contemplating the mystery of our salvation



During Holy Week and Easter time, the central period of our Christian life, let us meditate on the places of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, our Savior.

From the Upper Room to the empty tomb, passing through Gethsemane, to the house of the high priest who condemned Jesus and to Golgotha, let the Holy Spirit be our guide: he wants to reveal to us today the greatness of God's love for us and encourage us in turn to love all those we meet unconditionally.



THE CENACLE

Holy Thursday

On Holy Thursday, in the room that had been carefully prepared to celebrate the Passover, which Jesus had so ardently desired to eat with his disciples, the sacramental anticipation (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* , 3) of Jesus' total donation takes place, the extreme act of Mercy towards mankind.

That day, in that place, and every time we celebrate Holy Mass during which we make remembrance, Jesus offers his body and his blood for us, for each one of us.

While the synoptic gospels recount the institution of the Eucharist, the evangelist John narrates another fundamental event that occurs at the Cenacle: Jesus teaches his disciples that they are called to put themselves at the service of one another, to have mercy on each other. Christians cannot claim a relationship with God without taking an interest in and serving their brothers (*1Jn 4:20*)



GETHSEMANE

Holy Thursday

After the Supper, Jesus and his disciples went to Gethsemane. On his lips and in his heart was the declaration of the eternal mercy of God the Father, who would accompany the Son in all of the mystery of his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Jesus, true God and true man, now needs to go to prayer and entrust everything to the Father.

Those minutes, those hours in the Garden of Olives speak directly to the hearts of all those who are facing a difficult time in their lives. The love of God reached the point of giving us a companion for the journey who has already faced the test, despite being a spotless lamb.

In situations of pain, even when we do not feel it, God could not be closer. We include in our prayers all those who are oppressed and do not see the way out of the suffering they are experiencing. Let us pray that the Lord gives us the strength to believe that His Mercy continues to work even amidst difficulties and suffering.



SAINT PETER IN GALLICANTU

Holy Friday

To be on the path to holiness, as every Christian is, does not mean that one stops being a sinner completely and forever. We always need God's forgiveness, his Mercy that sustains us and helps us to move forward and get up when we fall. Saint Peter understood this well: Jesus chose him as the "rock" on which "to build his church" but clearly did not ignore Peter's human weaknesses.

God's call and the mission he entrusts to us does not imply pretending that there is no possibility of falling into temptation. Jesus knows that Peter will deny him. On the evening of the Last Supper, when faced with the readiness of Peter, the dedication he expressed to the Master, Jesus foretells what will happen, saying: "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times" (*Mk 14:30*).

Let us consider the fact that because Jesus showed that he knew what would happen – and yet did not kick Peter out, but instead took him to pray at Gethsemane – Peter was able to recognize his betrayal, to regret and to get back up. Peter had faith in forgiveness. This, perhaps, is the difference between Peter and Judas: to believe that God's mercy is so great that it welcomes us when, repentant, we return to the Father's house



BASILICA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

From Holy Friday to Easter Sunday

Entering into the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre while praying and meditating on the latest Stations of the Cross, leaves one speechless. The air you breathe in that sacred place is that of donation, of the total abandonment of Jesus in the merciful arms of the Father and in the violent hands of humanity. Is there any greater proof of love for mankind? Let us spend time with Jesus, our salvation, and ponder the words of the Apostle Paul:

*[Jesus Christ] who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself and became obedient
to the point of death
– even death on a cross.*

*Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus*

*every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Phil 2:6-11