



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Holy Land in the heart

The testimony of Sebastian Wetter, Prior of the St. Gallen Delegation in Switzerland



In one of the parishes I oversee as chaplain, there is a pilgrimage site dedicated to Maria Bildstein (Benken SG). In addition to the pilgrimage church, a multitude of grace images, grottos, and Stations of the Cross invite the visitor for devout contemplation. The sacred landscape, which was created at the end of the 19th century, was initiated by the pilgrim priest Johann Anton Hafner (1837-1929), and modeled after the Baroque Sacred Mountains. With the knowledge that not all believers would be able to visit the Holy Land, a Milanese Franciscan friar had the idea of bringing the Holy Land to Europe – after all, faith moves mountains (Mt 17:20). Thus, during the Baroque period and beyond, places in Palestine or symbolic locations were recreated so that even the simple carpenter and the elderly peasant could dwell where the Lord spent His earthly life.

To bring the Holy Land to us has always been a fascinating thought for me. It is quite mysterious that the Almighty takes on human form, is baptized in the waters of the Jordan, and visits cities and villages. It is a wonderful task of the Equestrian Order to take care of the places that are the origin of our faith, without forgetting that with Christ in our hearts, even our Switzerland, my city, my village can become the Holy Land.

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