



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Experience of Resurrection

A multimedia experience of the senses in Jerusalem, allowing one to participate in the encounter with the Risen Christ



When one enters the Old City of Jerusalem, the small streets of this city so dear to our heart, the sounds, the voices, the colors and the people... everything tells us we are in a special place. The basilica of the Holy Sepulchre welcomes the pilgrims who go there to spend time in the places where Jesus suffered his passion, died and resurrected. However, it might be challenging above all at the beginning to imagine those places the way they used to be and we know them through the Gospels.

The multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” located in the Christian Information Center, near the Jaffa Gate, “seeks to bring these memories alive – explain the curators in the booklet introducing the exhibition – and to make them tangible here and now. It describes the historical situation, the environment that witnessed Christ’s journey. Through the implementation of modern and innovative technologies, the exhibition literally ‘moves’ us through Christ’s last days.”

The six rooms of the exhibition allow the pilgrim to look beyond the surface of what is visible now when visiting the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and retrace Jesus’ steps until the resurrection. What the curators want to offer is not only a way to understand what the city looked like and where and how some important passages of the life of Jesus happened. The spiritual dimension and the personal experience of meeting with Jesus is at the heart of this idea: “The entire experience of this exhibition and the grace of pilgrimage will lead you to answer the final question, where is my Lord? He is here, with us, inside us, waiting patiently for us to open the doors of our hearts to him,” they write.

Father Tomasz Dubiel OFM, former director and initiator of the project, explains how this idea came to be and became a concrete project. “The idea was born in 2015 when Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa was the Custos. The number of pilgrims was increasing and the level of explanations at the Holy Sepulchre was lowering. At the same time some Israeli sites were getting organized with multimedia rooms to give explanations about some archaeological sites. Therefore the Custos thought it might

be a good idea to do something like that for the Holy Sepulchre. The Christian Information Center looked like the ideal place to host that.”

“We contacted a company that worked with us – he continues – and they went for two days to the Holy Sepulchre and listened to what the guides were saying and explaining to the pilgrims, seeing what the most recurring elements were. They then took into consideration my experience and that of other friars who are Holy Land tour guides. We then came up with the idea of the six rooms by dividing the material and thinking about what kind of technology might be most appropriate for each experience.”

Room 1 hosts a 1:1000 scale model of Jerusalem at Jesus’ time. Thanks to a special visualization that “enlivens” the model and the Gospel fragments corresponding to individual places, one can follow the path that Jesus travelled from the Garden of Olives to Golgotha.

In Room 2 the visitor is invited to a visit to the Garden of Olives and to experience the scene of Jesus being sentenced to death by Pilate virtually reconstructed thanks to the VR technique (Virtual Reality). Everyone is given VR glasses to enter the room and become an apparent participant in the given event.

In Room 3, a short film about the history of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the time of Christ until today guides the visitor through the successive historical epochs to show how the city changed over time. Room 4 is the history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre made in the form of a hologram and it complements the story presented in Room 3.

Room 5 presents the complex issue of the Status Quo explaining the agreement defining the property rights of each of the five religious communities who are present inside the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

In the last room, the pilgrim is welcomed by a model of the Tomb, approximate to scale of the Tomb of Christ, which is the real focal point of every pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Here the visitor is invited to make a step further and really opens himself/herself to Jesus’ resurrection and to depart from here like the women and the disciples, ready to announce Jesus’ victory over death to the world.

The multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” is a part of the Terra Sancta Museum run by the Franciscan Fathers at the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem. The concept was designed by fr. Tomasz Dubiel OFM, who supervised its realization and whom we met for this article. Polish artists and specialists designed and constructed this exhibition.

The Terra Sancta Museum project includes three sectors: in addition of the multimedia exhibition “The Experience of Resurrection” at CIC there is the multimedia and the archeological section located at the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, in the Convent of the Flagellation, along the Via Dolorosa. The third and most important part will be the historical section, situated inside the Saint Saviour Monastery, which opening is scheduled for 2025.

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