



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

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## A night of vigil at the Holy Sepulchre



**In an exceptional event, some young people from the Lieutenancy for Belgium were able to spend a night in vigil, inside the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. For many, this alone was worth the trip, and they awaited it with hope, impatience and curiosity. Here is the testimony of one of those who took part, David Colling:**

"You do not really understand the privilege of being allowed to spend a night in that most holy place, except when you are there face to face with your solitude. Those who have already been able to visit this place during the day know that it has nothing to envy at St. Peter's Square on Palm Sunday, or Rue Neuve in Brussels during the sales period. And there, what a luxury it was to be able to have silence! To have this all you had to do is keep quiet.

Our first approach to the complex was to discover it through numerous historical-architectural readings. We had to familiarize ourselves with the environment, to learn about its evolution; however, warned by our Franciscan host that access to the Aedicule would have been possible only before midnight – because of the various liturgies that would take place later – we hastened the pace of the visits to dedicate ourselves more to prayer. Soon after, we went in groups of three, in pairs or alone, to the spot where Christ was laid. While the passage in the Aedicule during the day allows you to stay only a few seconds, under the pressure of the incessant flow of visitors, instead now each of us prolonged minutes to pray before the empty Tomb. In reality, once you are in front of the Tomb, all notions of time fades ... I have no idea how long I spent there.

While someone abandoned themselves to prayer in the Aedicule, others passed from one chapel to another, to see the various holy places up close. Personally, Calvary impressed me a lot. What a strange feeling to be able to approach the place where the Cross was planted, on top of Golgotha, with the rocky relief in evidence! And what a typically Orthodox beauty that chapel built there! We consider

ourselves unanimously lucky to have been able to spend that exceptional night in the company of our dear Lieutenant, who had prepared various readings and reflections for the occasion, focusing on the themes of suffering and death.

The second part of the night was an opportunity to witness – sometimes from a distance – some liturgical “dances” of various kinds, by ministers of different confessions. Despite the inevitable tensions due to the simultaneous use of those places by different denominations – sometimes documented by the media – we could see the mutual respect shown by Latins, Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Copts, especially when they came to incensing each other mutually during their respective liturgies. It was a fine example of ecumenical union in the heart of the places we consider the most holy.

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