

PILGRIM

KIT



WELCOME TO UNIV 22

AFTER A TWO YEAR PAUSE, THE ETERNAL CITY AND UNIV INSPIRE WELCOMES YOU BACK WITH OPEN ARMS. FOR ALL THE PILGRIM LIFEHACKS FLIP THROUGH THIS GUIDE.

01

ALL YOU NEED
TO KNOW

02

PRAY DEEP

03

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE
FIRST CHRISTIANS



REBUILD TOGETHER: THE STRENGTH OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

For the past two years we have lived through a wave of change forced by the global pandemic. Looking back, at times we have felt alone, vulnerable, desperate, and disoriented.

We have been hit by humanitarian, economic, social, ecological and political crises and, despite everything, we have begun to see what really counts.

Pope Francis reminds us that we are all, **“In the same boat, all fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and necessary, all called to row together, all in need of mutual comfort.”**

Faced with these difficulties, we are learning to rebuild on the basis of solidarity and hope. Our world asks us to move forward together in a new and truly human direction. This means stopping to think and join forces to seek sustainable and creative solutions that promote a culture of encounter.

UNIV22 focuses on how to rebuild together on the basis of solidarity and universal brotherhood.



SHOW THE STRENGTH OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND GET BEHIND UKRAINE

Every year UNIV chooses a charity and this year we've chosen ['WONDER Foundation'](#), a charity which provides emergency and long-term support to women and children who are fleeing Ukraine so they can rebuild their lives in Poland.

Since 2018, **WONDER** has worked with local Polish organizations to help Ukrainians in Poland.

As a gift from the participants of UNIV to the Holy Father, we're putting together your donations for Ukraine

YOU'RE WELCOME TO MAKE A DONATION



PILGRIM KIT

OUR LADY OF PEACE

Our Lady of Peace is the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei located at Viale Bruno Buozzi 75. The mortal remains of St Josemaria Escriva rest here. Millions of people throughout the world turn to the intercession of this great saint.

Not only is Our Lady of Peace where we find St Josemaria, but within its walls we also discover his story, his sense of humour, his dreams, and where he got his strength from.

“Holy Mary is the Queen of peace, and thus the Church invokes her. So when your soul or your family are troubled, or things go wrong at work, in society or between nations, cry out to her without ceasing. Call to her by this title: ‘Regina pacis, ora pro nobis — Queen of peace, pray for us.’ Have you at least tried it when you have lost your calm? You will be surprised at its immediate effect.” Saint Josemaría Escrivá

YOU CAN ACCESS PODCASTS ABOUT THE TREASURES HELD INSIDE OUR LADY OF PEACE AND DISCOVER THEIR STORIES

Don't forget to bring your headphones to listen to the podcasts .





UNIV HACK



UNIV Hack is an online interdisciplinary challenge which teams up young people across continents to find creative solutions to global problems. UNIV Hack is held in three phases:

01 INSPIRATION

To warm up before the Hackathon begins, guest speakers from around the world share insights on different aspects of what it means to rebuild together.

02 ACTION

Officially called the 'Hackathon', teams are lead through a design thinking process to find creative solutions to global problems.

03 SHARING

UNIVHack participants come together for the first time for a final workshop at the Pontificia Università della Santa Croce. Teams discover what they have learnt through the process and pick up some final tips on how to effectively work in teams and solve large-scale problems. Select teams present their UNIVHack solutions.

1 MONTH

2 LANGUAGES: ENGLISH & SPANISH

4 MODULES: RESEARCH, EMPATHISE, IDEATE, SHARE

40 COUNTRIES

39 TEAMS & SOLUTIONS

500 PARTICIPANTS

SPEAKERS FOR THIS YEAR'S HACK



SUSAN HANSSEN

PhD, Associate Professor and Department Chair, History, University of Dallas (USA).

WEBINAR 1

PRESENCE IN PLACE AND TIME: CULTURAL REVIVAL THROUGH FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNITY

“Heroism is required for people to come together despite their differences, discover the power of the human condition, and create a fellowship of friends.”

REWATCH

CHRISTINA CROOK

@thechristinacrook
Award-winning author of *The Joy of Missing Out: Finding Balance in a Wired World*.

WEBINAR 2

GOOD BURDENS: HOW TO LIVE JOYFULLY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

“Building relationships, our greatest source of joy, often involves discomfort, inconvenience, and lack of control. But it’s precisely in those moments with others that we find the strength to push back on the constraints put on us by the digital world.”

REWATCH

ADELINE KHOURI

@adelakhouri
Executive Director of the Virtuous Leadership Institute.

WEBINAR 3

LIKE THE PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES, BEIRUT WILL RISE AGAIN: A TESTIMONY OF REBUILDING TOGETHER

“Agreeing on something is much harder than having the same opinion or beliefs, but you can strive to do great things with others different from you as long as you always have in mind that what you are doing serves others.”

REWATCH



UNIVHACK IS AN ACTIVITY RUN IN COLLABORATION WITH FASE FOUNDATION AND BEFORGET



UNIV BUCKET LIST

MUST DO'S

- Speak Italian
- Try pistachio gelato
- Meet the Pope
- Talk to the Father
- Catch the sunset from the top of Pinccio lookout
- Share a Margherita pizza
- Throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain
- Write a letter to the Pope and pop it in the Vatican postbox
- Sketch among the artists in Piazza Navona
- Put your hand in the mouth of Truth
- Send a postcard
- Peak through the Knights of Malta keyhole
- Bike through cobblestone streets
- Afternoon stroll through Trastevere
- Pray at the tomb of John Paul II
- Walk the Via Apia
- Reenact Roman Holiday or the Lizzy Mcguire movie

MUST SEES

- Colosseum
- Pantheon
- Trevi Fountain
- St. Peters Basilica
- Roman Forum
- Vatican Museums
- Spanish Steps
- Piazza Navona
- Castel Sant'Angelo
- Circus Maximus
- Arch of Constantine



MORE ON WHAT TO SEE HERE

See more on page 30



PRAY DEEP

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

STEP INTO THE GOSPEL

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

**CONSECRATION TO THE
IMMACULATE HEART OF
MARY**



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Download these missals for Holy Week

[HOLY THURSDAY](#)

[GOOD FRIDAY](#)

[EASTER VIGIL](#)

[HYMNS](#)

STEP INTO THE GOSPEL

HOLY MONDAY

“**SIX DAYS BEFORE** the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.” Jesus felt at home there among his friends, surrounded by their affection. He has often been in Bethany, but this is a more solemn moment. He is going to Jerusalem, where he knows the Cross is waiting for him. “They made him a supper. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment” (Jn 12:1-3).

Everyone knew that the religious authorities were seeking to do away with Jesus. Mary’s love enables her to sense what is to befall Jesus. So she wants to do something special for her Lord, to show her love for him. She takes her most valuable possession, expensive perfume of pure nard, and pours it over Jesus’ feet. She breaks the jar, giving everything to her Lord and God.

Some of those present angrily point to the futility of this gesture. We know that Judas Iscariot also took part in this criticism, not because he wanted that expensive item to be put to better use, but perhaps because it clashed with his own lifestyle. Mary, however, is silent. She gives no heed to the comments her gesture has provoked. Her only concern is to make our Lord feel at home, and therefore Jesus speaks out in her defense.

“Mary offers Jesus the most precious thing she has and with a gesture of deep devotion. Love does not calculate, does not measure, does not worry about expense, does not set up barriers, but can give joyfully; it seeks only the good of the other, surmounts meanness, pettiness, resentment and the narrow-mindedness that human beings sometimes harbor in their hearts.”[1]

WHOEVER GIVES EVERYTHING to God becomes a gift for others as well. On the contrary, whoever calculates carefully when faced with Christ’s call, ends up haggling with others as well. When we truly say ‘yes’ to our Lord, we bring to others “the good aroma of Christ” (cf. 2 Cor 2:15). As happened in Bethany, we could say that “the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment” (Jn 12:3). Hence our life too, guided by God’s strength, can fill the world with Christ’s fragrance. We ask Martha, Mary and Lazarus, whose memorial Pope Francis has wanted the Church to celebrate every 29th of July, to help us fill our life and that of our families and friends with the fragrance their own home had.

Today in Bethany Christ's death is also announced, when he speaks about "the day of my burial" (Jn 12:8). But his death will give rise to an abundant torrent of Life – clear and radiant – for all men and women! Jesus asks us to accompany him closely, since "if our will is not ready to die in accord with the Passion of Christ, neither will Christ's life be in us." [2] But we must not wait for extraordinary occasions to show Jesus our love. Each of our days is a new opportunity to serve him, to offer him our life and employ it generously in his service, following faithfully in his footsteps.

What we have in our hands will almost always be little things, but things a small child can offer with love: "Sometimes we feel inclined to act as little children. What we do then has a wonderful value in God's eyes and, so long as we don't let routine creep in, our 'little' actions will indeed be fruitful with the unfailing fruitfulness of Love." [3]

"WHAT JOY to contemplate Jesus in Bethany! A friend of Lazarus, Martha and Mary! He goes there to recover his strength when he is tired. Jesus has his home there. There are souls there who appreciate him. There are also souls who come close the Tabernacle and, for them, that is Bethany. I hope it is for you too! Bethany is trust, the warmth of a home, intimacy. Beloved friends of Jesus." [4] We want the Tabernacle closest to us to be a place where Jesus feels as much at home as in Bethany. We want to adorn it with the fragrance of our struggle, so often more a matter of wishes than results.

Martha has a very discreet role in the scene we contemplate on this Monday of Holy Week. She prepares the dinner during which Mary will anoint the feet of Jesus. With the affection of a sister and mother she serves her guests. The house would also have been filled with the aroma of that dinner prepared with great love; perhaps she prepared what her Friend especially liked. In these moments, nearing his death, Jesus is comforted by any small sign of affection. Our work, our smile, our charity for those close to us, are the details he appreciates.

As one more proof of God's infinite Love, our Lord has really stayed in the Tabernacle to be near us. If Mary's love and faith prompted her to show such refined affection for our Lord by anointing his feet in Bethany, love and faith can also lead us to have greater devotion to Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. Mary doesn't think she is doing anything extraordinary by anointing our Lord's feet with that precious perfume. She acts with the spontaneity of love. Only Christ knows that, in a few days time, he will wash the feet of his apostles. Mary has anticipated this with her gesture. Our Lord, who is grateful for any sign of affection, no matter how small, appreciates her feminine intuition.

Perhaps our Lady too witnessed this endearing moment. What a comfort it would be for her, as her Son's hour was drawing near, to see how Jesus felt loved in this home.

HOLY TUESDAY

“WILL YOU LAY DOWN your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times” (Jn 13:38). The Gospel of today's Mass foretells the denials on the part of Saint Peter. In the intimate atmosphere of the Last Supper, Peter is surprised by Jesus' words. He doesn't understand how he could ever do this. He wants to be faithful until death, and would never permit his Master to be handed over to his enemies to be crucified. Our Lord had already reprimanded him on a previous occasion, when Peter refused to accept Jesus' words about his future passion and death. But Peter still cannot accept that apparent failure. As the liturgy reminds us this week: “The days of his saving Passion and glorious Resurrection are approaching, by which the pride of the ancient foe is vanquished and the mystery of our redemption in Christ is celebrated.”^[1]

In his own way, Saint Peter thinks that he is ready to give his life for Jesus. In fact, he will draw his sword when Jesus is arrested and confront the crowd that comes armed to capture his Lord. He doesn't lack courage or esteem for Jesus. But experience will teach him that these qualities are not enough. Peter still needs the humility that comes from self-knowledge and, above all, from the knowledge of God. Jesus continues forming Saint Peter right to the end. These lessons are the most important ones of his life. Peter will not be a rock because of his strength but because of the humility he has gained from knowing Jesus in depth. He needs to experience the insufficiency of his own strength, so that he realizes it is God who is going to uphold him.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF Peter's betrayal in today's Gospel is accompanied by the announcement of Judas's betrayal, which helps us to grasp the great difference between the two. Peter put his weakness in Jesus' hands. He learned not to focus on his mistakes and his own strength, but to trust in God's goodness, in his divine plans, in his way of doing things. Peter wasn't deceiving Jesus when he told him he would be faithful until death. But he was relying almost exclusively on his own strength, on his own abilities. Judas, in contrast, never acknowledged his betrayal before Jesus, and always tried to keep up appearances. Peter, at least when he was with Christ, didn't care about appearances, although he will succumb to them when questioned by a maid in the High Priest's house.

The fisherman from Capernaum could have been helped by these words of Saint Augustine: "Seek out your merits, your righteousness, your motives; and see if you find anything that is not grace." [2] Saint Peter thought that his love for Jesus was already great, sufficient to withstand any test. He found it easier to remain faithful when confronted by the soldiers than when a young girl challenged him. The maid destroyed Peter's confidence in himself. But it was a liberation that he needed. For Peter discovered the need for his own abasement in order to follow Christ closely. Freed from his own strength and goals, he was able to adapt to God's plans and be faithful.

Saint Bernard said: "Do not consider, you who are a man, what you have suffered, but what He suffered. Learn, from everything that He suffered for you, how much He valued you, and thus his goodness will be evident to you through his humanity. The smaller he became in his humanity, the greater he revealed himself in his goodness; and the more He allowed himself to be abased for me, the more He is dear to me now." [3]

"ALL TOO OFTEN, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty ... The evil one makes us see and condemn our frailty, whereas the Spirit brings it to light with tender love. Tenderness is the best way to touch the frailty within us ... faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture." [4]

It fills us with peace to know that God wants us to trust him and the good we have, which is also God's gift. Saint Peter can be an example for us here as well. It fills us with serenity to discover that we can rely on our strengths and abilities – many or few – when we realize that it is God who will provide the increase with abundance. What joy it brings to realize that we don't have to rely solely on our own talents for the mission that has been entrusted to us and that so clearly exceeds us! We are amazed and grateful on seeing how much God loves us, shown in his willingness to carry out wonders with our poor collaboration.

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus once said: "I understand very well why Saint Peter fell. Poor Peter, he was relying upon himself instead of relying only upon God's strength ... I'm very sure that if Saint Peter had said humbly to Jesus: 'Give me the grace, I beg You, to follow You even to death,' he would have received it immediately ... Before ruling the Church that is filled with sinners, he had to experience for himself what man is able to do without God's help." [5]

Having learned this lesson, Saint Peter will be able to place at the service of the redemption all of his abilities – which, although borrowed, are a precious gift – and to rely on the strength of his Lord, who can do everything. As Saint Josemaría said, “when with a burning heart we say ‘yes’ to our Lord, that we will be faithful to him, that we are ready to make any sacrifice, we will also tell him: Jesus, with your grace; my Mother, with your help. I am so fragile. I make so many mistakes, so many small missteps, that I see I am capable – if you leave me – of making big ones!”[6].

HOLY WEDNESDAY

“**ONE OF THE TWELVE**, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you give me if I deliver him to you?’ And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him” (Mt 26:14-16). Traditionally, on Wednesday in Holy Week, the Church remembers the betrayal of Judas. How distant in the heart of this apostle, who was now preparing to betray Jesus, are the first encounters with the one he had considered the Messiah! Judas Iscariot had also been personally chosen by Christ. Alongside Jesus, he could have been as happy as the others, and become one of the pillars of the Church. However, he chose to sell, at the price of a slave, the one who gave him everything. And it was God’s will that Holy Scripture should not silence this fact.

The tragic outcome takes place at the Last Supper, when Jesus is assailed by the anguish of the approaching Passion and the heartbreak of abandonment by those he loved. When they were at supper, he said, “Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me” (Mt 26:21). The other eleven apostles, with experience of their own failings and great trust in Christ’s words, exclaimed in surprise: “‘Is it I, Lord?’ He answered, ‘He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me. The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.’ Judas, who betrayed him, said, ‘Is it I, Master?’ He said to him, ‘You have said so’” (Mt 26:22-25).

We do not know if Judas ever looked into Jesus’ eyes again. He would have discovered no rancor or anger there. Christ, his friend, was still looking at him with the same eagerness with which he had called him a few years earlier to be an apostle, to be alongside him. “What can we do before a God who served us even when he experienced betrayal and abandonment? We cannot betray

what we were created for, not abandon what really matters. We are in the world to love him and others. The rest passes away, love remains.”[1]

JUDAS’S BETRAYAL was not the folly of an instant, but the result of many small infidelities. In the Gospel according to John we find a significant episode: the criticism of Mary of Bethany’s apparent waste in anointing Jesus with precious ointment, a few days before the Passover. Judas dares to criticize her behavior, with an apparently altruistic reason. But “this he said not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and, as he had the money box, he used to take what was put into it” (Jn 12:6).

However, neither that offense, nor any human weakness, is strong enough to overcome the love of a God who calls each person constantly and who always awaits our return. Saint Josemaría saw in God’s way of being, so full of mercy, our true armor: “We all have shortcomings. But these defects of ours should never lead us to turn our back on God’s call, but to take refuge in it, to clothe ourselves in this divine goodness, as the warriors of old clothed themselves in their suit of armor.”[2]

Saint Augustine recommends humble petition before God as the best way to face our own fragility. Referring specifically to Judas Iscariot, he says: “After he betrayed Him, and repented of it, if he prayed through Christ, he would ask for pardon; if he asked for pardon, he would have hope; if he had hope, he would hope for mercy.”[3] Our Lord didn’t want Judas to perish, just as he does not want anyone to perish. Even in his own arrest he tries to bring him to his senses, calling him “friend” and accepting the disciple’s kiss. Perhaps even on the Cross Christ was hoping for his apostle to return and to be able to forgive him, as he did the repentant thief.

PETER, too, on that night of betrayal, denies our Lord three times. He who was to be the foundation of the Church wept for his sin with tears of love. Judas, in contrast, lacked the humility to return to his Lord to acknowledge his sin. Peter held firm to hope, while Judas lost hope, not trusting in God’s mercy.

Commenting on this Gospel passage, Saint Josemaría said: “Look how great the virtue of hope is! Judas recognized Christ’s sanctity, and repented of the crime he had committed. So much so that he took the money that was the price for his treason and threw it down in front of those who had given it to him as his reward for his betrayal. But he lacked hope, which is the virtue needed to return to God. If he had had hope, he still could have been a great apostle. In any case, we don’t know what took place in the heart of that man, whether he responded to God’s grace in the last moment. Only God knows what happened in his heart.

So never lose hope, never despair, even though you have done the most foolish thing possible. All you have to do is speak out, repent, and let yourself be led by the hand, and everything will be put right.”[4]

This is something we can learn from today’s Gospel. No matter how great our offenses, God’s mercy is always greater. Everything can be healed if we turn to our Lord and open our heart to grace so that Christ can heal our wounds. “Fear and shame, which stop us from being sincere, are the greatest enemies of our perseverance. We are made of clay; but if we speak clearly, the clay acquires the strength of bronze.”[5] This is the strength that the humility of Saint Peter, the rock of the Church, attained. And it is the strength that we ask Jesus for through Mary, his mother, and also our mother.

HOLY THURSDAY

“**NOW BEFORE** the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.’ The reader of this verse from Saint John’s Gospel is brought to understand that a great event is about to take place. The introduction is full of tender affection ... Let us begin,” Saint Josemaria advises us, “by asking the Holy Spirit, from this moment on, to give us the grace to understand every word and gesture of Christ.”[1] Today, our eagerness to be attentive to all that our Lord does leads us to contemplate his eloquent gesture of washing his apostles’ feet.

At the Last Supper, with the Passion now near, the atmosphere was one of love, intimacy and recollection. “Since Jesus knew that the Father had placed everything in his hands and that he had gone out from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper, took off his robe, took a towel and put it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel which he had put around his waist” (Jn 12:3-5). The apostles would have been shocked to see Jesus doing something normally only carried out by a servant. But over time they would have come to understand what Jesus wanted to tell them. Even today we may find it difficult to imagine God putting himself in such a position, wiping the dust and dirt from his friends’ feet with his own hands.

Letting Christ wash us means recognizing that we cannot purify, clean or sanctify ourselves. “This truth is hard to grasp: if I do not let the Lord serve me, wash me, strengthen me, forgive me, I will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven ... God saved

us by serving us. We often think we are the ones who serve God. No, he is the one who freely chose to serve us, for he loved us first. It is difficult to love and not be loved in return. And it is even more difficult to serve if we do not let ourselves be served by God.”[2] This is the Christian paradox: it is God who acts first; it is He who takes the initiative. This is why, before undertaking any apostolic work, it is so important to learn to receive what God wants to give us, to let him cleanse us again and again.

THE SIGHT of Jesus washing his apostles’ feet should never cease to amaze us. But his love and humility go infinitely further during the supper: “He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ And in the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; as often as you drink it, do this in remembrance of me’” (1 Cor 11:23–25).

Our Lord “instituted this sacrament as a perpetual memorial of his Passion, as a fulfillment of the ancient figures, as the greatest miracle He had performed and the greatest consolation for those He would leave saddened by his absence.”[3] Jesus gives himself to us; he becomes bread and wine for us. It is at once a sign of superabundant love and the greatest possible expression of humility. The Sacrament of the Eucharist enables us to identify ourselves with the Beloved, to become one and the same with Him, to be united as intimately as possible with God. Saint Josemaría said that “our Lord Jesus Christ, as though all the other proofs of his mercy were insufficient, institutes the Eucharist so that he can always be close to us. We can only understand up to a point that he does so because Love moves him, who needs nothing, not to want to be separated from us. The Blessed Trinity has fallen in love with man.”[4]

We cannot get over our astonishment. No matter how much we consider all that God the Father has given us, we will never be able to understand it: “It is the medicine of immortality, the antidote to death, the remedy enabling us to live in Christ forever.”[5] We do not deserve such great care, affection and attention. We want to try to respond as well as possible, but to do so we need God’s help. “What comes first is not our effort, or moral capacity. Christianity is first and foremost a gift: God gives himself to us. He does not give something, but himself ... This is why the central act of Christian life is the Eucharist: gratitude for having received his gifts, joy for the new life that he gives us.”[6]

IN THE PRIEST’S WORDS before the consecration we see Jesus’ grateful attitude towards God the Father: “he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying...”. We want to have the same attitude today, on the eve of

the Passion. Generosity grows naturally from gratitude for the new life we have received, and we want to share it with others. We want to try to love those Jesus loves, as he loves them: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34). Through Christ, with Him and in Him, we are capable of loving to the end. Like Jesus, we kneel before people to clean their feet. We understand their miseries and carry them on our shoulders.

Judgment, envy and comparisons disappear, transformed into petition, joy and gratitude to God for the wonders he works in others. “The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual good of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and Living Bread, which by the action of the Holy Spirit through his very flesh gives life to men.”[7] From there we draw the strength we need to bring Christ’s life to the hearts of the people around us, and to every corner of the world.

Holy Thursday, the day God gave the Church the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is also a day to pray for the holiness of all priests, that they may always serve the Church with the same love our Lord had. With our prayer we can help them make a reality of the deepest desire that moves them as priests: “This practical aspect of service is important: that it is not we who choose what to do, but we are servants of Christ in the Church. We work as the Church tells us, where the Church calls us, and we try to be precisely this: servants who do not do their own will, but the will of the Lord. Let us truly be in the Church ambassadors for Christ and servants of the Gospel.”[8]

Among so many other gifts, during these days Jesus will also give us the gift of his Mother. We turn to our Lady, the principal witness of Christ’s Sacrifice, asking for help to live a life of humble gratitude for all we have received.

GOOD FRIDAY

“**MY GOD**, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46). “Jesus experienced total abandonment in a situation he had never before experienced in order to be one with us in everything. He did it for me, for you, for all of us; he did it to say to us: ‘Do not be afraid, you are not alone. I experienced all your desolation in order to always be close to you.’”[1] Above all, Christ is afflicted by the suffering that we, the men and women of every age, experience as a result of sin: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (Lk 23:28).

No human suffering can make Christ turn away from his determination to save us. "His nailed arms are open to each human being and they invite us to draw near to him, certain that he accepts us and clasps us in an embrace of infinite tenderness." [2] The Good Friday liturgy begins with the priest prostrating himself on the ground. This was Jesus' position in the Garden of Olives. All of mankind's sins, all human suffering and loneliness – ours too – crushed him to the ground, and he turned to God the Father for strength.

Jesus came into the world to repair the evil we have inflicted on ourselves and on others. He wants to give us back our freedom and joy. His love for us is boundless, and he assures us: "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:30). Our sins do not need to have the last word if we allow Jesus to speak, if we let him tell us he loves us and does not reproach us for all this suffering. Today we remember that "Jesus has fallen that we might get up again, each and every time." [3]

ONE OF THE REASONS we sin is that we mistakenly think God's will is an obstacle to our freedom. This is what happened to Adam, our first father. But God wants us to be happy. He wants us to let ourselves be loved by him. "We are free only if we stand in the truth of our being, if we are united to God. Then we become truly 'like God' – not resisting God, ignoring him, or denying him. In his anguished prayer on the Mount of Olives, Jesus resolved the false opposition between obedience and freedom, and opened the path to freedom. Let us ask the Lord to draw us into this 'yes' to God's will, and thus to make us truly free." [4]

We are eager to thank our Lord for the sacrifice he willingly accepted in order to free us from death. Jesus is in agony to the point of sweating blood, but his trust in his Father never wavers, and he continues in prayer. "He approaches us, who are asleep. Arise, pray – He says again – lest you enter into temptation (Lk 22:46)." [5] Hours later, the fury of all the sins of mankind falls on Jesus' innocent body. The ingratitude of our hearts wraps our Lord in solitude. "You and I are unable to speak. Words are not needed. Look at Him, look at Him... slowly." [6]

"Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness. It also reveals a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. If I embrace his love then I am saved; if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but my own self, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves." [7]

OUR LORD'S wounds, through which his most precious blood poured out, are a serene refuge for our own pain and affliction. In Christ's wounds we are safe. Cleansed by his redeeming Blood, nothing can daunt us. "When we really come

to admire and love the most sacred Humanity of Jesus, we will discover each of his Wounds, one by one ... We will feel the need to enter into each one of his most Holy Wounds: to be purified and strengthened, rejoicing in his redeeming Blood. We will go there like the doves which, in the words of Scripture, find shelter from the storm in the crevices in the rocks. We hide in this refuge to find the intimacy of Christ.”[8]

And in our contemplation we will savor the Church’s strong and tender words today: “Sweet the timber, sweet the iron, sweet the burden that they bear!”[9] It is “the luminous sign of love, of God’s immense love, of something that we could never have asked for, imagined or expected: God bent down over us, he lowered himself, even to the darkest corner of our lives, in order to stretch out his hand and draw us to himself, to bring us all the way to himself.”[10] This is the truth of Good Friday: on the Cross, Christ, our redeemer, restored our dignity to us. And we want, even more intensely, to nail ourselves willingly to his Cross, to associate ourselves with his redemption and have our wretchedness washed clean by his Blood.

At the end of this time of prayer, we direct our eyes to the foot of the Cross. There we see our sorrowful mother standing, accompanied by a few women and a young man. No other pain can compare to theirs. Christ needed to have his Mother close to him during these moments, and now we need her even more.

HOLY SATURDAY

IT COULD BE that Holy Saturday is “the day of the Easter Triduum that we most neglect, anxious to move from Friday’s Cross to Sunday’s Alleluia.” To prevent this from happening to us, we can focus on the women who accompanied our Lady at all times. “For them, as for us, it was the darkest hour. But in this situation the women did not remain paralyzed. They did not give in to the dark forces of regret and remorse. They did not withdraw into pessimism. They did not flee from reality. They did something simple and extraordinary: in their homes they prepared perfume for the Body of Jesus ... Without knowing it, in the darkness of that Sabbath, these women were preparing for the dawn of the ‘first day of the week,’ the day that would change history.”

Today, Christ lies in the tomb. Friendly hands have lovingly placed him there, near Calvary, in the tomb owned by Joseph of Arimathea. Where are the apostles? The Gospels tell us nothing, but perhaps in the evening of that Sabbath they came, one by one, to the Upper Room, where a few days earlier they had gathered with the Master. How discouraged their conversations now were! They had betrayed

Jesus. Their dejection must have been so great that perhaps they even thought of abandoning everything and going back to the way things were, as if the last three years had been only a dream.

However, “in the silence of Holy Saturday, filled with God’s boundless love, we live in expectation of the dawn of the third day, the dawn of the triumph of God’s love, the dawn of the light that allows the eyes of the heart to see life, difficulties and suffering in a new way. Hope illuminates our failures, our disappointments, our bitterness, which seem to mark the collapse of everything.”

THE DIFFERENT REACTION of the holy women is striking: they were faithful to the end. They watched attentively how events were unfolding so that, after the Sabbath rest, they could return and finish embalming Jesus’ Body. Their discouragement is understandable: neither the apostles nor they were yet witnesses of Christ’s resurrection. In spite of everything, they do not want to forego this final service. Their affection is stronger than death.

The courage of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus also is an example for us. “In the hour of loneliness, of total abandonment and of scorn, it is then that they stand up for him. With them,” said Saint Josemaría, “I too will go up to the foot of the Cross; I will press my arms tightly round the cold Body, the corpse of Christ, with the fire of my love. I will unnailed it, with my reparation and mortifications. I will wrap it in the new winding-sheet of my clean life, and I will bury it in the living rock of my breast, where no one can tear it away from me!”[4] They have nothing to gain, they may lose everything, but they still want to offer Jesus their affection.

But Holy Saturday could not have been a sad day for our Lady, even if it was a painful one. Faith, hope, and the most tender love for her divine Son would have given her peace, enabling her to await the resurrection with serene longing. Mary would also have remembered the last words of Jesus: “Woman, behold your son” (Jn 19:26). And she would already have begun to exercise her motherhood with those men and women who had followed Christ from the earliest times. Our Lady would have tried to revive the faith and hope of the apostles, reminding them of the words they had heard a short time earlier from our Lord’s lips: “They will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise” (Mk 10:34). Our Lord had spoken very clearly so that, when the time of tribulation came, they would hold fast to his word in faith. Along with the painful memory of the sufferings endured by Jesus, a great relief would come over her motherly heart at the thought that everything was now over: “The work of our Redemption has been accomplished. We are now children of God, because Jesus has died for us and his death has ransomed us.”

ALONGSIDE OUR LADY, in the light of her hope, the hearts of each of the apostles would have been enkindled. “What if all this is true?” perhaps they. “What if Jesus has really risen, as he promised?” In the past they had all been united around the Son. Now they would like to be close to his Mother. Mary may even have sent one of them to look for those who hadn’t turned up yet. She may have hoped to find Thomas to comfort his fear-filled heart. In the moment of trial, they were eager to turn to Mary, and “with her, how easy it is.”

We want to find a support for our faith in hers: especially when things become difficult, when moments of darkness come. Saint Bernard assures us from his own experience: “If the winds of temptation arise, if you trip on the stumbling blocks of tribulations, look to the Star, call on Mary.” God wants her to be for us an advocate, a mother, a sure way to find the light again in times of darkness.

Those who have recourse to the powerful intercession of our Lady know that it has never been said that anyone who trusted in her was left unaided, no matter how difficult the moment or how great the confusion in their heart. And we can say to Jesus: “In spite of the sadness we may harbor, we will feel that we must hope, because with you the Cross blossoms into Resurrection, because you are with us in the darkness of our nights; you are certainty in our uncertainties, word in our silences, and nothing can ever rob us of the love you have for us.” Close to Mary, mother of hope, our faith in the merits of her Son Jesus will grow strong once again.

EASTER SUNDAY

Texts from Christ’s Presence in Christians, an Easter Sunday Homily by St. Josemaria Escriva

What would Jesus’ Resurrection have been like? How did his tortured Body come back to life and become a glorious Body? We don’t know. The only witnesses to this astounding event were the empty tomb, with the winding cloths and the face cloth. These silent witnesses are the first to announce that something entirely new has happened.

John is the first to “read” and understand the message of the linen cloths and the face cloth. A few days earlier he had been the courageous disciple who stood firm at the foot of the Cross, next to his Lord. Now he is the disciple who runs the fastest to seek Christ. The same one who stood patiently close by during the time of trial now moves the quickest in seeking Him. He is sustained by the same strength in both situations: his love for our Lord. And his love is

rewarded. God grants him a special grace to read in the folded cloths the greatest message in history: Jesus is alive!

But John isn't the only one who runs that Easter Sunday morning. Before him Mary Magdalene had run to tell the apostles the astounding news. The strength of her love is also very intense. Love for our Lord had led her to rise early that morning. She wanted to do one last service for Jesus, without expecting anything in return. And she will be the first to contemplate the Risen Lord in his glory, and to proclaim to the Church that He is alive.

Peter too runs. He is a bit slower in reaching the tomb. He has neither Mary Magdalene's impetuosity nor John's youthfulness. But he reaches the tomb and is the first to enter. He sees the signs of the Resurrection – the linen cloths and the face cloth – even if it takes him longer to believe, perhaps because the wound he carries is deeper. The pain of the Master's death is joined to the memory of his having abandoned Him during the Passion. But despite everything, he too runs. His love is still there; it just has to grow stronger.

How difficult it was for the disciples to believe that Jesus had come back to life! And how difficult it can be for us to accept that Jesus upholds our own lives! Sometimes the tomb seems to prevail: problems at work or at home, flaws in our own character, opposition to Christian values in certain environments... But if we look closely at these situations, we can surely find signs of hope: other persons who are tenaciously trying to do what is right and to defend the good, a solution to a difficult problem that suddenly appears... These are signs that are waiting for us to read them with faith, like those linen cloths on the morning of the Resurrection.

To read the signs God gives us, we need to welcome the gift of faith. We too need the sincere eagerness to seek our Lord, also when it seems He has left us. That is what Mary Magdalene, John, and Peter did that Easter morning. They were still seeking Christ; they wanted to offer Him a service, even though they thought He was dead. Our Lord rewards their faithful love with the joy of finding Him alive, luminous with the glory of Easter.



ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

O Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, in this time of trial we turn to you. As our Mother, you love us and know us: no concern of our hearts is hidden from you. Mother of mercy, how often we have experienced your watchful care and your peaceful presence! You never cease to guide us to Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Yet we have strayed from that path of peace. We have forgotten the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in two world wars. We have disregarded the commitments we made as a community of nations. We have betrayed peoples' dreams of peace and the hopes of the young. We grew sick with greed, we thought only of our own nations and their interests, we grew indifferent and caught up in our selfish needs and concerns. We chose to ignore God, to be satisfied with our illusions, to grow arrogant and aggressive, to suppress innocent lives and to stockpile weapons. We stopped being our neighbour's keepers and stewards of our common home. We have ravaged the garden of the earth with war and by our sins we have broken the heart of our heavenly Father, who desires us to be brothers and sisters. We grew indifferent to everyone and everything except ourselves. Now with shame we cry out: Forgive us, Lord!

Holy Mother, amid the misery of our sinfulness, amid our struggles and weaknesses, amid the mystery of iniquity that is evil and war, you remind us that God never abandons us, but continues to look upon us with love, ever ready to forgive us and raise us up to new life. He has given you to us and made your Immaculate Heart a refuge for the Church and for all humanity. By God's gracious will, you are ever with us; even in the most troubled moments of our history, you are there to guide us with tender love.

We now turn to you and knock at the door of your heart. We are your beloved children. In every age you make yourself known to us, calling us to conversion. At this dark hour, help us and grant us your comfort. Say to us once more: "Am I not here, I who am your Mother?" You are able to untie the knots of our hearts and of our times. In you we place our trust. We are confident that, especially in moments of trial, you will not be deaf to our supplication and will come to our aid.

That is what you did at Cana in Galilee, when you interceded with Jesus and he worked the first of his signs. To preserve the joy of the wedding feast, you said to him: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3). Now, O Mother, repeat those words and that prayer, for in our own day we have run out of the wine of hope, joy has fled, fraternity has faded. We have forgotten our humanity and squandered the gift of peace. We opened our hearts to violence and destructiveness. How greatly we need your maternal help!

Therefore, O Mother, hear our prayer.

Star of the Sea, do not let us be shipwrecked in the tempest of war.

Ark of the New Covenant, inspire projects and paths of reconciliation.

Queen of Heaven, restore God's peace to the world.

Eliminate hatred and the thirst for revenge, and teach us forgiveness.

Free us from war, protect our world from the menace of nuclear weapons.

Queen of the Rosary, make us realize our need to pray and to love.

Queen of the Human Family, show people the path of fraternity.

Queen of Peace, obtain peace for our world.

O Mother, may your sorrowful plea stir our hardened hearts. May the tears you shed for us make this valley parched by our hatred blossom anew. Amid the thunder of weapons, may your prayer turn our thoughts to peace. May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs. May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your Sorrowful Heart move us to

compassion and inspire us to open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside.

Holy Mother of God, as you stood beneath the cross, Jesus, seeing the disciple at your side, said: "Behold your son" (Jn 19:26). In this way he entrusted each of us to you. To the disciple, and to each of us, he said: "Behold, your Mother" (v. 27). Mother Mary, we now desire to welcome you into our lives and our history. At this hour, a weary and distraught humanity stands with you beneath the cross, needing to entrust itself to you and, through you, to consecrate itself to Christ. The people of Ukraine and Russia, who venerate you with great love, now turn to you, even as your heart beats with compassion for them and for all those peoples decimated by war, hunger, injustice and poverty.

Therefore, Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end and peace spread throughout the world. The "Fiat" that arose from your heart opened the doors of history to the Prince of Peace. We trust that, through your heart, peace will dawn once more. To you we consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world.

Through your intercession, may God's mercy be poured out on the earth and the gentle rhythm of peace return to mark our days. Our Lady of the "Fiat", on whom the Holy Spirit descended, restore among us the harmony that comes from God. May you, our "living fountain of hope", water the dryness of our hearts. In your womb Jesus took flesh; help us to foster the growth of communion. You once trod the streets of our world; lead us now on the paths of peace. Amen.



EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Have I rejected or neglected my faith or not bothered to find out more about it? Have I refused to defend my faith, or been embarrassed of it?

Have I taken the Lord's name in vain? Have I experimented with the occult or put my trust in fortune-tellers or horoscopes? Have I shown disrespect for any holy things, places or people?

Have I chosen not to attend Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Have I left God out by not praying?

Have I received Holy Communion with a grave sin on my conscience? Have I received Holy Communion without proper reverence or thanksgiving?

Have I been unhelpful at home? Have I lacked love for my parents?

Have I been impatient, angry or jealous? Have I fostered resentments or been unwilling to forgive? Have I sulked or given in to sarcasm? Have I been hateful or judgemental in thoughts or deeds?

Have I failed to work properly at school? Have I given in to laziness? Have I treated teachers and other adults with disrespect?

Have I been violent or taken part in fights? Have I hurt anyone by speaking badly about them or by engaging in gossip on the internet? Have I

betrayed secrets or told things simply to hurt others?

Have I spoken in an obscene way? Have I looked at obscene magazines, websites or videos? Have I been involved in impure behaviour on my own or with someone else?

Have I told lies to excuse myself, to hurt others or make myself look more important?

Have I stolen anything? Have I misused or damaged the property of others?

Have I been jealous of others, of their looks, their popularity, their good work? Do I set my heart on possessing things?

Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any way?

Have I consumed alcohol excessively or taken drugs?

Have I been vain or selfish in my thoughts or actions?

Have I preferred physical comfort to service of others? Have I neglected the responsibility to bring others closer to God through example and word?



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS

ROUTES & MAPS



The world is full of normal people with normal defects and normal talents and normal circumstances. Every one of these people has the potential to transform the world once they choose to take the first step - out of their comfort zone. The first Christians, walking through these very streets of Rome, took that first step by living their Christian vocation in a world that didn't yet understand the meaning of Christianity.

They were the protagonists of the 1st Century. We are the protagonists of today. What can we learn by walking in their footsteps?

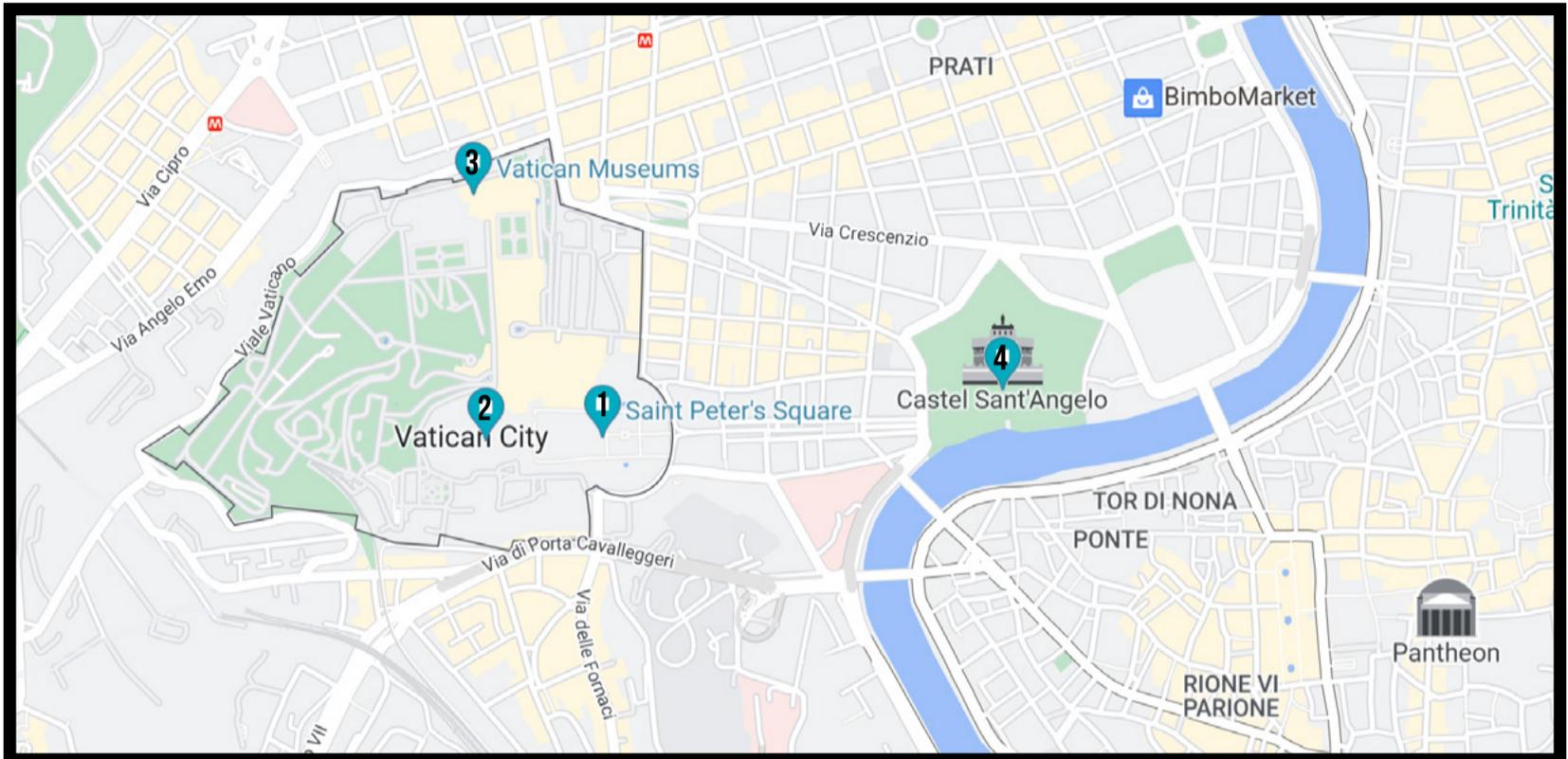
"Please, do not leave it to others to be protagonists of change. You are the ones who hold the future! Through you, the future enters into the world. I ask you also to be protagonists of this transformation. You are the ones who hold the key to the future! Continue to fight apathy and to offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world. I ask you to build the future, to work for a better world. Dear young people, please, do not be bystanders in life. Get involved! Jesus was not a bystander. He got involved. Don't stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did." Pope Francis, Christus Vivit no. 174

Here you will find different routes to get to know Rome following the paths of the first Christians. You will be able to access a map on Google Maps to better orient yourself and also listen to an explanation of the most important places on your route.



[Access the complete playlist of audio guides here](#)

ROUTE 1

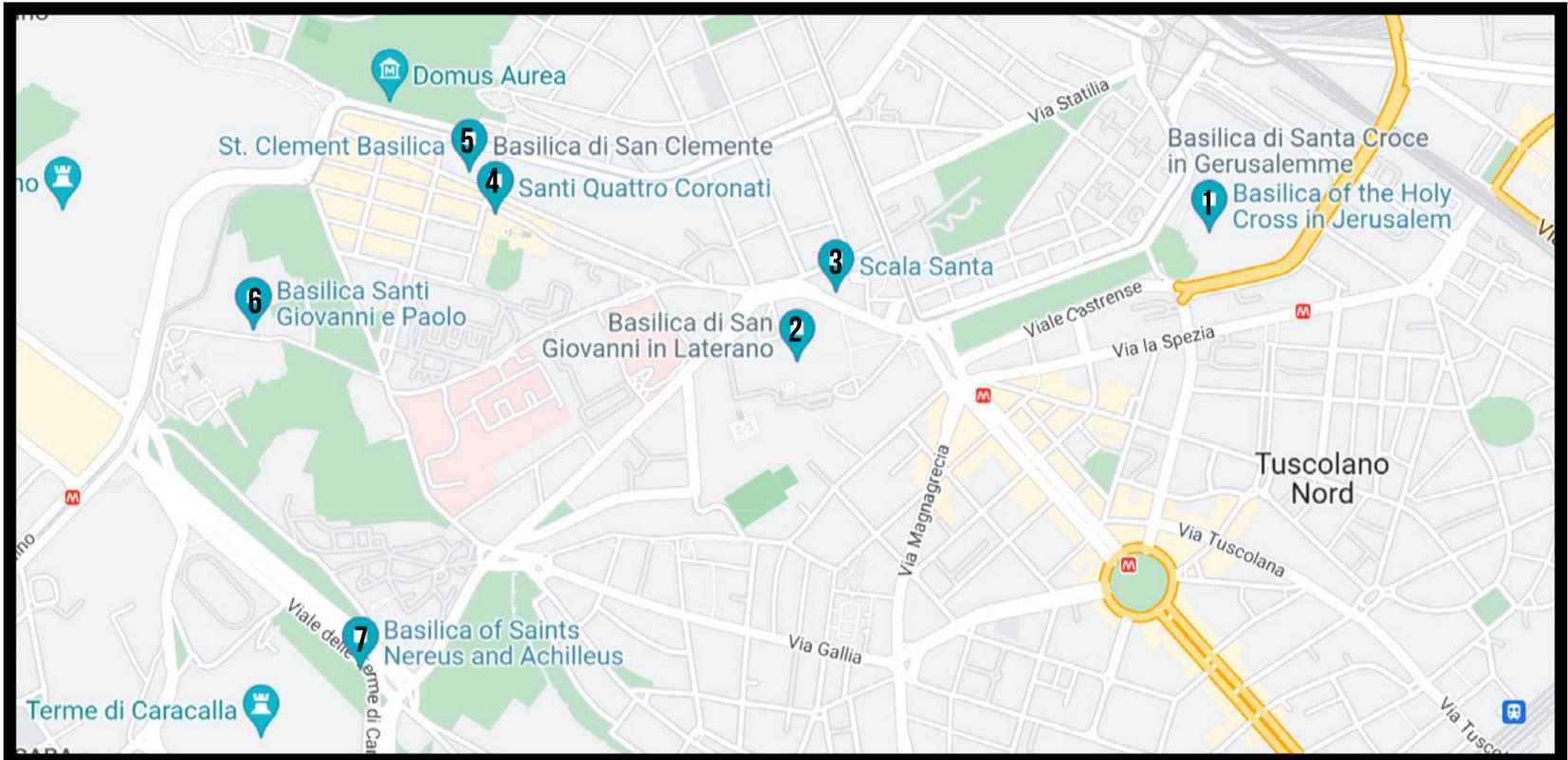


[AUDIO GUIDES](#)

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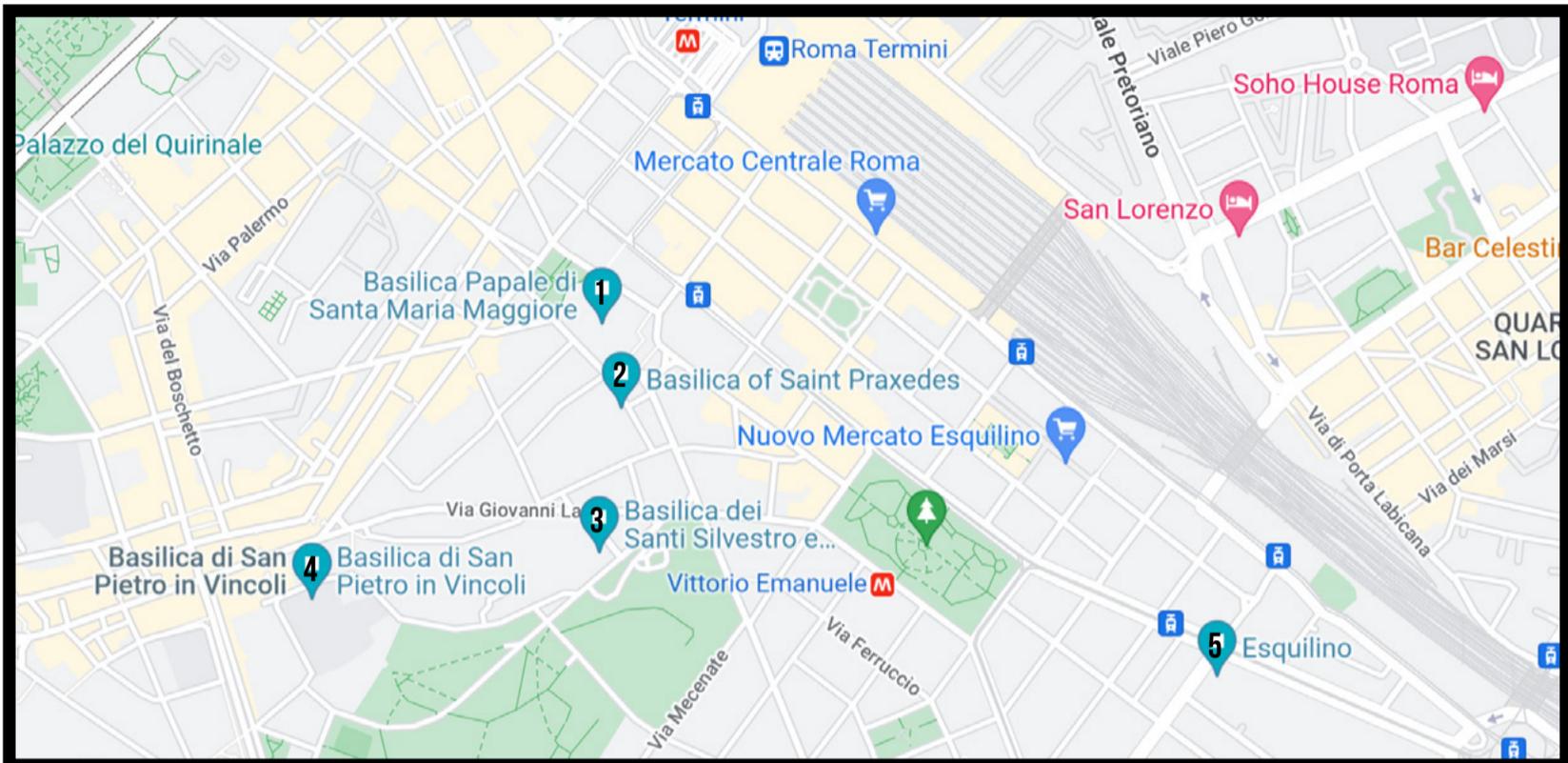
- 01. ST. PETER'S SQUARE 
- 02. ST. PETER'S BASILICA 
- 03. VATICAN MUSEUMS
- 04. CASTEL SANT'ANGELO

ROUTE 2


[AUDIO GUIDES](#)
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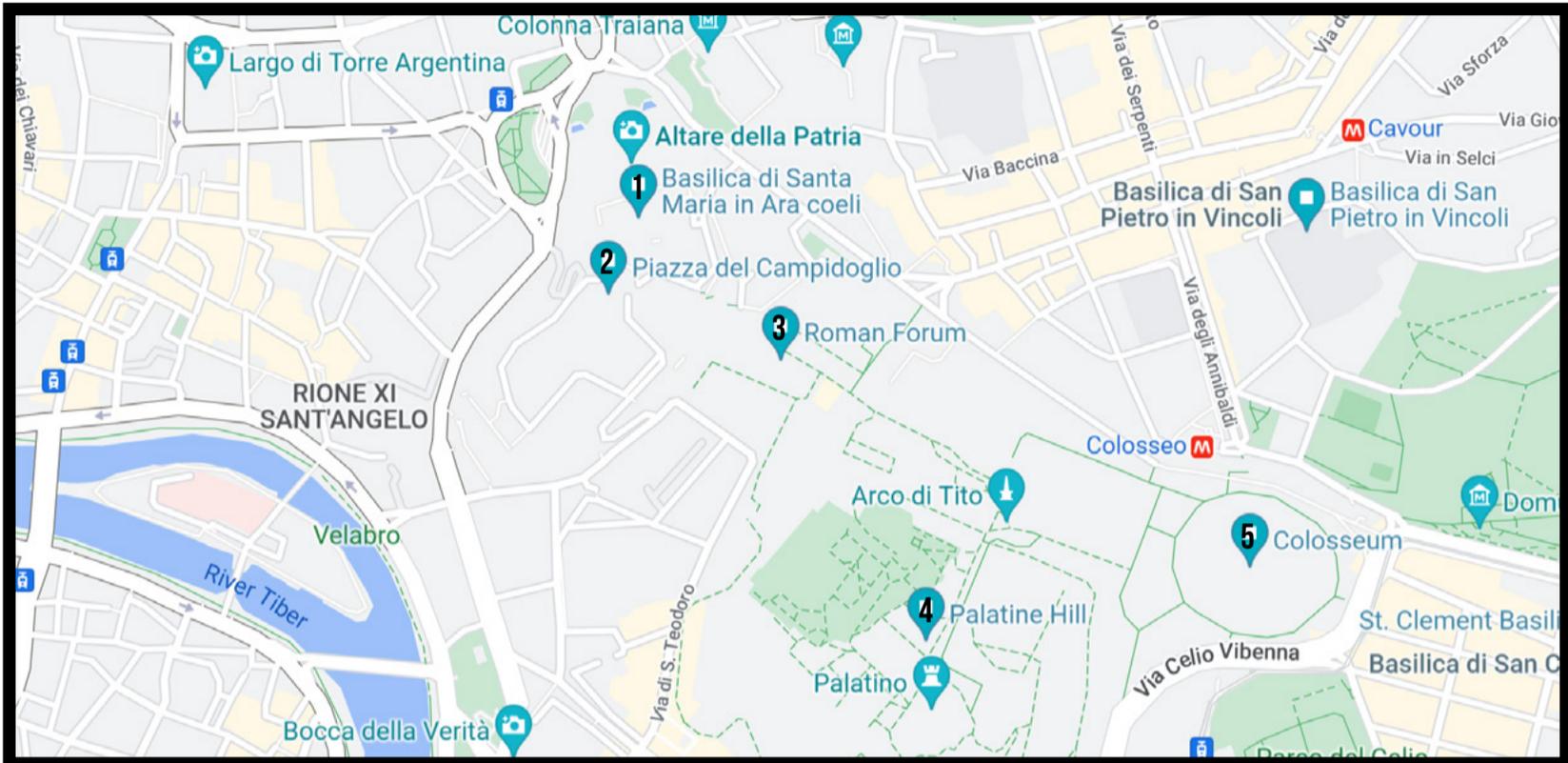
- 01. BASILICA OF THE HOLY CROSS IN JERUSALEM** 🔊
- 02. BASILICA OF ST. JOHN LATERANO** 🔊
- 03. SCALA SANTA** 🔊
- 04. SANTI QUATTRO CORONATI**
- 05. BASILICA OF ST. CLEMENT**
- 06. BASILICA OF STS. JOHN & PAUL**
- 07. BASILICA OF STS. NEREUS & ACHILLEUS**

ROUTE 3

[AUDIO GUIDES](#)[SHOW IN GOOGLE MAPS](#)

01. BASILICA OF ST. MARY MAJOR 
02. BASILICA OF SANTA PRAXEDES
03. BASILICA DEI SANTI SILVESTRO E MARTINO AI MONTI
04. SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI
05. ESQUILINO

ROUTE 4



[AUDIO GUIDES](#)

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01. BASILICA DI SANTA MARIA IN ARA COELI

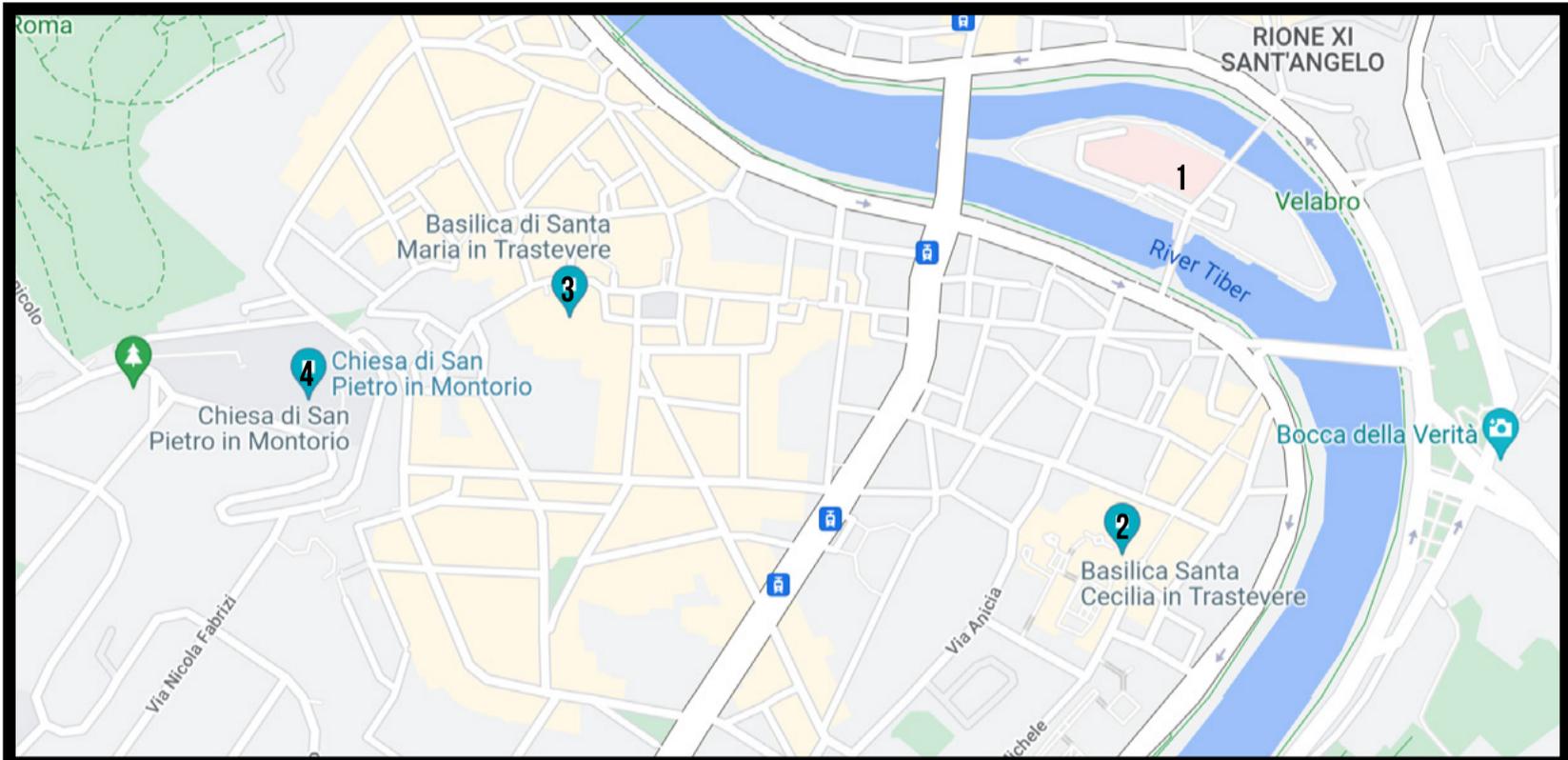
02. PIAZZA DEL CAMPIDOGLIO

03. ROMAN FORUM 

04. PALATINE HILL

05. COLOSSEUM 

ROUTE 5


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01. TIBER ISLAND

02. TRASTEVERE 🔊

03. BASILICA OF SANTA CECILIA IN TRASTEVERE

04. BASILICA OF OUR LADY IN TRASTEVERE 🔊

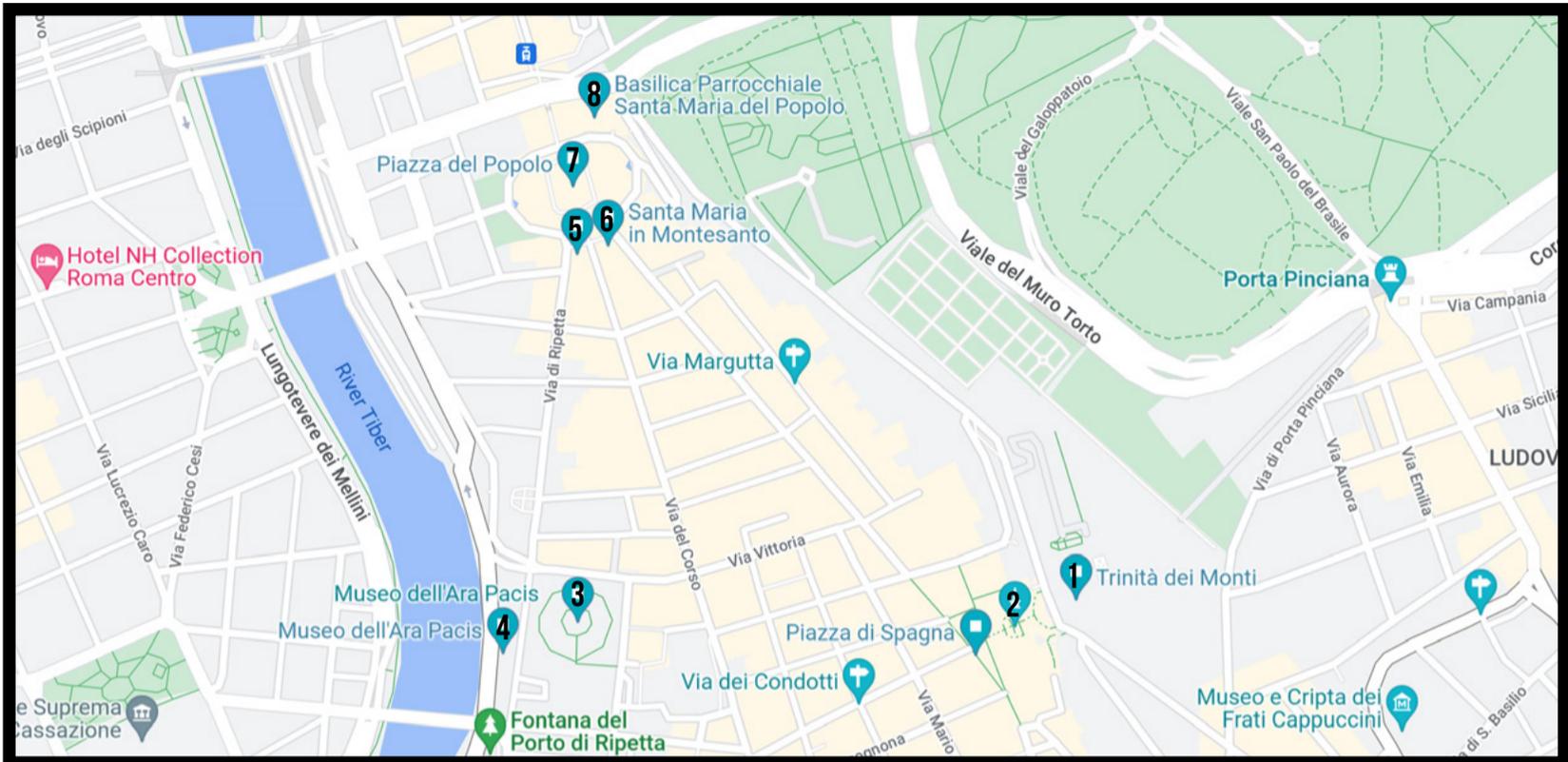
05. SAN PIETRO IN MONTORIO

ROUTE 6


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- 01. PIAZZA NAVONA 
- 02. ST. LOUIS OF THE FRENCH
- 03. PANTHEON 
- 04. BASILICA OF ST. MARIA SOPRA MINERVA 
- 05. CHURCH IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
- 06. TREVI FOUNTAIN 
- 07. BASILICA OF THE HOLY APOSTLES
- 08. CHIESA DEL GESÙ

ROUTE 7



[AUDIO GUIDES](#)

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01. TRINITÀ DEI MONTI
02. PIAZZA DI SPAGNA 
03. MAUSOLEO DI AUGUSTO
04. ARA PACIS
05. SANTA MARIA DEI MIRACOLI
06. SANTA MARIA IN MONTESANTO
07. PIAZZA DEL POPOLO 
08. SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO