

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem encloses many of the places associated with the events of Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. There are chapels devoted to various persons and events from this - such as the Chapel of Mary Magdalene, the Chapel of the Tearing of the Garments ... there are also chapels for the many different church groups, such as Armenians, Greeks, Latins (that's us), Coptics, Franks, Ethiopians, Syrians ...

There is an altar built over what is believed to be the Rock of Calvary.

And there's a chapel built around the Holy Sepulcher - the Tomb where Jesus was placed - and where after three days He rose from the dead.

The entrance to this chapel has a low door - so low, that you practically have to get down on your hands and knees to enter.

While I've never been to the Holy Land, this chapel is at the Franciscan Holy Land shrine which is near the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC.

Outside of Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, at the Church of the Nativity - built around what is believed to be the stable where Jesus was born - visitors have to enter through what is called "The Door of Humility." Historically, this door was made low and narrow to keep out thieves who would load up carts with the precious objects in the church, and steal them.

In our own time, the presence of this door requires that all those who enter the Church of the Nativity bow to get in.

In the Gospel, Jesus says:

*Strive to enter through the narrow gate,
for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter
but will not be strong enough.*

The word here which is rendered in English as "**strong**" has many Greek meanings ...

to be **strong** in body, to be robust, to be in sound health
to have **power** as shown by **extraordinary** deeds
to **exert, wield power**, to have **strength** to **overcome**

The power that is being spoken of ... the extraordinary deed ... what requires exertion to overcome ... the ability that many who can only attempt but are lacking is ... HUMILITY

Can we get on our hands and knees to “see the place where Jesus was laid” as in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem?

Do we have the humility to bow down to see where He was born at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem?

There are an awful lot of people are too proud to “*enter through the narrow gate.*”

Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said in answer to the question of WHY DID GOD BECOME A HUMAN BEING IN JESUS CHRIST?

He answers his own question this way: “HE DID NOT COME TO MAKE US NICE PEOPLE ... HE CAME TO MAKE US NEW MEN ... TO CHANGE OUR NATURES.”

Do we have the humility to allow God to TRANSFORM US? Are we strong enough to be humble? Will we be blocked by our own strong-wills and fail in our attempt? Are we be unable to come to Christ because we aren't strong enough to overcome our own fear or pride?

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us STRIVE to enter through that NARROW GATE. Let us approach these Holy Mysteries with HUMILITY and AWE. And if we find that we are lacking in the STRENGTH to be HUMBLE - let us ask Our Lord ... Jesus who became a little baby to save us ... Christ who endured the suffering on the Cross for our salvation ... let us ask HIM for HIS STRENGTH to be HUMBLE enough to come to Him, HUMBLE enough to receive His grace ... HUMBLE enough to be transformed by the love and mercy of the Most Holy Trinity.

O Jesus MEEK and HUMBLE of HEART;
Make our hearts like unto THINE.