



# EASTER SUNDAY

## *Resurrection- the Beginning and the End*

It was Holy Week in Jerusalem in 1990. I was living in the Arab section of the Old City right on the Via Dolorosa. The residence, Ecce Homo, was a Centre for Biblical Studies, run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion, a part of whose mission was to foster better relations between Jews and Christians.

There may have been some tensions between Christians and Jews, but between Palestinians and Jews at that time there was a positive enmity, and nothing has changed since then. It was dangerous for a recognisable, unarmed Jew to walk through the Arab section, and most would avoid it if they could.

A Jewish biologist had arrived in Jerusalem from Italy where he and his Catholic wife and family were living. He and his wife were friends of the Sisters at Ecce Homo, and in order to understand better his wife's faith, he asked if someone would explain to him the Stations of the Cross, which he knew were along the Via Dolorosa.

The task was delegated to me, and I was very aware of the sensitivity needed in explaining the drama of the Via Dolorosa to a Jew. I was aware also, that

he may have felt some insecurity, although his Jewishness was not apparent.

So, we set off from the Judgement Seat of Pilate, almost opposite Ecce Homo, and made our way along the old narrow cobbled street, the way of the cross crowded with pilgrims, especially from Cypress at that time of the year, many women dressed entirely in black. My Jewish companion was interested and asked questions at various Stations and didn't seem to take exception to the sometimes-over-emotional pilgrims.

We arrived at Calvary and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and stood in the long line of people waiting to enter the tomb. He whispered to me, "Is this the end"? and before I had a chance to reply, a man in front of us half turned and said:

'No, my friend, this is not the end. This is the beginning.'

I don't know what my Jewish friend made of that statement, but for me it was a moment of grace that I have never forgotten.

**Margaret Gillespie rsj**