

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is a church in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The church contains, according to traditions dating back to at least the fourth century, the two holiest sites in Christianity: the site where Jesus was crucified, at a place known as Calvary or Golgotha, and Jesus' empty tomb, where He was buried and resurrected. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335. Every year, the Eastern Orthodox Church celebrates the anniversary of the Dedication of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ. Following the siege of 70 AD during the First Jewish–Roman War, Jerusalem had been reduced to ruins. After seeing a vision of a cross in the sky in 312, Constantine the Great converted to Christianity, signed the Edict of Milan legalizing the religion, and sent his mother Helena to Jerusalem to look for Christ's tomb. Three crosses were found near a tomb, leading the Romans to believe that they had found Calvary. Constantine ordered, in about 326, that the temple to Jupiter/Venus be replaced by a church. After the temple was torn down and its ruins removed, the soil was removed from the cave, revealing a rock-cut tomb that Helena and Macarius identified as the burial site of Jesus, around which a shrine was constructed. In 327, Constantine and Helena separately commissioned the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to commemorate the birth of Jesus. Within the church proper are the last four stations of the Via Dolorosa, representing the final episodes of the Passion of Jesus. The church has been a major Christian pilgrimage destination since its creation in the fourth century, as the traditional site of the resurrection of Christ.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was built as separate constructs over the two holy sites: the great basilica an enclosed colonnaded atrium (the *Tripotico*) with the traditional site of Calvary in one corner, and across a courtyard, a rotunda called the *Anastasis* ("Resurrection"), where Helena and Macarius believed Jesus to have been buried. On October 18, 1009, Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the complete destruction of the church as part of a more general campaign against Christian places of worship in Palestine and Egypt. In wide-ranging negotiations an agreement was reached whereby the new Caliph Ali az-Zahir (Al-Hakim's son) agreed to allow the rebuilding and redecoration of the church. The rebuilding was finally completed at a huge expense in 1048. The rebuilt church site consisted of "a court open to the sky, with five small chapels attached to it."

The Altar of the Crucifixion, where the rock of Calvary is encased in protective glass. Renovations unified the small chapels on the site and were completed in 1149, placing all the holy places under one roof for the first time. In 1545, the upper level of the church's bell tower collapsed. The Franciscan friars renovated the church in 1555, as it had been neglected despite increased numbers of pilgrims. The Franciscans rebuilt the *Aedicule*, extending the structure to create an antechamber. A marble shrine was placed to envelop the remains of Christ's tomb, probably to prevent pilgrims from touching the original rock or taking small pieces as souvenirs. A marble slab was placed over the limestone burial bed where Jesus' body is believed to have lain. Another decree in 1853 from the sultan solidified the existing territorial division among the communities and the Status Quo for arrangements to "remain in their present state," causing differences of opinion about even minor changes. This is exemplified in the immovable ladder under one of the windows; it has remained in the same position since at least 1757, aside from two occasions of temporary removal. The dome was restored by Catholics, Greeks and Turks in 1868, being made of iron ever since. After seven decades of being held together by steel girders, a careful restoration of the Aedicule was finally agreed upon and executed in 2016–17, funded by \$4 million from King Abdullah II of Jordan and a \$1.3 million from Mica Ertegun. For the first time since at least 1555, marble cladding that protected the supposed burial bed of Jesus from vandalism and souvenir takers was removed. When the cladding was first removed on October 26, the National Technical University of Athens team found only a layer of fill material underneath. By the night of October 28, the original limestone burial bed was revealed intact. This suggested that the tomb location has not changed through time and confirmed the existence of the original limestone cave walls within the Aedicule. The tomb was resealed shortly thereafter. Today, the wider complex around the Church of the Holy Sepulcher also serves as the headquarters of the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem, while control of the church itself is shared among several Christian denominations and secular entities in complicated arrangements essentially unchanged for over 160 years, and some for much longer. The main denominations sharing property over parts of the church are the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian Apostolic, and to a lesser degree the Coptic Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox. On March 25, 2020, Israeli health officials ordered the site closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the keeper of the keys, it was the first such closure since 1349, during the Black Death. Clerics continued regular prayers inside the building, and it reopened to visitors two months later on May 24.