

May 26, 2025

# Daily Reflections

*Journeying through Easter*



Center for Spiritual Development

## JOYFUL EXPLORATIONS

By Julie Mussché

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### An Excerpt from the New Testament

*"We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard that you trust in Christ Jesus and that you love all of God's people.... This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is changing lives everywhere...."*

**COLOSSIANS 1:3-4, 6**

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### Reflection

Our ship glided toward the Sea of Marmara, edging into the Bosphorus Strait as we made our way to port in Istanbul. The gentle morning sun highlighted the magnificent architecture of the ancient city: the *Sultan Ahmed Mosque*, or *Blue Mosque*, the *Topkapi Palace* and the *Hagia Sophia* interrupted the horizon with the beauty of an ancient skyline. We could hardly wait to disembark. This

is where Europe and Asia meet, where cultures converge and speak to the rich history imprinted on the landscape. This is where Paul ventured to spread the Good News and where the seeds of Christianity were planted and burst forth to arise in Nicaea as the Church. It was also the seat of the Ottoman Empire or Caliphate which held sway in Southeast Europe, North Africa and Southwest Asia.

Our traveling party spent several days in Istanbul exploring and enjoying the splendor of the city. A dinner cruise on the Bosphorus took us right up to the entry of the Black Sea. A bridge joined Europe with Asia and we marveled at the buildings along the water's periphery. The following day we toured the city, which included stops at multiple places of worship. The *Hagia Sophia*, The Church of Holy Wisdom, was perhaps the highlight, at least for me. Built in 537, it was the center of the Holy Roman Empire, has been an Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church, a Mosque and a museum. While visiting there, it was a museum and more recently it had been converted back to a Mosque. The architectural features, from the interior to the exterior, reflect the many changes the building has undergone. On entering the building, one could sense the Sacred and the many souls who had worshiped and left their imprint on the character of the building.

Fondly bidding adieu to Istanbul, our ship forged into the Aegean Sea as we made our way to the island of Mykonos in Greece. I couldn't help but think of St. Paul as I stared out at the vast horizon of open water. What must it have been like traveling the trade ports of the Mediterranean during the First Century? I can only imagine how exciting and daunting it must have been to be spreading the Good News to people and places diverse and perhaps unknown. No doubt prayer buoyed Paul as he made his way, evangelizing and baptizing new disciples throughout Asia Minor. The following day, our ship would be heading to Ephesus, where Paul again ministered to the people. Oh, joyous explorations!

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## For Pondering

- When has your heart been broken open to God's unfolding story of relationship with humankind?
  - Take a moment to reflect on the following:  
"Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be 'catholic.' She can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love." Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 278
  - What is your understanding and vision of the Church throughout the world?
  - How are you invited by the Spirit to universal love?
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## For Prayer

*Lord, Father of our human family,  
you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,*

*dialogue, justice and peace.  
Move us to create healthier societies  
and a more dignified world,  
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.  
May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams.  
Amen.*

**POPE FRANCIS, FRATELLI TUTTI**

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