



The **Seven Churches Visitation** also known as **Visita Iglesia** is a ancient pious Roman Catholic Lenten tradition to visit seven churches on the evening of Holy Thursday. On Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, following the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Blessed Sacrament, is reserved on the Altar of Repose in the church for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. During the Seven Churches Visitation or Visita Iglesia, the faithful visit several churches – sometimes seven, sometimes fourteen, sometimes no set number depending upon the particular practice – to pray before the Blessed Sacrament in each church.

## Practice

After the Mass of the Lord's Supper, during which Christians remember Jesus Christ's last meal with his Apostles on the night that he was arrested, the faithful remember Jesus's Agony in the Garden.<sup>[6]</sup> After the mass, the main and most side altars are stripped; all crosses are either removed or covered; the Blessed Sacrament is placed in a tabernacle on the Altar of Repose, and churches are open late for silent adoration.<sup>[2]</sup> This is response to request Jesus made to his apostles while they were in the Garden, as recorded in Gospel of Matthew 26:40, "Could you not, then, watch one hour with me?"<sup>[6]</sup>

The those who practice this visitation leave the church where they attended the Mass of the Lord's Supper and travel to nearby churches to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. This occurs most frequently in urban areas where churches are close proximity making traveling easier. There are no set of prayers given by the Catholic Church except to pray for the intentions of the Pope and recite the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary and Gloria Patri. People also opt to pray the Stations of the Cross.

Philip Neri, drew up an itinerary in order to combine conviviality and the sharing of a common religious experience by discovering of the heritage of the early Saints. In modern times, pilgrimages are often arranged by parish organizations and co-ordinated with other parishes in the area.<sup>[1][7]</sup>