

GARDEN



Jesus, after finishing the meal with his disciples during which he conveyed to them his spiritual testament, left the Cenacle and descended towards the Kidron Valley to begin the path that would take him to the Cross. And he came to a garden, to which Mark and Matthew give the name Gethsemane (Mark 14:32; Matt 26:36). The place was probably a cultivated plot of land surrounded by a stone wall, like the countless ones that are to be found even today in the Holy Land.

John uses the term “garden (in Greek *kêpos*) and indicates that Jesus frequently retired there with his disciples. Like Adam, Jesus faced temptation in a garden, and a garden was also to be the place in which he would be buried (John 18:1-2). The theological theme of Jesus as the new Adam, which St. Paul takes up in his Letter to the Romans (Rom 5:12-21), is closely connected to the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

God created Adam as the first man, in his image and likeness, and placed him in the Garden of Eden, the place in which he was tempted and where he sinned by eating the prohibited fruit (Gen 2:8-15; 3:24).

Adam's sin fell on all humanity, but God placed a second person in the Garden, his son Jesus. The new Adam who carried out the will of the Father went freely to meet his persecutors so that that man could recover his likeness with God. Through his obedience to the Father (Heb 10:5ff.), and overcoming Satan's temptation, he became the new Adam and reopened the garden, the place that God had intended for man, the place of the Song of Songs in which the bridegroom encounters his bride. The garden that Jesus reopened is, in fact, the place in which the encounter with God becomes love and the New Covenant.