

The Bridge of Sighs, Venice



Built in 1614, the "Ponte dei Sospiri" connected directly the inquisitor's offices in the Doge's palace to the "New Prisons"- the first building in the world to be designed specifically to serve only for detention.

Unfortunately, detention often meant death, due to the harsh conditions, the humidity and the cold within the stone walls of the prison.

Therefore the name "Bridge of Sighs" reputedly refers to the heavy sighs of convicts who, crossing the bridge to go to prison, knew they were probably seeing Venice for the last time. Convicts were not just losing their liberty, they knew that often they would also lose their lives.

This reminds me of the pain and suffering that Jesus suffered on our behalf.

The prophet Isaiah describes Jesus as **"despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering"** (NIV Isaiah 53 v 3).

And in the garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion Jesus struggled in His torment:

"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (NIV Mark 14 vs 34 -36)

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as if there were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (NIV Luke 22 v 44)

Surely Jesus took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. (NIV Isaiah 53 vs 4-6)