

# Book highlights reflections from pilgrimages to the Holy Land

"In the Footsteps of Christ: A Saxum Experience" was launched in Punlaan School. It features the reflections of 50 women on various Holy Sites they visited in Israel.

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SAN JUAN CITY, PHILIPPINES - On July 11, 2025, Punlaan School hosted the formal launch of *In the*

## *Footsteps of Christ: A Saxum Experience.*

The book features 90 reflections, with corresponding immersive photographs, by 50 pilgrims who visited the Holy Land. It centers on the theme “Saxum,” the Latin word for “large stone,” referencing both the physical and symbolic significance of stones in Scripture.

The event gathered contributors, diplomats, clergy, and supporters to commemorate a project rooted in pilgrimage and prayer.

Special guests were His Excellency Ambassador Ilan Fluss of the State of Israel, Commissioner on Human Rights Maria Amifaith S. Fider-Reyes (a contributor of the book) and His Excellency Bishop Elias Ayuban Jr. of the Diocese of Cubao. The Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in the Philippines, Rev. Fr. Julio Dieguez, also graced the occasion.

Editor Dr. Cristine Margaret Atienza described the project as a collaborative effort. “This book is the fruit of a remarkable collaboration among women who have journeyed to Israel,” she said. “It is not merely a publication; it is a testament of faith, hope, and love.”

In his message, Bishop Elias Ayuban reflected on the biblical use of stones as altars, memorials, and foundations. He explained that “to build on Christ, the cornerstone, is to build on what endures.” He cited scriptural examples from Noah, Jacob, and Abraham, emphasizing stones as reminders of both memory and mission.

Ambassador Ilan Fluss noted the Holy Land’s significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. “I am a Jew. And Jesus was a Jew, too,” he said, highlighting the shared religious roots and the spiritual resonance of

pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land. He acknowledged the Philippines' 1947 vote supporting the State of Israel and the country's hospitality to Jewish refugees during World War II. "The Filipino people are known for their devotion, their reverence, and their humanity. That is deeply felt in Israel," Fluss added.

This book is intended as an informative and inspirational resource for those who will be going to the Holy Land. Those who have gone and may not go will find in it material to go deep into the significance of the Holy Sites and draw spiritual fruits.

Punlaan School is a technical-vocational institution for young women, established in 1975 by women inspired by the teachings of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei. They are celebrating their golden anniversary this year.

To inquire or to order a copy of *In the Footsteps of Christ: A Saxum Experience*, send email to [inthefootstepsofchrist.ph@gmail.com](mailto:inthefootstepsofchrist.ph@gmail.com) or contact Times Activity Center at 0919-478-0357.

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