

# Visit these 12 pilgrimage sites close to Metro Manila during Holy Week

by Jillian CariolaPublished: March 17, 2016Updated: March 17, 2016

During your pilgrimage this Lenten season, don't forget to include these sites to your spiritual journey.



As a culture deeply rooted in religion, Filipinos take it upon themselves to exercise their faith during Holy Week by committing to a *Visita Iglesia*, an ancient Roman Catholic practice of visiting seven churches on Holy Thursday. But while people typically flock places of worship close by during these days, it's not uncommon to make a spiritual journey beyond Metro Manila, and where they're certainly not confined within the four walls of a church or cathedral.

Here are 12 places to add to your *Visita Iglesia* itinerary that are a just a few hours away from the metro, and also happen to let you be one with nature.

## **BULACAN**

### **Banal na Bundok**

Situated on a 60-hectare property in San Miguel's historical Biak-na-Bato is Banal na Bundok, named for its resemblance to Jesus Christ when viewed from afar. After climbing up a long flight of stairs, one is greeted with life-size depictions of the Stations of the Cross, as well as life-size statues of angels, the way of the cross, and various other religious images. After paying your respects, you can check out other attractions within the vicinity, such as the Noah's Ark Wildlife & Rehabilitation Park and numerous souvenir shops.

## **Kapitagan flogging and crucifixion site**

The municipality of Paombong, more specifically the town of Kapitagan, is a popular tourist stop and pilgrimage site during Lenten season. Here, spectators witness devout Catholics flagellate and/or have themselves crucified as their way of sharing Christ's pain. Crucifixions can also be witnessed in other locations in the province, such as Santissima Trinidad in Malolos and San Miguel's Banal na Bundok.

## **Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto**

A famous religious and ecological tourist attraction in San Jose del Monte, the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto is an exact replica of the Lourdes Grotto in France, where the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. Created in 1963 at the 20-hectare farm of Anita Guidote-Guanzon, the shrine consists of a statue of Mary made of solid marble placed in a niche on the mountainside, as well as an amphitheater where devotees can sit in silence and prayer. Also found in the site are two churches, Rosary Hill and its famous giant Rosary beads, and the life-size tableaux of the Stations of the Cross.



*Aside from personal prayers, masses can also be heard at Bulacan's Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto (Photo from Judgefloro/Wikimedia Commons)*

## **LAGUNA**

### **Tatlong Krus**

Here's a treat for expert or novice mountaineers: located at the top of Mount Humarap in Paete, Tatlong Krus is a set of three concrete crosses. From this lookout point, devotees can also enjoy a panoramic view of Laguna de Bay, the town of Paete, and Mount Sembrano. Another attraction nearby is Matabungka Falls, a waterfall around 25 meters high, where devotees head to for a swim after having paid a visit to Tatlong Krus.

## **Tayak Hill**

Marked by two crosses and situated in Barangay Tala in Rizal (not the province), Tayak Hill has an interesting history that dates back to World War II. Tayak Hill also used to be home to a 300-meter landing strip and was also a drop-off point for provision and ammo. Now more popularly known as a site for devotees, it's also a haven trekkers and bike riders, with a panoramic view that includes Mount Cristobal, Mount Makiling, and the Malarayat Range.

## **Field of Faith**

Found at the foot of a mountain in Barangay Lamot 2 in Calauan, Field of Faith is a four-hectare property built in 2004 by former Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Gabriel Singson and his wife, writer Moonyeen. One of its most well-known areas is the Rosary Path, which visitors can tread while praying the rosary or getting enlightenment from the inspirational quotes lining the path. The Labyrinth is a walk where people can try the early Christian method of prayer and meditation. Devotees can complete their experience by checking out the sites other attractions, such as the Stations of the Cross on coconut trees, Shekinah wishing walls, and a luminous cross on a hill.

## **PAMPANGA**

### **Cutud flogging and crucifixion site**

Another location in the Philippines known for its crucifixion rites is San Pedro Cutud in San Fernando, where people can witness the locals' re-enactment of the passion and death of Christ. As part of their panata or vow, penitents ("magdarame" in Kapampangan) are willingly crucified after going through other practices such as carrying a wooden cross, crawling on the pavement, and self-flagellation. Its most active participant is Filipino carpenter Ruben Enaje, who has been crucified every year on Good Friday since 1985.



*According to participants, getting crucified during Holy Week is their way of sharing Christ's suffering. (Photo from Shutterstock)*

## **Banal Na Bunduk, Dalan Ning Krus**

Located at the foot of Mount Arayat in the municipality of Magalang is a pilgrimage site called Banal Na Bunduk, Dalan Ning Krus, which translates to “Holy Mountain, Way of the Cross.” Banal Na Bunduk features a life-sized version of the 14 Stations of the Cross, a project led by Soroptimism International of Magalang. After following the Stations, you can continue your journey of renewing your faith at the summit, a four-hour trek that rewards you with a view of sites like the Pampanga River, Zambales, and Bataan.

## **RIZAL**

### **Regina RICA**

Also known as Regina Rosarii, Regina RICA is a 13.5-hectare land at the foot of the Sierra Madre Mountains in Tanay founded by the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Regina Rosarii. Said to be “a place of prayer, an ecological sanctuary, and a wellness environment,” Regina RICA is marked by a 71-foot statue Our Lady on Top of the Hill, which contains SULOD or the Sanctuary of Universal Love and Devotion. Pilgrims are also free to explore Regina RICA’s other facilities, which include the chapel, Labyrinth walk, Way of the Cross, and organic garden. Regina Rica is open from 8am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays.



*Our Lady On Top of the Hill is a 71-foot image of the Blessed Mary in Regina RICA.  
(Photo from Timothy Soriano/Flickr Creative Commons)*

## **Ang Kalbaryo (Calvary Hill)**

You don't have to fly to Jerusalem for this one; Calvary Hill is located in Barangay Libid in Binangonan, a mere 15-minute walk or 5-minute tricycle ride from Sta. Ursula Church. After climbing up the hill via a flight of stairs composed of over a hundred steps, you end up in front of a glass-enclosed statue of the Blessed Mary, a 15-foot steel cross right behind it, the remains of an old chapel, and a vast view of Laguna lake and the entire municipality.

## **BATANGAS**

### **Marian Orchard in Balete, Batangas**

Built on a five-hectare land at Barangay Malabanan in Balete, Marian Orchard is a spiritual garden brimming with trees and flowers as well as a replica of Brazil's towering Christ the Redeemer. Aside from a chapel, other elements contributing to the site's peaceful atmosphere are a meditation garden, rosary garden, fountains, and a Garden of Saints.

## **QUEZON**

### **Kamay ni Hesus**

Barangay Tinamnan in Lucban is a busy tourist destination all year round because of Kamay ni Hesus, a five-hectare shrine. The mere trek to the top of the Via Dolorosa Grotto is a sacrifice in itself; the stairs leading up is composed of about 300 steps and brings you to the foot of the 50-foot-high statue of the Ascending Christ, currently one of the tallest depictions of Christ in the world. On the property, you can also visit other sites such as Luklukan ni Maria, a portion dedicated to the Blessed Mary; and Noah's Ark, a retreat house. At the Healing Church, healing masses are celebrated by Rev. Fr. Joseph Ayala Faller on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 9:30 am.



*A 50-foot image of the Ascending Christ is the highlight of the Via Dolorosa grotto in Kamay ni Hesus. (Photo from the Kamay Ni Hesus official website)*

Sources: [diaryongtagalog.net](http://diaryongtagalog.net), [theboylostinthecity.blogspot.com](http://theboylostinthecity.blogspot.com), [inquirer.net](http://inquirer.net), [pinoymountaineer.com](http://pinoymountaineer.com), [ivanlakwatsero.com](http://ivanlakwatsero.com), [humanfacebyceres.blogspot.com](http://humanfacebyceres.blogspot.com), [pinoyadventurista.com](http://pinoyadventurista.com), [reginarica.org](http://reginarica.org), [raindeocampo.com](http://raindeocampo.com), [rappler.com](http://rappler.com), [facebook.com/BanalNaBundukDalanNingKrus](https://facebook.com/BanalNaBundukDalanNingKrus), [thepinaywanderer.com](http://thepinaywanderer.com), [biyaherongbarat.com](http://biyaherongbarat.com), [kamaynihesus.ph](http://kamaynihesus.ph)

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