

THE TREE OF JESSE

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The *Igreja de São Francisco* (Church of St. Francisco) was built 800 years ago on a ledge overlooking the Douro River in Porto, Portugal. 500 years later in the early 1700s, the people of Porto devoted themselves to making its interior supremely magnificent.

Most breathtaking is the polychrome wood carving depicting The Tree of Jesse springing from the reclining body of Jesse of Bethlehem, the father of King David, and showing the genealogy of Jesus through the branches of the tree that are the Twelve Kings of Judah, ending with Joseph and above him the Virgin and Child. Above the Tree to the ceiling is intricately carved woodwork deeply covered with hundreds of pounds of gold leaf.

This masterpiece of baroque art is an awesome tribute to the importance of Christianity to Western Civilization. To experience the power of this masterpiece yourself, come with us on our next exploration of Portugal this coming March. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #234 photo ©Jack Wheeler*)

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