



# PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY

*March 17-26, 2011*

*This itinerary may need to be adjusted, due to situations beyond our control. What will not change is that we will visit holy places, give God plenty of time to work on us, and when we return home, we will have faces and stories of Palestinian Christians – the “living stones” of the Holy Land deeply embedded in our heads and hearts.*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 17: Travel to Tel Aviv**

Our pilgrimage begins today as we fly to the Holy Land to walk in the very footsteps of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are meals and movies in flight, as well as some conversation and sleep.

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 18: Tel Aviv, Bethlehem**

When we arrive at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv we will be met by our guide after clearing Israeli customs and immigration. We travel by bus to Bethlehem. If time permits we will celebrate our first Mass together in the Holy Land at the local Catholic parish of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Beit Sahour. Dinner and overnight at our hotel in Bethlehem.

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 19: Bethlehem**

We begin the day with a visit to the Milk Grotto Shrine of the Motherhood of Mary to offer prayers. Our next stop is the Church of the Nativity to visit the birthplace of Jesus and celebrate Mass in the Franciscan parish of St. Catherine of Alexandria—where midnight Mass is televised all over the world. After lunch we drive to Shepherd’s Field in Beit Sahour where the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of the Savior. Along the way we will have a chance to take a close look at the Separation Wall encircling Bethlehem. In late afternoon there is time for some shopping at a souvenir store owned by Bethlehem Christians which supports over fifty Christian families—the “Living Stones.” Dinner and overnight at our hotel in Bethlehem.

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 20: Jerusalem, Ein Kerem**

We begin our day entering the Old City of Jerusalem through the Dung Gate to visit the Western Wall (the holiest shrine and synagogue in the world for the Jews) and the Temple Mount, the site of the golden Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam’s third most sacred site. We will proceed to the opposite side to St. Stephen’s Gate to visit the Pools of Bethesda where Jesus healed the sick man. The Pools are located adjacent to the Crusader Church of St. Anne (the birthplace of Mary) where we will celebrate Mass. Next we will visit the Chapel of Flagellation, the Ecce Homo Arch and the Lithostrotos at the Convent of the Sisters of Zion. After lunch we drive to Ein Kerem in the beautiful hill country of Judah to visit the Church of the Visitation, where Mary visited Elizabeth and proclaimed her famous “Magnificat”. Also in Ein Kerem we will visit the Church of John the Baptist on the site where the Forerunner of the Messiah was born. Our tour continues with a visit to the Israel Museum. There we will visit the famous Shrine of the Book to see the Dead Scrolls. We conclude by visiting the scale model of Jerusalem from the Second Temple Period. Dinner and overnight at our hotel in Jerusalem.

## **MONDAY, MARCH 21: Mount of Olives**

This morning we will proceed to the Mount of Olives by visiting the Church of Pater Noster (where Jesus taught the disciples the Lord’s Prayer). From there we begin our walk to the Garden of Gethsemane on the traditional route of the Palm Sunday procession as we make our way to the Church of Dominus Flevit (where Jesus wept over Jerusalem). We will then descend to the Garden of Gethsemane where we will take our time for private prayer, silent meditation, Confession if desired, all in a beautiful private area of the Garden overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem. Mass will be celebrated at the Church of Gethsemane (Church of Agony or Church of All Nations). After lunch we will visit the Grotto where Judah gave Jesus the kiss of betrayal and then Mary’s Tomb. We return to our hotel in Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 22: Jerusalem, Mt. Zion**

We begin our day very early in the morning by prayerfully walking the Via Dolorosa (Way of the Cross) in the footsteps of Jesus, the Suffering Servant, through the narrow alleys and bazaars of the Old City. We end at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrate the Mass of the Resurrection and have more time for prayer and meditation. After Mass there will be time for a more extensive tour and an opportunity to visit the Tomb of Christ before returning to our hotel for

rest. After lunch we travel to Mt. Zion in the Holy City of Jerusalem. We first visit the Church of the Dormition (the “falling asleep” of Mary). We then walk a short distance to visit the reconstructed site of the Cenacle (Upper Room) where Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist, the Priesthood and the Holy Spirit. Our next stop will be at the Church of St. Peter Gallicantu (“cock-crow) where Peter denied Jesus. Here, we will walk the ancient sacred steps Jesus walked on. The rest of the afternoon is free for exploring and shopping in the Old City. We return to our Jerusalem hotel for dinner and overnight.

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23: Bethany, Dead Sea, Jericho, Nazareth**

We say good-bye to Jerusalem go to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, to visit the Tomb of Lazarus and the beautiful Latin Church. We proceed to Jericho by traveling through the Judean Desert and call to mind the desert monasticism of the early Church. On our way we will visit the beautiful Dead Sea and enjoy a refreshing dip at what is the lowest point in the world. Arriving in Jericho, we remember Zacchaeus and Bartimaeus and call to mind the temptations of Jesus as we view Quruntul Monastery on the side of the mountain. Remembering Joshua leading his people to the Promised Land, we can view the old city walls of Tel Jericho as we rest for lunch. After lunch we travel to the Galilee region where we enjoy the rest of the day in Nazareth. We celebrate Mass at the beautiful Basilica of the Annunciation and visit St. Joseph’s Church, the grotto home of the Holy Family. We continue by bus for our dinner and overnight on the Mt. of Beatitudes.

### **THURSDAY, MARCH 24: Mount of Beatitudes, Sea of Galilee, Capernaum**

After breakfast we begin the day with a morning Mass on the Mt. of Beatitudes. Then we travel to the Sea of Galilee and board a boat for a ride on the Sea, stopping to rock on the waves, to feel the wind, and remember The One whom “even the wind and the sea obey”. Next we visit Capernaum, which Jesus considered “home” and where he healed so many and taught so much, and where we see an ancient synagogue and the remains of Peter’s house and join in a healing service at the church there. After enjoying a traditional lunch of “St. Peter’s fish”, we visit Tabgha, the site of the multiplication of the fishes and the loaves and visit St. Peter’s Primacy, the place along the shore where Jesus three times asked Peter (and asks us), “Do you love me”? There is time for an optional walk along the Sea of Galilee from Tabgha to Capernaum before returning to the Mt. of Beatitudes for dinner and overnight.

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 25: Mt. Tabor, Cana, Jordan River**

We begin our day by visiting Mt. Tabor, the most striking mountain in Galilee and the place chosen by Jesus to be the site of his Transfiguration, for Mass and a time of reflection. After descending the holy mountain we board our bus to visit the church at Cana, the site of Jesus’ first miracle. After celebrating the renewal of wedding vows and giving thanks for all of the blessings of our pilgrimage, there is an opportunity to shop for wedding wine and crafts. After lunch, our final pilgrimage stop will be at the Jordan River to experience the renewal of our baptismal promises. Here we gain strength for living our baptisms back home as we prepare to return home to Little Rock. Dinner and overnight at the Mt. of Beatitudes.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 26: Return from Tel Aviv to Little Rock**

After an early Mass and breakfast we enjoy one last scenic view of the Holy Land from our bus as we catch our flight in Tel Aviv for our return flight home.