

## ***On Holy Ground: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus and the First Deacons***

### **Pilgrimage Itinerary**

#### **Day 1 Thursday, April 28: Depart U.S.A.**

Our spiritual pilgrimage begins as pilgrims depart from Chicago O'Hare International Airport on a direct, overnight flight to Ben Gurion airport, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Dinner (D), breakfast (B), and lunch (L) served in transit.

#### **Day 2 Friday, April 29: Arrive Tel Aviv | Jaffa | Netanya**

After arrival at Ben Gurion airport, **we'll be welcomed by our spiritual guides, Franciscan Fathers Louis Iasiello O.F.M. and Fr. Russel Murray, O.F.M.** The Franciscan Friars have been the Pope's official custodians of the Holy Land since the 14th century and have been present in the Holy Land since the visit of Saint Francis to the Sultan in the 13th century. The Scriptures will come alive as we follow the path of salvation history which will ultimately lead us to the Holy City of Jerusalem, the place where the Pascal Mystery unfolded. As well as walking in the footsteps of the Lord and visiting the sacred sites of his birth, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection, this unique pilgrimage for permanent deacons and candidates for the diaconate will include a number of places referred to in the Acts of the Apostles as significant to the lives of the 'First Seven' who the church honors as the first deacons of the church. After we pass through Israeli passport control, and claimed our luggage, we will be met by our official tour guide, Fabricio Lomanto, and then board our luxury touring bus. We will then drive to the biblical city of old Jaffa (on the coast of Tel Aviv) and celebrate **Mass in the Crusader Chapel located at St. Peter's Church**. After mass we will take a leisurely drive along the beautiful Mediterranean coast to our hotel in the city of Netanya. After dinner, pilgrims may elect to rest early, or walk along the shore of the beautiful Mediterranean for a breathtaking sunset.

Dinner and overnight at our hotel. (D)

#### **Day 3 Saturday, April 30: Netanya | Galilee**

After breakfast and private Morning Prayer we will drive along the shores of the Mediterranean to the ancient port city of Caesarea Maritima, built by King Herod to honor the Roman Emperor. As stated in Luke's acts of the apostles, Caesarea was first introduced to Christianity by Philip the Deacon (acts 8: 40) who resided in the port city and offered hospitality to Paul the Apostle (Acts 21: 8-10). Acts also records that Peter the Apostle visited with Philip the Deacon and while there, baptized Cornelius the Centurion and his household, the first recorded incident of a gentile being baptized a Christian (Acts 10:1-11:18). When the newly converted Paul was facing persecution in the city of Jerusalem, Christians guarded him from danger and accompanied him to Caesarea and arranged to send him to his native city of Tarsus. Paul would visit Caesarea again between his second and third missionary journeys, and, as mentioned, was offered hospitality at the home of Philip the Deacon and his four 'prophetess' daughters. Paul was held a prisoner in Caesarea for two years before being transported to Rome for trial (Acts 23:23, 25: 1-13). The famous theologian Origen wrote some of his most important theological works while living in Caesarea (3rd century) and Saint Eusebius, the famous church historian was the bishop of this important port city. Some early histories record that Zacchaeus the Publican (the tax collector from Jericho mentioned in the gospels) was appointed the first bishop of the Christian community at Caesarea. After our visit of

Caesarea Maritima we drive over the mountains to the biblical city of Nazareth, a location where Jesus spent most of his young life. While in Nazareth we will **celebrate Mass in the beautiful Basilica of the Annunciation**, site of the sacred encounter between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary. We will also visit St. Joseph's Church, the site of the home of the Holy Family. After lunch we drive to the town of Cana where we will recall the first of Jesus miracles, and institution of the Sacrament of Marriage at the famous wedding feast. **Those who wish to do so will be given the opportunity to renew their wedding vows**, and we will all reflect upon the critical instruction of Mary to the wedding stewards: "Do whatever he tells you." from Cana we will ascend the historic heights of Mt. Tabor, sight of the ancient battle of the Israelite general Barak against the Canaanites, and the sacred location where Jesus, with Peter, James and John as witnesses was gloriously transfigured. After a remarkable day of biblical discovery, continue to the Sea of Galilee to check in at our hotel in the ancient city of Tiberias.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in the galilee. (B,L,D)

#### Day 4 Sunday, May 1: Galilee

Like Jesus and His apostles often did during his extensive ministry at Capernaum, we will awake once again on the historic shores of the Sea of Galilee. After breakfast and private Morning Prayer pilgrims will visit the site called the Primacy of Peter, where, in a post-Resurrectional visit of Jesus, the Lord fed the apostles and asked Peter if he loved Him... after which he directed him to 'feed His sheep.' After **Mass on the shores of the Sea of Galilee**, we will drive through Palestine to the town of Burkin, to visit the Church of St. George built on the site of the miracle of the cure of the Ten Lepers. From there we drive to Samaria, the ancient capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the site where Philip the Deacon preached and introduced Christianity to the populace after the martyrdom of Saint Stephen. We will lunch at the antiquities site of Samaria. From Samaria we will continue on to the ancient Samaritan city of Nablus to visit the Church of Jacob's Well, the place of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. From the city we will be able to view the sacred mountain of the Samaritans, Mount Gerizim, the site of their holy temple. Return to our hotel and freshen up for dinner.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in the galilee. (B,L,D)

#### Day 5 Monday, May 2: Galilee

After waking on the glorious shores of the beautiful Sea of Galilee, and following breakfast and private Morning Prayer, pilgrims will be driven to the scenic Mount of Beatitudes overlooking the Sea and Galilean countryside. It was in this area, close to Capernaum, in this idyllic setting, that Jesus conducted many events of his public ministry and it is here that He preached his famous Sermon on the Mount. From the Mount of Beatitudes we will descend to the lake shore to a site called Tabaha (Seven Springs), the site traditionally revered as the place of the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes. From there we will proceed to biblical town of Capernaum, mentioned many times in the gospels and often referred to as the Second City of Jesus. Pilgrims will **attend Mass** and view the House of Peter (revered since the 1st century as the site of Peter's house), and from there walk a very short distance to the nearby ruins of a fourth-century synagogue built over the 1st century synagogue where Jesus delivered his famous Eucharistic (Bread of Life) discourse and healed the sick (John: 6).

It was on the shore of this ancient city on the lake, that our Lord called many of His apostles. After healing Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus healed many others of their afflictions until the early hours of the morning. After lunch we embark on a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, remembering a number of the numerous scripture passages that refer to Jesus and his apostles on the lake; once we

disembark, we will view the remains of a 1st century boat which, according to archeologists, was the same type of boat used by fishermen in the time of Jesus.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in the galilee. (B,L,D)

### **Day 6** Tuesday, May 3: Jordan Valley to Jerusalem

Check-out of hotel. Today we drive to the Jordan River valley. We'll drive by the site of one of the world's oldest cities, the city of Jericho, the city conquered by Joshua and the Israelite army after they crossed the Jordan River and entered the 'Promised Land.' In Jericho, we will stop at a Sycamore Tree and recall Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus the Publican (tax collector). After a short visit at some of the ancient archeological ruins (the ancient gates of Jericho [10,000 BC]) we will stop to celebrate **Mass at the Franciscan Church of the Good Shepherd** at the vibrant Franciscan Parish in Jericho, where you will be introduced to the peace-making work of the world famous 'International School.' From there we will travel a short distance to a panoramic site traditionally venerated as the Mt. of Temptation, the place of Jesus' temptations by the devil. Very near to city of Jericho is the Jordan River; here we will stop and commemorate our Lord's Baptism in the Jordan by St. John, and **you will be given the opportunity to renew your own baptismal promises.** From the Jordan river we will begin our steep ascent up the holy mountain to Jerusalem and, as pilgrims have for millennia, we will pray the Ascent Psalms to prepare us for our arrival in the holy city of Jerusalem. On our way 'up to Jerusalem' we will stop at Bethany, the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and for those able, make a short stop at the tomb traditionally revered as Lazarus' tomb. We will stay at a beautiful four-star hotel in Jerusalem.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Jerusalem. (B,L,D)

### **Day 7** Wednesday, May 4: Jerusalem | Bethlehem | Ein Kerem

Traveling a short distance south of Jerusalem, we arrive in the town of Bethlehem. We begin our visit in the countryside at a location traditionally venerated as the Shepherds' Field and there call to mind the angels' glad tidings to the shepherds, the greeting used in the Gloria. You will be able to view the archeological excavations of some ancient monasteries at Shepherds' Field. Within the town of Bethlehem, we go to venerate the Holy Grotto of the Nativity, as well as the Manger and the revered Grotto of St. Jerome. We also will visit the Franciscan Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, the site from which is broadcast Bethlehem's Christmas Midnight Mass. Here we will **celebrate Mass at the grotto chapel of Saint Jerome.** After lunch at the Franciscan pilgrimage house, we will travel to beautiful hillside village of Ein Kerem to visit the church of St. John the Baptist, long venerated as his birthplace, and the magnificent Church of the Visitation, where we will recall Mary's visit to Elizabeth and her hymn/prayer of praise: the Magnificat. finally, we will visit Philip's Spring, long venerated as the place where Philip the Deacon preached to and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Jerusalem. (B,L,D)

### **Day 8** Thursday, May 5: Jerusalem

After private Morning Prayer and breakfast, we will drive to the summit of the Mt. of Olives to visit the site of the Ascension of Our Lord and the Church of Pater Noster. Walking down the Palm Sunday Road to Jerusalem, we will visit the moving chapel of Dominus Flevit, the location where Jesus cried as he looked down at the City of Jerusalem. **Celebrate Mass at this shrine** which provides a spectacular panoramic view of the City of Jerusalem. From there, we will continue down

the road to the Garden of Gethsemane and visit the famous Basilica of the Agony. From there we will walk a short distance to site traditionally venerated as the location of Saint Stephen's martyrdom. Here at this sacred site, deacons will be afforded the opportunity to recall their own ordination call. After lunch we will visit the ancient City of King David, site of King David's Palace and the Pool of Siloam. At the beginning of the 19th century, an ancient synagogue was discovered in the city... some believe it to be the Synagogue of the Freedmen mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the congregation that Stephen so enraged with his extraordinary oratorical skills and preaching that they brought him before the High Priest; this 'interrogation' eventually led to his condemnation and stoning.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Jerusalem. (B,L,D)

### **Day 9 Friday, May 6: Jerusalem**

After an early morning **Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, Christianity's most sacred site. Return to the hotel. After breakfast, we will enter the Old City of Jerusalem through St. Stephen's Gate; our first stop is at the beautiful Crusader Church of St. Anne and the adjacent biblical 'Pools of Bethesda.' Pilgrims will then do what pilgrims have done for millennia, make the Way of the Cross, carrying a wooden cross along the streets and among the markets and shops as Jesus did on His journey to calvary following the Via Dolorosa. Visit Calvary and complete our devotions at the Sacred Tomb of Jesus. After lunch we will proceed to the Western Wall (Wailing Wall), where the prayers of millions have been offered at these remaining holy stones of the famous Temple of Jerusalem. As well as the foundation provided by King Herod's ancient temple stones, the only structures standing on the temple mount are Muslim Shrines of the Dome of the Rock and the El Aqsa Mosque. From the Western Wall we will be driven to Mt. Zion to visit the traditional site of the Upper Room, remembering Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, a post-Resurrection appearance, and the glorious Pentecost event. Archeologists believe that this is also the site of the first congregation of the Early Church, and therefore the site where the first deacons were 'selected by the community' and 'ordained by the apostles.' We will visit the beautiful Dormition Abbey, a church that honors Mary's "falling asleep." We end the day with a visit to St. Peter in Gallicantu, which marks the site of Peter's denial. Farewell dinner at the Ambassador Hotel. Freshen-up, and we'll be transferred to Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport for our red-eye non-stop flight to Chicago. (B,L,D)

### **Day 10 Saturday, May 7: Arrive in the U.S.A.**

Early morning arrival in Chicago O'Hare International airport, overflowing with memories from our pilgrimage.