



Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation
Living Stones Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
With Father John Predmore, S.J

November 6 – 17, 2017 – 12 days/ 11 nights

Throughout our spiritual pilgrimage, we will experience the holy places in which Jesus was born, ministered, crucified, and rose again. Through this spiritual journey, we will remain open to God's message and will return home with a new and deeper understanding of the living history of this incredible place and of those who inhabit and keep it—the "Living Stones" of the Holy Land.

Day 1 – Monday, November 6th: Departure

Our Holy Land pilgrimage begins as we depart on our international flight. Meals and in-flight entertainment will be provided.

Day 2 – Tuesday, November 7th: Travel & Arrival in Tel Aviv

After arriving at Ben Gurion International Airport, an HCEF Representative will guide us through our transfer to the city of **Bethlehem** for dinner and rest.

Day 3 – Wednesday, November 8th: Bethlehem



We will begin our day with a welcome address by an HCEF representative to orient us in our spiritual journey. We will then visit the **Shepherd's Field** in Beit Sahour, where angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus. Afterward, we will visit the **Church of the Nativity**, the birthplace of Jesus. Our tour will continue to the **Grotto of St. Jerome** where we will celebrate Mass, and the nearby **Milk Grotto**,

where the Holy Family took refuge during the Slaughter of the Innocents.

After our lunch at Al Karmeh restaurant, we will have a tour of the Bethlehem Museum to learn about the history and culture of Palestine from Pre-Roman times until today. Afterward, we will visit **Bethlehem University** to meet with students and learn about their experiences and dialogue with them.

Later in the afternoon, we will visit the nearby **Bethlehem Carmelite Convent** founded by the Palestinian Carmelite saint, Miriam Baouardy of Jesus Crucified, Then we will walk the path taken by the Holy Family through the old city of Bethlehem until we reach **Nativity Square. Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**



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Day 4 – Thursday, November 9th: Jerusalem



We will depart for Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives to visit the **Churches of Pater Noster and Dominus Flevit**. We will also visit the **Church of All Nations**, located in the beautiful Garden of **Gethsemane**, where Jesus prayed the night before his Passion, and here we will celebrate Mass.

After lunch, we will visit **Mount Zion and the Upper Room**, the scene of the **Last Supper**, and then the **Church of the**

Assumption (Tomb of Mary). Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day 5 – Friday, November 10: Dead Sea/ Jericho/Qumran

After breakfast, we will depart for **Jericho**. On our way, we will visit the **Tomb of Lazarus**, an important pilgrimage site located in the West Bank town of Al-Eizariya, traditionally identified as the biblical village of Bethany, on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, some 2.4 km (1.5 miles) east of Jerusalem. The tomb is the site of a miracle recorded in the Gospel of John in which Jesus resurrects Lazarus. Prayer and Mass.

We will then continue into the Jordan Valley to **Jericho**, where we will reflect on scenes from the bible, such as Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree and the healing of Bartimaeus' blindness. We will take time to consider the temptations of Jesus, as we view the Monastery of Temptation on the summit of the **Mount of Temptation**. After lunch, we will visit **Qumran**, where the **Dead Sea** scrolls were discovered, and will then enjoy ourselves at the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth. **Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**

Day 6 – Saturday, November 11th: Birzeit and Ramallah



We will depart for the town of **Birzeit**, located in the outlying hills of Ramallah. **Birzeit is also known as ancient Berzetho from the Greek –Roman period.** There, we will visit the local **Catholic Church and meet with the parish priest**, who will give us an introduction about the history of local Christians, as well as a tour of the church's archeological museum, which houses a collection of artifacts from the stone and

bronze age. We will celebrate Mass in the church.

We will then visit HCEF's **Birzeit Senior Citizen Center**, giving us the opportunity to



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meet with Birzeit's elders, hear their stories and break bread with them. Afterward, we will visit Jifna, a small scenic village that was once an important Roman-Byzantine city. Previously known as Gophna of Josephus, Jifna was the region's capital during the first century AD. Afterward, we will travel to **Ramallah** to visit the **Church of Hope**, opened in 1954 to support those seeking refuge from conflict. **Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**

Day 7 – Sunday, November 12th: Jerusalem



We will depart very early for Jerusalem to walk the **Via Dolorosa** (Way of Suffering) through the narrow alleys and bazaars of the Old City of Jerusalem, ending at the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher** and the **Tomb of Christ** where we will celebrate Mass. Afterward, we will visit the **Church of the Redeemer**, and will meet with a representative of the **Christian Religious**

Leaders of Jerusalem.

After lunch, we will enjoy free time in Jerusalem's Old City. We will then visit the **Dome of the Rock, the Golden Gate, the Western Wall, and the Temple Mount**. We will then continue to the **Jerusalem Jesuit Center** and the **Pontifical Biblical Institute**. We will return for our final night in Bethlehem for a farewell dinner with the HCEF staff.

Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day 8—Monday, November 13th: Nablus/ Jenin

We will depart for the town of **Nablus** (Neapolis) which was founded in 72 AD by the Flavian Emperors and built on the northern slope of Mount Gerizim. There, we will visit **Jacob's Well**, where Jesus met the Samaritan woman who offered him water, and celebrate Mass in the church. Afterward, we will take a tour of **Nablus' Old City** and later, will visit **Mount Gerizim**, or **Jebel At-Tor**, a sacred mountain that has been inhabited by the Samaritans for thousands of years. After lunch, we will travel to **Sebastia**, traditionally associated with John the Baptist, and we will also see the **Roman tombs, a Hellenistic Tower** and the **Herodion Gate Towers**. We will then head to Jenin to visit the **Church of Burqin**, considered to be the third oldest church in the world, as well as site where Jesus cured the ten lepers. **Dinner and overnight in Jenin.**



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Day 9—Tuesday, November 14th: Nazareth/Mount Tabor



We will depart for **Mount Tabor** to visit the site of Jesus' transfiguration at the summit of the mountain and enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Valley of Jezreal. Afterward, we will head to **Cana** to visit the Church where Jesus performed His first miracle, changing water into wine. In Cana, there will be an opportunity for married couples to renew their wedding vows. We will then travel to Nazareth, the town where Jesus and the Holy Family lived, to visit

the **Basilica of the Annunciation** where the Angel Gabriel first told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. We will celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the Nativity.

While in Nazareth, we will also see **Mary's well** and **Joseph's workshop**. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**

Day 10—Wednesday, November 15th: Ibillin/Mt Carmel/ Haifa

We will depart for Ibillin to tour **Mar Elias schools**. Mar Elias schools are well-known for their dedication to educating children of all ethnic and religious backgrounds based upon the principles of peace, reconciliation, respect, and justice. There, we will meet with representatives from the 3,000 students and faculty of Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Druze heritage who study and teach together as one community of learning and service. After lunch, we will head to **Haifa** to visit **Mt Carmel**, a Christian holy site where the prophet Elijah performed various miracles, and which is believed to be the site of the first Catholic Carmelite monasteries in the thirteenth century. The city of Haifa sweeps up the slopes of Mt. Carmel and is home to many cultural and educational institutions. No visit to Haifa is complete without touring the restored **Templar Colony**, the **Bahá'í Shrine and Gardens**, **Elijah's cave**, and **Stella Maris Church and Monastery**. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**

Day 11—Thursday, November 16th: Sea of Galilee



We will depart for the shores of the Sea Galilee, to the **Mount of Beatitudes** and recall the **Sermon on the Mount**. Prayer and Mass. We will then continue to **Tabgha** (Heptapegon) for a visit to the **Church of the Multiplication** of Fish and Loaves, admiring a well-conserved Byzantine mosaic from the fifth century. Afterward, we will visit the small chapel of the



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Primacy of St. Peter, and then continue to **Magdala Synagogue**. After that, we will go to **Capernaum**, the Town of Jesus. Among its ruins, we will see the remains of the House of Peter, the “Insula Sacra” and the White Synagogue. We will then take a **boat ride** on the Sea of Galilee where we will reflect on Jesus’ calming of the wind and the waves.

Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.

Day 12- Friday, November 17th: Return home

After transfer to the airport for an early morning departure, we fly back home. However, our faith journey will continue in a new, invigorated way. Having visited the sacred places in our tradition, having met the descendants of the first disciples of Jesus and witnessed how the people of the Holy Land strive to build bridges of justice, peace and reconciliation --all these experiences will enrich our spiritual life and transform each one of us. They will also enable us to interpret the news from the region in a different way. A Living Stones pilgrimage to the Holy Land will definitely enrich and permanently change your life for the better.

Notes:

- **Itinerary is subject to change without notice**
- **Itinerary includes interaction with the Living Stones**
- **Meeting with church leaders may be changed depending on their schedules.**