



Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation ***Living Stones Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*** ***Itinerary – Phoenix Group***

May 10th – May 21st, 2018 --12 Days/ 11 nights

As we visit these holy places, we will give God plenty of time to work on us, and when we return home, we will have the stories of Holy land Christians Christians – the “Living Stones” of the Holy Land – deeply embedded in our minds and hearts.

Day 1—Thursday, May 10th

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

Day 2—Friday, May 11th: Travel and 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—Saturday, May 12th: Bethlehem & Beit Sahour

We will begin our day with a visit to the Shepherd’s Field in Beit Sahour. This is where the angels appeared to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. Then we will visit the Church of the Nativity (the birthplace of Jesus) as well as the Grotto of St. Jerome and the nearby Milk Grotto. During lunch at Al-Karmeh Restaurant, we will be welcomed by a representative of HCEF who will introduce our various programs in the Holy Land. After that we will tour the Bethlehem Museum and exhibits on the cultural history of the Palestinian Christians.



Later, we will stop by the Bethlehem Carmelite Covent and remember Saint Maryam of Jesus Crucified (Maryam Baouardy), a Palestinian Carmelite nun canonized by Pope Francis in 2015. **Dinner and Overnight in Bethlehem.**

Day 4— Sunday, May 13th: Jerusalem

We begin the day very early to depart for Jerusalem and 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. Then, we will visit the Latin Patriarchate where we will be welcomed by a representative of the Bishop. After lunch, we will drive 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. **Dinner and Overnight in Bethlehem.**





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Day 5— Monday, May 14th: Jerusalem

We will drive to Jerusalem to visit the Dome of the Rock, the Golden Gate and the Temple Mount. After lunch, we will visit Mount Zion and the Upper Room, scene of the last supper, and then the Church of the Assumption (Tomb of Mary). We will also visit Mea Sharin, the Knesset, and the Israel Museum. **Dinner and Overnight in Bethlehem.**

Day 6— Tuesday, May 15th: Dead Sea, Jericho, and Qumran



We will head to Jericho, where we remember Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree and the blind Bartimaeus wanting to see. We are also reminded of the temptations of Jesus, as we view the Monastery of Temptation on the summit of the Mount of Temptation. After lunch in Jericho we will visit Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered, and then we will enjoy ourselves around the Dead Sea. **Dinner and Overnight in Bethlehem.**

Day 7— Wednesday, May 16th: Jerusalem



This morning will be free time in Jerusalem. We will have the opportunity to attend Mass with the local community, then shop in the market, revisit religious sites, discover something new, or simply relax in the Old City. In the afternoon, we will visit Yad Vashem Museum. Then we will depart from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for our farewell party with the HCEF staff. **Dinner and Overnight in Bethlehem.**



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Day 8— Thursday, May 17th: Birzeit and Ramallah

After enjoying our early breakfast, we depart for Birzeit where we will visit the Catholic Church and meet with the parish priest. Then, we will have lunch in HCEF's Birzeit Social Development and Cultural Center, giving us the chance to meet with the elders of Birzeit and hear their stories. After lunch, we will go to Ramallah to visit the Church of Hope and meet with our brothers and sisters there. Afterwards we will drive back to Bethlehem where we will have dinner and spend the night.



Day 9— Friday, May 18th: Nablus & Nazareth



In the morning we will drive to Nablus to visit Jacob's Well, where the Samaritan woman reminded Jesus that Jacob "gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it." He told her He was the promised Messiah, and she and many residents of her village believed in him. (Jn 4:5-42). Then we will enjoy our free time in Nablus' old city, and have our lunch there. After that we will drive to Nazareth, and visit the Church of Annunciation, where Mary received the news from Gabriel that she would give

birth to the Son of God. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**

Day 10— Saturday, May 19th: Mount Tabor and Haifa

We will depart after breakfast 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 **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'i Shrine and Gardens**, **Elijah's cave**, and **Stella Maris Church and Monastery**. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**



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Day 11— Sunday, May 20th: Sea of Galilee

Today we will pass through the Valley of the Doves--the Arbel Pass--to approach the Sea of Galilee as Jesus would have on his way from Nazareth. In Tabgha, we will spend some quiet time along the water, imagining ourselves with Jesus. We will pray at the site of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, and at the place along the shore where Jesus three times asked Peter—and on this day will ask us—“Do you love me?” Next, we will visit Capernaum, which Jesus considered home and where he healed so many and taught so much. Today, the remains of Capernaum include an ancient synagogue and the vestiges of Peter’s house. Then for lunch we will eat fish in the Mount of Beatitudes Monastery and then go aboard a boat for a ride on the Sea of Galilee, stopping to rock on the waves, to feel the wind, and to sing of the One whom “even the wind and the sea obey.” Then we will travel to the Mount of Beatitudes for a time of prayer and meditation on the hillside. **Dinner and Overnight in Nazareth.**



Day 12— Monday, May 21st: Return Home

After an early morning check-out and transfer to the airport, we fly back home. However, our faith journey will continue in a new, invigorated way. Having visited the places sacred to our tradition, having met the descendent of the first disciples of Jesus and witnessed how the people of the Holy Land strive to build bridges of justice, peace and reconciliation –we will be enriched and our spiritual lives transformed.

Notes:

- *Mass can be arranged daily*
- *Itinerary subject to change without notice*
- *The Itinerary includes interaction with the local Christians*
- *The meeting with religious and community leaders can be changed according to their Schedule.*