



***Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation***  
***Living Stones Pilgrimage to the Holy Land***  
***With Father Bill McLean***

**April 29 – May 10 – 12 days/ 11 nights**  
**With Optional Extension to Jordan**

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, April 29th: Departure**

Our Holy Land pilgrimage begins as we depart on our flight from Los Angeles International Airport. Meals and in-flight entertainment will be provided.

**Day 2 – Tuesday, April 30th: 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 **Nazareth** for dinner and rest.

**Day 3—Wednesday, May 1st: Nazareth/Mount Tabor**



We will depart early 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. We will then return for lunch in Nazareth, the town where Jesus and the Holy Family lived, and then visit the **Basilica of the Annunciation** where the Angel Gabriel first told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. We will celebrate Mass here at the Basilica. While in Nazareth, we will also see **Mary's well** and

**Joseph's workshop. Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**

**Day 4—Thursday, May 2nd: Cana/Mt Carmel/ Haifa**

We will go 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. Then we will head to **Haifa** to have lunch at Stella Maris Convent and visit **Stella Maris Church and Monastery** where we will have an **afternoon Mass**. Afterward, we will visit **Mount 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**, and the **Bahá'í Shrine and Gardens**. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**



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**Day 5—Friday, May 3rd: 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** and then celebrate Mass. Afterwards we will take a **boat ride** on the Sea of Galilee where we will reflect on Jesus' calming of the wind and the waves. 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. **After lunch at St.**

**Peter restaurant** we will visit the small chapel of the **Primacy of St. Peter**. 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 **Afterwards we will continue** to visit **Magdala Synagogue**. **Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.**

**Day 6—Saturday, May 4th: Jenin/Nablus/ Bethlehem**

After breakfast in our hotel, we will drive south to the Palestinian town of Jenin, where we will meet with the parish priest to hear about the situation of the local Christians. After Mass at the parish church, we continue to **Sebastia**, traditionally associated with John the Baptist, to see the **Roman tombs**, a **Hellenistic Tower** and the **Herodion Gate Towers**. After **lunch** in Sebastia, we will proceed to 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 have a brief tour of the Old City. Then we will continue **Bethlehem** for dinner and overnight.

**Day 7 – Sunday, May 5th: 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. We will continue to visit **Mount Zion** visit the **Upper Room**, the scene of the **Last Supper** We will then visit the **Dome of the**

**Rock, the Golden Gate, the Western Wall, and the Temple Mount.**

After lunch, we will enjoy free time in Jerusalem's Old City, and then we will return for our final night in Bethlehem for a farewell dinner with the HCEF staff.

**Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**



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**Day 8 – Monday, May 6th: Bethlehem**



We will begin our day with a visit to 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.

**During lunch**, we will be welcomed by an HCEF representative to orient us in our spiritual journey. Afterward, we will visit the nearby **Bethlehem Carmelite Convent** founded by the Palestinian Carmelite saint, Miriam Baouardy of Jesus Crucified, Coming back to the Old City of Bethlehem, we will walk the route of the Holy Family through the streets until we reach **Nativity Square. Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**

**Day 9 – Tuesday, May 7th: 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. Mass will be celebrated here. We will then continue into the Jordan Valley to **Jericho**, where we will reflect on Gospel scenes 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 10 – Wednesday, May 8th: 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 after we celebrate Mass with the community 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



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collection of artifacts from the stone and bronze age.

We will then visit HCEF's **Birzeit Social and Cultural Center**, giving us the opportunity to meet with Birzeit's elders, hear their stories and break bread with them. 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 11 – Thursday, May 9th: Jerusalem**



We will depart for Jerusalem we will visit the **Churches of Pater Noster and Dominus Flevit**. Then we will visit the **Latin Patriarchate** and plan to meet with Father Emile Salayta, a Palestinian priest and one of the co-founders of HCEF. **After lunch**, we will 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. We will then visit the **Church of the Assumption (Tomb of Mary.)** In the evening we will return to Bethlehem for our farewell dinner. **Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.**

**Day 12- Friday, May 10th: 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.



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**Day 12- Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>: Bethany Beyond the Jordan/Amman**



We will depart from Bethlehem after an early breakfast to the **Allenby- King Hussein border crossing**. After entry and visa formalities for Jordan, we will be met by the guide and driver from our Jordanian travel partner, and visit the Baptismal Site at Bethany Beyond the Jordan, where Jesus was baptized by John. After **lunch**, we will continue to Amman for a brief driving tour through the city and then arrive at our hotel for **dinner and overnight**.

**Day 13- Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>: Madaba, Mount Nebo, Wadi Musa**



After breakfast at our hotel, we will drive to **Madaba**, famous for its ancient mosaic map of the Holy Land and still a center of the mosaic craft. There is a large Christian community in Madaba, with both an Orthodox and Latin (Roman Catholic) church. We will also visit **Mount Nebo**, where Moses looked out at the Holy Land, to look back and remember the experiences of our pilgrimage. After lunch, we will drive three hours south on the desert highway to arrive at our hotel in Wadi Musa, next to **Petra**, for dinner and overnight.



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**Day 14/15- Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>/Monday, May 13:**  
**Petra and Return to Amman for Overnight Departure**



We conclude our time in Jordan with a full day tour of the famous **Petra UNESCO World Heritage site**, including lunch at the site. Then in the late afternoon we will depart from Petra, and after stopping for dinner, continue to **Amman Queen Alia International Airport**, where we will arrive late in the evening to check in for our early morning departure to fly back home.

**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.**