

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

And so to Galilee

On Monday we leave Jerusalem for the Sea of Galilee. On the way we will stop at the Jordan River baptismal site which is the international boundary between Jordan and Israel. I'm afraid not the "deep and wide" of the songs but we might take a small bottle back to use at baptisms in Minehead.

Then to Belvoir Castle: a crusader fortress.



Lunch today is in a garden restaurant, al-Rawdah

The climate here is much warmer and you might feel like freshening up in the outdoor swimming pool when we arrive at the Ron Beach Hotel before a superb buffet style dinner.

Tuesday we drive for about an hour to the Mount of the Transfiguration. We disembark into mini-buses to go up the mountain into a beautiful peaceful place cared for by the Franciscans.

From here we continue to Nazareth which we can see ahead of us on a cliff-top. (Remember Luke 4: 28-29) We visit a living museum of life in Galilee at the time of Jesus: 'Nazareth Village' who will serve us a Biblical style lunch.

After lunch we will see the amazing mosaics at The Basilica of the Annunciation and the much older Gabriel's Church.

Finally we drive to Cana, the site of Jesus's first miracle. (Although the wine is now tourist quality.)



Wednesday we follow the Lakeside ministry of Jesus starting at Capernaum. We visit the church of

Mensa Christi where the risen Christ recommissions Peter. Then we hope to celebrate the Holy Communion at Tabgha by the Sea of Galilee.

Lunch is at the convent of the beatitudes set in a beautiful garden with its modern octagonal church.

After lunch, we sail across the lake back to the hotel in time to relax, swim and pack.

Thursday we still have plenty to see. On our way to Tel Aviv we cross the country to the Mediterranean coast and stop at the Roman capital of Caesarea noting its remarkable aqueduct and amphitheatre. Lunch is taken at the Port Cafe and then we are off to the airport to catch a flight departing at 17:20 local time arriving at Heathrow at 20:45.



Sarah writes about Holy Communion by the lake:

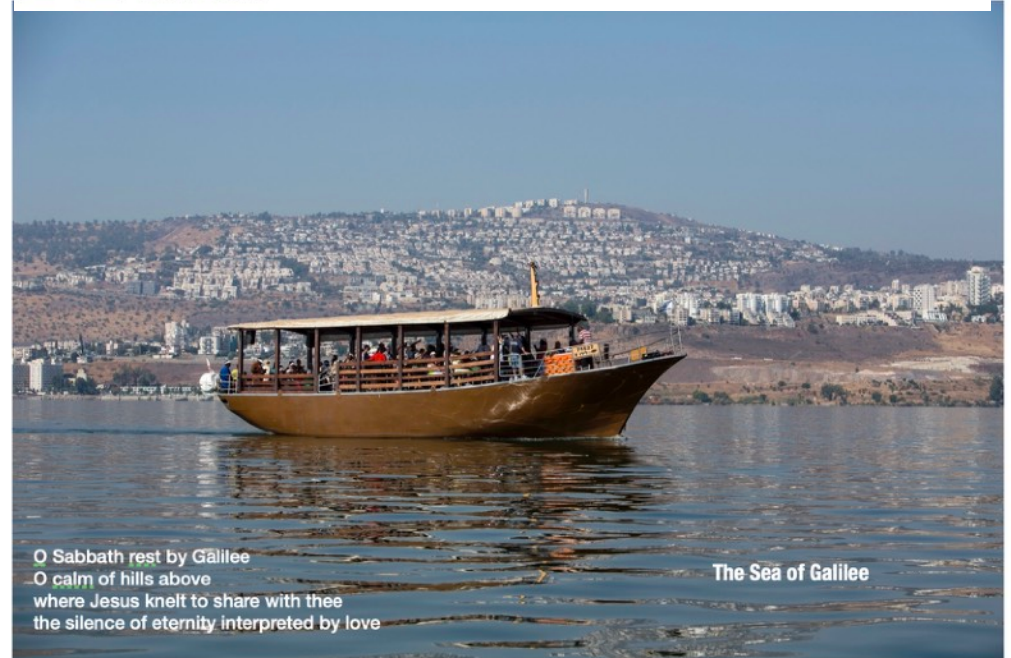
We walked through trees down to the shore where John set up an altar for a service of Holy Communion. We sat in the warm sunshine, looking towards the sea and revelling in the solitude. There were isolated rumbles of thunder in the far distance and as the service progressed these became more pronounced, while a breeze appeared, whipping up waves on the sea, and dark clouds obscured the sun. As John packed away the chalice and folded the altar cloth the first heavy raindrops fell and we hastened for cover, at which point there was a crash of thunder overhead and, as the saying goes, 'the heavens opened'.

After the storm, the scent of rain on parched earth and the perfume from a multitude of roses was so beautiful it was almost intoxicating. With birds singing all around us we were able to spend a brief interlude enjoying the serenity of the garden, dwelling on the thought that Jesus and his disciples would have experienced just the same weather and hoping that in the midst of all the troubles facing the modern world there will be room for the still small voice of calm.



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
EXMOOR

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND



O Sabbath rest by Galilee
O calm of hills above
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity interpreted by love

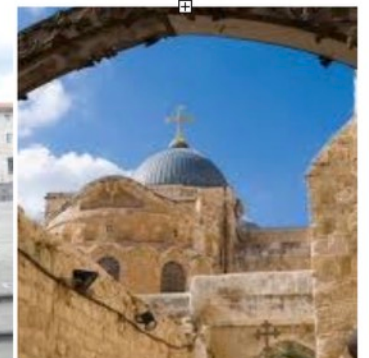
The Sea of Galilee

Tuesday 3rd May to Thursday 12th May 2022

with Revd Barry Priory & Revd John Thorogood

6 nights at the Golden Walls
Hotel close to the old city walls

3 nights at the Ron Beach Hotel
by the Sea of Galilee
www.ronbeachhotel.com



THE FACTS & FIGURES

Tuesday 3rd to Tuesday 12th May 2022

The cost is £2095 sharing a twin-bedded room
It includes flights and all airport and security charges

a complimentary visa upon arrival
Full-board (3 meals a day) ensuite rooms
in hotels at Jerusalem and Tiberias
We will be accompanied by a local guide
all entrance fees and luggage transfer

NOT INCLUDED

Travel insurance (which is essential)
The optional excursion to Masada (£85)
Single rooms (£575)

Travel to and from Heathrow
(I will organise transport for those who require it.)

FURTHER INFORMATION

I can lend a professional DVD of this pilgrimage
and send you a brochure
Revd Preb John Thorogood
2 West Street, Withycombe, Minehead TA24 6PX
johnvticar@btinternet.com 01984 641745



A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND



We will be travelling with McCabe Pilgrimages; a company that Barry and I know very well.

They are committed to the people of Israel and Palestine and use local Christian guides and coaches.

McCabe also has a charitable trust which supports a number of local projects such as the Jeel-al-Amal boys home which we may be able to visit.

We will meet the "Living Stones" not just the historic stones.

A Typical Programme

Tuesday

Travel to Heathrow for an afternoon flight to Tel Aviv. (Israel is two hours ahead of UK). We are met by our coach which takes about an hour to take us to our hotel in Jerusalem where there is a light meal awaiting us.

Wednesday

After a buffet breakfast, we make an early start (to avoid the crowds). Our guide introduces himself and the coach takes us to the top of the Mount of Olives with great views of the old city of Jerusalem. We begin a leisurely walk down the Palm Sunday route stopping off at the chapel of Dominus Fleuit (Jesus wept) where some of us might wish to celebrate a brief service of Holy Communion at one of the outdoor stations.

Continuing downhill we come to the ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. (We don't stop for coffee breaks so I usually carry some cereal bars instead.)

We are met by our coach once again which takes us to the site where Jesus was interrogated by the High Priest - now the church of St Peter in Gallicantu.



After a two course lunch at St Andrew's Guesthouse, our coach takes us to the village of Ein Karem, birthplace of John the Baptist. Then to the Israel Museum to see a model of ancient Jerusalem and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

From there we return to the hotel for a quiet drink in the bar or on the roof terrace followed by a buffet dinner.



Thursday is a walking day. We will take our bus just to the Dung Gate and then we will explore the Old City on foot.

We take a tour of the western wall tunnels and the crusader church of St Anne. The Church has an amazing acoustic so we choose a hymn to test it!

Lunch today is at Eccle Homo convent and we get there as we walk the Via Dolorosa through the busy, narrow street to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Our day ends in the peaceful Garden Tomb close to our hotel.



Martin writes:

When we arrived in Jerusalem my wife and I found our hotel room which over looked the old city and as I looked out of the window gazing at the Holy City, I thought this is the place where it all happened! The city Jesus knew so well, and where all those vitally important events in his life and the lives of the disciples took place. It all happened here in this place that I was now looking at through a hotel window. That moment has stayed with me ever since and I can still picture it in my mind.

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

Friday is an optional excursion to the Dead Sea. The Mount Olives is 2739 feet above sea level, the Dead Sea is 1368 feet *below* sea level! We can relax and enjoy this amazing wilderness on a two hour drive to the desert fortress of Masada. We travel in a large and roomy cable car to the top. It will be wise to wear a sun-hat and sun cream.

Now we are thinking of lunch but before that there is the opportunity to *float* in the Dead Sea - it is impossible to swim. Those who have been in the Dead Sea shower and change at the Lot Hotel where we have a wonderful lunch.



On our way back to Jerusalem we stop at Qumran - the site of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery.

Saturday we visit Bethlehem. This involves crossing into Palestinian territory and our first view of the security wall. Starting with a visit to the Shepherd's fields and perhaps a celebration of Holy Communion.

There is an opportunity for shopping at an olive wood cooperative. This will be a chance to support the economy of the Palestinian Christians and take home some gifts.

Today we will have lunch at a hospital! This is one of the ways the centre raises funds for its work and there are craft items on sale.

جمعية بيت لحم العربية للتأهيل
"المستشفى التخصصي للتأهيل والجراحة"

Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation

"Specialized Rehabilitation and Surgery Hospital"

Finally we visit Manger Square, the Basilica and grotto of the nativity. The Basilica is Orthodox and black-robed clergy often control the queue that leads down to the grotto where a star marks the spot venerated as the place where Jesus was born. Then we move next door to St Jerome's cave where he prepared a translation of the scriptures before returning to our hotel.



Sunday is a suitably gentler day. We are reminded that whereas Sunday is the Christians holy day, for the Jewish population it is Saturday and for the Muslims it is Friday.

There are several churches where we can worship. I like to join the arabic speaking congregation at St George's Cathedral. But they also hold a service for English speaking visitors. Lunch today will be at St George's Guesthouse.

The afternoon can be free or you may wish to visit Yad Vashem - the holocaust remembrance centre.

Holy Communion on the Lake shore

A pilgrimage to The Holy Land provides a rich feast of wonderful memories but one particular Eucharist has stayed in my mind.

We had visited The Mount of Beatitudes and walked down to the shore of The Sea of Galilee. We sat down in front of one of the simple stone altars that are provided and our leader, The Reverend Hugh Allen, presided over a service of Holy Communion.

Hearing the words of the Eucharistic prayer, with the sound of the water lapping gently close by and the beauty of the surroundings and knowing that Jesus had walked by these shores made Him feel very close. It was a moment of grace that I've always treasured. Indeed, I found it difficult to leave and felt rather emotional. I lingered for a while after the rest of our party had begun to move away at the end of the service.

As I stood up, I noticed a small piece of driftwood that had been washed ashore. It has been with me ever since and I'm looking at it now as I write. I place it in my hand and it takes me back to a time when I felt touched by the Son of God.

Barry Priory