

## **Downside Abbey Pilgrimage to the Holy Land July 2012.**

Dear Friends,

The Holy Land is an amazing place. Not only can you see the towns and landscapes that Jesus saw, but you can also feel His presence in a most special way. I would like everyone, and particularly our priests, to experience this, and I'm grateful to Abbot Aidan for allowing me to organise next year's pilgrimage.

Our group will be accompanied by Father James Hood, who is a chaplain in Downside School and also involved in the Journey in Faith sessions at the Pastoral Centre. With him and our agents, Trailfinders, I have prepared the attached draft itinerary that takes in all of the important Christian shrines, together with other interesting sites. Hezekiah's tunnel is a "must see" for the younger members of the party, and those interested in archaeological sites will be overwhelmed by Megiddo, the site of one of King Solomon's strongholds. Mass will be celebrated each day, and we hope to find time for *Lexio Divina*, and saying the Rosary.

The approximate cost per person, based on sharing a twin room in three and four star hotels is about £1500. This price is fully inclusive apart from lunches and other discretionary expenses, such as offerings at shrines and tips. To obtain the cheapest flight costs, we need to book by the end of August 2011. Therefore, if you are interested, could you please telephone me on 01761241289 to let me know and advise how many will be in your party.

Once I have a clear idea of numbers, I can let you have a fixed price. You will then need to fill in a booking form, and let me have a deposit cheque of £225 which will also include a payment for group travel insurance. The remainder of the cost will be payable by post-dated cheques in eight monthly instalments. We will travel by coach from Downside to Heathrow and the cost of this will again be dependent on numbers but probably in the region of £30-40 per person return. I will require a further post-dated cheque for this.

I'm sorry if this all sounds a laborious way of organizing things, but this arrangement will substantially reduce the administrative time involved. Hopefully spreading the cost will also help you to budget for the cost of the pilgrimage.

I really hope that you will be able to join us and look forward to hearing from you.

With kindest regards,  
Rina Bird.

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**2<sup>nd</sup> July.**

- Travel from Heathrow Airport to Tel Aviv and transfer to hotel in Jerusalem.
- Mass at the Benedictine Domitian Abbey in the evening.

**3<sup>rd</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Also visit the Milk Grotto and Shepherd's Field.
- Travel from Bethlehem to the village of Ein Karem to the Church of the Visitation and the Church of John the Baptist.
- If there is time onto the Church of the Resurrection at Abu Gosh, a French Benedictine Abbey.

**4<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Church of All Nations.
- Whilst we are on the Mount of Olives visit the Garden of Gethsemane, the Tomb of the Virgin Mary, Dominus Flevit Church, Pater Noster Church and the Chapel of the Ascension.
- Transfer to the City of David, including Warren's Shaft and Hezekiah's Tunnel.
- Also visit the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, built on the site of Caiphas' Palace.

**5<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Via Dolorosa and Mass at Holy Sepulchre Church. Visit the Cenacle (Upper Room) and St. Mark's Church on Mt Zion. Then to the Dome of the Rock and Western Wall Tunnels.

**6<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Travel from Jerusalem to Petra, Passing the Dead Sea, and if possible stopping at the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized.
- We will try and arrange Mass in Petra and if necessary this will take place in our hotel.

**7<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Visit Petra.

**8<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Travel from Petra to Tiberias.
- Mass on the way at the Church of Lazarus in Bethany.
- Visit the Temptation monastery at Jericho and Zachaeus' tree.

**9<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Benedictine Monastery at Tabgha, the Church of the Multiplication.
- Also visit Capernaum and the Church of the Primacy of Peter.

**10<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Church of the Annunciation at Nazareth.
- Visit St. Joseph's Church and Mary's Well in the Church of St. Gabriel.
- Visit Cana and renew wedding vows at the Church of the Wedding Feast.

**11<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Basilica of the Transfiguration at Mt Tabor.
- Visit Magdala and then boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.

**12<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at the Church of the Beatitudes.
- Visit Caesarea Philippi, Banias Waterfall and Bethsaida.

**13<sup>th</sup> July.**

- Mass at Naim.
- Visit the archaeological site Megiddo, the Revelations site of Armageddon, and then onto Tel Aviv for return flight.