

FEBRUARY 20 – MARCH 1, 2018

# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

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Father Alec Sheldon invites you to join him for an inspiring journey to the Holy Land. The Holy Land is often referred to as a 5th Gospel, a land where the people, places and events of the scriptures come to life. Much of the land is as it was centuries ago making it easy to imagine walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee listening to Jesus and his early disciples. The narrow streets of Old Jerusalem where Jesus carried the cross to his passion make a fitting place to prayerfully walk our own Stations of the Cross. Father Sheldon will open our eyes to the scriptures in the very places where the stories took place – with liturgy in historic chapels such as the Basilica of the Nativity, the Grotto of the Annunciation, the Holy Sepulchre and Dominus Flevit. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to treat yourself to a special retreat and to encounter the visionary men and women of the scriptures.

We are all members of a global community that is increasingly interdependent. The future of our world depends on our cultivating a spirit of hospitality, respect, understanding and compassion for one another.

Enlightenment comes in many forms, but we believe that there are few life experiences more moving than exploring other cultures, meeting people of diverse backgrounds, and becoming a citizen of the world – leading and inspiring respectful and compassionate ways of life.

## Our Program

**Tue Feb 20:** Depart New Orleans for Tel Aviv.

**Wed Feb 21:** Arrival Tel Aviv. We will transfer by private deluxe motorcoach to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. After checking into the hotel, we will enjoy a welcome dinner. Overnight Tiberias.

The Sea of Galilee, surrounded by green hillsides, is a popular resort. It is 13 miles long and 6 miles wide. Since ancient times it has been an important fishing center. Tiberias was founded in the 1st century and became the capital of the region. During medieval times it was an important rabbinical center. Maimonides is buried here. For Christians, the Sea of Galilee is important as the center of Jesus' ministry and continues to provide a vivid and evocative experience of stories in the Gospels connected with the calling of the disciples, Jesus' teaching on the hillsides, and his miracles.

**Thu Feb 22:** Breakfast. This morning we will travel to nearby Nazareth to visit the Basilica of the Annunciation. We will celebrate Mass in the space in front of the Grotto of the Annunciation, and then visit the Church of St. Joseph and the excavations under the Sisters of Nazareth guesthouse. Afterwards, we will travel to Cana for renewal of marriage vows, followed by a visit to the Mount of Beatitudes. We will have liturgy here overlooking the Sea of Galilee, and then return to Tiberias for dinner and overnight.

Nazareth is Jesus' home town. The city was a modest size village during the time of Jesus and suffered during the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the 1st century. Today it is inhabited by Christians, Jews and Muslims and includes a medieval architectural center as well as a covered souk.

The main attraction here is the Basilica of the Annunciation – a modern church built over the ruins of a Byzantine church built over a cave where the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, announcing that she had

been chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah. There are also ruins nearby of a site believed to be the home and workshop of Joseph.

Cana is the site where Jesus performed his first miracle at the wedding feast (John 2:1-11). There is a church here that commemorates the miracle and a nice place where married couples renew their marriage vows.

The Mount of Beatitudes is a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. It lies on the northern end of the sea in a region where Jesus was active in his ministry and in calling his first disciples. The site includes a beautiful eight-sided chapel signifying the eight beatitudes and offers an inspiring place for worship and prayer. The site marks the place where Jesus preached to the crowds - his so-called 'Sermon on the Mount.' Galilee was the region where the rabbis fled after the destruction of the temple in the year 70. It was there that they began to write commentaries on the Jewish scriptures. There are many similarities between the themes of the Gospels and the commentaries of the rabbis, underscoring how important this region was for the creative evolution of Jewish and early Christian spirituality. Matthew's Gospel compares Jesus with Moses as Moses receives the Torah (Law) on Mount Sinai.

**Fri Feb 23:** Breakfast. We will begin with a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum for a visit to the archaeological site here. We will continue to Tabgha, with prayer or liturgy in one of the historic chapels here. Afterwards, we will visit Magdala, with prayer in the breathtaking chapel dedicated to women of the scriptures. We will conclude with a visit to Gnof Ginosar to see the "Jesus boat." Dinner and overnight Tiberias.

Capernaum is one of the most important sites along the shores of Galilee. There is an extensive archaeological park here with ruins from the 1st century. This was the city where many of Jesus' first disciples lived. A church is built over the ruins believed to be the house of Simon Peter where Jesus cured his mother-in-law. The ruins of a 4th

century synagogue underscore the long-term importance of this city for Jewish life in the region.

Near Capernaum is Tabgha. It is here that Jesus did much of his preaching. The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes commemorates the miracle of the feeding of those gathered to hear Jesus. The site is right on the shore of the Sea and offers a suggestive place to commemorate Jesus' calling of his disciples (as the Chapel of the Primacy of Peter celebrates).

Magdala is a new archaeological site on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. In preparation for a new conference center, the foundations for the ancient city of Magdala were found. This is the home town of Mary Magdalene. Archaeologists have found remnants of a 1st century synagogue. This is extremely impressive and rare. Since the Gospels talk about Jesus stopping in synagogues along the shore of Galilee to pray and teach, this archaeological site is one of the most certain we have of a place Jesus actually was present at. There are foundations of other structures that have been excavated as well. A beautiful new chapel dedicated to women of the scriptures has been built here with a view overlooking the Sea.

At Nof Ginosar, visitors can see a 1st century fishing boat, the same kind Jesus' disciples would have used. It was found in the mud of the Sea during a drought and has been preserved. The exhibit here allows visitors to consider the life of fishermen during the 1st century and further understand the make-up of Jesus' first community of followers.

**Sat Feb 24:** Breakfast. Today we will travel down the Jordan River valley to Qasr al-Yahud for a baptism renewal service. This is across the river from the site where John the Baptist baptized Jesus. We will continue to Mt. of Olives for panoramic view of Jerusalem and liturgy at Dominus Flevit. If time permits, we will visit Western Wall for the end of Sabbath prayer. Afterwards, we will proceed to the hotel for late check-in. Dinner and overnight Jerusalem.

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Qasr al-Yahud is a site along the Jordan River on the Israeli side of the river. It sits across from a site in Jordan - Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan. The area is near the actual site of John the Baptist's ministry in the Judean desert and along the Jordan.

The Mount of Olives rises to the east of the Old City of Jerusalem. It has been a burial site for 4500 years – with acres of tombs covering the hillsides. It is believed that this is where the Messiah will first beckon the faithful to the resurrection. There are breathtaking views from the Mount of Olives of the Old City of Jerusalem including an unobstructed view of the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock.

The Mount of Olives is associated with Jesus' agony and betrayal. Nearby is the Chapel of the Ascension, built on the site where Jesus is believed to have ascended into heaven after his resurrection. The road nearby is called the Palm Sunday Road – the route Jesus would have taken from Bethphage to Jerusalem during his triumphal entry into the city. The Pater Noster Church commemorates the place when Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The Chapel of Dominus Flevit is built around a rock in the garden believed by medieval pilgrims to have been the place where Jesus wept over his impending passion. The Church of All Nations was built over the site where Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Western Wall is one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Jews. The Wall is part of the retaining wall for the Temple Mount built by Herod the Great. Over the centuries it has become a place of Jewish pilgrimage where Jews lament the destruction of the temple and pray (placing small written prayers in the cracks of the large stones).

**Sun Feb 25:** We will begin with a visit to the Haram Es Sharif (the Temple Mount area) and the Western Wall, with the opportunity for prayer here. We will continue with a visit to the Jerusalem Archaeological Complex and Davidson Center, which showcases the developments over history on Mt. Zion. Afterwards, we will visit

Bethlehem and the Basilica of the Nativity, with liturgy at the Basilica. Sometime today, there will be an opportunity to learn about the Muslim connection of the Holy Land and why it is considered special to them. Dinner and overnight Jerusalem.

Haram Es-Sharif is the Noble Sanctuary or original platform upon which the Jewish temple stood. After the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 AD, the area underwent many modifications until the 7th and 8th centuries when the Dome of the Rock and the El-Aqsa Mosque were built here.

The Jerusalem Archaeological Complex and the Davidson Center is a large archaeological park adjacent to the Western Wall devoted to exposing the various foundations and monuments built on this site. There is an important and illuminating exhibit of the development of Jerusalem over the millennia.

Bethlehem is the traditional birth place of Jesus. The town is not far from Jerusalem, and attempts have been made to preserve some of the pastoral feel it must have had in the 1st century. In the 4th century, Constantine built a church over the site of Jesus' birth. The church has been enlarged and rebuilt several times. A star marks the place of Jesus' birth in the Grotto of the Nativity. The Field of Shepherds commemorates the place where the shepherds learned of Jesus' birth and came to pay him homage.

**Mon Feb 26:** Breakfast. Today we will visit the Upper Room and King David's tomb, St. Peter in Gallicantu, and the Via Dolorosa (for a devotional walking of the Stations of the Cross), ending at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. We will enjoy the afternoon at leisure in the Old City. Dinner and overnight Jerusalem.

A crusader building houses the "Upper Room," place where the disciples dined with Jesus – the so-called "Last Supper." It is here that Jesus washed their feet and announced his impending death. Jews believe that in the lower level of the building, amongst a series of chambers, is the Tomb of King David. This continues to be an important Jewish pilgrimage site.

The Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu is built over some 1st century caves and buildings. According to tradition, this is where Jesus was held prisoner prior to his trial and where Peter denied knowing Jesus when he was accused of being one of his followers.

The Via Dolorosa is a route through the Old City of Jerusalem that traces the path of Jesus' journey from his trial and flagellation to his crucifixion and burial. Christians stop at 14 stations to remember important moments of that journey and to pray. The Via Dolorosa ends at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was first built by Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena in the 4th century. In the 11th century it was rebuilt and has been enlarged and repaired over the centuries. It encloses two important sites – Golgotha, the site of Jesus' crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus, where he was laid to rest after his death and where he resurrected. Disputes over access to the most important pilgrimage site for Christians led to a resolution under the Ottoman Turks, dividing custody among Armenians, Greeks, Cops, Roman Catholics, Ethiopians and Syrians.

**Tue Feb 27:** Breakfast. Today we will go on a full-day excursion to the Dead Sea to visit Masada, Ein Gedi and Qumran. Dinner and overnight Jerusalem.

The Dead Sea is the lowest point on Earth – 1348 ft below sea level. The water, rich with minerals, creates an unusual degree of buoyancy for those who go into it. There are a number of spas in the area where people spread therapeutic mud on themselves.

Masada, the site of the last Jewish resistance against the Romans in 73 AD. It is an impressive fortress built high upon a plateau. Originally, Herod had used it as a desert palace. There are extensive ruins accessible by a gondola or, for the more athletically inclined, by winding foot path. There are magnificent views of the desert and the Dead Sea.

Qumran is the site where the Essenes – an ascetical Jewish community of the 1st

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century – lived and prepared for the coming of the Messiah. Their writings were lost until a Bedouin shepherd found a cave full of jars containing their scrolls in 1947. The so-called Dead Sea Scrolls were instrumental in helping scholars better understand the various movements that were active in 1st century Palestine and their relationship to the life and teachings of Jesus. The scrolls are now preserved in the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem.

**Wed Feb 28:** Breakfast. We will enjoy some free time this morning in the Old City. This afternoon, we will visit Ein Karem, the birthplace of John the Baptist; and Abu Gosh, the site of Emmaus (with liturgy). Afterwards, we will enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant before a late evening transfer to the airport.

Ein Karem is a beautiful village where John the Baptist was born. Several churches and monasteries were built here to commemorate his life, including the visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth.

Abu Gosh is the site where Christians commemorate the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection at the place of Emmaus (Luke 24). There are two sites traditionally believed to be Emmaus. One is Latrun - where older legends place the breaking of the bread and appearance of Jesus. In Latrun there is a crusader church, a Cistercian monastery and a templar fortress. But, the Crusaders shifted emphasis to Abu Gosh (a place associated with the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant just before King David took it to Jerusalem) based on a more accurate distance from Jerusalem given in Latin Bibles and the presence of a caravanserai (a watering place along the highway) that was more evocative of the scene from Luke. A beautiful church was built here in the 12th century and is the place where groups come to celebrate the appearance of the resurrected Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Thu Mar 1:** We arrive in New Orleans today.

### Inclusive Features

- Roundtrip air New Orleans to Tel Aviv
- Accommodations in centrally-located 4-star hotels:
  - Tiberias: 3 nights
  - Jerusalem: 4 nights
- Breakfast and dinner daily (including a farewell dinner at a local restaurant)
- One lunch
- A full-time tour manager throughout Israel
- Guided visits with local experts per the itinerary
- Local transportation via deluxe private motorcoach

### Travel Resource Center

Visit [www.travelillum.com/trc/pma](http://www.travelillum.com/trc/pma) for details and registration information. With questions please contact:

Fr. Alec Sheldon  
fralec@rivrdcat.org  
(225) 869-5751

### Program Prices

**\$3990** per person based on double occupancy

**\$650** supplement for single occupancy

### Land-Only Program Prices

Excludes all airfare and airport transfers

**\$2690** per person based on double occupancy

**\$650** supplement for single occupancy

Please note: Single rooms for single use are limited to 10% of the total number of rooms reserved. Should additional single rooms be requested, hotels may impose a higher supplement for all single rooms. If you have selected double occupancy but no roommate is available due to uneven numbers or if your roommate should cancel you will be in a single room and responsible for the single room supplement.

All prices listed are discounted for payment by check. When paying with a credit card you will be charged the standard base price which is 5% higher.

All program prices are based on availability of services at the time registration material is received; currency exchange rates in effect July 5, 2017—and on 2017 land and air tariffs—and are subject to change.

All services are provided subject to Illume's Conditions and Clauses. The program prices will be reviewed before the invoices for the final payment are mailed, and will reflect the current prices.

### Travel Protection

Illume suggests that you purchase travel insurance to help protect your trip and your investment from unexpected circumstances. Please read the Illume Conditions and Clauses attached to the Program Registration Application to review the charges that will apply in the event that you cancel your program participation. Illume offers you the option of purchasing a Group Deluxe Travel Protection Plan for your program. If you wish to purchase the plan, the premium should be paid with your initial deposit on the same check.

### Travel Protection Rates

#### Group Deluxe

**\$242** per person – double occupancy

**\$319** per person – single occupancy

#### Group Deluxe – Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR)\*

**\$363** per person - double occupancy

**\$478.50** per person – single occupancy

\*CFAR coverage is 75% of the nonrefundable trip cost. Trip cancellation must be 48 hours or more prior to scheduled departure. CFAR is not available to residents of New York State.

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This Travel Protection Plan is provided by Travel Insured International. All questions concerning covered reasons for cancellation, coverage while traveling, benefits and filing claims can be best answered by calling Travel Insured. Travel Insured International's customer care phone number is **1-(844)-440-8113**.

To download the Plan Document, please visit the "Travel Protection" link on your program's Travel Resource Center.

### Program Registration

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Complete the Application and forward with your **\$1200.00** deposit per person (and travel protection payment, if purchasing) by **August 20, 2017** to:

Fr. Alec Sheldon  
c/o St. Joseph Parish  
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Paulina, LA 70763  
fralec@rivrdcat.org  
(225) 869-5751

Registrations will be accepted after **August 20, 2017** on a space-available basis. Additional costs may apply. Contact illume for pricing and availability after **August 20, 2017**.

Checks should be made payable to illume.

Balance of payment due not later than:  
**November 22, 2017**

Note: Any changes to the program will be outlined in the final documents which you will receive one month prior to departure. If changes are made that affect the program price, you will receive an invoice or a credit accordingly.

**Program No. 18.10442**