WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS
A pilgrimage for Catholic Educators in the Wollongong Diocese

DEPARTURE: TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY 2016

A 20 Day Pilgrimage Journey

TOUR CODE: 6PV10
DAY 1: TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY 2016 – DEPART FOR THE HOLY LAND

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 6TH JANUARY – VIA MT NEBO TO THE DEAD SEA

Theme: From Old to New

This morning we fly into Amman and immediately travel west to ascend Biblical Mt Nebo for a spectacular Mass. Here, at the site where the Old Testament opened its door to the land of the New, Moses looked over into the Promised Land and blessed Joshua who was to lead the Israelites under God’s protection (Joshua 1:6–9). It has been possible for archaeologists to identify this sanctuary, thanks to the records left by two pilgrim-visitors of the fourth and fifth centuries of their travels in this region. One of these was Egeria, the pilgrim nun. His Holiness Benedict XVI, on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2009, said this while here on Mt Nebo: “Here, on the heights of Mount Nebo, the memory of Moses invites us to ‘lift up our eyes’ to embrace with gratitude not only God’s mighty works in the past, but also to look with faith and hope to the future which he holds out to us and to our world.” We too can seize this opportunity to thank God for our journey thus far and anticipate the blessings that are to come.

We then arrive at the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea to check-in to our beautiful hotel located down on the shore. Here we will unwind and take the optional opportunity to float in the salty waters said to have healing qualities. The experience is quite uplifting!!

Dead Sea overnight (D)

DAY 3: THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY – DEAD SEA TO BETHLEHEM

Theme: New Beginnings

Our pilgrimage starts this morning with a visit to Bethany Beyond the Jordan, one of the most recent archaeological and religious discoveries. The five springs here form a tributary of the Jordan River, believed to be the Baptismal site of Jesus by John the Baptist. So authentic is this site that His Holiness Benedict XVI chose this as an essential place to visit on his last pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We will celebrate Mass, renew our Baptismal promises and see the beautiful Orthodox Church (also the Catholic Church in construction).

Continue west across the Jordan River border into the Holy Land of Israel known as the land of the “fifth Gospel”. Journey on to Bethlehem, the City of David – the perfect way to begin our pilgrimage through the life of Jesus. Bethlehem overnight (BD)

DAY 4: FRIDAY 8TH JANUARY – BETHLEHEM & SURROUNDS

Theme: The Birth of Jesus

Our day of pilgrimage begins this morning in Ein Karem, the birthplace of St John the Baptist and site of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth “Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord” (Lk 1:43). Pilgrims may choose to pray a mystery of the Rosary here as we walk up to this church dedicated to ‘The Magnificat’.

Continue on to the Israel Museum where we have an orientation viewing of the Second Temple scale model of Jerusalem as it was in the time of Jesus. Then proceed to the Shrine of the Book to view the Dead Sea Scrolls with our own eyes.

We travel on to Shepherd’s Field to commemorate the appearance of the angels to the shepherds on that first Christmas night (Lk 2:8–16). We celebrate our group Mass here in a local cave. Return to Bethlehem where we will visit the Church of the Nativity built over the stable where Jesus was born. Bending low, we enter the church through the Door of Humility and descend into the Grotto of the Holy Manger. A silver star in the floor marks the very spot where Christ was born. The star’s inscription reads in Latin: Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus Natus Est (Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born).

Bethlehem overnight (BD)
ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DAY 5: SATURDAY 9TH JANUARY
– MASADA & BETHANY
Theme: Desert Encounters
Travel along the Jericho Road as we remember the parable of the Good Samaritan and journey through desert hills and dry rocky landscape. Soon our coach will pass by the site of Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd boy.

We continue south along the Dead Sea to the historical Masada where, on arrival, we will embark on the cable car offering spectacular scenery to the summit. Here we will enjoy a guided tour of Herod’s fortress and the Zealot’s last stand.

Continue on to Bethany where we relive the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Here we will celebrate Mass at the Church of St Lazarus before returning to Bethlehem.

Bethlehem overnight (BD)

DAY 6: SUNDAY 10TH JANUARY
– VIA CAESAREA TO THE SEA OF GALILEE
Theme: The Beatitudes
We depart Bethlehem this morning and journey north to the crusader port city of Caesarea to see the maritime city built by Herod the Great and once the Roman capital of Israel. It was here the centurion Cornelius was baptized by Peter, becoming the first gentile convert to Christianity (Acts 10), and where Festus tried Paul (Acts 25: 6–12). Visit the impressive excavations, the amphitheatre and the Herodian port.

Continue north to the town of Haifa which is the largest city in Northern Israel, and the third-largest city in the country. The Mediterranean Sea wraps around three sides of Haifa with intoxicating blue and gold beaches. We hope to spend some time at the House of Grace, a Catholic ministry that works with the most marginalised members of Haifa: Christians, Jews and Muslims who are in need of counselling, guidance, and material aid. We will hear a special talk about this ministry (subject to opening hours).

In this region we will also visit Mount Carmel where Elijah smote the false prophets and where we will visit the Carmelite Monastery, Chapel of the Holy Family and Elijah’s cave.

Journey east to ascend Mt Beatitudes as we celebrate Mass and take time in this special place to ponder Jesus’ message of happiness – the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1–12). Finally we continue to Tiberias on the shores of Lake Galilee … “Go to Galilee and you will find him there” (Mt 28:7).

Sea of Galilee overnight (BD)

DAY 7: MONDAY 11TH JANUARY
– MT TABOR / NAZARETH / CANA
Theme: The Annunciation
We travel out this morning to the foot of Mt Tabor before ascending by taxis up the narrow winding road leading to the majestic summit. Here Our Lord’s divinity shone forth in the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–2). After some time to reflect in this breathtaking setting we will better understand Peter’s words ‘Lord it is good for us to be here’.

We then journey west to Nazareth, the town of Jesus’ childhood. Upon arrival we enter inside the Basilica of the Annunciation where a traditional cave becomes the focal point of Mary’s response “Let it be done to me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). We celebrate a touching Eucharist here. Also see the Church of St Joseph and a traditional Jewish Synagogue (Synagogue Church) similar to that in which the Holy Family would have worshipped.

We will also visit what is known as the White Mosque, the oldest Mosque in Nazareth. It preaches peace, collaboration and brotherhood between the different peoples and communities in Nazareth.

Continue on to the village of Cana where Jesus, at the request of His Mother, performed his first miracle transforming the water into wine at the wedding feast (Jn 2:1–11). Here, married couples may take the opportunity to renew their wedding vows, and single and widowed pilgrims will receive a special blessing.

Sea of Galilee overnight (BLD)
DAY 8: TUESDAY 12TH JANUARY – SEA OF GALILEE

Theme: The Galilean Ministry of Jesus

Our memorable Galilee day begins in Capernaum, the centre of Jesus’ teaching and healing and home to Peter the Apostle (Mt 4:12–20). After exploring this site, we travel through Sowers Bay and reflect on the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1–9) before continuing through Magdala, the town of Mary Magdalene.

Visit the Nof Ginosar Kibbutz, within which is preserved the remains of a first century fishing boat as in the days of Christ. We then set off from the shore in a traditional sailing vessel to encounter one of our most memorable pilgrimage highlights – a Private Mass floating in the centre of Lake Galilee with engines switched off. Here we will recall the miracles of Jesus calming the storm and appearing to the apostles walking on this very water. After Mass, we will continue back to the shore for our special 'St Peter’s fish' lunch.

Travel this afternoon around the lake to Korazin to relive the parables of the House built on the rock and the persevering widow. Journey on to Tabgha, site of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Mt 14:1–20), before an important stop at the Church of the Primacy of Peter where Jesus challenged Peter and each one of us ‘Do you really love me, feed my sheep’. Here we will spend some quiet time to reflect and pray by the shore of the lake.

Sea of Galilee overnight (BLD)

DAY 9: WEDNESDAY 13TH JANUARY – VIA JACOB’S WELL & TAYBEH TO JERUSALEM

Theme: Living Water – Living Stones

Departing Lake Galilee, we journey south through Samaria, a land rich in Old Testament history. We see the twin peaks of Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal, known in the Old Testament as Mt Blessing and Mt Cursing. Mt Gerizim is today the home of the few remaining Samaritans.

Soon we come to the actual site of Jacob’s Well, hewn manually out of solid rock and over 100 feet deep. The water at the bottom of the well is fed by flowing water which is why ancients gave it the name of “living water”. It is at this well that Jesus met the Samaritan woman and said to her: “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (Jn 4:13–14)

Pass by Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and through the beautiful Levonah Valley referred to in Judges as the Valley of the Dancers.

Our afternoon brings us to Taybeh, a unique Christian village on the edge of the Judean wilderness. This living community is linked to Ephraim (Jn 11:54) where it is said Jesus and his disciples sought refuge after the Council of Priests asked for his execution. The village has been a Christian outpost ever since and since we will be able to see an ancient farmer’s house. In such a house farmers would have lived in and kept their animals in the manger below as in the time of Jesus’ birth. We visit and celebrate our group Mass in the church here where local Catholics have practiced their faith for generations.

Finally we continue our journey up to Jerusalem – the City of our God.

Jerusalem overnight (BD)

DAY 10: THURSDAY 14TH JANUARY – JERUSALEM

Theme: The Passion, Death & Resurrection of Jesus

We will proceed to the Mt of Olives this morning where we will firstly visit the Church of the ‘Pater Noster’ commemorating the site where Jesus taught His disciples the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:7–15). We then enjoy a panoramic view over the city and a spectacular photographic opportunity. We then enter the Jewish cemetery for a guided walk.

Exiting the cemetery, we commence our walk down the Palm Sunday Road, wandering past the tombs of the Prophets Haggai, Malachi and Zechariah before arriving at the Dominus Flevit for Mass. This church was built on the site where Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41–44).
We then visit the Garden of Gethsemane, where we will enter the Church of the Agony containing the bare rock upon which Jesus is said to have prayed before his arrest. The outside garden contains olive trees, the roots of which go back to the time of Jesus. Nearby we will have the opportunity for a time of reflection in one of the private gardens.

In the afternoon we pass through the walls of the Old City to the vicinity of the Temple Mount to view the Dome of the Rock, El Aqsa Mosque and the Western Wall. Then we come to the Church of St Anne, said to be built over the birthplace of the Virgin Mary, and visit the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus healed the paralysed man (Jn 5:2–9).

Tonight we will meet with the Bereaved Parents. These brave people have endured so much and are trying so hard to help to bring peace to the Holy Land.

Jerusalem overnight (BD)

**DAY 11: FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY – JERUSALEM**

Theme: The Passion, Death & Resurrection of Jesus

We begin our day with a visit to the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu for Mass, where in the prison below Our Lord was interrogated and imprisoned, while Peter denied Jesus three times.

Continue on to nearby Mt Zion to visit the Cenacle room of the Last Supper and the Church of Dormition where Our Lady was assumed into heaven.

Onwards to the Yad Vashem (A memorial to the victims of the Holocaust). Here we will learn about this tragic event from a Jewish perspective and pay tribute to those who lost their lives. Following our time here we have the opportunity for private reflection.

Jerusalem overnight (BD)

**DAY 12: SATURDAY 16TH JANUARY – JERUSALEM**

Theme: The Passion, Death & Resurrection of Jesus

Arise early this morning as we enter to the Old City of Jerusalem to commence our Stations of the Cross, beginning from the Antonia Fortress where Jesus was condemned to death. See the Lithostrotos (pavement) in the Ecce Homo convent. Visit nearby the Flagellation and Condemnation Chapels as we pray and follow in Our Lord’s footsteps along the actual Via Dolorosa to the site of Calvary where we will celebrate Mass in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Walk the stairway climbing to the actual site where the Cross of Jesus once stood. The glass panels reveal the natural rock below which we may come to touch with our pilgrim hands. Also enter the Edicule containing the tomb where Our Lord rose from the dead.

We then return to the Jewish Quarter for a tour of a synagogue.

Enjoy some free time this afternoon to pray, rest or explore the Old City at your own pace.

Jerusalem overnight (BD)

**DAY 13: SUNDAY 17TH JANUARY – PILGRIM WALK TO JERICHO**

Theme: Desert Encounters

Early this morning we arise and set off by foot on the “Good Samaritan Track” through the stark desert landscape towards Jericho. En route we will visit the Monastery of St George, spend time in reflection and prayer and explore the amazing desert landscape. (subject to weather conditions)

We continue to Jericho the ‘City of Palms’ which is said to be the oldest inhabited city and most famous oasis. Across the valley we view the Mt of Temptation, the site of Jesus’ fast of 40 days and there are enough stones to illustrate Satan’s words “If you are the son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves”. Here in Jericho we can give our feet a well deserved rest and enjoy a traditional Palestinian meal. We will also celebrate Mass here.

Return to Jerusalem for the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

Jerusalem overnight (BLD)
DAY 14: MONDAY 18TH JANUARY – BETHLEHEM ENCOUNTER

Theme: The Dignity of Life

We return to Bethlehem today for a special day of encounter. Firstly we will visit the Holy Child Program which serves as a sanctuary of safety for the families of the region. The program facilitates the acquisition and development of new skills, recovery, and rehabilitation from trauma, build resiliency and instills hope for the future through a community of caring, committed professionals. We will learn of their extraordinary work in upholding the dignity of these children’s lives before opening our hearts and minds to serve alongside them (subject to school holidays).

Today we will also visit the renowned Bethlehem University, a Catholic co-educational institution providing higher education to the people of Palestine. After an orientation tour we will celebrate Mass in the lovely chapel and then enjoy a meal prepared by the hospitality students.

Jerusalem overnight (BLD)

DAY 15: TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY – JERUSALEM – FREE DAY

We enjoy our final day in Jerusalem at leisure to rest, pray and return to our favourite places in the Old City.

For our final night in the Holy Land, we enjoy a special dinner.

Jerusalem overnight (BD)

DAY 16: WEDNESDAY 20TH JANUARY – JERUSALEM TO PETRA

Theme: A cry in the wilderness

This morning we depart Jerusalem, crossing the border back into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Our journey takes us south along the King’s Highway through the Jordanian Desert. En route to Petra, we make a stop at Wadi Mujib, known as the ‘Jordanian Grand Canyon’. Here we will enjoy a wonderful photographic opportunity as we gaze at the amazing gorges below that make up part of the Jordan valley trekked by John the Baptist.

Continue south to the magnificent ancient trading city of Petra known as the ‘Red Rose City’ and one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. Here we are positioned in the biblical land of Edom (Judges 11:17–18).

Petra overnight (BD)

DAY 17: THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY – PETRA EXPLORATION

Theme: Ancient Wonders

Enjoy an unforgettable guided walking tour this morning of the ruins from ancient Petra – the city that the Nabateans carved out of solid rock dating back to 300 BC! Our visit will follow a passage through the Siq, a chasm created in a prehistoric earthquake. It is one of the special moments to walk through this canyon which dramatically opens up to reveal the Treasury Building (Al Khasne) – a never to be forgotten experience. We will see also the Roman Theatre, Corinthian tomb along with churches, homes and many other buildings from this fascinating period.

The remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure.

Petra overnight (BD)
DAY 18: FRIDAY 22ND JANUARY – VIA MADABA TO THE DEAD SEA

Theme: Desert Mosaics

After a leisurely breakfast we travel north on the Biblical Kings Highway back towards the Dead Sea.

We spend some time at St Georges Church in Madaba with its precious 6th century mosaic map of the Holy Land comprised of more than two million pieces. After this some free time will be afforded to explore the fascinating township of Madaba, the ‘City of Mosaics’, taking the opportunity for lunch and to browse the local crafts.

We check in at Amman airport late this evening for our flight to Australia.

(BD)

DAY 19: SATURDAY 23RD JANUARY – DEPART JORDAN – IN TRANSIT

DAY 20: SUNDAY 24TH JANUARY – ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

INCLUSIONS

Airfares: Economy class airfare Ex Sydney
(N.B. Airlines taxes are included at approximately $406 per person on standard itinerary and subject to fluctuations).

Accommodation & Meals: Based on combined three and four star hotels throughout with breakfast and dinner daily.

Miscellaneous Inclusions: Deluxe Air-Conditioned Motor coach with driver • Local Tour Escort/Guides • Sightseeing and entrance fees throughout as per itinerary • Tipping • Passport and Jordan Single Entry Visa Cost (Included).

Not Included: Other meals not stated • Items of a personal nature including phone calls, laundry, beverages, etc. • Travel insurance (Harvest will recommend a special group policy rate).