

Holy Land Pilgrimage 2020: Q & A

1. **What is the date for the Holy Land 2020 Pilgrimage?** March 24-April 2, 2020
2. **What are the age requirements for joining the pilgrimage?** 18 and older (*by the Departure Date*) unless accompanied by a parent on the trip.
3. **Is a priest joining us on the pilgrimage?** Yes, Fr. Peter Richards is our Pilgrimage Chaplain.
4. **Will there be daily Mass on the Pilgrimage?** Yes, our liturgies will be at some of the most holy places in all of Christendom.
5. **Why should I go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land?** The Church teaches that *"Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer."* (CCC 2691) Going to the Holy Land is the ultimate pilgrimage experience and is often called the 5th Gospel. You will walk in the footsteps of Jesus and the Holy Family. The stories of Sacred Scripture, that may have seemed obscure and distant, will come alive in your imagination. You will be privileged to pray in the places where the historical events of our salvation took place – including Golgotha and the Tomb of the Resurrection. You will also meet fellow Christians who are living under difficult circumstances in the Holy Land and you will learn more about their situation.
6. **Is this a guided tour?** Yes, we have secured an English speaking tour guide who will meet us at the airport and be with us the entire time. His name is Nasser Elias and Bob Swift has worked with him on a previous pilgrimage. Nasser is truly the best!
7. **How will we travel around Israel?** In a top of the line very comfortable coach tour bus.
8. **What locations will be going to in the Holy Land?** Please refer to the brochure for specific locations but we will be present in all the major Christian pilgrimage sites along with other locations in Israel including: Tel Aviv, Mount Carmel, Caesarea Maritima, Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, the Golan Heights, Magdala, Mount Tabor, Jordan River, Dead Sea, Qumran, Jericho, Bethlehem, Bethany, and of course all the major locations Jerusalem – including the Holy Sepulchre.
9. **What is the weather like in March in Israel?** The temperatures at the end of March have an average high of 66-69 degrees and average low of 49 degrees. Occasional rain is still possible at the end of March, however we will be there right at the beginning of the transition to dryer spring weather. This is a very pleasant time of the year to go to Israel.
10. **How physically demanding is a pilgrimage to the Holy Land?** There will be plenty of walking and there are both hills and stairs – Israel has mountainous terrain. ***(PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT: Pilgrims need to be able to walk 5-miles over the course of a day and 2-miles at any one time. Terrain is paved but includes inclines, declines and stairs)*** Talk to Bob if you have specific questions about health concerns.
11. **How much is the Holy Land 2020 Pilgrimage?** \$3798.00 is the estimated cost. This price is based on 40 pilgrims with double occupancy for rooming. The cost would increase to \$3898.00 if we only get to 30 pilgrims. The cost would increase to \$3998.00 if we only get to 20 pilgrims. ***(Please note that 20 pilgrims is the minimum size for our group)***
12. **Is single occupancy rooming available?** Yes, but there is additional fee of \$750.00 for single occupancy rooming.

13. **Is Travel Insurance included in the price of the pilgrimage?** No, but it is available through the Catholic Pilgrim Office (Travelex). You may also obtain travel insurance through other sources. **Getting travel insurance is highly recommended.**
14. **Why purchase Travel Insurance?** Because of the amount of money that each pilgrim is investing to make this trip, it makes sense to carry travel insurance that provides coverage for medical emergencies and provides emergency cancellation coverage.
15. **How much does Travel Insurance cost?** It varies by the amount of coverage and the age of the applicant. Please see the **Travelex Brochure** for more information or go to: <https://www.travelexinsurance.com/travel-insurance>
16. **What is the policy regarding payment, cancellation, and refunds?** *(DEPOSITS - CANCELLATIONS - REFUNDS: The **deposit of \$300.00 per person** is required to confirm tour acceptance and will be applied to total price of program selected. 50% of remaining balance to be paid in full 150 days prior to departure by **October 26, 2019**. If 50% of remaining balance is not received by 150 days prior to departure, the tour member will be cancelled. Remaining balance to be paid in full 75 days prior to departure by **January 9, 2020**. After initial deposit is made, \$200 cancellation fee applies for any cancellation received in writing up to 150 days prior to departure. \$600 cancellation fee applies for any cancellation received in writing between 149 and 75 days prior to departure. NO REFUND is possible under any circumstances for cancellations made within 74 days of departure. We strongly advise insurance for this reason. Receipt of deposit for any partial payment of a tour constitutes acceptance of all terms and conditions listed herein. Passenger substitutions are not allowed after registration. TOUR INSURANCE IS AVAILABLE AND STRONGLY RECOMMENDED. OUR CANCELLATION POLICY APPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL PASSENGERS, AND NOT FOR MASS CANCELLATIONS. IN CASE OF MASS CANCELLATIONS, CANCELLATION FEES IMPOSED BY SUPPLIERS WILL ALSO APPLY. All claims must be in writing. No refunds for services or sightseeing rendered and not used by tour members. In the event that departures do not reach the minimum 15 persons prior to departure, The Catholic Pilgrim Office, Inc. reserves the right to cancel, withdraw or change the tour in whole or in part at any time. The sole obligation of The Catholic Pilgrim Office, Inc. is to refund payments received in connection herewith if not acceptable to tour members. All cancellations must be in writing.)*
17. **What are the hotel accommodations?** First Class hotels in both Tiberius and Jerusalem. The pilgrimage price is rated at double occupancy. Single rooms are available for an additional fee of \$750.00. The hotels provide daily breakfast and dinner.
18. **Are meals included in the price?** Yes, the hotels provide daily breakfast and dinner. Lunches are not provided. Each pilgrim should plan on \$15.00 - \$20.00 per day for lunches, along with purchasing bottles of water to stay hydrated (\$1.00 per bottle)
19. **Are tips included in the price?** Yes, all basic tips are covered in the pilgrimage fee, however it is customary for pilgrims to take up a special collection for our pilgrimage guide and bus driver at the end of the trip.
20. **Will the price change?** Most likely the price will not change, however the airline cost is an estimated so the tour price is subject to change. *(Rates are based on the airline fuel surcharges and applicable currency exchange rate(s) at the date of quotation, which are subject to change up to 30 days prior to departure. Any significant change as determined by The Catholic Pilgrim Office, Inc., up or down, will be applied to each passengers account)*

21. **What about handicapped pilgrims?** We are traveling by tour bus to the various sites, but please be aware that there is *always walking* involved with this pilgrimage, including hills and stairs. There will also be travel by boat on the Sea of Galilee. **When discerning your participation in this pilgrimage please be realistic about any physical limitations you may have.** Talk to Bob Swift if you have specific concerns. *(Tour members are expected to be in good health. Tour members, who require any form of special assistance, must be accompanied by a helper who is totally responsible for those tour members)*
22. **What airline will we be using and are we able to keep the air miles?** We will be flying either Delta or United Airlines out of MSP. Typically individual pilgrims *will not* receive credit for air miles because of the deeply discounted group rate we are receiving for plane tickets.
23. **What is included in the price?** Roundtrip airline tickets on either Delta or United Airlines from Minneapolis to Israel (*one stop in USA – Typically Newark NJ*), 1st class hotel lodging in Tiberias and Jerusalem, all transportation in Israel, English speaking guides, all tips, breakfast and dinner daily, any and all entrance fees to sites.
24. **What will I be responsible for?** Meals or purchases while traveling to and from Israel, lunches, snacks, water during the day, and any personal shopping expenses.
25. **Will I need a valid U.S. Passport?** Each pilgrim must have a US passport that is valid for 6 months *after* the return of the pilgrimage (**must be valid through October 30, 2020**).
26. **What is the payment schedule?**
- \$300.00 Deposit to secure spot on the pilgrimage (Please include your **Pilgrimage Registration Form** along w/t a **copy of your passport**)
 - \$50% by October 26, 2019
 - Remaining Balance by January 9, 2020
27. **Who should I make the deposit check out to?** The Catholic Pilgrim Office Inc.
28. **Who should I submit the Pilgrimage Registration Form and \$300.00 deposit to?**
- **St. Michael Catholic Church**
Attn: Bob Swift / Holy Land
11300 Frankfort Pkwy. NE
St. Michael, MN 55376

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PILGRIMAGE?

- Please email Bob Swift at: bswift@stmccatholicchurch.org