

PASTOR'S COLUMN

“Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: November 2–15, 2005”

Today there is new hope for finding solutions to the conflicts that have for the last few years plagued the Holy Land. Many people are once again considering sharing in the joy and blessing of visiting the land where God’s plan for the salvation of the world unfolded.

People are beginning to return to the Holy Land (Israel/Palestine) after almost five years of unrest.

My last visit to Israel/Palestine was in the year 2000. I enjoyed a 3-month sabbatical at Tantur Ecumenical Institute just outside Bethlehem when the most recent “troubles” broke out. That visit was my fifth to the Holy Land.

For me, Israel/Palestine is a place to which I want to return over and over again, because each time I visit, my faith is deepened, and I am more connected to the Scriptures and more centered in the celebration of the Eucharist. When you walk where Jesus walked, you are never the same again!

I am happy to announce that in November of this year (November 2–15, 2005), I will be leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will be doing so in cooperation with Rev. Garrett Edmunds O.F.M., formerly the Associate Pastor of Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, and newly assigned (once again) to the Franciscan Friary in Jerusalem.

Each of us will be leading a tour and both groups will have the greater experience of Fr. Garrett who has lead over 40 pilgrim groups in the Holy Land in the last 8 years, and me, who has lead 3 pilgrim groups (less experience but a great amount of enthusiasm!).

The pilgrimage will be a comfortable, two-week opportunity to grow in faith and to deepen your relationship with God.

Imagine visiting Tel Aviv, the Judean Hill Country, Bethlehem, Ein Karem (the home of John the Baptist), Tiberias, Caesarea and the Mediterranean Coast, Haifa, Mt. Carmel, the Jordan River, Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, the Mt. of Beatitudes, Mt. Tabor, the Jezreel Valley, the Jordan Valley, Jerusalem, the Western Wall, Mt. Zion, the Upper Room, Dormition Abbey, the Mt. of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Old City of Jerusalem, the Pool of Bethesda, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Bethany, Jericho, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Ein Gedi, and more!

It is a well-planned pilgrimage, and it will be educational and prayerful.

Brochures will be available in a few days and will be available in the Parish Office. If interested, please make a reservation soon. Space is limited.

Also in a few days, the brochure will be available on our parish website (www.stmoside.org), as well as a series of reflections and photos taken that I created while on sabbatical in the Holy Land in the year 2000.

The land of Israel/Palestine is the Fifth Gospel. To better understand the four Gospels, one must walk the fifth. I hope that you will consider joining Fr. Garrett and me in November.

Fr. Mike