

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

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It was a dream come true! For years I have wanted to visit the Holy Land, and a few years ago, I prepared to go, but the pilgrimage was cancelled due to an escalation in hostilities. From January 21-28, 2007, I, along with 14 others, travelled to the Holy Land and walked in the footsteps of Jesus. Although some of us went as members of the League, we each paid our own way.

It was a busy week and, in this short space, I cannot describe everything we saw and did. What I will try to do is highlight buildings and places we saw which commemorate events in the life of Jesus and His mother Mary.

We visited the Church of the Annunciation and the Church of St. Joseph. The Church of the Annunciation was one spot where I was deeply touched. Imagining Mary and being close to the spot where the angel Gabriel is believed to have appeared to her was a moving experience.

We spent time in Nazareth in a village recreated to look as it would have in the time of Jesus.

We drove by Cana on our way to Tiberias where we spent our second night. We could look out our patio door and see the Sea of Galilee not far away.

A very special part of the pilgrimage for me was sailing on the Sea of Galilee. The engines were cut and we just floated, or should I say, rocked for a time. We sang "Gentle Woman" and prayed the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. I reflected on Jesus standing in the boat preaching to those on the shore and His call to the fishermen, "...you will be fishers of people." As I sat, I prayed for the team of men preparing for a Cursillo Weekend back home. They too would be "fishers of people."

One stop was at Yardenit, the baptismal site at the River Jordan. There, we dipped our fingers in the river and renewed our baptismal promises.

In Bethlehem, we visited the Church of the Nativity. The Basilica of St. Catherine is the church from which Midnight Mass is televised to the world on Christmas Eve.

We gathered in the "Upper Room" in St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Church where the Last Supper is said to have taken place. It is also where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost. We passed the Garden of Blood where Judas is supposed to have thrown the coins

he received for betraying Jesus. The money was used to buy this burial ground for the poor.

On our last day, we passed through the Valley of Judgment and saw the Garden of Gethsemane. The olive trees in the garden are very, very old, with the oldest dating back to the time of Jesus. The twisted trunk is said to symbolize agony.

Beside the garden is a church known by many names: Gethsemane, Church of All Nations and Basilica of the Agony. The traditional Rock of the Agony lies in front of the main altar.

We went up to the Mount of Olives and we could see two churches. One of them is called *Dominus Flevit*, Latin for "The Lord wept." Its dome is shaped like a tear.

In the Christian Quarter of Old Jerusalem, we travelled the Way of the Cross or the Way of Sorrow – the Via Dolorosa. The last five stations are within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the church, a Latin shrine marks the spot where Jesus was nailed to the cross. There is also a Greek Orthodox altar, and under it is a silver disk marking the place of the crucifixion.

We also visited Capernaum, where Jesus made His home for three years.

We prayed morning and evening prayer each day, and we remembered intentions which we carried with us. At the Benedictine Monastery in Tabgha, we lit 11 candles and prayed the League Prayer for our sisters from all across Canada and their intentions.

I asked others on the trip to share their impressions, and here are a few.

- "... all during the week we were filled with a sense of awe and wonderment that we were actually there, on holy ground, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. The Scriptures come alive with new intensity as we can now visualize the holy sites. It was a blessed dream come true for us." (Ann and Herb Doucet)
- "I saw [Jesus] in the face of my fellow pilgrims, other Christians, Jews and in many others. We are all children of God." (Glenda Klein)
- "This was a very deeply spiritual pilgrimage to travel back to the roots of my faith." (Margaret Ann Jacobs)

- “The trip to the Holy Land was undoubtedly one of the highlights of my life. To have followed Jesus’ footsteps with my sisters in the League was a treasure that I will cherish. The trip will forever be emblazoned in my memory.” (Dr. Rayleen De Luca)
- “Just one highlight of this amazing pilgrimage was the storm that suddenly burst upon us the first night we spent in a kibbutz-hotel on the Sea of Galilee. After everyone had gone to bed, I heard this tremendous wind swirling with fury around us. I looked out of the window and could see the troubled waters and understood how frightened the apostles would have been out there in their boat, with Christ fast asleep...!” (Lorette Noble) †



ST. PATRICK PARISH COUNCIL SUDBURY, ONTARIO



Congratulations are extended to St. Patrick Parish Council for enrolling 33 new members. In recognition of this achievement, President Zenaida Odense was presented with a certificate of merit by Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan President Evelyn Theriault.

SACRED HEART PARISH COUNCIL TROUT CREEK, ONTARIO



Belonging to the CWL is a great family tradition in Trout Creek, where the council’s oldest and newest members are related! Juliann Reichstein is a 67-year member, her daughter Jean Rennette (missing from the picture) is a 49-year member, her granddaughter Bonnie Hanselman is a 26-year member, and her greatgranddaughter Haili Hanselman, aged 16, is a new member.