

# Welcome!



Dear friends,

Thank you for your interest in joining the two of us on the Paulist Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, January 22 through February 2, 2023!

Before registering and making a deposit, we want to make sure you know what to expect if you make this pilgrimage with us. The following document is a truncated version of a longer preparation guide that will be sent to all pilgrims after registration. Before you register, we would like you to read this document carefully and then fill out the [Pilgrimage Questionnaire](#). **No one will be allowed to register for the pilgrimage until they have submitted the questionnaire to us.** Every individual pilgrim must fill out their own questionnaire.

The longer preparation guide (with **brown** section titles) includes five sections and an appendix:

- I. INTENTION: why travel to the Holy Land?
- II. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION: prayer and petitions
- III. PHYSICAL (and MENTAL) PREPARATION: long-distance travel to a foreign country
- IV. INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION: history and geography
- V. THE NITTY-GRITTY: packing list, flight information

APPENDIX: A history of the city of Jerusalem

This truncated guide (with **green** section titles) includes only sections I, III, and a version of section V without the specific flight information.

Do not hesitate to contact Sergio at [holyland@paulist.org](mailto:holyland@paulist.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

*Rev. Rich Andre, C. S. P.*  
Pilgrimage Chaplain

*Sergio Pellicano*  
Pilgrimage Coordinator

## I. INTENTION: why travel to the Holy Land?

### A prayer by Stephen C. Doyle, O.F.M.:

Lord Jesus Christ, you were a pilgrim in this Holy Land. Now you lead and guide us on our pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.

As we follow in your steps, we ask the grace to keep our eyes on you. Open our hearts that we may find you not only in ancient stones, but in your people and in each other.

Let your words be a fire burning within us. Write your Gospel upon our hearts.

Give us a spirit of prayer lest we return full of facts but not of grace and love. Lord, teach us to pray in the very land where you taught your disciples so that we may say:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### Who are the Paulist Fathers?

**The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle** (“The Paulist Fathers”) is a community of Catholic priests who share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through mission preaching, media, campus ministries, parishes, downtown centers, the arts and more.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we focus on **evangelization** (reaching out), **reconciliation** (bringing peace) and **ecumenical and interfaith relations** (seeking unity).

Every day, across the Internet and airwaves, in bookstores and campus centers and in communities and churches, we navigate between the spiritual and the secular to meet every person at any point on the journey of faith.

Some have called us “America’s friendliest priests.” With due respect to all of our brother priests, that’s a compliment we gladly accept! To learn more, visit [www.paulist.org](http://www.paulist.org).

### Who is Servant of God Fr. Isaac Thomas Hecker, C. S. P?

Isaac Hecker (Dec. 18, 1819 – Dec. 22, 1888) was the New York City-born son of German immigrants who spent his early life working in family’s bakery and flour business. As a young man, he began a spiritual journey that eventually led to him to the Catholic Church. He became a priest and a faithful son of the Church who was not afraid of questioning, challenging and experimenting.

In 1858, together with his associates, Fr. Hecker founded the Paulist Fathers with the mission of helping the American people understand the Catholic Church and helping the Church understand the democratic spirit of America. Fr. Hecker was a brilliant missionary preacher, author, publisher and pastor. It is our prayer that, one day, he also will be known as a saint. The cause for Fr. Hecker’s beatification and canonization was formally opened in 2008 at which time he received the title “Servant of God.”

During our pilgrimage, we will reflect on several quotations from Fr. Hecker’s writings and sermons. We will also consult some important Church documents which were drafted in part by individual Paulists, including **Unitatis Redintegratio** (1964), **Nostra Aetate** (1965), and **Go and Make Disciples** (1992).

### Homework: please pray about your intentions

Long before we arrive in the Holy Land, we encourage you to earnestly pray about why you are making this pilgrimage. The Holy Land includes a dizzying diversity of architecture, history, cultures, geography, and religions. There is simply too much to drink in during our short visit. Why are you expending the time, the effort, and the money to take this trip?

### Our primary intention: PILGRIMAGE

We intend for this trip to focus on the Holy Land as what St. Jerome called it: “The Fifth Gospel.” At the heart of Christian discipleship is the development of a personal, intimate, relationship with Jesus Christ. To visit the Holy Land is to have the opportunity to walk where Jesus lived, died, and rose again. By visiting the Holy Land, the Scriptures can come alive to us in new and exciting ways!

### Our secondary intention: encountering the peoples of the Holy Land in a “Paulist” way

In his 2013 apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis uses the word “encounter” 32 times. As the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) demonstrates, we can only make a difference in the lives of others if we genuinely interact with them.

The Holy Land has been revered by people of many religions throughout the centuries. We will have the opportunity to talk with people currently living in the Holy Land, with a special emphasis on the Paulist charisms of **reconciliation, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue**. We will focus especially on the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears of our Christian brothers and sisters. We will visit the Bethlehem Children’s Home, and interact with parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Beit Sahour. We may have the opportunity to get to know some members of the hotel staff.

We will also encounter people of other faiths:

- **Judaism:** As Jesus and his companions were Jewish, we will learn about Judaic practices at the time of Christ. In addition, we will visit the Israel Museum, the Western Wall, the Rabbinical Tunnels, and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. A Jewish Israeli citizen is scheduled to speak with us.
- **Islam:** We will see the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. A Muslim East Jerusalem resident is scheduled to speak with us.

### Tertiary intentions:

While there are many other valid and wonderful reasons to visit the Holy Land, please do not let these concerns distract you from our primary and secondary intentions:

- *“Spiritual tourism.”* With all the astounding sites and architecture, it is tempting to take thousands of pictures during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. By all means, bring a camera and take pictures, but do not allow picture-taking to distract you from praying, learning, and experiencing the Holy Land!
- *Shopping.* Everywhere we go, we will be surrounded by souvenir vendors. We have scheduled one shopping excursion (probably on Day #7 of the pilgrimage) with a community of vendors whose families depend on our tourism dollars for their livelihoods. Before you arrive in the Holy Land, make a list of everyone for whom you wish to purchase souvenirs. Then, shop in earnest during the given opportunity, and resist the temptation to buy stuff everywhere else we go. Please note that street vendors will attempt to place their wares into your hands – and once you’re holding the items, it is much harder to return them to the vendor!

(Section II – SPIRITUAL PREPARATION – has been omitted from this truncated guide.)

### **III. PHYSICAL (and MENTAL) PREPARATION: Changes in Time Zones, Climate, Culture, Elevation, and Paving**

**CAUTION:** You **MUST** be in good physical and mental health to undertake this pilgrimage! On most days, we will walk several miles on uneven cobblestones and steps. We will stand for hours at a time. Occasionally, we will climb up and down significant grades. We will visit many confined spaces. We may occasionally be in crowds of people who will try to push their way in front of us. If you have any concerns about your wellness to undertake this pilgrimage, please contact the Pilgrimage Coordinator at [holyland@paulist.org](mailto:holyland@paulist.org) immediately, and we'll help you assess if the trip would be too dangerous for you.

International travel can be hard on even the most seasoned travelers. With some preparation, you can minimize the shocks that your body will experience on this journey.

**Arrive well rested.** Our days on pilgrimage will busy and long, so try your best to shift your sleeping and waking hours in the days before the flight. The Holy Land is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Time and 10 hours ahead of Pacific Time.

**Stay hydrated.** Parts of the Holy Land are arid: the Dead Sea receives an average of 2 inches of rainfall per year! The trip coordinator will **insist** that every individual person carry a water bottle with them every day of the trip – no sharing! If you are uncomfortable bringing a reusable bottle and refilling it from your hotel room sink, plan to purchase at least one bottle of water each morning.

**Strengthen your legs.** The streets of Jerusalem are covered in uneven cobblestones, and many of the shrines have steep stairs with inadequate handrails. It only takes one twisted ankle at the beginning of the trip to make someone miserable for the remainder of the pilgrimage. Anyone who has bad knees or hips should bring a walking stick or trekking pole to assist with stability. Consider doing exercises in the preceding months to improve your lower body strength.

**Be flexible: cultural differences.** We will be guests in a foreign culture, where people have customs different from the United States and Canada. (For example, in many parts of Israel, elevators are programmed to stop on every floor during Shabbat.) Be open to the new experiences! Approach the differences with *curiosity*, not annoyance.

**Be prepared: coughs and colds.** With all the changes that our bodies will be experiencing on the pilgrimage, we will all be susceptible to feeling run down. Please bring along the over-the-counter medications you usually turn to for headaches, colds, and digestive problems.

**Be prepared: varying temperatures.** The climate variation in the Holy Land is remarkable. In the months of December through March, there is significant variation in the weather from day to day. On a given day, the temperature may start off cold and rainy and become swelteringly hot.

Average high/low temperatures (in °F) for each month in the Holy Land:

|           | Jan   | Feb   | Mar   | Apr   | May   | Jun   | Jul    | Aug    | Sep   | Oct   | Nov   | Dec   |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Jerusalem | 53/43 | 57/44 | 61/47 | 69/53 | 77/60 | 81/63 | 84/66  | 86/66  | 82/65 | 78/60 | 67/54 | 56/47 |
| Dead Sea  | 68/53 | 72/56 | 78/61 | 85/68 | 93/75 | 99/80 | 102/83 | 101/83 | 96/81 | 90/75 | 80/65 | 71/56 |

Please keep in mind that these temperatures are averages; the actuals may be quite different. Just before you begin packing, look at the weather predictions in Israel for the next two weeks. Plan to dress in layers and bring a waterproof jacket. You'll also want to bring a swimsuit and water shoes for our time at the Dead Sea. Casual clothing is fine in the shrines, but remember that **both men and women must have their shoulders and knees covered whenever we visit a church**, and we will visit multiple churches most days of the pilgrimage.

**Be obedient: reflect on who's in charge!**

On pilgrimage, we will be on someone else's clock, literally, metaphorically, and spiritually. God is the ultimate guide on this pilgrimage, but there will also be several people on the ground responsible for guiding our steps. Even if you're used to leading groups, please try your best to be a good follower. Stay in the present moment whenever possible, and allow the mustard seed of faith to grow in the soil of your heart. If this is a challenge for you, please pray with Matthew 6:25-34 ("Consider the lilies of the field...")!

**Be flexible: minor last-minute changes to itinerary**

"Blessed are the flexible, for we will not be bent out of shape." Every time we arrive at a pilgrimage site, the Tour Guide, the Chaplain, and the Pilgrimage Coordinator will quickly assess the situation on the ground and make last-minute decisions. Please understand that we will almost always be giving you last-minute instructions as we prepare to get off the bus. For those who want more time to prepare, we apologize in advance that that simply will not be the case for many moments during the pilgrimage.

**Be obedient: stay with the group!**

We are on a tight schedule, and it is easy to get lost on the winding, narrow streets of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Cana, and Nazareth. It can also be difficult to guide a large group through Customs at the Ben Gurion Airport. You **MUST NOT** wander off on your own: we may lose hours trying to find you! You **MUST** follow the instructions of the Tour Guide, the Pilgrimage Coordinator, and the Chaplain. Because we have time-specific reservations at many sites, a 5-minute delay can result in a lost opportunity for the entire group!

(Section IV – INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION – and the appendix on the history of the city of Jerusalem have been omitted from this truncated guide.)

## **V. THE NITTY GRITTY:**

### **Suggested packing list and some flight information**

In the weeks before the pilgrimage begins, Catholic Travel Centre will send you a separate “Traveler’s Packing Check List.” Please use that list in conjunction with this one, to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything.

Passport and other paperwork:

- You will need a valid passport that is good for at least 6 months after the date we are set to return to the United States. Keep this on your person at all times.
- A photocopy of your passport. Keep this in your hotel room.
- Carry a copy of the emergency contact and health information form with you that you will be sending to the Pilgrimage Coordinator.
- Priests wishing to celebrate the sacraments will need a letter of good standing from their ordinary, addressed to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. They should keep a photocopy of that letter with them, since it is sometimes required in the churches where we celebrate Mass.

Luggage:

- You can only bring one checked bag and one carry-on bag. Once we get to Israel, plan to use the carry-on bag as your “day trip” bag to take on/off the bus.
- Catholic Travel Center will provide us with colorful luggage tags in advance. PLEASE put those on every piece of luggage, so we can identify one another’s luggage at the hotels and airports.
- Don’t over-pack! You will likely want to purchase MANY souvenirs, so you need to save room for them.
- Many seasoned international travelers prefer to use a wallet that hangs from the neck that can be stored under one’s clothes. Keep your passport, cash, and credit cards in this wallet.
- If you have preferred status with the airlines and can take additional baggage, please let the Pilgrimage Coordinator know as soon as possible at [HolyLand@paulist.org](mailto:HolyLand@paulist.org). The Chaplain and the Coordinator have special items to take along, and we could use the extra luggage space!

Clothing:

- Wear comfortable shoes. Absolutely NO HEELS!
- Casual clothing is fine. For example, jeans are perfectly acceptable.
- Dress in layers. The temperature may vary widely throughout the day. Just before you start packing, check out the predicted weather at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com).
- PLEASE NOTE: We will be visiting churches on every day of the pilgrimage. Both men and women need to cover their shoulders and knees at the holy sites, so you can’t wear shorts or tank tops into the churches.
- Bring rain gear – rain jacket and a small umbrella.
- Also be prepared for sun – with a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses.
- Most hotels do not provide a washcloth – bring one with you.
- We will probably have the unique opportunity to swim in the Dead Sea. Bring a bathing suit and snug-fitting water shoes. Some portions of the bottom of the Dead Sea are covered with rocks; other places are covered in mud which will easily pull off flip flops or sandals.

#### Laundry:

- If at all possible, bring only two or three changes of clothing for the trip that you can wash in your hotel sink overnight. Otherwise, you will probably struggle to fit everything into your luggage. For this reason, consider bringing clothes that all fit one color palette that can be easily mixed and matched.
- You may be able to arrange for your clothes to be professionally laundered by the hotels at which we will stay (for a fee), but we cannot guarantee it.
- For washing clothes in your hotel room, consider the following:
  - We recommend Woolite™ for hand-washing clothes.
  - Some people simply use an odor-removing spray, such as Febreze™.
  - Bring a good quality rubber stopper. Some hotel sinks do not have a good mechanism for filling the sink with water.
  - Bring clothing that will air dry overnight.
  - Bring a thin towel with which you can roll up your clothes to help wring the water from them before beginning the air-drying process.

#### Money:

- Good news! You do not need to exchange money. United States currency is accepted everywhere, with only one exception:
  - Many restrooms at the shrines charge a fee, often 2 or 3 New Israeli shekels (NIS) per person or \$1 for two people. Usually, you need to have exact change. It is near-impossible to obtain shekel coins in the United States; on our first full day in the Holy Land, several pilgrims should exchange small amounts of United States currency for 1-shekel coins, so that we can pay for restrooms.
- Most breakfasts, lunches, and dinners are provided on the trip, but you must pay for any beverages besides water at those meals. A few lunches may be at your own expense. Please note that you will need to pay CASH for all beverages and tips, plus any meals not included.
- Even if you don't usually purchase souvenirs on a trip, you may be surprised at the strong pull to buy mementos for your loved ones in the Holy Land. Before you leave the United States, make a list of everyone for whom you want to purchase souvenirs.
- Try your best to wait until we go to Bethlehem to purchase souvenirs. We will give you roughly 45 minutes to shop there, and your purchases there will help dozens of Palestinian Christian families in need. Feel free to purchase a few postcards and other small tokens elsewhere.
  - If you plan to send postcards, bring your address book with you.
  - Many travelers like to send themselves a postcard from foreign countries as a memento.
  - We cannot guarantee that postcards mailed from Israel will arrive in the United States before we return home.
- Some souvenir shops will accept credit cards, as will our Jerusalem hotel for incidental expenses. Check with your credit card company about overseas charges, and inform them of the dates that you will be out of the country.

- However, most other vendors – including the restaurants at which we'll stop for lunch, plus the thousands of street vendors whom we encourage you to avoid – will not accept credit cards. Bring enough cash for the whole trip, so that we don't lose time trying to find English-language ATM machines in Israel that dispense U. S. dollars.
- Bring lots and lots and lots of small bills for tips. In addition to the tips included in the travel package, you will probably want to tip the hotel staff and the restaurant staff every day. At every Mass, there will be a free-will offering, where everyone is expected to contribute at least \$3-5 towards the upkeep of the particular shrine that we are visiting. Please plan to be especially generous at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Beit Sahour, which ministers to many Palestinian Christians without steady employment.
- On the bus, we will take up several additional collections:
  - A donation to the Bethlehem Children's Home
  - An additional tip for our tour guide
  - An additional tip for our bus driver

Please be generous: God has given you the financial resources to visit the Holy Land, and we have an obligation to help care for our brothers and sisters in need. Also, consider that our marvelous tour guide (Maher Nahhas) is from Galilee; he and the driver will give up several days with their families to travel with us.

#### Walking:

- Catholic Travel Centre will also provide you with a name tag in advance. Please pack this in your carry-on bag and put it on before we land in Tel Aviv. It may help us get through customs more easily.
- Bring sturdy, comfortable walking shoes. We will be walking a lot, almost every day!
- If you are at all unstable on your feet, please bring a cane or a trekking pole to help with your balance. Jerusalem is filled with uneven cobblestones, and many of the places we visit have steep stairs with inadequate handrails.

#### Restrooms:

- Most of the public restrooms we will visit are well-equipped. Just to be safe, plan to bring some toilet paper and hand sanitizer handy in a bag you can take into the restrooms with you.

#### Spirituality:

- We will provide you with a pilgrimage book, including scripture passages, prayer services, and music that we'll use at the various sites.
- Each day, we will visit multiple sites of profound spiritual importance. It is difficult to reflect deeply on everything "in real time," but you will have an opportunity for personal reflection in the evenings and on the bus rides. Consider bringing a Bible, a rosary, a journal, and perhaps some other spiritual reading.

#### Electronics:

- Check your cell phone carrier's policies to determine if you can use your phone overseas, and how much the charges will be.
- The hotels and bus will probably have free wifi, but again, check your cell phone policy about accessing the internet overseas.
- Israel's electrical system uses a combination of type C, H, and M plugs. ('C' is a type used widely throughout Europe, with two round pins; 'H' is three pins in a triangular shape, and 'M' is three round pins.) You will need adapters to plug in your electronics. (You can purchase these in the United States at a luggage store.)
- Israel's electrical system operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz. Most computers and phones will adjust the voltage automatically, but other products (such as clocks and curling irons) will need bulky converters. Strongly consider if you can get by for two weeks without using the types of appliances that require converters.

#### Snacks:

- While our schedule will vary each day, the days will typically be quite long. Expect breakfast to be around 7 am, lunch around 1 pm, and dinner around 7 pm. Most of our meals will be all-you-can-eat buffets with plenty of delicious, nutritious food. Nevertheless, if you get "peckish" between meals, consider bringing non-perishable snacks.

#### Medication:

- Bring all prescription medications in your carry-on bag, packed in their original containers.
- Also bring a list of all your prescriptions, including their generic names.
- Since many people get "run down" by the end of a long overseas trip, bring your preferred over-the-counter medications for headaches, colds, and digestive problems.

#### Valuables:

- Leave them at home!
- ONE EXCEPTION: Married couples should bring their wedding rings. They will have the opportunity to renew their marriage vows in Cana.

#### For the airplane:

- Consider bringing sleep aids, such as medications, neck pillow, eye mask, etc.
- There is extra security flying in and out of Ben Gurion Airport. It is likely that when we board our flights to and from Tel Aviv, we will need to pass through a second security screening. The airlines will only allow you to bring beverages larger than 3 ounces through the second security screening **if they are unopened and you can produce a receipt** proving that you purchased the beverage in the airport terminal.

#### BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY: pack light!

- You'll want to bring a bag onto the bus each day with the things you'll need for the day: camera, layers of clothing, medications, snacks, hat, sunglasses, rain gear, etc. We'll be providing you with additional materials while we're over there: a pilgrimage guidebook with hymns and prayers, a portable sound system to better hear our tour guide, etc.
- We'll be moving all of our luggage only a few times during the trip, but here's some motivation to bring less, from European travel expert Rick Steeves: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58HdRSTAFec>

### [Flight information for 2023 Paulist Pilgrimage to the Holy Land](#)

American Airlines #146 – depart New York (JFK) at 11:35 pm Jan 22, arrive Tel Aviv (TLV) at 5:15 pm Jan 23

American Airlines #145 – depart Tel Aviv (TLV) at 12:45 am Feb 2, arrive New York (JFK) at 6:20 am Feb 2

*Pilgrims have the option to purchase a “land only” package, but they will need to arrange their own transportation to our hotel in Old City Jerusalem.*

#### PLEASE NOTE:

- Catholic Travel Centre recommends that pilgrims arrive in New York a day in advance.
- If you arrive in New York by January 21, we hope you'll join us for Mass and a program about the Paulists at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle on January 22. **You must RSVP for this program at [holyland@paulist.org](mailto:holyland@paulist.org) by November 1, 2022.** There will be an additional fee of ~\$50 per person to pay for our transportation from the church in midtown Manhattan to the airport. **Payment due December 1, 2022.**
- International travelers are expected to arrive at the terminal at least 3 hours before their flight departs, but some airlines will not accept luggage to be checked in more than 6 hours before a flight. If you arrive earlier, some airports have luggage storage services in the terminal.
- You will be issued an electronic ticket by Catholic Travel Centre. If you have any problems checking in for your flight at a kiosk, get in line to speak to a ticketing agent.
- Please wear your nametag to the airport, and please be sure to wear it when we land in Tel Aviv.
- If you would like to have your airline miles credited towards your airline mileage points, please speak with an agent when you check in for the flight.
- **VERY IMPORTANT:** When we arrive at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, we will all gather as a group **before** heading through the passport checkpoint. The passport agent at Ben Gurion will ask you a few simple questions and give you a card. You will use the card to pass through the next gate. **Hold onto the card after passing through the gate; you may be asked to produce it when we fly out of Ben Gurion at the end of the pilgrimage.**
- Security at Ben Gurion is a very serious affair. When we return to the airport at the end of our pilgrimage, stay with the group and allow the Pilgrimage Coordinator and/or Chaplain to lead the group. Several pilgrims may be pulled aside by security to be asked additional questions. Don't panic; this is standard procedure. Answer the questions honestly with simple “Yes” and “No” responses. Do not elaborate. Do not make jokes with the security personnel.