A Journey of Faith: 
A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Prayer and Meditation Booklet

February 15-23, 2019

Saints Constantine and Helen Church Pilgrimage
www.schwebster.org
The Holy Land at the Time of Jesus Christ

7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 9 a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. 10 You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. (Deuteronomy 8:7-10)
Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

Throughout the centuries, Christians from around the world have made sacred pilgrimages to holy places, churches, and monasteries, but above all to the Holy Land, the place where God Himself, the Creator of the universe, became a part of His creation and became a human in our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born in these lands in Bethlehem. He grew up and lived in Nazareth. He chose 12 men to become His closest disciples in Galilee and named them apostles, preparing them to go out into all the world to share His Good News. He performed countless miracles and pushed back the kingdom of Satan and darkness, ushered in the reign of God throughout Judea and all Israel, and into the entire world. He inspired people with His teachings of wisdom, mercy, and love. He met broken people and hopeless sinners and offered them hope and new life. Ultimately, He showed His infinite agape love by offering His life as a sacrificial lamb, taking the sins of the world upon Himself. Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins, and the sins of all humanity, past, present and future, forgiving us and giving us a new beginning. He even voluntarily and willingly tasted and experienced the darkest evil - betrayal, denial, rejection, arrest, torture, and death itself - all with a supreme purpose to confront and defeat Satan and all evil, conquering death through His own death, and resurrecting from the dead so that He would offer hope and new life to all humanity!

Over the next eight days, we will have the blessed opportunity to walk where Jesus walked, to see where He lived, and to venerate all the places where He revealed Himself as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Let us prayerfully approach this Pilgrimage so that our faith may be renewed, our commitment to following our Lord may be strengthened, and our hearts may be opened in a special way to encounter Jesus and be filled with His Holy Spirit.

With deep love and extreme gratitude in Christ our Lord,

Luke
A PRAYER FOR OUR PILGRIMAGE

Priest: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to ages of ages. Amen.

Everyone: Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who are present in all places and filling all things, the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and save our souls O Good One.

Priest: Brothers and Sisters, as we set out on this Holy Pilgrimage to venerate the places made sacred by the presence of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, His holy Mother Mary the Virgin, and all His holy Apostles, help us to encounter You and to worship You with a sincere heart. Throughout the centuries pilgrims have come here from around the world to meditate upon Your life and to be strengthened and renewed in the Christian way of life, striving to become more faithful in following You and more sincere in becoming an instrument of Your love to all the world. Come, O Lord, and at each and every Holy Site be present, filling us with joy and amazement.

People: AMEN

Priest: Thus says the Lord of hosts: “People, the inhabitants of many cities will yet come. The inhabitants of one city will go to another saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts. I am going.’ Many people and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem seeking the Lord of hosts and entreating His favor.” Thus says the Lord of hosts: “In those days ten men from the nations of every language will take hold of the robe of a Jew and say, “Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:20-23)

People: Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me. Let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where You dwell. Then will I go to the Altar of God, to God, who is the joy of my youth. I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God. (Psalm 43:3-4)
Priest: “They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again He took the twelve aside and told then what was going to happen to Him. He said, “Let us go up to Jerusalem.” (Mark 10:32)

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: All powerful and loving God, You always show mercy toward those who love You and towards all people. You are never far from those who seek You. Travel with Your servants on this Holy Pilgrimage and guide our way in accordance with Your will. Shelter us under Your protection. Give us the light of Your grace. Be our Companion on this sacred journey and keep us safe at every turn. Bless these countries of Israel and Palestine, keep all the people in peace with one another, and enlighten us all with Your all Holy Spirit. We ask this through the prayers of our most pure Mother, the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph the Betrothed, the holy Apostles and of all the saints, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us and save us.

People: AMEN.

THE HYMN OF PENTECOST
(The Coming of the Holy Spirit)

Blessed are You O Christ our God
You who have revealed the fishermen as supremely wise
Sending down upon them the Holy Spirit.
And through them, the whole world draws into Your net.
O friend of all, Glory to You.
DAILY MORNING PRAYERS


Blessed is our God, always now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who are present in all places and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and save our souls O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. x3

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity, have mercy on me.
Lord, forgive our sins. Master pardon our transgressions.
Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name’s sake.

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit Now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come, Your 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 the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory
Of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PSALM 118

The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation. This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. The Lord is God and He has given us light. You are my God and I will give thanks to You. You are my God and I will praise you. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever.
THE PETITIONS

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. ("Lord Have Mercy")
For the peace from above, and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.
For our pilgrimage group and our families back at home, let us pray to the Lord.
For this Holy Land, and the people of Israel and Palestine, and for peace among Christians, Muslims and Jews, let us pray to the Lord.
For all travelers by land, sea and air, for the sick and suffering, for captives and for their salvation, let us ask of the Lord.
Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us O God by your grace.

For a perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless day, let us ask of the Lord. ("Grant this O Lord")
For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, and a guardian of our souls, let us ask of the Lord.
For the forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.
For all that is good and beneficial to our souls, and for peace in the world let us ask of the Lord.
For the remaining time of our lives to be lived in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.
For a Christian end to our lives, peaceful without shame and suffering, and for a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.
Remembering the most holy mother of God, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves, and one another, and our entire lives to Christ our God. ("To You O Lord")

For to you belong all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers and others, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us and save us. Amen.
Day 1 - Friday, Feb 15 - Journey to the Holy Land

Psalm 137— Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

A Psalm that Jews recited when they longed to return back to Jerusalem during their time of exile

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.
2 On the willows there we hung up our harps.
3 For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
4 How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!
6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

Day 2 - Saturday, Feb 16 - Arrival and Tiberias

Lydda and the Tomb of St. George the Great Martyr

The Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer grew up in a deeply believing Christian family. His father was martyred for Christ when George was still a child. His mother raised him in strict piety in Palestine. Saint George entered into the service of the Roman army and was brave and valiant soldier. He came to the notice of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) and joined the imperial guard. The pagan emperor was concerned with the danger presented to pagan civilization by the triumph of the Crucified Savior, and intensified his persecution against the Christians in the final years of his reign. During this reign of persecution, St. George distributed all his wealth to the poor, freed his servants, and then appeared in front of the Senate. The brave soldier of Christ spoke out openly against the emperor’s designs. He confessed himself a Christian, and appealed to all to acknowledge Christ: “I am a servant of Christ, my God, and trusting in Him, I have come among you voluntarily, to bear witness concerning the Truth.” He was martyred with cruel torture for his faith.
JOURNAL FOR DAYS 1 and 2

Each day during our pilgrimage, take time to reflect and meditate on where you went, what you experienced, and how you are processing this holy experience. This journal is full of passages from Holy Scripture that relate to the sites that we will see. Read these words prayerfully. Open up your heart and mind to hear God speak to YOU through these words. The goal of this pilgrimage is for you to encounter God in a new and living way. He will come to us and speak to us through what we will see, through the reflections we will read, through our time of prayer, and through our fellowship with one another. Be open and ready to meet the Lord in a new way. As He said to His first disciples, “Come and see.”

Write down any thoughts or prayers that you had throughout these first two days of travel:

- How do you feel God speaking to you on this pilgrimage? What are your expectations and hopes during this week?

- How do you think you can renew your faith commitment through this pilgrimage? Where do you need to repent (to turn back towards God), and how do you hope to grow closer to God over these next eight days?
Day 2 - Sunday, Feb 17 - Capernaum, Sea of Galilee, Mount of Beatitudes, Jordan River

We will participate in the Divine Liturgy held at the Monastery of the Holy Apostles, the very place Jesus called His first disciples to leave their fishing boats, to follow Him, and to become “fishers of men.” After the Liturgy we will enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus calmed the storm and walked on the water. Then we will visit Capernaum, the town where Jesus lived and began his ministry with His disciples, where He healed Peter’s mother-in-law and many others. We will visit the Mountain of the Beatitudes, and the place where he offered the Sermon on the Mount and where he fed 5000 men with five loaves and two fish. Our last stop will be at the River Jordan, where we will go in the water and have a renewal of our baptismal vows! (The actual site of the Lord’s Baptism is at the Ford of Hijlah, closer to where the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea, but this area is in a militarily sensitive location so it is not possible to go there.)

SEA OF GALILEE
Matthew 4:18-22 - Jesus Calls the First Disciples

18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus Stills a Storm on Sea of Galilee

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” 36 And leaving the crowd he-
hind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Matthew 14:22-33 - Jesus Walks on the Water

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

CAPERNAUM
Mark 1:29-34 - Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-Law

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him
about her at once. 31 He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

32 That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered around the door. 34 And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

MOUNTAIN OF THE BEATITUDES
Matthew 5:1-12 - The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 6:1-21 Sermon on the Mount/The Lord’s Prayer

5 “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they
have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “Pray then in this way:
   Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
   Your kingdom come.
   Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
   Give us this day our daily bread.
   And forgive us our debts,
   as we also have forgiven our debtors.
   And do not bring us to the time of trial,
   but rescue us from the evil one.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; 15 but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 14:13-21 - Feeding the Five Thousand

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds
heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

THE RIVER JORDAN
Matthew 3 - The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his
sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Renewal of our Baptismal Vows in the River Jordan

Priest: Brothers and Sisters, it is a blessing for us to come to the same place where St. John baptized our Lord Jesus Christ, along with thousands of others who came to hear him preach a message of repentance. May we all seek to renew our own baptismal vows, which were spoken for many of us by our godparents when we were infants. Through the Holy Mystery of Baptism we experienced the “tomb and a womb,” dying to our fallen nature and being born anew, born again, born on high with a renewed nature in Jesus Christ. St. Paul wrote, “As many as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ.” Let us all renew our vows and make a commitment to live a life in Jesus Christ, striving to walk according to His teachings and ways, allowing His Spirit to dwell freely in us and to guide us each and every day, while striving to reject Satan and the works of evil and darkness.
Priest: Do you renounce Satan and all his works and all his empty promises and all his angels and all his worship?

Pilgrims: I do renounce him.

Priest: Then spit on him (three times)

Priest: Do you join yourself to Christ?

Pilgrims: I do join myself to Christ

Priest: Do you believe in Him?

Pilgrims: I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and God.

Priest: Blessed is our God who desires that all people be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

People: Amen.

Priest: Let us say together what we believe as Orthodox Christians:

**The Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed**

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father through Whom all things were made. Who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; And He will
come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

+ + +

Each Pilgrim will now enter into the Waters of the River Jordan to be symbolically baptized (or if they are unable to enter, will have water poured upon their heads, as everyone sings together:

+ + +

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

When you were baptized in the River Jordan O Christ, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the Father’s voice bore witness to You, calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of dove, confirmed the truthfulness of the Word, O Christ our God the Giver of Light glory to You.

Who is so great a God, as our God, You are the God who alone does great wonders.
JOURNAL FOR DAY 3

• How have you followed your calling as disciples of Jesus Christ in your every day life? Have we truly tried to become “fishers of men,” sharing the Good News and love and light of Christ with the world around us?

• How have you tried to live daily the Beatitudes and the teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount - to love our enemies, to forgive one another, to fast, pray and give alms, to take care of what we treasure in our hearts, to seek first the kingdom of God, to treat others as you want to be treated, and to follow the narrow path that leads to life?

• How do you understand who Jesus is? As a great teacher, a wise philosopher, a bold prophet, or as the Son of God who walked on water, healed the sick, controlled the storms, and as the Lord of the universe who asks for our total loyalty?

• What new commitments do you want to make in your life with Christ at this moment? How do you want to work on developing your relationship with Christ when you return home?
Day 4 - Monday, Feb 18 - Mt. Tabor, Cana, Nazareth, Taybeh

Today we will take a taxi and then walk up Mount Tabor, the Mountain where Jesus was transfigured as bright as the sun and revealed the uncreated light of God. We will visit the ancient Monastery of the Transfiguration, which stands 2000 feet above sea level. We will then go to the town of Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding. Our couples will have a Renewal of Marriage Vows here. Then, we will visit Nazareth, the home of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, when they raised the child Jesus. Here we will see the site where the Archangel Gabriel met the Virgin Mary and announced the good news that she was chosen to give birth to God. Tradition says that the Archangel Gabriel came to Mary twice. First at the well (the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation) she was told “Hail O Favored One.” She was frightened and went to her home. The Archangel then appeared a second time at her home (The Roman Catholic Basilica of the Annunciation) and repeated his greeting, to which she responded “Let it be to me according to Your will.” If time allows, we will also visit Jacob’s Well, the place where Jesus met the Samaritan Woman, St. Fotini, who had been married five times, yet whose life changed after her encounter with Jesus. We will conclude the day by traveling to the Palestinian village of Taybeh, the only all-Christian village in all of Palestine or Israel.

MOUNT TABOR - The Mount of Transfiguration

2 Peter 1:16-19 - Eyewitnesses of Christ’s Glory

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” 18 We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 So we have the prophetic
message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be atten-
tive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day
dawns and the morning star rises in your
hearts.

Luke 9:28-36 - The Transfiguration

28 Now about eight days after these say-
ings Jesus took with him Peter and John
and James, and went up on the mountain
to pray. 29 And while he was praying, the
appearance of his face changed, and his
clothes became dazzling
white. 30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talk-
ing to him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his
departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusa-
lem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down
with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glo-
ry and the two men who stood with him. 33 Just as they were
leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to
be here; let us make three dwellings,
one for you, one for Mo-
ses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. 34 While
he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and
they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35 Then from the
cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen;
listen to him!” 36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found
alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any
of the things they had seen.

HYMN OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

You were transfigured on the mountain
O Christ our God,
and You showed to Your disciples Your glory
as each one could endure.
Shine forth on us sinners all
Your light never-unending,
through the prayers of the Theotokos,
O Light Bestower glory to You.
Priest: Blessed is our God always now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen

The Reading is from John 2 - The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

Pilgrims: Glory to You O Lord, glory to You.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, on the day of their wedding, blessed these servants (names) who stood before You and Your holy altar. You celebrated Your first miracle here at Cana of Galilee, in the presence of Your blessed Mother and
Your holy Apostles. Through the intercession of Your holy Mother, You changed water into wine and we behold the stone jars in reverence. You did so, to show us Your great love and Your divine blessing on marriage. As You were present here in Cana 2000 years ago and blessed a marriage, be present once again and bless these Your servants (names) who renew the celebration of their marriage. May the rings which You blessed be a sign to them that Your love for them and their love for You and for each other is eternal. May the crowns which You placed on their heads be a continuing sign of sacrificial love that they made to each other. Now Lord, we ask You once again to bless this cup of wine with Your heavenly blessing. May it be the wine of celebration which was drawn from the water pots which we now behold. May this wine be filled with Your Holy Spirit so that these Your servants will be sustained in joy, peace and happiness. As they share it with each other and with all their friends, may it be a sign to them and to us that our lives in You is one of continual love, and sharing, especially to those in need.

We also pray for the pilgrims whose spouses are not present (names). We pray for those spouses who have already entered into Your eternal kingdom (names). And we pray for those who have not yet married (names) that they may find Christ-loving spouses with whom they will journey into your heavenly kingdom together. As we celebrate in this holy place, may these servants have long life, good health, peace, joy, love, and blessings from heaven.

_The couples now exchange a kiss of love to one another!_

_“O Lord our God, crown them with honor and glory!”_

For You are the God of miracles, sacrificial love, and sharing of joy and gladness in marriage, and to You we offer glory, the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.
NAZARETH
Luke 1:26-38 - The Birth of Jesus Foretold to a Virgin

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Today is the beginning of our salvation,
and the revelation of the mystery of ages.
The Son of God becomes the son of a Virgin,
and Gabriel proclaims this gift from God.
Together with him we cry out, to you O Theotokos,
“Hail Lady full of Grace, the Lord is with you.”
You are honored more than the cherubim, and you have more glory when compared to the seraphim, you without corruption gave birth to God the Logos, you are the Theotokos, You do we magnify.

O Champion General, I your Servant now inscribe to you Triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude Being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, From all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud, “Rejoice o Unwedded Bride.”

Hail Mary Full of Grace The Lord is with you Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb for you have given birth to the Savior of our Souls

TAYBEH
“Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.” (John 11:54)

The Palestinian village of Taybeh (pronounced Tie-bay), the only Christian town left in Israel or Palestine, holds fast to its memory of Jesus seeking refuge there shortly before his crucifixion. The Gospel of John says Jesus went to Taybeh — then called Ephraim — after he raised Lazarus to life and the authorities planned to put Jesus to death. From its elevated site between Samaria and Judea, it overlooks the desert wilderness, the Jordan Valley, Jericho and the Dead Sea.

Living amidst Muslim villages, Israeli settlements and military roadblocks, Taybeh’s inhabitants (numbering 1300 in 2010) are intensely proud of their Christian heritage. The village’s Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic (Latin) and Greek Catholic (Melkite) communities maintain an ecumenical spirit — even celebrating Christmas together on December 25 according to the Western calendar and Easter/Pascha according to the Eastern calendar.
JOURNAL FOR DAY 4

• When you climbed up Mount Tabor, how did you feel reflecting on when Jesus transfigured as bright as the sun? Is that possible for a mere human being, to shine the uncreated light of Almighty God? How do we allow Christ’s light to shine through us?

• At Cana we remember Jesus blessing a marriage. Reflect on the blessing of your own marriage, or the possibility of a future spouse? Pray that the Lord help you find a Christ-centered spouse. Offer a prayer to God about that now.

• In Nazareth, Mary said YES to the Archangel Gabriel. How can we repeat the words of the Virgin Mary and say, “Let it be to me according to your will” in our own lives? Do we believe that the impossible is possible with God?

• How do you feel about the challenges the Christians in Taybeh and throughout the Holy Land face as a persecuted minority? What can we do to help them?
Day 5 - Tuesday, Feb 19 - Taybeh, Jericho, Jerusalem

After a morning in Taybeh visiting the only all Christian village in the Holy Land, we will go to The Mount of Sarantarios/The Mount of Temptation and take a cable car to the monastery at the top. Here is where Jesus strictly fasted for 40 days in the desert, not eating anything, and was tempted by Satan. We will continue our travels and see the Church of Elisha and pass through Jericho and see the sycamore tree which Zacchaeus climbed in order to see Jesus pass by. We will also visit one of the oldest monasteries in the world at the place where the Virgin Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus rested for one night when they fled to Egypt. We then go to Bethany and visit the monastery of Saints Martha and Mary and enter into the cave/tomb where Lazarus lay for four days before Christ raised him from the dead.

THE MOUNT OF TEMPTATION
Matthew 4:1-11 - The Temptation of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. 3 The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and
showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

**JERICHO**

**Luke 19 - Jesus and Zacchaeus**

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

**BETHANY**

**John 11 - The Death of Lazarus**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for..."
God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” 5 Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6 after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” 8 The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” 9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10 But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” 11 After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” 12 The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” 13 Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” 16 Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and be-
believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34 He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did believed in Him.
JOURNAL FOR DAY 5

• Which of the three temptations that Jesus faced are great challenges for you in your life?

• How does the story of Zacchaeus challenge you? Would we be willing to give away half of all we own to the poor? To repay anyone we have mistreated? And do we joyously welcome Jesus to enter into our house, into our lives, and bring about radical change and transformation?

• How does the story of Lazarus give you hope when we are confronted with death? Do we believe as Martha that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life and that whoever believes in Him will never die?”
Day 6 - Wednesday, Feb 20 - Bethlehem, Jerusalem

We will see the 1500 year old Greek Orthodox Church built over the birthplace of our Lord and Savior in Bethlehem, which is the second oldest church in existence. We will touch the actual ground where Jesus was born, and see the Holy Manger. We then will see the Cave of St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin. Then off to the Shepherd’s Field, where the angels sang to the shepherds telling them of the “good news of great joy that a Savior is born.” On the return to Jerusalem we will visit the Monastery of the Prophet Elijah and the Tomb of St. Symeon. We will also visit the Monastery of the Holy Cross, and the village of Ein Karem where John the Baptist was born.

BETHLEHEM - The Basilica of the Nativity

Luke 2:1-7 - The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Matthew 1:18-2:18—The Birth the Messiah

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of
David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they
were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Kontakion for Christmas**

Today the Virgin comes forth to the cave to give birth ineffably to the eternal Word. Rejoice, the Universe hearkens to this news while the angels and the shepherds glorify him the God before all ages who willed to be held as a young child.

**Hymn of the Nativity**

Your Nativity O Christ our God, has shined the light of knowledge upon the world, for thereby they that worshiped the stars, were instructed by a star, to worship you the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You the Dayspring from on high, O Lord glory to You.

**Joy to the World**

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing (x2) and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns, Let men their songs employ While fields & floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy (x2) repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace.
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar:
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia
Christ the Savior is Born! (x2)

THE “MILK” GROTTO

This is the cave where the Holy Mother nursed the infant Jesus immediately prior to the Holy Family fleeing the wrath of Herod and leaving for Egypt. It is said that some of her milk fell to the ground, turning the stone of the cave white. Thus it is called the “Milk Grotto.”

Matthew 2:13-18 - The Escape to Egypt

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:
A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

THE ROYAL 9TH HOUR OF THE NATIVITY

Today, He who holds the whole creation in His hand is born of the Virgin. He whose essence none can touch, is bound in swaddling clothes as a mortal. God, who in the beginning fashioned the heavens, now lies in a manger. He who rained manna on His people in the wilderness is fed on milk from His mother’s breast. The Bridegroom of the Church summons the wise men. The Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts. We worship Your birth, O Christ. (x3) Show us Your holy Theophany.

CAVE OF ST. JEROME
St. Jerome is one of the great fathers of the Western Church. In AD 374 he spent years in asceticism with the hermits in the desert east of Antioch. He studied under St. Gregory the Theologian, became a priest in Antioch, and then a papal secretary in Rome. In 386, he settled in Bethlehem and spent 34 years living in this cave, translating the Bible into Latin.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth… Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path… I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:103,105, 111

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, that the people of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:9

SHEPHERDS’ FIELD
Luke 2:8-20 - The Shepherds and the Angels

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.
THE DOXOLOGY

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace
and good will to all. We praise You, we bless You,
we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for
Your great glory. Lord King, heavenly God, Father Almighty,
Lord the only begotten son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us,
You who take away the sins of the world. Receive our prayer,
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
and have mercy on us. For You only are holy,
You only are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God
the Father. Amen. Every day I will bless You
and I will praise Your name forever. Lord, You have been a
refuge for us from generation to generation. I said,
Lord have mercy on me and heal my soul,
for I have sinned against You. To You I have taken refuge,
teach me to obey Your will, for You are my God.
For with You is the foundation of life, and in Your light
we shall see light. Grant Your mercy to those who know you.

Lord keep us this day without sin.
Blessed are You, Lord, teach me Your commandments.
Blessed are You, Master, grant me understanding of Your
commandments. Blessed are You, Holy One,
enlighten me with your commandments.
Your mercy, Lord, endures forever. Do not turn away
from the work of Your hands. To you is due glory, honor
and worship, to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for-
ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

"Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains.
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo"
THE FIRST NOEL

"The First Noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel."

JOURNAL FOR DAY 6

• What were you thinking when you saw the humble place where God Himself came to be born? What lessons can we take away from the Christmas story that can be applied in our lives?

• How do you imitate the magi in offering precious gifts to God? How are you a good steward with all that God has given to you?

• How do we strive to praise God daily in your life, like the angels praise God continuously in the heavens?

• St. Jerome’s work at translating the Bible reminds us of the treasure we have in Holy Scripture. Have we ever read the entire New Testament? The entire Bible? And how do we strive to nourish our souls and minds daily on Holy Scripture?
Day 7 - Thursday, Feb 21 - Jerusalem

We begin at Saint Stephen’s Gate, the place where the first Christian martyr died. We walk around old Jerusalem and visit the Church of St. Anna, the birthplace of the Theotokos and the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus healed the paralyzed man. We then reach the climax of our pilgrimage when we walk the Via Dolorosa (Stations of the Cross). We will see the prison where Christ stayed (Praitorion) before his crucifixion. We will enter the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is the site of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We will climb the stairs to reach Golgotha, the place of His crucifixion. You will see the slab of stone where Jesus’ dead body was laid. We will enter the Tomb that held His body for three days before His holy resurrection. Take the time to deeply reflect what our Lord Jesus did for you and me and the entire world at this holiest of all places in the world.

***Tonight at midnight we will return to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and attend a three hour midnight Divine Liturgy and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ at the very place He resurrected from the dead! During this Liturgy you can also visit again Golgotha and the Tomb of Christ in a more serene and prayerful atmosphere.

SAINT STEPHEN’S GATE

8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12 They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. 13 They set up false witnesses who said, “This man
never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.” 15 And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel…. 54 When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. 55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” 57 But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

CHURCH OF ST. ANNA (Birthplace of the Theotokos)
The birth of the Holy Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, is not recorded in the canonical Gospels, but the early Church carried a tradition that was recorded in the Protoevangelium of St. James, which is offered here:

The Infancy Gospel of James

According to the histories of the twelve tribes of Israel, Joachim was a very wealthy man. He brought his offerings twofold to the Lord, saying to himself, “This from my abundance will be for all the people, and this which I owe as a sin offering will be for the Lord God as a propitiation for me.” Now the great day of the Lord drew near, and the children of Israel brought their offerings. Reuben stood up against Joachim, saying, “it is not permissible for you to bring your offerings first, for you did not produce offspring in Israel.” Now his wife Anna sang two dirges and beat her breast saying, “I will mourn my widowhood and I will mourn my barrenness.” And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, saying, “Anna, Anna, the Lord God heard your prayer, and you will conceive and give birth, and your offspring
shall be spoken of in all the world.” Anna replied, “As the Lord my God lives, if I give birth, I will present the child as a gift to the Lord my God, and she shall be His servant all the days of her life.” and behold, two angels came saying, “Behold, your husband Joachim is coming with his flocks.” Now an angel of the Lord had come down to Joachim saying, “Joachim, Joachim, the Lord God heard your prayer.”… Now her time was fulfilled and in the ninth month Anna gave birth to a girl. Then Anna said, “My soul is exalted this day” and she laid herself down. When the required days were complete, Anna washed herself according to the childbirth ritual, and gave her breast to the child. She called her name Mary.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN MARY

You are honored more than the cherubim, and you have more glory when compared to the seraphim, you without corruption gave birth to God the Logos, you are the Theotokos, You do we magnify.

VIA DOLOROSA - STATIONS OF THE CROSS

We trace the steps taken by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the narrow streets of Old Jerusalem. Let us remember that we are walking with Him to Golgotha. Push aside all the noise and commercialism and distractions as we walk this holy path, and try to prayerfully keep our focus on the way of the Cross. Imagine Jesus being betrayed, denied, abandoned by his own friends, then whipped, tortured, mocked, beaten, crowned with thorns, spit upon, rejected and ridiculed by the very people He loved. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life. For God did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” (John 3:16-17) The 14 Stations of the Cross are: 1) Jesus is condemned to death, 2) Jesus is made to carry the Cross, 3) Jesus falls the
first time, 4) Jesus meets His sorrowful Mother, 5) Simon of Cyrene helps carry the Cross, 6) St. Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus, 7) Jesus falls the second time, 8) Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem, 9) Jesus Falls the third time. [The final five stations are all in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.] 10) Jesus is stripped of His garments, 11) Jesus is nailed to the Cross, 12) Jesus dies on the Cross, 13) Jesus is taken down from the Cross, 14) Jesus is placed in the Tomb.

At each station of the Cross, we will pause in silence, offer a brief meditation, and then say a prayer.

Your Cross we do magnify Master, and Your holy resurrection we glorify.

Mark 15:1-21 - The Way of the Cross
As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ² Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” ³ Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴ Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” ⁵ But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶ Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷ Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸ So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹ Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹² Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” ¹³ They shouted back, “Crucify him!” ¹⁴ Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” ¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace
(that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. 18 And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. 20 After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Luke 23:26-31
26 As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. 28 But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ 31 For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER
(THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION)

This is the holiest place in all of Christendom. Within its walls are the last five Stations of the Cross, including the Hill of Calvary (Golgotha), as well as the Sacred Tomb where our Lord was buried and resurrected from the dead after three days. It was also here that St. Helen found the precious and life-giving Cross of our Savior.

Mark 15:22-26
22 Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him, and divided
his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. 25 It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”

32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. 35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” 38 There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

39 One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Mark 15:33–36
33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” 36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”

John 19:25-30
Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary
When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is accomplished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Mark 15:38-39

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

TROPARION OF THE CRUCIFIXION

Today is hung upon the Cross
He who hung the land in the midst of the waters (x3)
A crown of thorns crowns Him who is the king of angels.
He is clothed with the scarlet of mockery
He who clothed the heavens with clouds>
He received whippings who in the Jordan freed Adam.
He was nailed to the Cross who is the Church’s Bridgroom.
He was pierced with a spear who is the Son of the Virgin.

We worship Your Passion O Christ. (x3)
Reveal to us Your glorious Resurrection.

John 19:42-The Burial of Jesus

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also him-
self waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

LAMENTATIONS AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST
1st Stansa

Η ζωή εν ταφώ κατετεθη Χριστε
και αγγελων στρατιαι, εξεπλησσοντο
συγκαταβασιν δοξαζουσαι την σην.

O my Life and my Christ, in a tomb they placed You
And the legions of the angels were amazed
As they glorified with praise Your sacrifice.

O my Life, how can You die? How can You dwell in tomb
For You now destroy the kingdom of death
And You resurrect those dead in Hades.

We magnify You, O Lord, Jesus Christ our King,
And we worship Your passion and Your burial,
For by them You delivered us from death.

You gave the earth its bounds, yet the tomb was so small,
Where You dwell today O Jesus, King of everyone,
And You call the dead to leave their graves and rise.

(2nd Stansa)

Αξιον εστι, μεγαλυνειν Σε τον Ζωοδοτην
tον Σταυρω τας χειρας εκτειναντα
και συντριψαντα το κρατος του εχθρου.
It is truly meet and right, to magnify You the Giver of Life
For upon the Cross Your outstretched hands,
Have destroyed the power of the enemy.

It is truly meet and right, to magnify You the Maker of all,
For by Your Passion we have attained,
Triumphant victory over death.

The earth shook with trembling,
and the sun darkened O Savior,
When they placed Your Body in the darkened tomb
But the everlasting Light shines forth from You.

Joseph and Nicodemus
Sing lamentations at Your tomb, O Christ,
You who were slain by all of us,
And are joined in singing by the seraphim.

(3rd Stansa)
Αι γενεαι νυν πασαι υμνον τη Ταγη Σου
προσφεροντι Χριστε μου.

Every generation, Bring their lamentations,
to our Tomb my Christ

Joseph entomb, helped by Nicodemus,
The holy Body of His Maker.

O come all creation and sing a lamentation,
And let us honor our Creator.

Son of the Almighty, My God and my Creator,
Why did You suffer in the flesh?

At first light of the morning, the myrrh bearing women,
Brought spices to Your Tomb.

My God, One in Three, the Father, Son and Spirit
Grant mercy to us, to Your world.
AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST

Romans 6:3-11

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 28:1-10 - The Resurrection of Jesus

28 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” 8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his
feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

**PASCHAL CANON**

This is the Day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O people; Pascha, the Lord's Pascha: for Christ our God has brought us from death to life, and from earth to heaven, as we sing this song of victory:

Christ is Risen from the dead, by death He has trampled upon death, and to those in the tombs He is bestowing life.

Jesus having risen from the grave as He foretold, has bestowed to us eternal life and great mercy.

The Angel cried out to her who is full of grace, Rejoice and again I say rejoice, for your Son is risen from the grave on the third day.

Shine, O shine, the new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has risen over you dance now and be glad, O Zion, and You O Theotokos, rejoice in the rising of Your Son.

Christ is Risen from the dead, by death He has trampled upon death, and to those in the tombs He is bestowing life.

Jesus having risen from the grave as He foretold, has bestowed to us eternal life and great mercy.

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(Read all together): Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Your holy Resurrection. For You are our God, and we know none other than You and we call upon Your holy name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ, for, behold, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection; for by enduring the cross, He has destroyed death by death and granted life to all.
Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered,
and let those who hate Him flee before His face.

A sacred Pascha has been shown to us,
a new and holy Pascha
a mystical Pascha mystical, all venerable Pascha.
a Pascha who is Christ the Redeemer;
a spotless Pascha, a great and holy Pascha;
a Pascha of the faithful;
a Pascha that has opened to us the gates of Paradise;
a Pascha that sanctifies all the faithful.

As smoke vanishes let them vanish,
as wax melts before the fire.

Come from the tomb, O women bearers of good news,
and say unto Zion: Receive from us the good tidings
of the Resurrection of Christ; adorn yourself and rejoice,
O Jerusalem, for you have seen Christ the King,
like a bridegroom come forth from the tomb.

So let sinners perish at the presence of God,
and let the righteous rejoice.

The myrrh-bearing women in the deep dawn
stood before the tomb of the Giver of life;
they found an angel sitting upon the stone, and he said to
them: “Why seek ye the Living among the dead?
Why mourn ye the Incorruptible amid corruption?
Go, proclaim unto His disciples.”

This is the day which the Lord has made,
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Pascha the beautiful, Pascha, the Lord's Pascha,
the Pascha all-venerable has dawned upon us.
Pascha, with joy let us embrace one another.
O Pascha! Ransom from sorrow, for from the tomb today,
as from a bridal chamber, has Christ shone forth,
and has filled the women with joy, saying:
Proclaim unto the apostles.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

This is the Day of Resurrection, let us be radiant in the festival
Let us embrace one another.
Let us call brothers even those who hate us, and forgive all things in the Resurrection, and therefore let us proclaim:

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death and to those in the tombs he is bestowing life.

CHRIST IS RISEN!
TRULY HE IS RISEN!

***Tonight at midnight we will return to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and attend a three hour midnight Divine Liturgy, receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ at the very place He resurrected from the dead! During this Liturgy, think about all that you experienced on this day. Bring this journal and read through the passion story again. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ did all this for you and me, as well as for the entire world!

During the Liturgy, if you want, walk around and visit again Golgotha and the Tomb of Christ in a more serene and prayerful atmosphere. Throughout this service, express your deep gratitude and thanksgiving to our Savior for all He has done for us - for saving us from our own sins and from the evil and darkness of the world, and for giving us hope that His love is greater than any evil, His light is brighter than any darkness in the world, and that His life has conquered death so that we don’t need to ever fear death. Christ is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who Is, who Was, and who Is to Come, the Lord Almighty.” (Revelations 1:8) May we always walk with Him all the days of our life!
JOURNAL FOR DAY 7

• How did the Way of the Cross, and the entire Passion experience touch you today? What made the biggest impression on you? In what ways are you called to carry your cross each day in your own life?

• What was it like to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the very place where Jesus was crucified and resurrected from the dead?

• How can we live each and every day filled with the joy of our Lord’s Resurrection. What can we do so that we will never let anything that happens in life ever make us forget that “Christ is Risen!”
Day 8 - Friday, Feb 22 - JERUSALEM

On this our last day, we will get a breathtaking view of the Holy City of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. We will enter the Chapel of the Ascension, where Jesus ascended into heaven 40 days after His Resurrection. According to tradition, this is where the second coming of Jesus will take place. We will visit Gethsemane and the Garden of Agony where Jesus prayed before His arrest. We will also see the Church of All Nations. We will then visit the Tomb of the Virgin Mary, from where her body was taken into heaven. Then we will descend across the Kidron Valley to the Church of St. Peter, where he denied Jesus three times. Here also we will visit the Western Wall (Wailing Wall), Judaism’s holiest site. We will end the day visiting the Upper Room, where the Last Supper and where the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost occurred. We will also see King David’s Tomb.

CHAPEL OF THE ASCENSION

Luke 24:36, 44-49 - The Ascension into Heaven

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you...These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” 50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Acts 1:3-8—The Ascension into Heaven

After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 While staying with them,
he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE/Garden of Agony
CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS

Mark 14:32-42 - Jesus Prays in Gethsemane
32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;[1] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man
is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

TOMB OF THE VIRGIN MARY
From this site the holy body of the Virgin Mary was buried but then taken into heaven by her Son and God, our Lord Jesus. We have a tradition to offer a portion of the Paraclesis and pray for the names of the living as the pilgrims enter and venerate the holy tomb of the Theotokos.

Priest: Have mercy on us O God according to Your great mercy, we pray to You hear us and have mercy on us. (Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy)

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness and remission of the sins of the servants of God, all pious and Orthodox believers, especially for the pilgrims who have journeyed to this Holy Land (names), for their families and all the loved ones whose names we now bring before you and through the intercessions of His Holy Mother.

Again we pray for the safekeeping of this holy site of the Dormition of the Theotokos, and the Holy City of Jerusalem from pestilence, famine, earthquake, flood, fire and slaughter from invasion of enemies, civil war and unforeseen death; for His merciful kindness to entreat as our good God who loves all and repel and scatter all anger and disease that moves against us, and deliver us from His impending and justified chastisement and have mercy on us.

Again we pray for that the Lord God will hear the petitions of us sinners and have mercy on us. Hear us O God our Savior, the Hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are far off at sea, and show compassion on us, O Master, for our many sins, and have mercy upon us.

For You are a merciful and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.
EXAPOSTILARION

O you Apostles from afar
Being gather together
in the village of Gethsemane
Lay my body in burial
And You my Son and my God
Receive now my spirit

You are the sweetness of angels
The gladness of the afflicted ones
The protection of all Christians
Virgin Mother of the Lord
Grant me now help and save me
From eternal torment.

I have you as mediator
Before God who loves all people
May He not question my actions
Before the hosts of the angels
I ask of You O Virgin
Hasten quickly to my aid

You are a tower adorned with gold
A city protected by 12 walls
A radiant throne touched by the sun
A royal seat for the King
O unexplainable wonder
How do you nurse the Master?

HYMN OF THE DORMITION OF THEOTOKOS

In giving birth you retained your virginity,
and in dormition you did not forsake the world,
O Theotokos. You were translated unto life,
being the Mother of Life.
Through your intercessions, O Theotokos,
deliver our souls from death
This is the place where a number of the most important events in history have taken place. During the Last Supper, which we Orthodox call the Mystical Supper, Jesus inaugurated the Eucharist, which introduced and invited all future generations to participate in receiving the Body and Blood of Christ and unite with Him in a mystical manner. This is also the room where the Risen Jesus first appeared to the Apostles on the day of Resurrection, and then eight days later to Thomas and the other ten disciples. The Apostle Matthias was chosen here, to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve. And in this room came the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, filling and empowering the disciples to become bold, fearless preachers throughout the world. Unfortunately, this room has been in Islamic hands and is now administered by the Israeli government. Thus, no Christian symbols are present, and no Christian service permitted. There is one symbol that has remained. There is a column which has a carving of a pelican feeding her young from herself, even at the price of her own life. What better symbol of the sacrificial love of Christ for us.


7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.” 9 They asked him, “Where do you want us to make preparations for it?” 10 “Listen,” he said to them, “when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters 11 and say to the owner of the house, ‘The teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”’ 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.” 13 So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. 14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then
he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

“O taste and see how good the Lord is, taste and see, how good the Lord. Alelluia. Alelluia. Alelluia.”


When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”...

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should
Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

THE HYMN OF PENTECOST
(The Coming of the Holy Spirit)

Blessed are You O Christ our God
You who have revealed the fishermen as supremely wise
Sending down upon them the Holy Spirit.
And through them, the whole world draws into Your net.
O friend of all, Glory to You.

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THE WESTERN (WAILING) WALL
This is what remains from the second Jewish Temple. The first Holy Temple was built by King Solomon in the 10th century BC, but was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. The second Temple was rebuilt in the 6th century BC by the Jewish exiles who returned to their homeland, and lasted until 70 AD, when the Romans destroyed the entire city of Jerusalem, including the Temple, as prophesied by Jesus Christ. This Western Wall is all that remained until recent archeological excavations discovered the Hulda Gates and the stairs on the south side. This is the most sacred site for Jews. The tradition of writing prayer requests and placing them in the wall is very old.

1 King 8: 14-30 - Solomon’s Dedication of the Temple

Then King Solomon turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. He said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to my father David,
saying, ‘Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from any of the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.’ My father David had it in mind to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David, ‘You did well to consider building a house for my name; nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ Now the LORD has upheld the promise that he made; for I have risen in the place of my father David; I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. There I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.’

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. He said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart... Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Regard your servant’s prayer and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.

KING DAVID’S TOMB
If we have time we may also visit the tomb of King David, the greatest King of Israel.
JOURNAL FOR DAY 8

• As we reflect on the events following the Resurrection of Christ, especially on His Ascension into heaven and then the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, what is God saying to me?

• The angel said to the disciples that just as Christ ascended into heaven, he will come again at an unexpected time. How do we live our lives so that we are prepared for His return and second coming? Are we ready now for His coming?

• Jesus promised His disciples “power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” so that they would then become His witness in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the world. How do we allow the Holy Spirit to empower us and use us as His witness to the world around?

• In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus warned his disciples “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” How do we nourish our spirit every day so that we can remain strong in times of temptation?
Day 9 - Saturday, Feb 23 - Return Home

Thank God for a blessed Pilgrimage experience. May we always remember these holy days in which we journeyed in the footsteps of our Lord, and may our faith be renewed and strengthened by the encounter we had with Him at these sacred sites. Let us go home with a greater zeal and commitment to following the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ, with greater love and dedication to serving Him, with a deeper love towards our fellow human beings, and with a renewed inspiration and gratitude for the incredible treasure of faith we have in our Orthodox Christian tradition. All glory be to God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen!

JOURNAL on our Departure Day

- What will we cherish most from this holy Pilgrimage?
- How can we share the highlights and spiritual blessings we experienced here with others?
- What new commitments will I make in my walk with the Lord?