

JOURNEY TO THE HOLY LAND

By Father John Warfel



With a few exceptions, what moved me most during our trip to the Holy Land last month was not historical sites. After all, the precise location of the empty tomb, the crucifixion, even the exact site of Our Lord's birth are more or less speculative. More to the point, churches were built over these sites as early as the Fourth Century, so even if they *are* authentic, they look nothing like they did at the time of Christ.

Two things did move and impress me however. The first was the **sense of prayer and pilgrimage** that infused every inch. Regardless of a given site's

authenticity, you could cut the cumulative spiritual energy with a knife - some of the Christian sites have been revered for seventeen-hundred years; the Hebrew sites for much longer of course. I always say that when I entered Grace Church for the first time, I could sense the lingering spirituality of 150 years worth of prayer. Amplify that twenty times and you have an idea of what I experienced in Israel.

I was also deeply moved by some **natural settings**, places that probably look a lot like they did in the First Century, settings that Jesus would have known intimately. Four sites in particu-

lar had a powerful impact on me; they appear below.

The Judean Desert (Wadi Qelt) *(photo above)*

Early one morning, our group trudged up a hill (not knowing what we would see once we reached the top) and we were stunned by this breathtaking vista. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, this is what he saw. We spent about a half an hour in meditative silence. This may have been the holiest moment of my trip.

(Continued on Page 2)

HOLY LAND CON'T.

The Jordan River

Separating Israel from Jordan, the Jordan River is roughly 150 miles long. It flows through the Sea of Galilee and ends at the Dead Sea. Here again, the exact spot where John the Baptist preached and baptized is anyone's guess. Having excellent guides and an adventurous bus driver, we avoided the tourist sites along the Jordan River, places where countless docks facilitate assembly line public baptisms. Instead, we visited this peaceful and secluded spot (again in early morning). Here we renewed our baptismal vows and were asperged (sprinkled) by water from the Jordan. Another powerful moment.



The Sea of Galilee

It took Jesus about four days to travel between Galilee and Jerusalem on foot - about a three-hour drive today. I was amazed at how quickly the climate and terrain changes from desert like Jerusalem (parts of which reminded me of Nevada) to the lush, green region of Galilee to the north. The Sea of Galilee, also known in scripture as Lake Gennesaret and Sea of Tiberias, is a spectacular site. Larger than I had imagined, the shoreline is pristine and relatively undeveloped. Our group enjoyed a boat ride taking us a fair distance from shore; from that perspective we got a glimpse of a landscape undoubtedly familiar to Jesus.



The Garden of Gethsemane

In addition to the crowded, fenced-off portion of the Garden of Gethsemane, our guides took us to this secluded, private section, a stone's throw away from the crowds. Here we walked freely among ancient olive trees, trees that had been living at the time of Our Lord, providing the backdrop to the scene of Christ's arrest. A night before the Maundy Thursday Altar of Repose will never be the same for me now.

All in all, I am very grateful for this wondrous experience. At times it was exhausting - each day began early and our schedule was very full. There wasn't much free time. We were overwhelmed by enormous amounts of history, religion, politics and archeology. But now that a few weeks have passed, I'm beginning to process much of what I have seen and learned. On many levels, the *old old story* is now that much more real for me.





PRAYER LIST

To have names added to or deleted from the prayer list, please leave a yellow prayer request slip in Kathryn Parker's mailbox-- upper right--or e-mail her at kparker7@hvc.rr.com.

Please pray for	Prayer Intention	Submitted by	Please pray for	Prayer Intention	Submitted by
Sarah Clark	healing	Peggy Fellows	Barbara, Charlie, Andy Clark	health, prosperity, love	Penny Ames
LynnMarie Monroe	happiness, guidance	Kathryn Parker	Richard	health, love, prosperity	Penny Ames
Marie	comfort	Kathryn Parker	Kathryn Parker	healing, peace, happiness	Penny Ames
Lynn, Kenny, Lily, Madeline	healing, peace, guidance	Kathryn Parker	Ron Cosentino		Grace Church family
Kathryn & Shannon Leary	comfort, peace	Kathryn Parker	Julia Logiodice	acceptance at school	Mike Saunders
Graham Jamison	healing, comfort	Ellen Jamison	Ilene Stepanick	comfort, happiness	Mike Saunders
Jessi Jamison	healing, guidance	Ellen Jamison	Meri	healing, comfort	Beth Maisonet
Justin Guardino	healing, guidance, employment	Ellen Jamison	Tara Catizone	healing	Eleanor & Meg Catizone
Lenora Vaughn	comfort	Ellen Jamison	Leah Veloudas	healing, comfort	Eileen Bloomer
Isabelle Townsend	healing, comfort, release from pain	Ellen Jamison	Katie White	healing, comfort	Anne Caldwell
Alex Jamison	healing, comfort, guidance	Ellen Jamison	Carol McGinis	strength, healing, peace	Sue Scott
Linda Totaan	healing	Christine Ford-Huebsch	Carmen Musolino		Jan & Frank Musolino
Stephanie	healing, safety	Christine and Les	Owen and Family		Jan & Frank Musolino
James Mariano	safe return from Iraq	The Ford-Huebsch Family	Ewing Orlando	healing, comfort	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Megan, Penilynn, Brandon	well-being	Their Church School Family	Zachary Brownstein	healing	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Carlee	healing, well-being	Her Church School Family	James Higgins	healing, comfort	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Lisa Bonkowski	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco	Nora & Gillian Dirr	comfort, guidance	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Jayne Hess & family	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco	Maryanne Sevarino		Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Lisa Oboyski	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco	Gary Anallo		Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Sammy Rogers	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco	Joseph Dirr	healing, comfort, guidance	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Donna Black	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco	Patrick Knockwood	guidance, safety	Andrew & Lorraine Higgins
Ryan DeNisco	healing, guidance	Lisa DeNisco	Jeanette Dahl	healing	Martha Lebow
Francine Scott	healing, comfort	Carol Warner	Eddie Zeh	healing	Martha Lebow
Messiah Warner	personal, healing	Francine Scott	Jake Lopata	healing, comfort	Marj and Mike Edwards
Micah Warner	healing, strength	Francine Scott	Joan Karalis	healing, comfort	Grace Church family
Norman Warner, Jr.	safety	Francine Scott	Nicole Rumsey	comfort	James Rumsey
Charles Warner & family	healing, strength	Francine Scott	Lisa Oboyski	healing, comfort	Lisa DeNisco
Denzel Warner	strength, guidance, safety	Francine Scott	Nick Gisondi	healing	Patricia Lewis
The Mather-Cathy family	healing	Pam Mather-Cathy	Tom Quinn	healing	Patricia Lewis
Lauren Ponzoni	healing, comfort	Nancy Karp	Artie Colatrella	healing	Patricia Lewis
Joe Baurenfeino	healing, comfort	Christy Silvels	Kayden Moore	healing	Tim Moore, Mary Beth McGuire
Jill	healing, comfort, release from pain	Christy Silvels	Amy, Ndan, Dylan	healing, guidance, employment, release from pain	
Denise Fallo	healing, comfort, guidance	Christy and Magen	Barbara	healing, comfort	Eileen Callahan
Magen Phillips	healing, comfort	Mom (Christy)	Susan Heintz	healing, comfort	Eileen Callahan
Patricia Phillips	rest in peace	Christy and Magen	Michael Roe	healing, comfort	Eileen Callahan
Kelley Phillips	healing	Christy and Magen	Beth Finger	jobs	Barbara Pinkall
Jake Phillips	healing, comfort	Christy and Magen	Sheree VanDeBogart	healing, comfort	Gordon VanDeBogart
Krystina Kun	healing, comfort	Christy Silvels	Meghan Littlejohn	healing, comfort	Peg Cluster
Bill Gray	comfort, peace	Penny Ames	Ephraim Goldthorp	healing, comfort	Peg Cluster
Jennifer Bellotto	creativity, love, peace	Penny Ames	Matthew Rales	healing, comfort	Peg Cluster
The people of Tibet	courage, peace, freedom	Penny Ames	Kathy, Sheryl	healing, comfort, strength	Nancy Karp

The Stained Glass Windows
of Grace Church:

The Lady Chapel Window

"The Annunciation" 1944

The angel Gabriel is announcing to Saint Mary that she is to be the Mother of God. The Holy Spirit overwhelms her; the Dove overshadows her. This is the perfect window for the Lady Chapel since Saint Mary is Our Lady of Grace.

Look carefully and see if you can find some items in this window that did not exist at the time of the Annunciation. Also note that the Dove appears to be ascending and descending. What colors and objects represent Mary? And can you tell if Mary is outside or inside, or both?

From a booklet on our stained glass windows, with noted comments from Mary Carpenter.

– Kathryn Parker

Church School Calendar

Sunday, June 6 - Children's Sunday,
Last Sunday of Church School, Party

Date to be Announced in June:
Children's Day in the Church Yard

Sunday, July 4 - Children's Sunday:
Volunteers Needed to serve

Monday, July 26 - Friday July 30th - **Vacation Bible School** - Not too early to sign up and/or volunteer. Mark your calendars and join us for some great family fun!!!

Sunday, August 1 - Children's Sunday

Date to be announced in August: **Family Fun Night**

Sunday, September 5 - Children's Sunday and
Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday September 12 -
First day of Church School for 2010/2011 year



Stewardship - June 2010

For the past several years, my friend Polly has been in charge of the Stewardship Campaign at St. Nicholas Church in New Hamburg. Each year, Polly asks members of the congregation to talk about why they come to St. Nicholas and what the church means to them. She then puts the statements together in a booklet that is distributed to the congregation. Since my husband Ken was Priest in Charge at St Nicholas before he died, I know many members of the congregation. I always find it interesting to learn a bit about what keeps them at St Nicholas and what has attracted the new members.

As we come to the (almost) halfway point the current year, and remember that Commitment Sunday will be upon us before we know it, I think its important to think about what Grace Church means to each of us. What brought us here? What keeps us here? What do we need to do to ensure that Grace Church continues to be here for us and for our families?

I know for me, Grace Church is a very holy place. I feel surrounded and uplifted by the prayers of all of those who have come before me and all of you who are here now. I want to do everything that I am able to help ensure that Grace Church continues to be a place of prayer and worship and of learning and of serving others. This is why I make both a financial commitment and a commitment of my time to Grace.

Its not too soon to think about your answers to these questions.

– Claire Newquist

Epistle by Email

The cost of bulk mail has gone up significantly. Many of us already receive our *Epistles* by email. This helps in many ways: it's less costly, it's more green, and there is less copying and folding. We would like as many parishioners as possible to receive their *Epistles* by email. Please fill out the following form; good time to update all of our information as well. Thank you!

Name: _____

Address change _____

Phone change _____

Email address: _____

Please either place this form in Phyllis' mailbox in the boardroom, or mail it to her at 58 North Street, Middletown, NY 10940

Thank you.



Youth Group

The Youth Group volunteered their time and services to paint and stain the Rectory porch this spring. The job started during Easter vacation in March with scraping the old paint off of the pillars and railings. Not only did we learn important handiwork skills, we agreed that we were having more fun than if we were snorkeling off a tropical island! Next, the porch had to be painted. Hours were spent over several days throughout April and May painting the pillars, handrails and spindles (whew, tedious!). Finally a clear stain was applied to the new porch floor. The stain is a great way to show off the beautiful wood grain. We spent much time admiring the Rectory and speculating about the history and happenings within each layer of paint and the marvelous house itself. We can't wait for Father John to host an open house to show off the new porch.

I personally would like to give special thanks to the Youth Group volunteers, our friends and Carolanne. They handled an adult job with patience and pride. Kids, just remember that for years to come, consider each compliment as a special thank you for a job well done. There will be many oohs and ahhs because it truly does look splendid!

– Mrs. Meg



Senior Warden's Comments

I want to thank you for reelecting me to the position of Senior Warden for my third, and final, term. I appreciate your support and the trust that you have given me. I will continue to work to honor them. I apologize that I was unable to deliver these remarks on May 1st. My voice just did not want to cooperate.

I think that my first responsibility as Senior Warden is to comment on the state of Grace Church and our clergy. I think all is well. Each week I am reminded of how fortunate we are to worship here at Grace and to have Father John as our Rector. This said, I do want to share some thoughts with you that come out of my recent trip to Israel.

Just a few weeks ago Father John and I, and the rest of our tour group, worshiped at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Shefar Amr, just outside of Nazareth. The members of the congregation are Palestinian Christians, and there were also a number of English speaking visitors, besides us, so the service was conducted in both Arabic and English.

A couple of things occurred to me during the service. First, although I like to think that I am flexible and able to go with the flow – what I have called in the past the breadth and diversity of the Episcopal church – I initially found myself very uncomfortable when we were singing or praying in Arabic and English at the same time. I didn't know where I was! We English speakers quickly discovered that there seem to be many more syllables in Arabic than in English – no matter how we tried it was hard to end the songs we sang in English, or even the Lord's Prayer, at the same time the Arabic ver-



sions ended. As the service continued, I couldn't help but be caught up by the enthusiasm with which the Palestinian congregation sang and prayed and said their responses. This was not a group of quiet Christians, barely singing out and whispering their responses – why they practically shouted. And, this enthusiasm and energy was contagious – I found myself responding in kind.

I thought about this on a recent Thursday evening when I was the only member of the congregation at the Thursday evening Mass. Once again, I found myself responding to Father John with hesitation; despite the number of times in my life I've said the responses, there is that moment of panic when you are the only one saying them. At that point, remembering the congregation at St Paul's.

I promised myself to do a better job at proclaiming my faith-to live up to the example set by this group of Christians living surrounded by the Jewish and Muslim majorities. I ask you to think about doing the same, whether it be by responding with joy and gladness during the services...or by doing something that you've never done before (or not often)...come to a different service, come to a Vestry meeting and take an interest in how your church is run, help out at some event, not because you have to or you feel obligated, but because you want to find a way to express your joy at being a part of this wonderful church, diocese, communion of saints that stretches across the globe.

Thank you.

Claire Newquist



Don Boyer has announced that he will be retiring as the director of Grace Church Choir next January 1. We're so grateful for the many years of wonderful music his efforts have produced - but don't worry - he'll still be singing from within the choir!



A festive coffee hour was held on Mother's Day.



Fr. John teaches the church school about Pentecost.



At right: Alyssa DeNisco graduated from high school and will be going off to college in August. We will really miss her at Grace Church, but will look forward to her visits when she is home. Congratulations and best wishes, Alyssa.

Fried Chicken Dinner!



Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Grace Episcopal Church
12 Depot Street in Middletown

5:30 & 7:30 PM Seatings

\$10 Adults, \$6 Kids 12 years and under.
See Virginia or Diane for Tickets

845-344-0569

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