



JERUSALEM-PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS

بطريركية القدس اللاتين

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For nearly two millennia Christians have been making pilgrimages to the Holy Land so that they might have an experience of what has been called the “Fifth Gospel.” The desire to walk on the same ground traveled by our Divine Savior and to see the same vistas He saw has drawn countless pilgrims from all parts of the world. The opportunity to hear the words of Jesus where they were first spoken has inspired so many faithful to make the journey.

The Holy Land is rich in biblical sites. A visit to Nazareth allows a reflection on the mystery of Incarnation. In Bethlehem pilgrims see the small cave where Jesus was born and are filled with awe at the goodness of God who sent His Son to be born into our world darkened by sin. The Sea of Galilee will trigger memories of hearing the story of Jesus walking on the water and calming the storm, the miraculous catch of fish and so on. The journey ends in Jerusalem, appropriately named the Holy City. Here Jesus came to fulfill His mission to suffer His passion, to be crucified and to lay down His life, according to the will of His Father.

But the pilgrimage does not end on Calvary. Walking a short distance from Calvary , the pilgrim finds the tomb of Jesus and, like Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, finds that **He is risen**.

This is what awaits the pilgrims who desire to follow in Jesus’ footsteps.

Coming to the Holy Land will give you an opportunity to see the living stones of the Church, the Christians who trace their roots back to the earliest years of the Church. Your desire to meet with them and to show your love and concern in the midst of their hardships means a great deal to them.

I invite you to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Come and see where the Master lived.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Msgr. Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem