VISITING HOLY PLACES PROMOTES GROWTH IN FAITH
Without the Church, Jesus is "at the mercy of our imagination," Pope says

In his homily on Sunday, Pope Francis said that Jesus and his mother Mary are “inseparable,” just like Jesus and the Church, who is the mother of all humanity that guides her children to God.

“Separate Jesus from the Church would introduce an absurd dichotomy,” the pope said in St. Peter’s Basilica on Jan. 11. “I am celebrating the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, in a Church that is much more real to the Christian pilgrim.

“The Church is a mother like the tenderly holds Jesus and gives him to everyone with joy and generosity. Without the Church, Jesus ends up as an idea, a moral teaching, a feeling,” he said.

With Christ's elevation, we have a relationship with Christ, and our relationship with Christ would be at the mercy of our imagination, our interpretations, our moods,” the pope continued.

It is not possible to understand the salvation offered by Jesus without also appreciating the motherhood of the Church. Without the Church, it is impossible to love and belong to Christ without loving and belonging to the Church, Pope Francis said.

“Any notion that we have found Christ and that is enough. Changing your perspective makes all the difference,” he said.

The pope concluded his homily by drawing attention to a statue of Mary and Jesus at the side of the altar, noting that the Mother of God “returns to us to help us find Jesus, to guide his followers on their journey.”

The pope then invited all to remain seated as he journeyed, “Help us live the Church: make the journey to understand who this Jesus is and how he transforms our lives and brings us salvation and everlasting life.

There are many ways that we can seek this greater understanding of Christ. One way is to always be open to that way of understanding. Through the fourth century, St. Helena, the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, was so overcome by her conversion to Christianity that she set out to find the places where Jesus lived, died, and rose again. After pilgrimages still do that to this day. Praying at the site of his immolation, walking his footsteps across Galilee, standing where Mary stood at the foot of his cross, laying a flower on the stone where his body was laid to rest – these actions tucked from the faith of Jesus.

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The pope called for a greater understanding of the Church through its sacraments, Pope Francis said. Without the Church and her guidance, our relationship with Christ would introduce an absurd dichotomy.

The continuing geographic diversity of his selections, Father Lombardi noted, established that nations have remained significant even the most mystical manifestations of Christ.

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**WMOF**

Did you find someone who is lost and at least try to rescue them during this past week of the Christmas season? It is easier to find the lost ones than it is to rescue them. All the various ways we identified that someone could be lost can give us in motivation to help those among us. The "lost sheep" of our world are very real, and much more than a story or a parable. Sometimes, prayer is all we can do. We know from the Gospels that we can work deliberately our own time, talent, and treasure to better serve others who we know seem to be suffering during Christmas, how can we turn our backs on those in need? None of us do so intentionally, but we make a real difference. The holy Jesus grows to an integral part of the Holy Family, and then goes on to be the Good Shepherd. Without exception, we can work deliberately with our time, talent, and treasure to better serve others who we know are lost. Especially during Christmas, how can we work deliberately with our time, talent, and treasure to better serve others who we know are lost? None of us do so intentionally, but we make a real difference.

**ODU Names Executive Director of Leadership and Major Gifts**

Ohio Dominican University has appointed Steven A. Miller as the executive director of leadership and major gifts. Miller will be responsible for identifying and recruiting major and planned gifts to benefit ODU students and to advance the university's mission.

"We're excited to have Steve join our efforts to grow funds for our other precious resources for the students, faculty, programs, and facilities at Ohio Dominican University," said Dr. Stephen A. Veit, vice president for university advancement. "Steve's professional skills and dedicated service to local organizations that share similar founding missions will help expand the ODU's programs and mission across each of the university's three campuses and throughout the central Ohio region."

Miller joins Ohio Dominican from the Mount Carmel Health System Foundation, where he has served as a development officer for major gifts since 2013. Miller played a key role in developing major gift philanthropy strategies to benefit the system's four hospital campuses. A 1997 graduate of Ohio University's college of nursing, graduate medical education program, and honours college, Miller worked with the Holy Family Soup Kitchen and John's insights into the spiritual journey.

"OPD Names Executive Director of Leadership and Major Gifts" (Continued)

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**Knights provide coats for kids**

During the Christmas season, the Knights of Columbus provided more than 145 coats for children, in distributing the Coat of Justice (DOJ) facility to downtown Columbus. Bishop (OUC) was the first coat recipient, joined by a large crowd of children at the DOJ facility. At a Coat of Justice distribution, the group of kids gathered for a photo to take a picture to take and share on social media.

**Catholic Consumerism: Steadfastness of God’s Creation**

By Stephanie Rapp

The need for unity in the work of the Catholic Church has been something we’ve been calling for, and we’ve been calling for it through the years with various efforts. One of the ways we’ve been calling for unity is through the Catholic Consumerism movement. The Catholic Consumerism movement is an effort to promote the truth that God is present in all of creation, and that we have a responsibility to cooperate with Him in the work of creation. This truth is reflected in our Catholic beliefs, and it is a truth that we can all relate to.

**Groundbreaking surgery procedure**

Neurologists across the nation have a new option in the operating room, thanks to a groundbreaking procedure completed at Mount Carmel Health System. The SpineMask procedure, by Dr. Bradford Mullin and the surgical team at Mount Carmel East Hospital recently completed the first spinal fusion procedure in the world using the SpineMask, a non-invasive tool that works with surgical spinal navigation technology. The technology allows the surgeon to see the bone and spinal cord and accurately place screws during spinal fusion, creating a safer, less invasive procedure for the patient.

**WATTENER FOOD DRIVE**

Columbus Bishop Watterson High School students collected nearly 17,000 canned goods or toiletry items and raised more than $6,000 during the school’s holiday food drive. The food and donations were sent to the Holy Family Soup Kitchen and Catholic Social Services’ Our Lady of Guadalupe pantry. Students picked with some of the food items (from left) Lindsey Frilling, Dominique Hadad, Kari Lanning, Charlotte Lewis, and Luke Lawson.

Photo courtesy by Bishop Watterson High School
Wishing all of you a blessed New Year!

The Catholic Times Staff
I’ve always been a fan of New Year’s resolutions and goal-making, despite a nice dose of cynicism acquired from years of failure and burning myself out on unattainable targets.

Last year, I revisited resolutions and made a few strides in the right direction. No shock: I won some, I lost some. Despite my best efforts, the exercise thing wobbled. Despite my life’s chaos, my version of ballet journaling has flourished. Despite my tight budget, my husband and I have gone on more dates this year than since we’ve been married.

And so I can’t help but look at this resolution thing with a bit less cynicism than I approached it last year. I was really just playing along a bit … I can’t say I was expecting success.

In that optimism, I can’t help but see a bit of Mary. It can’t be accidental that Jan. 1, that day of Le, Those Many Resolutions We Shall Forget Within a Month or Two, is also a Holy Day of Obligation, the Feast of Mary, Mother of God.

Isn’t it just like a mother to encourage us to examine where we can improve our lives, to nudge us closer to the path of holiness, to cheer for us as we get off our collective duffs and stride toward success?

This Jan. I marked my 10th year as a mother. My oldest child — a daughter who’s almost as tall as I am, has a sassy streak and a sense of humor, and looks so much like my husband that it’s a bit uncanny — was born on this feast, this last day of the Octave of Christmas, feast of Mary, and beginning of the year.

It’s almost like God was making sure I would always have a reason to take Jan. 1 seriously, no matter what. No, I don’t have to take Jan. 1 seriously, no matter what. It’s just like Mary was making sure I was paying attention.

She’s had it out for me for years, now that I look back. I can see her at work in my life, and I can’t help but smile a bit. It’s the subtle little nuances, the coincidences that really aren’t, the ways my life has turned out so unexpectedly different than I planned.

Goal-making is a struggle I face … is it worth it?

Everyday Life

ST. MATTHEW SUPPORT GROUPS

Gahanna St. Matthew Church is sponsoring DivorceCare and GriefShare support groups for people who are going through the pain of divorce or the loss of a beloved person. Both groups consist of friendly, caring people who have gone through these difficult experiences and want to help others deal with them. The DivorceCare group will meet each Sunday between Jan. 18 and April 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the St. Michael Room of the church, 807 Havens Corners Road. The GriefShare group’s meetings will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays from Jan. 15 to April 16. There is a one-time charge of $30 for each, which includes a workbook.

For more information or to register for DivorceCare, contact Mike Wootman at (614) 269-5799 or Loretta Seipel at (614) 575-1357 or lseipel1947@yahoo.com.

The contact for GriefShare registration is Stephen Duraney at (614) 442-7650, extension 12, or Stephen.sopcc@gmail.com.

John Backman of Lan-
caster Council 1016 of the Knights of Colum-
bus shares some holiday cheer with Mark, a resi-
dent of the Arthur Rai-
fer Veterans House on North Columbus Street in Lancaster. Each year, the Knights fill boxes with Christmas goodies for residents of the house as a way of showing their appreciation for the se-
vice and sacrifice the men have given.
A group of parishioners and friends of Reynoldsburg St. Pius X Church traveled to Italy from June 9-19 as part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the death of the parish’s patron, Pope St. Pius X, and the 60th anniversary of his canonization as a saint. Including myself, there were 44 of us who journeyed to Italy for this commemoration.

Our first stop on the trip was Venice, the capital of the Veneto Region and a city much of which is above water – the Doge’s Palace, leading into the Bridge of Sighs and jail. The bell tower of the Basilica of San Marco was repaired during the leadership of Cardinal Sarlo. Most of the group relaxed here with a gondola ride, complete with singing and music.

After Venice, we went to Riese, Italy, which is only a few miles away from Venice, the hometown of St. Pius, which is restored and preserved under the original “Gates of Paradise” doors; Santa Croce Church, the city’s cathedral, and the historic palace and square of Florence, with its Neptune Fountain.

Traveling through Umbria, the group arrived at the arena site of “St. Pius’ X” on the front that all of us pilgrims wore on the tour. The arena was happily and warmly housed. The cap. And then he led us down the street from the Church of St. Matthew’s the boyhood home of St. Matthew the Apostle, assisted by Deacon Charlie Miller and Bill Demidovich, and seminarian Robert Johnson as master of ceremonies. In this church, the future St. Pius X was baptized and celebrated his first Mass, as a newly ordained priest. The Mass and its attention were for all the parishioners of St. Pius X. So we carried with us everyone back home in thoughts and prayers.

After this Mass in Rome, I presented to the parish of St. Matthew the Apostle a copy of our parish’s 50th anniversary book from 2008, and a copy of our last pictorial directory. These books were a gift from our Diocese of Columbus, the Diocese of Columbus, which is his feast day. And then he led us down the street from the Church of St. Matthew’s the boyhood home of St. Matthew the Apostle, assisted by Deacon Charlie Miller and Bill Demidovich, and seminarian Robert Johnson as master of ceremonies. In this church, the future St. Pius X was baptized and celebrated his first Mass, as a newly ordained priest. The Mass and its attention were for all the parishioners of St. Pius X. So we carried with us everyone back home in thoughts and prayers.

Our final destination was the center of the universe of historic Rome and Italy, and the Basilica of St. Peter’s Square in Vatican City. St. Peter’s Basilica, the world’s largest church, is one of the most visited locations in the world to right relationship with God through Christ. This is the work of all of us who are part of the Church, the Holy Church, as the center of our lives and to work to bring our society and world to right relationship with God through Christ. This is the work of all of us who are part of the Church, the Holy Church, as the center of our lives and to work to bring our society and world to right relationship with God through Christ. This is the work of all of us who are part of the Church, the Holy Church, as the center of our lives and to work to bring our society and world to right relationship with God through Christ.
Hudson, the founder of Catholic Travel in Washington, D.C., established the first Rosary pilgrimage to Lourdes from the United States. Many nations have a Rosary pilgrimage to Lourdes, typically the largest annual pilgrimage group from the country and normally organized by the Dominican Order. The largest pilgrimage every year is the French one, which takes place on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in October. Sid Linnen’s daughter, Elizabeth Grundy, has continued the tradition started by her father in organizing the pilgrimage from the United States, which has continued uninterrupted for 60 years. I have been a part of the past 10 pilgrimages. During this time, there have been miracles.

Most people’s minds jump to miracles when they think of Lourdes. Everyone who makes a pilgrimage to this grotto of Our Lady experiences the miraculous. They feel the marvelous love of Our Lady from our heavenly mother. Few are healed. Some are healed and do not even know it. All are changed. However, miracles do happen.

In the Marian year of 1954, Sr. John Linnen had recently received her first Holy Communion. Her mother was a doctor who had accompanied the U.S. National Rosary Pilgrimage for many years as part of the medical staff. When Sr. John returned home to Columbus with her twin sister, she brought her two daughters with her to Lourdes. However, shortly before the trip began, Collin budged her arm at the elbow in a transplanted accident. The swelling was so bad that they could not set the bone, but had to wait. The surgeons only let Collin travel because her mother was a doctor. Collin arrived in Lourdes with her arm in a sling.

When the Blessed Mother instructed her to drink from the spring, the child said that he had to dig in the mud to get a little water. That spring has not stopped flowing since 1858. Baths were built in Lourdes near the grotto which the water flows in the first place. It was there that the good doctor brought his daughter and her twin to meet the Blessed Mother. They met her daughter and her mother standing in line for the baths. When the Lourdes volunteers brought them past the curtains to enter the waters, the mother made clear to the medical team that she intended to be careful with her daughter’s arm. They brought Collin into the water and out again, followed after by her sister, then her mother. Reunited on the other side, Collin announced the good news. “My arm feels strong.” She was healed.

Everyone who believes receives a miracle. In Lourdes, it is hard not to. Some people chase after physical healings in a desperate last chance, only to find that the true miracle is deeply rooted in their soul. There in that holy place is found a love that surpasses all miracles. When you go to Lourdes, you meet our Mother. Not everyone will be able to go to Lourdes in his or her lifetime, but if you go, it will change your life. For those who travel overseas only once in their life, Lourdes should be one of your stops. However, the best way to experience Lourdes is to go and stay for a while. That is one of the best elements of the U.S. National Rosary Pilgrimage – you spend a full week at the shrine.

The U.S. National Rosary Pilgrimage will travel to Lourdes from June 28 to July 7, 2015. For information on the pilgrimage, or to simply send pettions that will be given to Our Lady at the Lourdes grotto during the pilgrimage, visit www.lourdes-pilgrimage.com.

Keep in mind that you do not have to travel to encounter Our Lady or her Son. Even though the healing related above took place in the miraculous waters at the grotto of Massabielle, most of the miracles approved by the Lourdes medical bureau have occurred in front of the Blessed Sacrament. At Lourdes, the host is the same Jesus as in your church tabernacle. “For those who believe, no explanation is necessary,” Our Lady was known to say.

The 61st U.S. National Rosary Pilgrimage will travel to Lourdes from May 29 to June 6, 2015. For information on the pilgrimage or to register, visit www.lourdes-pilgrimage.com.

Top: The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Lourdes, France. Below: A procession of pilgrims in white clothing at the shrine of Our Lady of the Crowned Virgin. Photos courtesy of Michael Dosh, OP.

PLANEATARIUM PROJECT

The 6th-grade and middle-school students from Millford St. Brendan School had the opportunity of visiting a planetarium without leaving the school’s property. The NASA engineer, a former astronaut, presented a planetarium program to the school and presented information about stars and galaxies. These topics were more detailed for the middle-school students. Students pictured are (from left): first-row: Jim Orner, Jordan Francis; second-row: Calen Babcock, Logan Schriner; third-row: Lain Thompson, Rori Marcus, Katelyn Merchel, Sophia Moretti; fourth-row: Ka Ri Mercer; fourth-row, Emily Hatfield, Sophia Hores ten.

Photo courtesy Fr. Michael Dosch, OP

CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

Gahanna St. Matthew School students are taking part in an intergenerational program entitled “Friends Across Time” with local senior citizens. The group meets monthly as both groups can learn about each other, forming lasting friendships between generations. The group is shown making Christmas centerpieces for the Bawden McDonald House.

Photo courtesy St. Matthew School

By Father Michael Mary Dosh, OP Pastor, Columbus St. Patrick Church “For those who believe, no explanation is necessary; for those who do not believe, no explanation is possible.”

These words open the 1943 film adaptation of The Song of Bernadette, originally a book by Fr. Walther, a Jewish man who promised Our Lady to sing so she may be heard. He was taken refuge in the city of Lourdes. At this village, nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees in southern France along the Spanish border, the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette in the Grotto of Massabielle, a shallow cave along the Gave River. Instructing her to drink from the spring, the 14-year-old girl to proclaim Our Lady’s miracles. She was healed. Some are healed and do not even know of Our Lady experiences the miraculous, who makes a pilgrimage to this grotto when they think of Lourdes. Everyone is adequate for this maternal encounter; for those with no faith, no explanation is possible.

The first Rosary pilgrimage to Lourdes from the United States, which has continued uninterrupted for 60 years. I have been a part of the past 10 pilgrimages. During this time, there have been miracles. First and middle-school students from Millford St. Brendan School had the opportunity of visiting a planetarium without leaving the school’s property. The NASA engineer, a former astronaut, presented a planetarium program to the school and presented information about stars and galaxies. These topics were more detailed for the middle-school students. Students pictured are (from left): first-row: Alex Papadopol, Lain Stevens-Weinert, and Colston Lauvray; second-row: Joe Abel and Anthony Bousa-Wilson.

Photo courtesy Sacred Heart School
Cardinal George was first diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2013. He is at peace, but he counts on everyone’s prayers for this difficult time, his archdiocese said in a Dec. 31 statement.

Father Lawrence L. Hummer, pastor at Chillicothe St. Mary Church, can be reached at hummerl@stmarychillicothe.org.
Bethesda Annual Benefit Dinner

**St. Mary’s School Gala and Auction**

**The Beef House at Concourse Park**

**Happenings**

**AM820 Catholic Radio**

**Classified**

**MARTIN, James N., 65, Dec. 31**

**LAWRENCE, Anthony P., 89, Dec. 19**

**KOSEC, Dorothy C., 101, Dec. 11**

**KEMPTON, Dorothy M., 97, Dec. 21**

**St. Peter Church, Millersburg**

**JAHN, Mary A., 84, Dec. 28**

**HUNT, John R. “Bob,” 81, Dec. 26**

**HAMLER, Nancy J., 75, Dec. 21**

**St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg**

**BERNHARD, Geraldine, 79, Dec. 29**

**BAUMAN, James J., 88, Dec. 24**

**St. Andrew Church, Columbus**

**SULLIVAN, Robert E., 88, Dec. 19**

**STABILE, Nita M., 88, Dec. 27**

**SIVINSKI, Elizabeth “Betty,” 85, Dec. 30**

**RIESER, Magdaline T., 93, Dec. 25**

**St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville**

**St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark**

**St. Aloysius Church, Columbus**

**St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg**

**Pray for our dead**

**Submit obituaries to: tps@coltdisc.org**

**January 15, 2011**

**Catholic Times**

**16 Catholic Times**

**January 15, 2011**
Eat, Drink, & Solve A Murder...

Step back in time to the gangster era of the 1920s when Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School presents a fun-filled evening of dinner theater with its production of “The Mafia Murders” from 6 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25 in the school cafeteria, 4212 Karl Road.

The audience will have an opportunity to interact with the characters to solve this gangster murder mystery. Listen to the clues carefully to see if your suspicions are correct. The evening will be hosted and performed by the students of the DeSales theater and choir programs, with proceeds going to the sponsoring organization, the DeSales Performing Arts Association. Dinner will be catered by Bosc & Brie. Audience members are encouraged to dress up in their favorite 1920’s costume for a chance to win a prize. The cost is $75 per couple or $37.50 per individual. Program content is appropriate for those of junior high age and older. Order tickets online at www.sfdstalions.org/dpaa or contact Temple VanCuyk for tickets at (614) 932-0818 or tavancuyk@yahoo.com.

Book Review

FAUSTINA

Faustina: The Mystic & Her Message

“Jesus’ message of Divine Mercy and the devotions associated with it have reached to the ends of the earth in a remarkably short period of time. Yet, from the very beginning of the spread of this message at the onset of World War II, hardly anything was known about Sister Faustina Kowalska, the instrument divinely chosen to bring Divine Mercy to the attention of the world. There was little information about her life and origins even after the publication in 1981 of her diary, which was quickly recognized as one of the greatest works of Christian mysticism in the 20th century.”

“Who was this humble, obscure, and unlettered religious sister, who ranked fifth among the 100 greatest Catholics of the 20th century in a 1999 newspaper survey conducted on the eve of her canonization?”

“This monumental biography provides a superabundance of information and photos that will satisfy the desire of many souls, including thousands of Divine Mercy devotees, to get to know St. Faustina.” — Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, former vice postulator for North America of St. Faustina’s canonization cause.

Follow the path of Faustina on her journey to sainthood in this biography that masterfully tracks this mystic’s riveting life and her unique call from Jesus. Get to know the real Faustina, her message, and her mission. More than 70,000 copies of the original Polish edition were sold within three months of its release. The book is now being offered in America for the first time.

The book’s author, Ewa Czaczkowska, is an award-winning Polish journalist, professor, and historian. She writes for the Polish newspaper Rzeczpospolita (The Commonwealth) and is an adjunct professor of journalism at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw. Her books include “Father Jerzy Popieluszko, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski: The Biography,” and “Miracles of St. Faustina.”

NEWS IN PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pilgrims hold figurines of the Christ Child during a traditional procession celebrating the feast of the Holy Innocents in Antigua, Guatemala, on Dec. 28. The event recalls the children massacred in Bethlehem by Herod in his attempt to destroy the child Jesus.

CNS photo/Joel Carillet, Reuters

Father Naeem Shoshandi celebrates Christmas Mass at the Mart Shmoni Shrine in the Ainkawa refugee camp in Irbil, Iraq. Christmas bells did not ring at Mosul and Christian villages this year for the first time in 1,600 years.

CNS photo/Sahar Mansour

Pope Francis visits the Nativity scene in St. Peter’s Square after a prayer service on New Year’s Eve in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.

CNS photo/Paul Haring
Along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus’ earthly ministry was centered.

By Father Michael Watson  
Pastor, Delaware St. Mary Church

In October 2013, I went to the Holy Land with 18 other pilgrims who were a combination of my former parishioners at Columbus St. Andrew Church and others from central Ohio. For all of us, it was our first trip there, and we were graced with each other’s presence. We flew into Tel Aviv, a beautiful city on the Mediterranean, and after dinner, we strolled down to this mighty sea, which played a vital role in spreading the faith, especially in the formative years of the Church.

The next day we bussed down the road to Caesarea, which in the time of Jesus was a thriving seaport, man-made by Herod, and located 75 miles west of Jerusalem. An active amphitheater still stands in the city, and one could recognize along the beach an area once used as a hippodrome. This seaport was the departure point for the apostles, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, from whence the missionary work to the Gentiles initiated.

Later in our journey, we toured the area of Caesarea Philippi (not to be confused with Caesarea), a resort area in the northern region near Syria. Temples were constructed there to the Greek god Pan, and to Caesar Augustus. Here, Peter made his confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah – right in the midst of pagan territory and the false gods of the world, in an area that had been renovated and renamed by Phillip, son of Herod the Great, to make a name for himself.

The weather was beautiful during the pilgrimage, except for one afternoon when we were at Mount Carmel, the site where the prophet Elijah fled after slaying 450 prophets of the false god Baal at a time of great drought.

Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel and mentioned to his servant that he heard the sound of heavy rain, though his servant could see only a cloud the size of a hand. After our arrival, the winds began to pick up and clouds emerged, and we were barely able to hightail down the hill into town before a downpour came.

I recalled that Scripture account during our descent.

Elijah was also recalled as we headed south and east to where John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. This site was where Elijah and Elisha crossed over the river and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. It also was where Joshua and the Israelites crossed over into the Holy Land after 40 years in the desert. This place was an intersection of salvation history.

We not only drew water from the Jordan, but also got a bird's-eye view of the area by taking a cabled tram up to the Mount of Temptation, which overlooks the self-proclaimed oldest city in the world, Jericho. This was where the devil took Jesus to gaze at all the kingdoms Jesus could have if only He would worship Satan. We could see far beyond Jericho, back to where Jesus was baptized, and were reminded of the saving grace that calls us back to our baptism in the midst of temptation.

Continuing south, we ended up at the Dead Sea. From a distance, it looked like a resort in the middle of the desert. There are numerous umbrellas and chairs and an outdoor bar area, which I explored.

Nothing can grow there, as the salt is overpowering. You can only float in the water on your back, as the salt water would burn your eyes. I chose to wear clerical garb that day so as not to get in the water, though the majority of the pilgrims brought a change of clothes and experienced the salty and strange-smelling water. This place highlighted to me how we can be drawn to the attractions of life and end up in a dead zone.

The pilgrimage was centered on the sights around Jerusalem. Being a spatial person, my most ‘Aha’ experience on the trip was the proximity of King David’s tomb and the Cenacle, both on Mount Zion. They are about a five-iron apart. David has been dead for 3,000 years and his remains are still entombed. Jesus, at the Last Supper, instituted both the Eucharist and Holy Orders, so that from Mount Zion, He would be able to feed his people by offering a perpetual sacrifice. Furthermore, on the day of Resurrection, He appeared at the same place and, through the Holy Spirit, extended the power of forgiveness to the apostles to extend His saving work.

In contrast, we saw the remains of the Temple, which was destroyed in 70 AD. On that site is a golden-domed mosque. This pilgrimage reinforced to me the new and everlasting covenant established by Jesus, whom we gather around to worship, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to be reinvigorated through the sacramental life of the Church.