

# In the Footsteps of Saint Paul: A Pilgrimage Through Asia Minor (Turkey), with a visit to Patmos, Greece

Monday, April 19 – Saturday, May 1, 2010

Churches carved into the rock...ancient cities where the Gospel was first proclaimed...the birthplace of the Creeds of the Church...Roman and Byzantine ruins...Greek islands...sandy beaches...one of the friendliest and most interesting cultures in Asia...

All this and more can be found on our pilgrimage to modern-day Turkey, ancient Asia Minor, and the Greek island of Patmos. Turkey was the site of much of Saint Paul's work of evangelism, the home of Early Church theologians, and the site of the earliest ecumenical councils of the Church. Patmos was the home to St John the Divine, author of the last book of the New Testament, and the place where his Revelation was written. Both are tremendous places of pilgrimage for Christians today.

If you have ever wondered about the ancient world, about the life and times of Saint Paul, about the meaning and message of the Book of Revelation, or even about Christian theology in general, then this pilgrimage is for you! We will be following in the footsteps of the great Apostle, exploring the cities where he preached, taught and wrote, and visiting the land that in many ways gave rise to our modern church. In Western Turkey and on the Greek island of Patmos, we will explore the challenges of early Christian life in the ancient world, and the context which gave rise to some of the great Christian writings. We will visit, among other places, Ephesus, Colossae, Pergamum, Laodicea, Antioch of Psidia, Patmos, Nicea and, of course, Byzantium.

Please consider joining us for a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint Paul next spring. The trip will be led by the Rev. Sally French and the Rev. Joe Walker. Sally is a licensed Christian Pilgrimage leader, and has taken many groups to biblical destinations throughout the Middle East. We will be journeying across Turkey, from Cappadocia to Ephesus, the Mediterranean Coast, the Greek island of Patmos, and Istanbul.

Itinerary:

*Monday, April 19, 2010:* Depart North America for Turkey.

*Tuesday, April 20, 2010:* Arrive Turkey. Air and bus transfers to Goreme, the main site in the region of Cappadocia. Relax, dinner and overnight in our hotel.

*Wednesday, April 21, 2010:* We will begin our pilgrimage in Cappadocia, the heart of the early church, and a site of spectacular ruins and history. Today we will visit the open-air archaeological park to see the ancient churches carved into the rock, to examine the ancient fresco paintings, and to discuss and learn about the development of Christian theology, including the creeds of the Church.

*Thursday, April 22, 2010:* Our tour of the Cappadocia region continues with a visit to one of the great underground cities of the region, a place of refuge for early Christians fleeing persecution. Then, we drive on to modern-day Konya, home of the 'whirling dervishes'. We will visit their centre and the local museum. We will end the day in the town of Yalvac, ancient Antioch of Psidia.

*Friday, April 23, 2010:* Today, we begin by touring the ruins of ancient Antioch of Psidia, where Saint Paul began to spread the Gospel to the wider world (Acts 13). From there, we continue on to the ancient spa town of Heliopolis, modern-day Pammukale, and a UNESCO world heritage site. On the way, we will stop and visit ancient Colossae and Laodicea, famous from the Letter to the Colossians and the Book of Revelation. We will have free time today to visit the spa and Turkish baths and pools at our hotel.

*Saturday, April 24, 2010:* Our tour of some of the "seven churches" of the Book of Revelation (Rev 3) takes us to the ruins of Sardis, including some spectacular Roman buildings, a temple dedicated to Artemis, an ancient Synagogue and a Byzantine church. We will continue on towards the Mediterranean coast and spend the night in the modern-day resort town of Kusadasi, close to the ancient city of Ephesus.

*Sunday, April 25, 2010:* Visit Ephesus, one of the greatest ruins of the ancient Roman world, and a significant site for Saint Paul. In addition to an extensive tour of the ancient city, we will also be visiting the Basilica of Saint John and the ruins of the Temple of Artemis of the Ephesians, one of the 'seven wonders of the ancient world'.

*Monday, April 26, 2010:* Today we travel to the Greek island of Patmos by private boat from Kusadasi, Turkey. There, we will visit the Monastery of

Saint John and the Cave of the Apocalypse where the revelations to John took place (Rev 1:9-10). We will also enjoy lunch and free time in the Greek harbor town of Skala.

*Tuesday, April 27, 2010:* From Ephesus, we will continue northward to Bergama, ancient Pergamum. There, we will see the Acropolis, the Askelepion (Temple of Healing), and other ancient temples. Following our visit, we will drive on to Bursa, Turkey's fourth largest city, known for its parks and silk production.

*Wednesday, April 28, 2010:* After a morning tour of Bursa, we continue on to Iznik, formerly Nicaea, site of the first ecumenical council of the Church in 325, and the place where the Nicene Creed began to be written. There, we will visit the site of the ancient palace complex (where the Council of Nicaea was held) and the ruins of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom. From Iznik, we journey to Istanbul. We will enter the city along the Bosphorus, with a boat cruise past the city's many minarets.

*Thursday, April 29, 2010:* Tour Istanbul: Our day begins with a walking tour of the Blue Mosque, the Hippodrome, and the famous Hagia Sophia, followed by an afternoon visit to the Chora Church. We will finish our day with some free time in the Istanbul, a trip to the Spice Market and Grand Bazaar, and a relaxing evening to enjoy the city. Dinner today is on your own.

*Friday, April 30, 2010:* Free day in Istanbul. Walk through the ancient streets, visit the Topkapi palace or other sites, shop and relax. In the evening, we will gather together for a final celebratory meal, a traditional Turkish feast. Lunch today is on your own.

*Saturday, May 1, 2010:* Departure. Travel from Istanbul's Ataturk International Airport to North America on our return home.

#### Accommodations and Meals:

Your pilgrimage fees include all accommodations and most meals.

The accommodations will all be 4 or 5 star, depending on availability. The only exception to this is in the town of Yalvac (Antioch of Psidia), where the best hotel in the region is 3-star.

All meals are included, except dinner on April 29 and lunch on April 30. This is to give you some flexibility with your free time, and to give you the option of getting to know Istanbul and to make your own decisions regarding what, where, and when you eat. On other days, we will be traveling together as a group during mealtimes. Most meals will be 'buffet-style', with plenty of choices and opportunities to test the local cuisine. We can accommodate

almost all dietary restrictions, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Registration, Fees, and other information:

The total cost for the pilgrimage is \$5350.00 Canadian. This includes all travel (flights, bus, boat, etc), accommodations, meals as described, all admissions and guiding costs. It does not include medical insurance, local tips, travel visas (required for both Turkey and Greece upon entry), drinks and personal expenses. For more details, please see the Registration form. It is possible to arrange for departures from other locations, please ask if you are interested in joining us.

We strive to provide you with both a first-class travel experience and a positive experience of Christian pilgrimage. Throughout our time together, there will be opportunities for worship, for prayer and reflection, and for spiritual direction. This is not a "package tour" – it is a spiritual journey with fellow Christians, following Saint Paul and those who went before us in the earliest days of the Church. We believe that seeing the lands of the bible is truly a life-changing experience and we are excited about the possibility of sharing them with you. Although your leaders are both Anglican clergy, we welcome people of all Christian backgrounds and we would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to contact me either by email, [sally\\_french@twcny.rr.com](mailto:sally_french@twcny.rr.com) or by telephone (315-286-4450) We wish you every blessing as you discern and prepare for pilgrimage, and we look forward to journeying with you in the footsteps of Saint Paul.