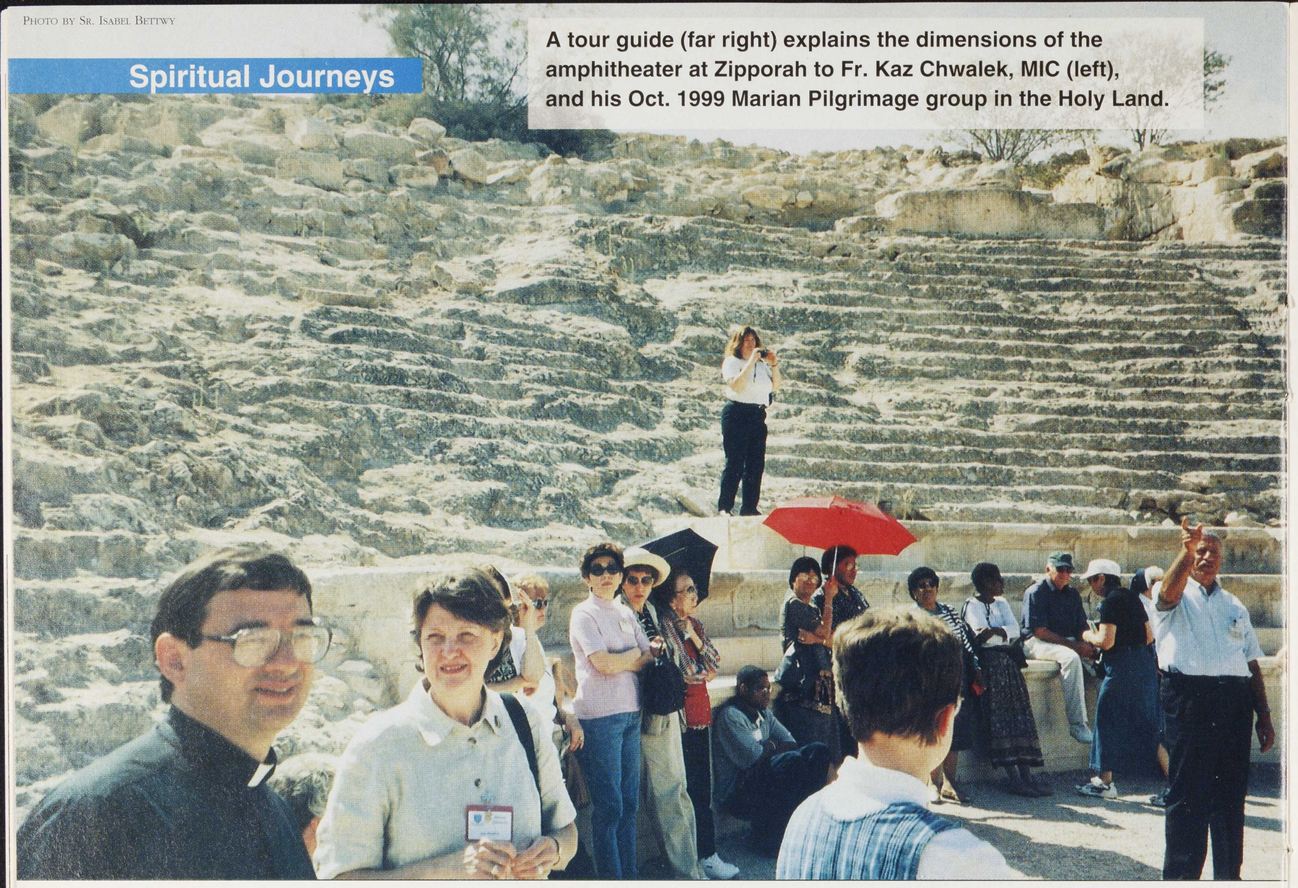
Photo by Sr. Isabel Bettwy



A tour guide (far right) explains the dimensions of the amphitheater at Zipporah to Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC (left), and his Oct. 1999 Marian Pilgrimage group in the Holy Land.

Why make a JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE?

Discover the advantages of going this year and where to go.

An interview with Fr. Kaz Chwalek, MIC

Why go on pilgrimage during 2000?

We are celebrating the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ — the greatest event in human history. That is why the Holy Father has designated 2000 as the Holy Year of the Great Jubilee. During this Holy Year, everyone is called to reflect on God who is love and mercy, to be renewed in faith, hope, and love.

It is a year of special grace and reconciliation for all humanity — a year of deeper awareness that Christ is with us in the Holy Spirit and in the Sacraments. That is why during the Jubilee Year, the Church encourages the faithful to go on pilgrimage to a sacred place. The goal is to encounter anew God's presence and love, His forgiveness and mercy.

What is the spirit of pilgrimage?

When we go on pilgrimage, we leave behind our daily cares and activities and focus on God and His love alone. Then we can pray more, listen to God's word more attentively, and experience His grace in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

We are called to be like Abraham, who trusted God's word, left his home, and journeyed to a land of plenty — or like Moses, who left the place of slavery and led his people to the Promised Land. We are pilgrim people on the journey from our earthly dwelling to a dwelling place prepared for us by Christ in heaven. Pilgrimage reminds us of this truth.

What is the main spiritual benefit?

During the Jubilee Year, we have the opportunity to receive special graces known as indulgences. Now, we need to remember that the goal of every pilgrimage is to experience God's mercy and grow in holiness. If properly understood, indulgences can help us in reaching that goal.

Here is a brief explanation of indulgences. When we sin, we not only offend God, but we also introduce a disorder into our life and the lives of other people. It's true that we receive forgiveness from God through the ministry of the Church when we repent, confess our sins, and do our penance. Even so, some disorder due to our sins usually remains. And there are temporal consequences or punishments attached to that disorder.

However, Christ has given us the Church. As His Mystical Body, she has been granted the power to bind and loose in His name and to distribute graces from His superabundant treasury of merits — all flowing from His redemptive death. Now, these treasures of redemption or indulgences are available to all the faithful and can be used for the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin for ourselves, for others, and also for the deceased. Further, these merits of redemption can be partial or plenary (complete).

So, during the Jubilee Year, if we make a pilgrimage to a designated holy place, we can receive a partial or plenary indulgence. Conditions for a plenary indulgence are: sacramental confession and genuine conversion of heart, Holy Communion, a pilgrimage to a designated holy place, prayer (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Creed), and a work of mercy.

Why go to the Holy Land and Rome?

Since we are celebrating the second millennium of Christ's birth, the Holy Father has designated the Holy Land and Rome as special places of pilgrimage. After all, where else should we go, but back to our roots during the Holy Year of the Incarnation? Back to where our faith has first been revealed!

I will never forget actually being in the Holy Land last October. To visit the place where Jesus was born, to walk on the same ground that touched His feet, and to see where Mary lived — it brings alive the Bible. I will never forget seeing the Sea of Galilee and finding Capernaum, which became a second home for Jesus during His years of ministry.

And, then, there is the awe of going on pilgrimage to Rome. Rome was where St. Paul was, where St. Peter was. From there, they proclaimed Christ to the whole known world. And there, Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified. You find places there associated with the early Christian martyrs, such as the catacombs.

What if I can't go to the Holy Land or Rome?

The cathedral of every diocese has been designated as a place of pilgrimage for the Holy Year. Then, in each diocese, other sacred places have been designated. Check with the chancery office of your diocese for information.

Coming on pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, MA, is a beautiful way to mark the Great Jubilee. It has been designated as a place of pilgrimage for the year by the diocese of Springfield, MA.

Here, at the National Shrine, you can rediscover the Merciful Christ who has done everything for us. You can especially experience Divine Mercy through the Sacraments. In addition to Holy Mass, there are confessions every afternoon. There is also the opportunity to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and remember everyone around the world who is so in need of God's mercy. ✝

MARIAN PILGRIMAGES

Guadalupe, Mexico
March 9-14
Spiritual Director:
Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC

Canonization of Sr. Faustina
April 24-May 1 (or May 6)
Spiritual Director:
Fr. Dan Papineau, MIC
For details, see inside front cover.

Beatification of two Children of Fatima
May 10-18
Spiritual Director:
A Marian priest, to be named
For details, see inside front cover.

Shrines of Italy
June 19-29
Spiritual Director:
Fr. David Lord, MIC

Oberammergau
September 19-27
Spiritual Director:
Fr. Shaun O'Connor, MIC

Medjugorje & Rome
October 9-21
Spiritual Director:
Fr. Dan Papineau, MIC

Holy Land & Rome
November 5-16
Spiritual Director:
Fr. Dariusz Mazewski, MIC

For more information, write:
Marian Pilgrimages
Marian Helpers Center
Stockbridge, MA 01263
or call:
1-800-462-7426