

TRAVELLERS TALES

*Fr. Peter Robinson's Tour of the
Middle East, Italy and Ireland
Sept. - Oct. 1997*

It was a wonderful trip, starting off in Bangkok with its Buddhist temples, chaotic traffic, hundreds of bikes weaving in and out, not a helmet in sight, often carrying three or four family members. A day trip to the River Kwai was very memorable leaving on the bus at 8.00 am in peak hour traffic to meet the train which took us over the bridge on the River Kwai to Kanchanaburi on a very rickety wooden train tracks at 5-10 kms per hour. It was all so different from the hell it must have been during World War II, the war cemetery and the museum were so well cared for.

From Bangkok we travelled via Rome to Amman, the capital of Jordan, then onto Petra to see the ancient ruins that are still being excavated today. Then onto Akabar to catch the Ferry to Nuiewba, Egypt, where we stayed overnight before heading to Mt. Sinai. Next morning at 2.30 am, about half of the crowd headed via camels to the top of the mountain to see the most magnificent sunrise ever. The less hardy souls headed for the monastery of St. Catherines - the oldest building in the world according to repute.

Our next stop was Eliat in Israel which is very similar to the Gold Coast!! The next day we drove to the Kibbutz on the banks of the Sea of Gallilee, calling in at Masada on the Dead Sea, where we all visited the ancient Roman ruins on the top of the mountain. A quick stop was at the River Jordan where we all renewed our Baptismal Vows.

We stayed on the Kibbutz at Ginosar two days and visited all the surrounding holy places. Fr Peter said Mass on the Mt. of Beatitudes, the house of St. Peter, and on the shores of the Sea of Gallilee where the Miracle of the loaves and fishes took place. We also had a trip on the Sea of Gallilee in a boat similar to those of Our Lord's time and watched the fisherman using the same type of nets.

From Gallilee we travelled to Jerasalem calling into Jericho, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Caesaria on the Mediterranean on the way. We spent three days in Jerusalem visiting all the Holy places - via Garden of Gethsauani, the Mount of Olives, the Holocaust Museum, the Wailing Wall and many other Biblical sights.

We left Israel and arrived in Rome - staying only overnight with a short visit to St. Peters and the Viatican the next morning before heading off to Florence, Padua, Sienna and Venice. Our trip to Assissi was aborted because of the earthquake. The four days in Northern Italy was certainly not long enough to see all the historical sights.