

GREECE & MALTA

St Paul & the Early Church



The Acts of the Apostles come alive as we join St Paul and his companions in the places of his Second Missionary Journey and rediscover the faith and struggles of the early Christian communities. Rekindle our passion for the Gospels as we capture afresh the fervour and spirit of the Church's greatest Evangelist.

COMMENCES MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2024 • 11 DAYS / 10 NIGHTS.

Athens (2 Nights) • Acropolis • Ancient Corinth • Kalambaka (2) • Meteora Monasteries
• Berea • Thessaloniki • Kavala (2) • Ancient Philippi • Island of Malta (4) • Mdina • Gozo.
+ **Optional Rome 2 night extension**



Accompanied by
Tim Staples
from Catholic Answers



ST PAUL IN ROME
POST TOUR EXTENSION

Delve deeper into St Paul's remarkable journey by extending your trip and retracing his footsteps through the historic sites of Rome.



the genuine pilgrim experience

harvest
journeys



KAVALA



METEORA

Meals: B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner

Itinerary

DAY 1: MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2024 – ARRIVE ATHENS

Athens today is the thriving capital of Greece, but, more importantly, we have entered the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys.

Welcome to Athens. Tonight, join with your fellow pilgrims for our first group dinner.

Athens overnight (D)

DAY 2: TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER – ATHENS & ANCIENT CORINTH

Theme: The Athenians & The Corinthians

The Athenians: When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city which worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). He quickly intrigued the philosophers, many of whom believed that the purpose of life was to eat, drink and be merry. Paul uses an altar he sees dedicated to an 'unknown god' as a springboard to teach the Athenians about the real God who can be known!

We begin our pilgrimage with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34). View the **Ancient Agora** and the **Plaka** (Old Greece) and explore the **Parthenon**. Also see the **Kallimármaro Stadium**, dating back to 330BC and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896.

The Corinthians: At the time of Paul, Corinth was a great cosmopolitan Greek city thriving in commerce, a proud culture and a resulting widespread immorality. Its 'sin city' reputation saw it given over to rampant prostitution, jealousy and deep divisions. Even within the city confines was a Pagan temple dedicated to the

goddess of Lust (Venus). Paul responds with an effective severity that insults the opposition while offering deep insights into how the good news can speak order into the chaos. This approach eventually brings him joy in witnessing the results of true repentance and reconciliation within the Corinthian community.

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** this afternoon where the apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. On arrival we will view the **Erastus inscription** dating back to the first century AD and concerning a Christian convert, Erastus (Rom 16:23) who was the 'director of public works' in Corinth.

Visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. See the **Peirene fountain**, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting.

Finally, we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where St Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18).

Athens overnight (BD)

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER – ATHENS TO METEORA

Theme: The Monastics

This morning we begin our day at the fascinating **Acropolis Museum**, built to house every artefact found on the rock of the acropolis and the surrounding slopes.

Continue north to **Meteora** as we prepare to marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their cave-like Monastic community.

The Monastics: The foundation of the stunning Meteora monasteries began around the 11th century inspired by the monks' love of God and quest for holiness through monasticism and asceticism. The entire life of a monk consists in fully opening to the heart of God and striving for sanctification whether working, studying or in the stillness of prayer. Through the centuries, the monastics became watchful custodians of the faith tradition forming schools for the Greek children under Turkish Rule. They also were a refuge for the

persecuted, providers for the freedom fighters, and teachers of the way of holiness.

Kalambaka overnight (BD)

DAY 4: THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER – METEORA PILGRIMAGE

Theme: The Monastics

This morning we will visit some of the living **monasteries of Meteora** and view the extraordinary collection of priceless religious frescoes and other treasures that will make this a remarkable visit.

Enjoy some free time this afternoon back at our hotel.

Kalambaka overnight (BD)

DAY 5: FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER – VIA BEREIA AND THESSALONIKI TO KAVALA

Theme: The Bereans & The Thessalonians

Today we journey north by coach to **Berea** (modern Veria). The "**Bema**" - an impressive monument to Paul - is believed to incorporate the steps from the original synagogue from which he preached the gospel to the Jews who welcomed the word of God and began to study the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-12).

A small church was established here, and we will also view the 'hidden churches', a collection of about 20 Byzantine structures, camouflaged, in the form of barns, from the invading Ottoman Turks.

The Bereans: The Apostle Paul came to evangelise Berea at least three times during his ministry. The faithful here possessed a teachable spirit towards the Bible and receiving the word with all readiness of mind and weighing up arguments against holy scripture on a daily basis. This was the surest way to come to a strong conviction of the Gospels' divine origin. The promise that "they who seek shall find" was fulfilled by the Bereans and Paul's visits resulted in the conversion of many.

Continue on to **Thessaloniki**, Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe.



MALTA

The Thessalonians: *Thessaloniki was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia. Paul established a church here of some importance and performed manual work in order to not be a burden on the local folk. He began his usual strategy of preaching to the Jews but it was the enthusiastic response of the Gentiles which provoked jealousy among the Jews who formed a riot that forced Paul to flee to nearby Berea. Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians from Corinth in 51AD which is said to be the earliest of any New Testament writing.*

Our visit will include the ramparts of the city, the triumphal **Arch of Galerius**, as well as the **Rotunda** where we can see pieces of the pulpit from which Paul preached. View the **Roman Agora** where he also preached. Nearby we shall visit **St Demetrios' Church** dedicated to a Roman soldier who converted to Christianity and was later martyred. View its valuable mosaics and frescoes before descending into the crypt where we find the remains of some ancient Roman baths and streets.

Continue east along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to the port city of Kavala (ancient Neapolis), once named "Christoupolis" after being the first European city to accept Christianity. It was here that St Paul, St Timothy and St Silas first landed from Troas (Acts 16:11), one of the great moments in the history of Christianity in Europe.

Kavala overnight (BD)

DAY 6: SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER – PHILIPPI

Theme: The Philippians

The Philippians: *The fellowship in Philippi was the first European church founded by St Paul. Although composed primarily of those who were poor, the church caringly sent supplies to Paul being regularly concerned to give to the ministry like no other community. Here too a woman named Lydia was deeply moved by St Paul's preaching and was soon baptised along with her entire household. Paul's letter to believers living in Philippi was written between 61 and 63AD while in prison. Here he addressed his growing concerns of the influence of false teachers among the faithful.*

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby **Philippi**, named

after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the **Baptistry of Lydia** for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the **River Zygaktis** and renew our Baptismal vows. Visit the **marketplace** (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the **cistern** which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. In the **ancient theatre** we will hear the story of Paul's arrest, imprisonment and miraculous release.

Remainder of the afternoon at leisure to rest back at our hotel.

Kavala overnight (BD)

DAY 7: SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER – FLY THESSALONIKI TO MALTA

Departing Kavala, we board our flight from Thessaloniki to the island nation of **Malta**.

On arrival into Malta you will be met and transferred to your accommodation for dinner.

Malta has been colonised in turn by the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Spanish, French and finally the British until 1964. The legacy of this diverse history can be seen throughout the island, from 5,000-year-old temples to the majestic Baroque buildings and fortifications of Valletta, the capital.

Malta overnight (BD)

DAY 8: MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER – MALTA PILGRIMAGE

Theme: The Maltese

This morning we visit **St John's Co-Cathedral**, **St Anthony's Church**, **Fortification** and **Auberges** built by the Knights of St John. Visit the impressive **miraculous Crucifix at Ta'Giezu Church** – the head is reputed to have been made by Angels. Continue to the ancient **Icon of Our lady of Damascus** and then to the **St Paul Shipwreck Church** (view two relics of St Paul).

After a lunch stop, we proceed to **St. Paul's Bay** from where a short boat trip takes us to the island where the Apostle was shipwrecked. We return to the mainland and visit **St Paul's Bonfire Church**. From here we continue to **Rabat** where we can enter **St Paul's Grotto**

where St. Paul lived during his short stay in Malta, the grotto forms part of the parish church also dedicated to him. We visit **St Paul's Catacombs** found nearby and the **Chapel of St Agatha**. After a short walk into **Mdina**, Malta's old capital city, we visit **St Paul's Cathedral** which will be another highlight of our day's trip.

The Maltese: *Christianity has almost 2000 years of history in Malta. It was brought to the islands by none other than the apostle Paul in around AD60 who took refuge in a cave for the greater part of his 3 months here.*

This all began through a violent storm creating an unexpected shipwreck that forced the apostle and the accompanying 274 passengers to swim safely to shore. Here they were notably welcomed by the local inhabitants who 'showed us unusual kindness and they made a fire and called us to warm ourselves'. Acts 28:2. The Maltese community, who numbered around 5000 at the time were under Roman occupation and consequently inclined towards idol worship, witchcraft, and superstitions which Paul would later help them overcome through miraculous acts and the powerful proclamation of the Gospel.

Despite earlier episodes of persecution and opposition, the hospitable Maltese would soon come to open their doors and hearts to Paul whose legacy of vibrant Christianity remains a living witness here to this day. Paul sailed on to Rome and to his ultimate martyrdom where he would be forever celebrated as the Church's greatest evangelist.

Malta overnight (BD)

DAY 9: TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER – GOZO

Theme: The Maltese

Travel by ferry this morning to **Gozo** where we visit the **Church of St John La Rounda** (in Xewkija village), **Gozo Citadel** which is a medieval city and is the Capital of Gozo. From its ramparts one can catch a breathtaking view of the entire island. We visit its **Cathedral** and **Museum**. In Rabat we visit **St. George's Basilica**, then on to the **Ggantija Temples** – The two temples of Ggantija on the island of Gozo are notable for their megalithic structures. These lay claim to be the World's oldest free standing structures, dating back to 3,800-3,600BC. They



SAINT PAUL CATHEDRAL, MDINA, MALTA

are among the best-preserved temples on the Maltese Islands. Finally we visit **Ta' Pinu Shrine and Calypso's Cave**.

Malta overnight (BD)

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER - HAGAR QIM

In the morning we visit **Hagar Qim & Mnajdra Temples** - Prehistoric, freestanding temples over 5000 years old, these are amongst the worlds' most impressive monuments and the **Blue Grotto** - a mystic Sea cave with a deep bottom reflecting the brilliant colours of marine fauna (**optional boat trip**).

The afternoon is free for you to continue exploring this picturesque island. In the evening enjoy a farewell dinner with your fellow travellers.

DAY 11: THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER - DEPART MALTA (B)

This morning you will depart Malta for your homebound connections OR continue onto Rome for a 2 night extension.



INDICATIVE COSTS

TOUR CODE	PV2474
STARTS	Monday 11 November 2024
FINISHES	Thursday 21 November 2024
LAND ONLY	\$6990 PP (twin share) *
SINGLE ROOM	\$2170 Supplement
PREPAID TIPS	\$198 Per person

** Costs have been based on prices as at January 2024 and must remain subject to possible change in the unlikely event of significant exchange rate variations, airfare & fuel increases and minimum group size (25) contingencies.*

INCLUSIONS

Accommodation & Meals: Based on moderate standard hotel accommodation throughout with breakfast and dinner daily.

Miscellaneous inclusions: Economy flight from Thessaloniki to Malta • Deluxe Air-Conditioned Motor coach with driver • Professional English Speaking Local Guide • Sightseeing and entrance fees throughout itinerary.

Not Included: Passport • Visas (if applicable) • Prepaid Tipping (invoiced with other services) • Other meals not stated • Items of a personal nature including phone calls, laundry, beverages, etc. • Travel insurance.

ROME EXTENSION

STARTS	Thursday 21 November 2024
FINISHES	Saturday 23 November 2024
LAND ONLY	\$1890 PP (twin share) *
SINGLE ROOM	\$380 Supplement
PREPAID TIPS	\$54 Per person



Rome **OPTIONAL EXTENSION**

DAY 11: THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER - DEPART MALTA FOR ROME

This morning we depart from Malta for the Eternal City of **Rome**. (*Flight included in package*)

On arrival into Rome we visit the impressive **St Mary Major Basilica**. Onwards to the **Basilica of St John in Lateran** (First Papal residence) and the adjacent **Holy Stairs** brought from Jerusalem to Rome in 326AD by St Helena (as a favourite of pilgrims, these steps may only be ascended on the knees).

Visit the **Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme** with its extraordinary collection of **relics from the Holy Land**.

Rome overnight (BD)

DAY 12: FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER - ROME

Commence our pilgrimage day with a spectacular Mass at **St Peter's Basilica** before coming to the nearby **Vatican Museums**. Wander the spectacular chambers leading to the **Sistine Chapel** to view Michelangelo's masterpieces, including the magnificent fresco of the **Last Judgment**. Continue through to the awe-inspiring **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest church in the world for an informative exploration. Our guided tour will feature among other highlights **Michelangelo's stunning Pieta**, the **tomb of Pope St John Paul II**, the **great Confessional** and the **Crypt** containing the **tombs of several Popes**.

Journey this afternoon out to the majestic **Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls**. Originally consecrated in 324, the saint's tomb is visible now under the Papal Altar. We will celebrate a wonderful Mass here as a special tribute to the Church's greatest evangelist.

Continue then to the **ancient Catacombs** for a memorable guided tour to marvel at these underground burial tunnels for Christians and Hebrews.

This evening we will celebrate our final night in Rome at a local trattoria.

Rome overnight (BD)

DAY 13: SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER - DEPART ROME

Free time in Rome before our departure for the airport to join our homebound flight connections. (B)



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