

May 11, 2011

Dear Steve and Janet,

I am sorry to be late in writing this but better late than never. Words cannot express my gratitude to both of you in providing such an excellent pilgrimage experience for us during our April 11 trip but I will try, and I know I'll have to use a lot of words, so here goes....

When asked "How was the Pilgrimage?" I usually respond "It was wonderful---and humbling". When asked "what was your favorite thing?" how can I answer? From a purely scenic aspect, the trip to the Golan Heights was definitely a fav. But the trip into Bethlehem was such an eye-opening education in local politics and culture. And spiritually? How can I choose? The physical beauty and serenity of the Mount of the Beatitudes...the ache in my heart when grasping the Rock of the Agony in the Garden before Mass... the pain in my soul when Steve read Psalm 88 in the dark in the pit (prison) where Jesus was lowered to await his crucifixion (an experience that did truly bring me to my knees)....walking the stations of the cross and reciting the Divine Mercy and rosary....reaching in to touch Calvary rock...smelling the sweet fragrance of oil on the stone where our Lord was anointed after death...touching the stone from which He arose... imagining the ascension into heaven while standing in the spot where He actually ascended (and will return!!). Growing closer to our Mother as we walked where she walked too. Humbling....yes.

The food was fantastic everywhere we went. The organization of each little detail was evident every day ---and on all levels--the video for family to follow at home, the rosaries to touch and say in all the holy places, the prepared booklet with bible verses and descriptions of the site (so that we could reference our trip while there and after our return home), our keepsake video of our own trip... the way you helped us navigate at the holy sites, kept us moving (yes I was always bringing up the rear with my camera but you did keep me moving!)... helped us avoid getting ripped off by vendors and protected us from any verbal harassment from said vendors...and if anything went wrong, you were always there to make it right.

Steve, Janet, Amer, Osam, Reem and Maroon were awesome in every way---personable, knowledgeable, enthusiastic. And Father Rob Clements--- his daily sermons, his leading in prayer, his wonderful humanity was so inspiring every day. I couldn't have asked for a better group of fellow pilgrims to be with. And I always felt safe---always. I had high expectations for this trip and I can honestly say that you not only met them, but exceeded them in every way. I will recommend you to anyone I can---and I will start saving for another pilgrimage with you as you expand your offerings.

To my fellow pilgrims, thank you for befriending me, for loaning me sleep medication when I misplaced mine, for watching out for each other, for being good Christians. I'm enjoying uploading my photos of the places and people (you can find them at www.katdavisphotography.com). I'm trying to process a few more each day so check in periodically. Please let me know if there are any photos you'd like to have and I will send you the link to them. I will likely be making some greeting cards and calendars from the trip (sometime this summer) and would be happy to share these with you as well. God bless!

~Kathy Davis

See the trip photo album at <http://www.katdavisphotography.com/HolyLandPilgrimage>