

GREECE

In the Footsteps of St. Paul with Greek Island Cruise



April 21-May 1, 2023

\$5,349 PER PERSON FROM **CHICAGO(ORD)**

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OPTIONAL POST TOUR TO MALTA | MAY 1-5, 2023 | \$2,000 ADDITIONAL PER PERSON

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: **Fr. Jonathan Bakkelund**

GROUP LEADER: **Julie Sherwood**

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Friday – April 21 - Depart for Greece

Make your way to where you will board your overnight flight(s). Meals will be served on board.

Day 2: Saturday – April 22 - Arrival in Thessaloniki

Upon landing at Makedonia Thessaloniki Airport, make your way to the baggage claim area and collect your luggage. Proceed to the arrival hall, where you will be greeted by your tour guide and/or driver. Board the bus to transfer to your hotel. Enjoy some time to relax after check-in. After a delicious meal, overnight in Thessaloniki.

Day 3: Sunday – April 23 – Philippi – Kavala - Thessaloniki

After breakfast, start your journey in Greece with the first stop of the day in Philippi. Philippi was the city where Saint Paul the Apostle delivered his first sermon and, he established the 1st church in Europe. "And from there (He went) to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman Colony. We remained in this city some days", (Acts 16:12-18). It is also the site where Saint Paul baptized a woman named Lydia, the first convert to Christianity in Europe. Visit the Roman Forum, where Saint Paul cast a spirit out of a fortune-telling woman. View the prison (now in ruins) where Saint Paul and Silas were thrown into by the owners of the fortune-tellers. Continue to the modern port city of Kavala, which was once the ancient Neapolis. This port is where Saint Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy landed when they sailed into Europe. After enjoying this city by the sea, return to Thessaloniki for a delicious meal and restful overnight.

Day 4: Monday – April 24 – Thessaloniki City Tour - Kalambaka

Start your day with breakfast at the hotel. In the winter of 49-50 AD, Saint Paul wrote two epistles to the Thessalonians. These letters urged Christians to "live blamelessly" and to refrain from living idly while they wait for the second coming of Christ. While in Thessaloniki, you will witness several ancient artifacts, such as the triumphal Arch of Galerius found at the start of Via Egnatia. Due to the convenient location, this arch was once a strategic artery of the Roman Empire and was constructed to honor the Roman Emperor Galerius following the Roman victory over the Persians. Following the city tour, transfer to Kalambaka. This evening, you will have a wonderful meal and a relaxing overnight in Kalambaka.

Day 5: Tuesday – April 25 – Meteora - Delphi

After breakfast, board the motorcoach for a short drive to the Meteora Monasteries. In the eleventh century, some monks settled within caves. However, as the Turkish occupation increased, the monks were forced to move their settlements higher upon the rocks until they were unreachable by any opposing enemy. These settlements became Monasteries by bringing building and lifting materials by ladders and baskets. Notorious for preserving the Hellenic religion as well as their academics and arts. During your visit, you will be able to view stunning Byzantine art, as well as the breathtaking scenery that surrounds the monastery. Continue to Delphi for dinner and overnight.

Day 6: Wednesday – April 26 – Athens

Today, visit the center of the ancient world (navel) of the earth, Delphi. Its prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world. On the slopes of Mount Parthenon in a landscape of unparalleled beauty and majesty, lie the ruins of the Sanctuary of Apollo Pythios. Visit the site and the museum and continue to Athens "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found, also, an altar with this inscription "to an unknown God". What, therefore, you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" Athens is one of the most glorious cities in the world and the cradle of western civilization as we know it today. Dinner and overnight at your hotel in Athens.

Day 7: Thursday – April 27 – Athens: Excursion to Corinth

After breakfast at the hotel, start with a tour of the oldest city in the world, Athens! Visit the rock that has dominated the panorama of Athens for twenty-five centuries, the Acropolis. At the Acropolis, you will see the ruins of the Parthenon, Erechtheum, and Propylaea. After you will ascend Mars Hill, this is where Saint Paul spoke to the Athenians about the one and only God (Acts 17:22). While in this city, view the ancient Agora, the former public center of Athenian life. It held the focus of a political, commercial, social, religious, and cultural center. As you are in the former political center, proceed with a drive through the city to view the House of Parliament on Syntagma Square. Also, have the opportunity to view the University of Athens, the oldest higher education institute in Greece, and the National Library of Greece which holds 4,500 Greek manuscripts. Visit Panathenaic Stadium, the beautifully marbled multi-purpose stadium. It is home to the Olympian Zeus and the site of the first modern-era Olympics (1896). Following your visit to Athens, you will proceed to ancient Corinth. Under the shadow of the towering Acropolis, Saint Paul lived in Corinth for two years. While here, Saint Paul felt great grief over what the Gentile Church in Corinth has become. As a result, he wrote four letters, all with the overarching theme of love. In Corinth, have the opportunity to view the remains of the first century shops, the site of the Saint Pauls trial by Gallio, the Fountain of Peirene, and the Temple of Apollo. Following your visit to Corinth, return to Athens for a delicious meal and overnight.

Day 8: Friday – April 28 – Athens – Start 3-Day Cruise (Celestial Cruises) to Mykonos

Following breakfast, proceed to the Piraeus port, where you will board your 3-day cruise. Your first stop will be the Island of Mykonos, the most cosmopolitan of the Greek islands that attract visitors from all over the world. After docking, transfer to Hora, the capital of the island. Enjoy a walking tour that will take you on the narrow cobbled streets of the city. Pass by chic boutiques, elegant nightclubs, and white-washed houses to arrive in Alekandra. This part of Mykonos is known as the "Venice of Mykonos", as homes have wooden balconies and are built on the sea. Historically, these homes were of wealthy merchants and captains. Return to the cruise ship for dinner and overnight.

Day 9: Saturday – April 29 – Kusadasi – Ephesus (Mary's House) - Patmos

Enjoy breakfast on board in the lively Turkish port of Kusadasi. We then transfer to the small village of Mt. Koresos. Visit the stone chapel situated upon the site, where the Virgin Mary spent her last days following the crucifixion of Christ. Following this visit, walk through the Magnesians Gate to the

ancient Ephesus. Enjoy a walking tour that will take you through the most magnificent excavations in the world. Some of the sites include the Odeon (concert hall), the Fountain of Trajan, the Scholastica, the Temple of Hadrian and the Latrines, and the Library of Celsus. The last stop on the walking tour is the Great Theatre. The largest ancient theatre with a capacity of 25,000 people is a site where Saint Paul preached. Follow the exact route that Mark Anthony and Cleopatra once rode in procession via the Arcadian Way. This main street runs from the Great Theatre to the city harbor. On your transfer back to Kusadasi, have the opportunity to view the Basilica of Saint John. In the sixth century, Emperor Justinian erected this structure over the grave of the evangelist, John. Upon arrival in Kusadasi, enjoy free time to explore on your own before returning to the ship. The cruise journey continues to Patmos, where you will transfer to the village of Chora. While in this capital, visit the monastery of Saint John the Theologian. This marvelous structure, built nine hundred years ago, continues to be supported by the walls of a strong fortification. In addition to the stunning main church that contains outstanding frescoes, you will have the opportunity to view the beautiful courtyard, dining room, and bakery. Visit the small museum, where you will view priceless ecclesiastical treasures such as books, manuscripts, mosaics, icons, textiles, vestments, and jewelry. Board the bus and transfer to the monastery. Visit the Grotto of the Apocalypse believed to mark the spot where John of Patmos received his visions that he recorded in the Book of Revelation. The silver niches in the wall mark the pillow and ledge where he used as a desk by the author. View the three-fold crack made by the voice of God, who emphasized the importance of honoring the Holy Trinity. Your day will culminate with a transfer to the port of Scala. While in this quaint and picturesque harbor, enjoy free time before returning to the ship.

Day 10: Sunday – April 30 – Heraklion - Santorini

This morning awaken and transfer to the largest city on the island of Crete, Heraklion. While in this administrative capital, visit a in 1899 discovered the ancient ruins of the Palace of Knossos. The palace is currently partially reconstructed and believed to have been the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos and the seat of an ancient Minoan culture. Here is where Saint Paul met the owner-and captain of the ship and was warned by him of continuing his journey to spread Christianity in Rome. Following this historical visit, embark by ship to the idyllic island of Santorini. Santorini is definitely the most breathtaking island of all the Greek Islands. Upon arrival in Santorini, visit Thira with its iconic white-washed houses, narrow streets, open-air cafes, and glittering boutiques that cling to cliffs. This evening enjoy your last dinner and overnight on the cruise ship.

Day 11: Monday – May 1 - Return Home

Today marks the end of your cruise. Following disembarkation, you will say your heartfelt farewells to a journey that will last in your memory forever. Transfer to the Athens airport for your return flight(s) home.

OR Continue to Malta

Day 11: Monday - May 1, 2023: Depart Athens- Arrive Malta

Upon arrival, collect your luggage from baggage claims and proceed to the Arrivals Hall, where you'll be met by a tour guide and/or driver and transferred to your hotel. Later, your guide will tell you about St. Paul and Christianity in the Maltese Islands. You will attend Mass at a local church before dinner at your hotel.

Day 12: Tuesday - May 2, 2023: Malta - The Three Cities - Valletta

After breakfast at your hotel, depart for a full-day guided excursion to the Three Cities of Vittoriosa, Cospicua, and Senglea, where in 1530 the Knights of St. John settled on the east coast in the creeks of Grand Harbor. Next, see the Miraculous Statue of Jesus Christ the Redeemer in the Oratory of the Basilica, dedicated to the birth of the Virgin Mary in Senglea. Later, take a typical harbor boat tour from Vittoriosa across the Grand Harbor to Valletta and see its waterfront. You will also see St. Johns Co-Cathedral and Museum in Valletta, and visit the oratory, which houses the famous Caravaggio paintings. Dinner and a restful overnight.

Day 13: Wednesday - May 3, 2023: Malta - Meliha - Gozo

After breakfast at your hotel, depart for a full day's guided excursion to Gozo, a sister island of Malta. Here you'll visit the Meliha Sanctuary of Our Lady, a Marian Shrine. The sanctuary was blessed by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Malta in 1990. The Sanctuary enjoys a picturesque view of the Valley of Our Lady, Meliha Bay, Comino, and Gozo. Later, see Munxar Parish Church, a Baroque-style building dedicated to St. Paul, the Gozo Cathedral of the Assumption, and St. George's Basilica, known as the golden church of the "marble Basilica" of Gozo. The relics of St. Clement rest in the Baroque altar in the side chapel of St. Lazarus, one of eleven side chapels within the Basilica. Next, visit the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pnu, Malta's most important pilgrimage site. The narrow rooms on either side of the altar are full of testaments of the local belief in the intercession of Our Lady. Lastly, return by ferry to Malta, and enjoy dinner and overnight at your hotel.

Day 14: Thursday - May 4, 2023: Malta - St. Paul's Bay - Mosta - Mdina - Rabat

After breakfast at your hotel, another full day's guided tour awaits. See St. Paul's Bay by boat, the Church of the Assumption of our Lady, St. Paul's Cathedral and Museum in Mdina, the medieval walled city, the Bastions, St. Paul's Catacombs, and St. Paul's Grotto. St. Paul's Grotto is said to be the place where St. Paul took refuge and prayed for three months while trying to convert the Maltese to Christianity following his shipwreck around 60 AD. Pope John Paul prayed in the grotto during his visit in 1990. Return to Malta for dinner and your last overnight.

Day 15: Friday - May 5, 2023, Return home

After an early breakfast and heartfelt farewells, transfer to Venice airport for your return flight home.

Pilgrimage to Greece WITH FR. JONATHAN BAKKELUND ~ APRIL 21-MAY 1, 2023 | \$5,349 FROM CHICAGO (ORD)

Items indicated in RED are mandatory

Last Name/First Name, Middle Name (as it appears on passport)

Date of Birth

US Passport or State ID#

Passport or ID Exp.#

1 MM DD YY

Gender: Male Female

2 MM DD YY

Gender: Male Female

Address City State Zip

Home Tel # Work/Cell Tel # E-mail (s)

Departure City: Nickname / Name tag

OPTIONAL:

Private Room: \$1,160 (If traveling alone) or Roommate Request: _____

Optional Post Tour to Malta | \$2,000 additional Double Room Optional Post Tour to Malta | \$2,560 additional Single Room

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