

**JOIN Father Joseph Warnakulasooriya IN HIS PILGRIMAGE TO THE
STEPS OF ST. PAUL IN GREECE WITH A CRUISE IN THE GREEK ISLANDS**

11 days, 9 nights from September 21-October 1 of 2025

Christ the King Catholic Church, Bakersfield, CA -USA

Sunday – Sept. 21: USA – Thessaloniki -Depart from LAX at 5:30 pm

Monday – Sept. 22: Thessaloniki

Arrival, reception, and transfer to the hotel. Dinner and accommodation.



Tuesday– Sept. 23: Thessaloniki - Philippi - Amphipolis - Kavala



Buffet breakfast at the hotel. Departure for an excursion to the locations that witnessed the presence of the Apostle, as well as the creation of the first Christian communities on the European continent, all within a superb archaeological framework that will introduce us to the most pivotal history of ancient Greece. AMPHIPOLIS. A town where a majestic Hellenistic lion stands. When Paul and his companions had to leave Philippi, they crossed Amphipolis via the splendid Roman road called Via Egnatia, and after crossing the Strymon River, they viewed the famous statue of the sitting lion. We will visit the archaeological site of the ancient Greek city. KAVALA. Facing the island of Thasos and now occupying the site of ancient NEAPOLIS, the port of PHILIPPI. It was the first city visited by Saint Paul during his journey in 49 AD. Kavala has the everlasting glory of being the Beautiful Gate through which Christ triumphantly entered Europe. In the afternoon, visit PHILIPPI. Formerly called CRENIDES. To the inhabitants of Philippi, the Apostle Paul wrote the well-known "Epistle to the Philippians," and from there he wrote his second "Epistle to the Corinthians." We will visit the archaeological complex: OCTAGONAL TEMPLE;

AMPHITHEATER; ROMAN AGORA; BATHS; BASILICAS; PAUL'S PRISON; FORUM. Mass in Philippi and return to Thessalonica. Dinner at the hotel.

Wednesday– Sept. 24: Thessalonika - Veria - Vergina - Kalambaka



Buffet breakfast at the hotel. Departure for PELLA. Birthplace and residence of Alexander the Great and the capital of Macedonia until the 5th century BC. Significant excavations were carried out in the city in 1915, which we will visit. VERGINA. In this city, the tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, was discovered. VERIA (BEREA). Saint Luke writes: "Immediately, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea by night, and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue." Passing through this city, we will recall the Apostle's traces in his inexhaustible teaching of the Scriptures on his way to Athens. We will stroll through its old town's narrow streets and visit the CHURCH OF PALEA MITROPOLI and AGII ANARGYROI. Departure for Kalambaka. Arrival at the hotel, dinner and accommodation.

Thursday – Sept. 25: Kalambaka - Athens



Buffet breakfast at the hotel. Tour begins with a visit to the METEORA monasteries. An austere monastic center since the 11th century, it not only serves as an ideal place for prayer but also attracts visitors to admire this unique "forest of rocks," inviting peace and tranquility. This place called many to withdraw from the world, giving rise to the METEORA MONASTERIES. We will make a complete visit to this site with its monasteries suspended from the sky. Built on the most whimsical and steep peaks, of the 21 existing monasteries, only six are inhabited. Inside, we can see beautiful frescoes, original icons painstakingly worked by the monks themselves, and art everywhere. We will have the opportunity to visit three of these monasteries: the MONASTERY OF TRANSFIGURATION, the MONASTERY OF SAINT STEPHEN, and the MONASTERY OF HOLY TRINITY, which can be substituted depending on closure days. Departure for Athens. Arrival at the hotel, dinner, and accommodation.

Friday – Sept.26: Cruise of the Greek Islands in the Aegean Sea



Breakfast and transfer to the port of Lavrio to start the **cruise of the Greek Islands** with Full Board on the famous ship CELSTYAL OLYMPIA (to be confirmed). Departure at 01:00 pm to the island of Mykonos. Arrival at 06:00 pm and free time for those who wish to disembark and explore part of this beautiful island. Sailing at 11:00 pm towards Kusadasi (Turkey).

Saturday – Sept. 27: Kusadasi – Patmos



Full Board. Arrival in Kusadasi at 07:00 am. Disembarkation and included guided visit to the ancient city of Ephesus, a place of Paul's apostolate and to whose inhabitants he directed an important letter. Visit the traditional House of the Virgin with the possibility of celebrating Mass. Return to the ship and sail to Patmos, the famous island where Saint John the Evangelist was imprisoned and wrote the Book of Revelation. Included guided visit to the Monastery containing the Cave where Saint John lived. Return to the ship and departure at 09:30 pm to Crete

Sunday – Sept. 28: Heraklion (Crete) – Santorini



Full Board. Included guided visit, touring part of this island on foot. Visit to the Church of Saint Titus, disciple of Saint Paul and first Bishop of Crete. Continue to visit the famous and ancient Venetian port, the Basilica of Saint Mark with the medieval Monastery of Saint Catherine, and the Cathedral of Saint Minas. Return to the ship and sail to Santorini. Arrival at 04:30 pm and free time to enjoy this beautiful island. Return to the ship and departure at 09:30 pm for the Island of Rhodes.

Monday – Sept. 29: Port of Lavrio – Ancient Corinth



Arrival at 06:00 hours. Breakfast and disembarkation. Departure to Corinth: On the third day of arduous and long walking, Paul reached the isthmus of Corinth, now crossed by a 6-kilometer canal. Coinciding with the Apostle's death, Emperor Nero, fifteen years later, gave the first blows with a golden mattock. Paul must have been greatly impressed, not only by its artistic beauty but also because the date of its construction coincided with the destruction of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem by the King of Babylon. Paul spent two years with the Corinthians, leaving among them one of the most flourishing Christian communities he founded. Continue to the famous Corinth Canal, a Roman work of the first century to connect the Ionian Sea with the Aegean Sea. Return to the hotel in Athens, dinner, and accommodation.

Tuesday – Sept.30: Athens



Buffet breakfast at the hotel. Then visit ATHENS. The cradle of European culture, the source of arts and ideas, pride of the Ancient Age. Founded in the 15th century BC, when the Apostle entered its streets around 50 AD, it had been under Roman rule for two centuries. Overwhelmed and astonished by the luxurious buildings, Paul mingled with the people and ascended to the Acropolis, where he finally discovered the wonder of the Temple to the Patron of Athens. It is presumed that he did not enter the Temple and left the sacred site head down and thoughtful, sure that "his spirit was consumed seeing the city full of idols" (Acts 17:16). We will visit the ACROPOLIS. This hill, fortified during the Minoan period, was transformed into a sanctuary around the 5th century BC, becoming the heart of all Greek culture based on the worship of the gods. We will admire the majesty of the PARTHENON and the elegance of the ERECHTHEION. We will end with the AREOPAGUS, a hill existing below the Acropolis, where Paul addressed the Athenians, speaking to them and presenting the new doctrine of which he was a bearer and minister. Then we will pass by the PANATHENAIC STADIUM, the TEMPLE OF ZEUS, SYNTAGMA SQUARE with the ROYAL PALACE. In the afternoon we will have a free time to stroll through the typical and picturesque Plaka Neighborhood. Return to the hotel. Dinner and accommodation.

Wednesday – Oct. 1: Breakfast and Transfer to Athens airport to board your flight back to the USA.