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# **Pilgrimage of the Prelate of Opus Dei to the Holy Land**

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz made a pilgrimage to the holy sites from August 17 to 25, 2022. This video shows some of the sites he visited and collects impressions from those who met him.

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Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz arrived at Ben Gurion Airport (Israel) on August 17 to begin a pilgrimage to the Holy

Land that will end on August 25. The previous visit of a prelate of Opus Dei dates back to 2013, when Msgr. Javier Echevarría came to bless the beginnings of the Saxum Visitor Center.

On Thursday, Msgr. Ocariz had the opportunity to see the permanent exhibition that introduces pilgrims to the Holy Land with informative explanations, videos, and other multimedia resources. He then had lunch with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

The next day, he went first to the Basilica of the Annunciation, where he prayed before the remains of our Lady's house and celebrated Mass in the chapel of St. Anne, with 20 people participating.

He also visited a place near the basilica called the "Tomb of the Just One," where the archaeological

remains of a house and a tomb from the first century can be seen, helping recreate the atmosphere of the time of Jesus Christ. In the afternoon, the pilgrimage continued in the church of Cana, where the miracle at the wedding feast of Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine, is commemorated. There is a jar from the time of Christ that helps give a sense of what the servants would have used to collaborate with our Lord's first miracle.

He then proceeded to Mount Tabor. In the church that commemorates the Transfiguration, he spent some time in prayer next to the Blessed Sacrament; then, from the top of the mountain, they contemplated the Jezreel Valley, where many places related to the life of Jesus and others mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures can be seen.

## **At the Basilica of the Nativity and Ein Karem**

On Saturday, Msgr. Ocariz visited the Basilica of the Nativity. After receiving some historical information, he paused for a moment of prayer before celebrating Mass at the Altar of the Magi, located in the Grotto of the Basilica. This is the closest Catholic altar to the site of the Birth of our Lord (the management of the site is shared with other Christian denominations).

Afterwards, the Prelate spent some time speaking with about 160 people who participate in means of formation offered by Opus Dei in Bethlehem and nearby. The meeting was held at the Peace Center, located in Manger Square, very close to the Basilica. Most of the participants listened to the Prelate's answers in Arabic, thanks to a simultaneous translation.

At the end of the gathering, he was able to greet friends of the Work who came from Jerusalem, Haifa and Nazareth, and Bethlehem. In the afternoon, his pilgrimage continued with a visit to Ein Karem, where Our Lady's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth took place. After an explanation of the rooms on the first floor, the Father prayed for a few minutes in the upper church, concluding with the recitation of a Salve.

### **On the Way of the Cross**

The following day, early in the morning, the Prelate walked the Way of the Cross, entering the Old City from St. Stephen's Gate, or Lions' Gate. In the afternoon, he held a get together at the Mishkenot Sha'ananim convention center. Among the attendees, in addition to Christians, were Jews and Muslims.

On Monday, he celebrated Holy Mass at the Holy Sepulchre. Afterwards, they left the Old City walking through the Jaffa Gate, whose wall testifies to the many different periods that have left their mark on the city. In the afternoon, he visited the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr. Adolfo Yllana, and visited the Polis Institute of languages and humanities.

Tabgha, where the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is commemorated, was the starting point on Tuesday. After visiting the site commemorating the miracle, they went to visit the nearby Church of the Primacy of St. Peter. Shortly after, they ended the morning praying in the Church of the Beatitudes. In the afternoon, they visited Capernaum, the town where the Lord and several apostles lived. They prayed in the church that stands on the ruins of the House of Peter for some time. Afterwards, they

visited the synagogue and the ruins of the city. A walk through Capernaum helped them to get an idea of the various historical towns located around the lake, including Magdala. That same afternoon, they were able to sail in a boat on the lake of Gennesaret and pray while listening to Gospel passages set on the lake.

On Wednesday he celebrated Mass in the Cenacolino ("Little Cenacle"), using the same chalice that Blessed Alvaro had used in what was his last Eucharist in the same place. After visiting the Cenacle, they went to the church of St. Peter in Gallicantu. After praying for a few moments before the Tabernacle, they visited the various rooms that commemorate the night Jesus spent as a prisoner before his trial. In the afternoon, they prayed at the rock in the Garden of Gethsemane and

entered the church of the Tomb of the Virgin.

On the last day of his visit, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz visited the Abbey of St. Mary of the Resurrection in Abu Gosh, which maintains 12th century frescoes and one of the Emmaus traditions. On the way to the airport, they were able to stop at Emmaus Nicopolis.

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