

# The Topor Report

News and notes from one of the busiest Missionaries at St. Luke's...

**Dateline: May 1<sup>st</sup>**

## **David Topor accompanies Norm Paolini to the Holy Land**



What a privilege! Norm Paolini and I joined Fr. Richard McAlear, OMI, and 52 pilgrims in retracing the footsteps of Jesus Christ. We were in the Holy Land from May 1 – May 12, 2009. The majority of the time was spent in or near Jerusalem. Toward the end of the pilgrimage we ventured north into Galilee. Highlights of the pilgrimage include Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This Church encloses the spots where Jesus died on the cross and where He was buried. Another highlight was the Mass at the Garden of Gethsemane. Fr.

McAlear spoke of the utter aloneness that Jesus felt when He sweated blood during the night before His passion.

Other Masses were celebrated at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, on Mount Tabor (the Transfiguration), at the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany, on the Mount of the Beatitudes, and on Mount Carmel (the region where the prophet Elijah lived). God showered many graces on us through the liturgy of the Church. Insightful homilies helped us harvest the spiritual fruits that the Lord was offering us. And receiving our Lord's body and blood in the places where he walked was particularly powerful.

The pilgrimage however was not without its lighter moments. Seeing Uncle Norm riding a donkey along the path that Jesus took during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, was an event never to be forgotten (We have a snippet of it on video, and a great shot above). Norm and I riding a camel en route to the Dead Sea was another high point. And floating (you don't sink because of the high concentration of salt) in the Dead Sea was totally unique among any water experiences of my life.



Another gift of the pilgrimage was meeting so many wonderful people who were seeking to deepen their relationship with our Lord. Their faces, stories and lives are permanently etched in my memory. They were so interested to learn of the work of the Mission, and were so very supportive of our ministry. I would like to thank them for who they are, and for their commitment to the Lord. You are in our thoughts and prayers.



If you ever get the chance to go to the Holy Land, go. It is a most remarkable place. In the meantime, please pray for peace in the Holy Land, for there is much unrest and injustice in this most holy of places.



## **Dateline: June 1<sup>st</sup> Another great year: Generations of Faith**

Cor ad cor loquitur. Heart speaks to heart. God's heart speaks to us, and we speak to Him. This is what prayer is. And this was the theme of this year's Generations of Faith. We explored the importance of prayer. We examined the meaning of the different parts that make up our greatest prayer, the Mass. We explored the beauty of praying with, to and through the saints. We studied the art of lectio divina, that is, praying with the Sacred Scriptures. We prayed the Stations of the Cross with St. Faustina. We learned of the great gift of the Rosary. We came to a deeper appreciation of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy. Our Lord emphasized the importance of the Chapel of Divine Mercy, the Novena of Divine Mercy, the veneration of the Image of Divine Mercy, as well as the Hour of Mercy (3 pm) and the Feast of Divine Mercy.

At the end of the year we honored our young people who received the body and blood of our Lord for the very first time in Holy Communion. Congratulations to them and to their families. During next year's Generations of Faith, we will be studying the Liturgical Year itself.

Many thanks to Nancy Polino, Gregg Prince, Sharon and Ray Zgoda, Angela Colosi, Danielle Davis and Debi Lloyd whose efforts have made Generations of Faith possible. And thank you to Frank and Nancy Polino whose generosity has allowed

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us to give out quality take-home materials to deepen our life of prayer.