

Ignatian Journey Leaders



The Rev. Dr. Patricia K. Tull is a biblical scholar who has led groups in the middle east for twenty years. She is professor emerita at Louisville Seminary, and currently works for an interfaith environmental organization in Indiana. Her most recent book is *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis*.

The Rev. Dr. Sarah J. Melcher is a minister in the United Church of Christ and Professor Emeritus of Xavier University. Her specialties are disability in the Hebrew Bible, Abrahamic Religions and the Environment, and African American Biblical Interpretation.



The Rev. Dr. Kristine Suna-Koro is Associate Professor of Theology at Xavier University. She is a Latvian-American theologian who works in the field of postcolonial studies and has been involved in interfaith dialogue through the Young Leadership Section of the International Council of Christians and Jews (IC CJ) and the Interfaith Perspectives on Immigration seminar at the American Academy of Religion (AAR).

Comments from Previous Pilgrims

When I read the Bible now, I am able to visualize the setting and land. Seeing the wilderness, the Sea of Galilee, fertile valleys, and Garden of Gethsemene allowed the Bible to come alive in a new way for me. The journey also developed my understanding of the differences between Israelis and Palestinians and the ways these affect everyday life for both groups.

--Lenor Ott, February 2014 traveler



The trip we took to the Holy Land was life-changing. It opened my eyes to the reality of faith lived out in the 21st century in Israel and the West Bank. I could no longer dismiss the humanity of one group or the other. Instead, I saw the sacredness of both the Palestinian and the Jew because I saw God in each.

--Rev. Bojangles Blanchard, January 2014 traveler

Because it was not a rushed tour but more of a pilgrimage, I had time to read through the Gospels again while I was there, and they were enlivened like never before for me. Most importantly, the pilgrimage allowed me to think about the conflict in the area, and I hope I am now a bit more empathetic to God's children on both sides of the walls.

--Rev. Jean Hawxhurst, January 2012 traveler



Trisha Tull and our other leaders were very patient and knowledgeable as our group toured all the amazing sites. They were sensitive to the local culture, they prayed with us, and helped us to form a picture of what the Holy Land is both now and how it may have looked long ago.

--Rev. Andrew Hartmans, January 2012 traveler

Hardly a week goes by in preaching and teaching when I do not make some reference to my trip.

--Rev. Ken Hockenberry, June 2009 traveler

The conflict in the Middle East is complex, and before I traveled there I do not think I fully understood just how complex. Conversations with people there not only enriched my spiritual life, but gave me a new perspective on how the Middle East is portrayed in media. I was able to see the people and their lives, rather than a statistic.

--Rev. Katrina Pekich-Bundy, January 2009 traveler

It expanded my "neighborhood." I cannot watch the happenings and turmoil of that part of the world with detachment because it is now a part of me and my story.

--Rev. Linda Martin, May 2008 traveler

My trip to Israel opened the Bible for me in a way that I never thought was possible. After returning, every scripture came alive for me and my congregation commented on the change in the way I read scripture and preached.

--Rev. Bonnie Orth, May 2008 traveler

Not only did this trip grant me a much deeper understanding of the issues confronting the Holy Land, it deepened my understanding of Scripture and my spiritual formation as a Christian.

--Rev. Anne Vouga, January 2005 traveler

