

Tantur Ecumenical Institute

Newsletter

Latest News and Events:

- **Intensive Four Week Summer Hebrew Course at Tantur by Keith Begg, (Limerick, Ireland – Tantur)**
- **The Ascent of Mount Sinai by Alison McKenzie, (Sydney, Australia) Sr. Zelia Cordeiro, MC, (Birmingham, Alabama, USA - originally from St. Catarina, Brazil) & Fr. Bob Menard, OFM. (Anderson, South Carolina, USA)**
- **Petra Personified by Sr. Mary Gomolka (Watchung, New Jersey, USA)**
- **A Reflection for January by Rev. Fr. Peter Murphy, (Auckland, New Zealand)**



Tantur – On a hill in Jerusalem, near Bethlehem



Intensive Four Week Summer Hebrew Course at Tantur by Keith Begg

Tantur is proud to host a Four Week Summer Hebrew Course running from the **04th June – 29th June, 2012**. **Level Aleph**, is the first in a series of 6 intensive Hebrew Language Courses designed for the beginner in mind and modeled on the curriculum of The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The course will be instructed by an Accredited Teacher from the Hebrew University. The course itself will take place here on the beautiful grounds of Tantur located on hill in Jerusalem and in easy commuting distance to the Old City and the historical city of Bethlehem.

Course Description

For Beginners, the student will learn to read and write the Hebrew Alphabet with both block and script letters while also learning basic syntax and morphology. By the end of the course the student usually acquires over 1,000 words and gains experience in a variety of skills. Such skills include.

- **Conversation:** Simple dialogues and stories about everyday life.
- **Reading:** Engaging in manageable texts where the student learns to read passages without vowels. In reading modern Hebrew the vowels are not contained in the text, while they are in biblical thus making every day Hebrew in many ways more difficult than biblical Hebrew.
- **Comprehension Aural:** Listening and Learning from everyday conversations.
- **Writing:** Short dialogues and conversations which take place in the class and on every day practical aspects of life
- **Grammar:** Basic grammatical and syntactic structures, learning about verb structure, past, present and future tenses together with the masculine and feminine forms.

Costs

- **\$2,300** which includes tuition, room, board & course materials
- **\$899** for local participants which includes tuition & course materials

For further information and receipt of an application form please email me on kbegg@nd.edu or tsdlowe@yahoo.com

We look forward to hearing from you.....

.The Ascent of Mount Sinai

by

***Alison McKenzie, Sr. Zelia Cordeiro,
MC, & Fr. Bob Menard, OFM.***

The beautiful light casting its shadows on the hills of Mount Sinai.....



Four intrepid voyagers about to set out for an adventure in Sinai. From left to right Rev. Fr. Peter Murphy, Fr. Bob Menard, Fr. Carl Telford & Sr. Zelia Cordeiro



At the base of the mountain I was overwhelmed by the specter of St. Catherine's Monastery, a huge ark-like structure floating on a sea of sand and rock. This community is where spiritual disciplines were honed to perfection. The icons, manuscripts and mosaics testify to the rich heritage housed and celebrated here. It is an architectural icon that reveals the commerce between God and man. Since childhood this mountain has held a special place in my imagination: a place of revelation. Here, God spoke to Moses. Here, God made Himself known to Elijah. Here, God draws people from all parts of the globe today. There is an affinity between the human soul and this mountain.

On Oct. 30th (2011) I stood at the beginning of the narrow path leading up the mountain. Then, I took the first step, fulfilling a lifetime dream. Before I fully realized it, I was struggling to climb, not the mountain, but, up onto the back of a camel. Then, "we" together began negotiating the perilous path along the edge of the mountain...in total darkness! It soon became clear to me that if I was going to enjoy this experience, I needed to surrender to the darkness, let go and "trust" the camel and his Bedouin handler.

I began to hear the voice of the Bedouin, Jussef, and how he subtly coaxed his camel along the path and she responded. The seductive quality of their interaction awakened my heart to "see" my surroundings as if for the first time. Relaxed now, and synchronized with the camel's rhythmic walk, I began to enjoy the starry sky, the crisp night breeze, the sounds of distant villagers, and, the presence of other climbers around me. As my body adjusted to the changing altitude my soul was set free. I could see my life with new perspective, its past and its future. I heard God's call in a new way. What a liberating experience it was for me!

At the top of Mt Sinai the mystery and majesty of God was deeply felt. "Take off the shoes from your feet because the place where you are standing is holy ground." As I stood there recalling Exodus, out of the mist emerged, bit by bit, the rugged peaks of the surrounding mountains. As far as the eye could see, mountain after mountain appeared. All who shared that morning with me knew we were on "holy ground". *(Continued on next Page)*

The Ascent of Mount Sinai

by

*Alison McKenzie, Sr. Zelia Cordeiro,
MC, & Fr. Bob Menard, OFM.*

Continued.....

Each one tried to give expression to the Mystery some in silence, some in tongues, and, some in chants and hymns. A cacophony of sounds, dissonant and diverse, but somehow, united in praise. Today, as I recall this trip, three exhibits in the monastery museum remain with me: the manuscript of "The Ladder of Perfection," the Icon illustrating the text, and, the Icon of its author, John Climacus. Each is a vivid reminder that spiritual growth is most often, gradual, progressive, always challenging and sometimes messy! The manuscript speaks to the progressive nature of the spiritual quest. The Icon illustrates the steepness of the climb. Finally, in the eyes of the monk, John, we see the awe and terror sloshing around in the soul of the faithful seeker. Three souvenirs that no one can steal and no moth destroy

Petra Personified

by

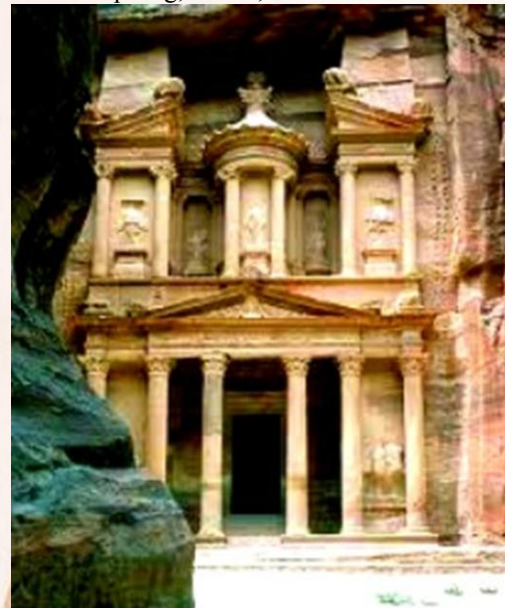
Sr. Mary Gomolka

When preparing to leave New Jersey, USA, for the three-month program at Tantur, friends encouraged me to consider a trip to Petra, Jordan. This trip did indeed become a reality in November, 2011. Getting to Jordan involved a van ride to Tel Aviv Airport for a plane to Amman, Jordan. The journey then to Petra is a four hour drive by car. The best procedure to follow is to enlist a private tour guide and driver in advance. This eliminates safety worries and the wasting of time in search of these services upon arrival I had planned to ride a donkey through the Petra sites, but the guide assured me that he would lead the way slowly. The walk took three hours with the most notable, wonderful, and extremely knowledgeable of guides. He is of a particular tribe, the remnant of the Nabotaeans. So what is Petra? It is considered by some as the eighth wonder of the ancient world, striking awe in anyone who ventures there. It is a remote dead city with multi-colored sandstone mountains, with steep, rocky slopes and high cliffs. Into this amazing stone have been carved tombs, facades, theaters, dwellings, and stairways. This was the city of the Nabotaeans who settled here over 2000 years ago. Coming from Arabia, they were a clever, practical people, considered one of the most gifted in history. They were independent, engaged in the caravan business, and thus were open to various cultures from China, Africa and India. They gradually weakened under Roman rule, and abandonment followed. The city was completely lost to the West by the 15th century, and it was not rediscovered until 1812. Some say three days are actually needed to completely explore this huge, unbelievable, archeological site. Its magnificence is overwhelming. For me it was a quick trip, but most rewarding.

Bedouin Township of St. Catherine's



Inspiring, Iconic, Incredible Petra



A Reflection for January by Rev. Fr. Peter Murphy

I recall when we were celebrating Eucharist together after climbing Sinai, sharing our experiences. For me it was simply being in the moment. First there was the waiting; the pre-dawn light emerging showing us the sun was on its way. Then the continued waiting as that light gradually became stronger. Next the momentary doubt; would this day be an exception, that the sun might not rise? However, the signs were there; the emerging light dancing on the surrounding mountain tops and the rich blue light of the sky enveloping us. Then suddenly it appeared it seemed from below us bathing us in this glorious light. What followed was an outpouring of joy and praise in a symphony of languages from those around us. What was it like for Moses? It was here he experienced the awe and terror of meeting God face to face. Then when he came down the horror of his people dancing to the god made in their own hands. Such is the isolation of a leader. But the experience was such to sustain him and them together for the next forty years.

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