



From Dublin Ireland to the Dubliners Pub, Jerusalem all in honour of St. Patrick!

by
Keith Begg



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Yes it would seem that the 4 corners of the world go green for one day. From left to right, Pyramids of Giza (Egypt), Sydney Opera House (Australia), Tokyo Tower (Japan) Leaning Tower of Pisa (Italy)...and no the final snapshot is not pollution it is the dyeing green of the river in Chicago.....Would hate to fall in ☺



For those of us who have a drop of Irish blood coursing through our veins or who have indulged in the odd tittle of Guinness, the 17th March, marks the occasion where millions of people around the world get into the spirit of things, indeed in more ways than one, to celebrate Irishness for a day. While I am lucky in many ways to come from the Emerald Isle, I am often a big disappointment to those that meet me. I don't have red hair (Maureen O'Hara has a lot to answer for)☺, I am not related to any leprechauns, cannot dance like Michael Flatley from Riverdance nor do I live in a thatched cottage in some remote field. It always amazes me when I meet people on my travels, especially my American brethren as they seem to have an almost mystical view of the country of my birth. For me Ireland is a modern and upbeat European state, where people are more likely to indulge in a Bellini's rather than a pint of the black stuff, go salsa dancing rather than Irish dancing and are more into Rock than the diddy dee music most often associated with my country of origin. So I am now spending my third year celebrating St. Patrick's Day in Jerusalem. I naively thought when I first moved here that surely Irish culture would have not travelled so well to the Middle East and it just might be possible to enjoy my first Paddy's day, without been forced into drinking green beer, watching Darby O'Gill and the Little People for the 30th time and seeing copious amounts of people dressed in almost Halloweenesque leprechaun outfits bounding down the street, scaring people half to death. How wrong was I. When I first started working at Tantur it took me a while to realize that I worked for an organization whose "mother ship" was The University of Notre Dame. It was on that first St. Patrick's Day in 2011 that a large number of Notre Dame students happened to arrive on the shores Tantur. They were all wearing "fighting Irish" tee shirts with a demented looking leprechaun (their mascot) on the front of them...I thought to myself this can't be happening. So Fr. Tim and Lisa, gracious as ever decided to throw a St. Patrick's Day bash down in their apartment. I was lucky to have my friend Robert here at the time and we were set with the task of making the hot whiskeys and Irish coffees, almost getting completely inebriated from the fumes (although none of us were complaining). The evening was amazing until it came to the sing song. These wonderful Americans some with Irish ancestry no doubt sang ditties from the Emerald Isle and ashamedly we did not know any of them, except for "When Irish Eyes are Smiling". We love to call those who claim Irish ancestry to be "Plastic Paddy's" i.e. not the real deal. However after that evening I felt like a refugee in my own country realizing that these wonderfully good natured American students knew more about our culture than I did, although I still have never met a person in Ireland by the name of Shannon, Erin or Riley! Rob and I then headed for the bright lights of Jerusalem savoring the thoughts of celebrating our feast day in a place that surely never heard of St. Patrick's Day. So we arrived in a little Israeli bar called The Record. Over half the people there had shamrocks drawn on their faces, were wearing leprechaun outfits and startling of all, drinking green beer. We were persuaded by our new Israeli friends to go to the Dubliners an Irish Bar in the centre of Jerusalem. The doors opened and it look liked the whole cast from the Lucky Charms adverts had gathered for a big reunion. Again people did not believe I was Irish as I silently cursed Maureen O'Hara under my breath (Next time I am purchasing a red haired wig). So I showed them my passport but even at that they were not too convinced. However my friend from Dublin who has blond hair and is from Poland originally was immediately accepted as one of the clan bearing a good old Irish family name, Golebwieski! However when they saw how many pints I could put away they were finally convinced. Yes I am afraid some stereotypes do hold weight. Have a wonderful St. Patrick's Day (He wasn't even Irish)

From the Middle of Nowhere to the Middle East



by
Fabienne Theytaz.

This was the title given to me for this article. Rather than the “middle of nowhere”, I’d say that the place I now call home is at the end of the world: The Arctic. A mysterious call led me there in 1999, more precisely to Rankin Inlet, on the shores of Hudson Bay, in Nunavut, the newest territory of Canada. Nunavut means ‘our land’ in the language of the Inuit. Nunavut has become ‘my land’ and I’ve been working for the Diocese of Churchill-Hudson Bay as a lay missionary since then. Our Diocese is enormous (2 million square km) and very remote; the nearest city is 1500 km away. To go from one place to the other, involves travelling by plane and at an exorbitant cost. Nunavut is the land of the Inuit; they have been living there in a self-sufficient and nomadic life for thousands of years, finding amazing ways of survival in this harsh climate (-40 to -60C in winter). But their lives have changed dramatically since the Cold War because of important military operations that sprung up in the Arctic, bringing with them new diseases, relocation of people in settlements and a totally new way of life. All these changes were not without consequences and the Inuit are still trying to adjust to this ever changing new society. On a religious level, the Inuit went from Shamanism to Christianity within a few decades. 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of the presence of the 1st Roman Catholic Church in this part of the Arctic. Today, our mission is principally one of presence, prayer and sharing the daily life of the Inuit; and also to encourage, train and support Inuit pastoral leaders. Half of these parishes have no resident priests and the pastoral leaders are the ones in charge of the religious education, services and liturgy in coordination with the visiting priest. And in the parishes with a resident priest (who is often away to visit other parishes), the Inuit leaders are there to assist him, especially with the proclamation of the Gospel in their language and culture.

One evening, while I was staring at the magical Arctic sky full of stars and Northern Lights, something struck me: from Bethlehem, the Gospel has been brought to the end of the world, the disciples have truly implemented Jesus’ last words: *“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation ...”* Mark 16:15-16. Bethlehem is even in Rankin in the form of Fuad, the administrator of our health center. Fuad came to our parish and talked about his native Bethlehem, not only by words and pictures, but also by praying in Jesus’ language, Aramaic. Since then, Bethlehem has been brought closer to us. When I started considering what to do during my sabbatical year, I had Bethlehem in a little corner of my mind among other ideas. What better than a visit to Jesus’ country to learn more about him and get closer to him? The priest of the neighbouring community encouraged me in this project and gave me 2 addresses in Jerusalem; Tantur was one of them. When I read Tantur’s website, I knew right away that it was the place where I wanted to go. And here I am, enjoying every single minute of this awesome 3-month program. Though Bethlehem today is offering a heart-breaking view behind the massive walls erected around it for ‘security’, it is striking to think that everything started there, 2000 years ago. Though Jesus is no more physically there, it is urgent to keep spreading his message of Justice, Peace, Love and Forgiveness so we are spurred into action, a message that is more necessary than ever in this unjust world but especially so in the unstable Middle East, where Jesus was born, lived his life and spread his message of Love and Peace.

Local Parish Church, Rankin Island



Map of Canada and Hudson Bay with Greenland to the right of picture.....Follow the arrow until you get to Rankin Inlet



Some of the newest Inuit generation growing up under changing times in Rankin Island on the shores of Hudson Bay



Palestinian Sisters are doing it for themselves.....standing on their own two feet!

by
Sr. Marian Schubert

During our time at Tantur we had several opportunities to go on field trips where we were able to meet up with some of the working Palestinian women of Israel.

On one occasion we had the privilege to walk from the desert monastery of St. George to the outskirts of Jericho. It was a very hot day and there was very little vegetation of any kind. There was no shade to relieve us from the heat of the day. And while we were walking we spied a shepherd woman guarding her sheep and goats. Her skin was very weathered and dark from living in the elements. I admired her fidelity to her work and her ability to toil in the heat of the day - all to keep her flock safe and fed.

Another time we went to the Negev to a village outside of Arad. There we visited with a group of Bedouin women who have started their own businesses. This is a controversial issue concerning the role of women in that culture - but the Bedouin need money for survival. The first business that we visited was a small soap and cosmetic factory called Desert Daughters. The women make the soaps and lotions from natural oils, flowers, plants and even camel's milk found in the desert. The recipe formulas for these products are ancient and they have been used as homeopathic treatments for arthritic pains and skin ailments.

On that same trip we also visited a yarn and hand-made blanket store. One of the women gave us a demonstration of how they make the yarn. They take cleaned wool fur - it looks a bit like cotton candy at this point - and then using centripetal force she spins the wool into yarn. The women then dye the wool and with the hand-made textiles make beautiful blankets and other pieces of cloth.

The Bedouin women also cooked for us. We ate our meal in a tent. The food they served us was delicious. We ate an Arab bread that looked and tasted like a flour tortilla. We were also served hummus, goat cheese, tomatoes, olive oil, cucumbers and various spices to eat with the bread.

On another field trip on our way home from Hebron we were able to visit an amazing place called the "Tent of Nations." We met a Christian Palestinian woman named Amal. She supervises the family property that has been theirs for many generations. Since the early 1990s there have been attempts by some Israelis to take away their land. She and her family have continuously fought to keep their family legacy. In response to these difficulties she has started a program that encourages visitors and volunteers from all over the world to come and help her and her family to keep the land alive and occupied so that it cannot be taken from them. They have started an ecological farm and an educational center for peaceful dialogue. Many of the programs work to build bridges and respond in non-violent ways to the abuses that have been directed at many Palestinians. The roles of Arab women in Israel are changing. It was a blessing for us to witness to these life giving developments for women.

Shepherd Women in the scorching heat guarding their sheep and goats



Sr. Marian Schubert from California USA at Mt. Tabor with her Three Month Group. Marian kept us all smiling with her wonderful sense of humour



"Desert Daughters" - Palestinian hospitality is legendary



A Reflection for March by Rev. Brian Senior

I was part of the July 2011 four week course a group of fifteen wonderful people. I was one of only two Brits, and uniquely in my experience, the only Anglican. It was a life changing month - the major element of my first period of Study Leave after eighteen years as a priest in parish ministry. I had visited the Holy Land twice before, on short pilgrimages, and was desperate to return, to learn, and to try to understand a little more about reconciliation. Tantor for me was many things ,a healing space among kind people following a family trauma, a time of renewal and refreshment, an opportunity to learn and grow. What a privilege to meet local Jews, Muslims and Christians, to gain deeper insights into how geography, history and theology have brought us to where we now are; and to see for myself how the current political situation impacts the lives of each community. I've been back, of course, three times so far. My wife and I have travelled the length and breadth of the country, visiting places not included in traditionally pilgrimage itineraries. One of the trips highlights involved attending the 2012 "Christ at the Checkpoint" conference, and had the privilege of praying with Messianic Jews and Palestinian Arab Christians who were meeting one-another for the first time.

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