

**Speaking Christ's Words:
The Desert, Jerusalem, and Galilee
Summer 2016**

Professor: Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C.
Dates: May 29 - June 7, 2016
Place: Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Israel

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“The Church does not cease to listen to his words. She rereads them continually. With the greatest devotion she reconstructs every detail of his life. These words are listened to also by non-Christians. The life of Christ speaks, also, to many who are not capable of repeating with Peter: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” (St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 7)

“Christ’s whole life is a mystery of redemption. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of the cross, but this mystery is at work throughout Christ’s entire life.” (CCC 517)

Course Description:

This intensive course in the land of Jesus will seek to explore the theological themes of the Gospel narratives informed by socio-cultural and historical perspectives with a particular emphasis on preaching. The journey through the land organizes the theology, which is a reflection on the deeper meaning of the journey and its application for proclamation of the word. In keeping with the tradition of the earliest followers of Jesus and subsequent generations of Christians, by returning to the places of origins, we will seek a better understanding of the foundational words, persons, events, and places mentioned in the Gospels so as to probe their ongoing redemptive value.

The course will consist of readings, brief orienting lectures, Masses, guided visits, theological reflection and written sermons or pastoral projects. The bulk of the course will take place in Tantur and its surroundings (Jerusalem, Bethlehem, etc.) with an intensive trip into Galilee. Students will have preparation reading before the onsite portion; written work and projects are completed after the onsite portion.

Required Texts: (* indicates required onsite in Israel)

1. Robert Louis Wilken. *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
2. **The Bible*. A specific translation is not required.
3. *Jerome Murphy-O’Connor. *The Holy Land: An Archaeological Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Course Work:

The work of this course is divided into three portions: preparation for Israel, the onsite experience, as well as written work after the onsite experience.

1. Preparation for Israel

Students should have read the following text before May 29, 2016:

Robert Louis Wilken. *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

2. Expectations onsite in Israel

This will be a course in theological reflection attentive to the social and theological meanings of space based on some of the significant places of the Gospel narratives. Preaching students should be asking: What could God be trying to tell God's people in choosing this particular place for a significant action?

There will be brief orientation lectures. Most of the time will be spent visiting significant places during the day, periods for reading scripture, personal reflection, and there will be evening gatherings for group reflection and conversation. There will be Roman Catholic Mass each day at one of the sites on the itinerary. These liturgies comprise part of the reflection upon a particular site and all are expected to attend.

On the evenings *before* the visit to a site, participants will be assigned: (1) to offer a brief reflection on the scriptural text(s) referring to the place we will visit; (2) to present from Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's book (or another source present at Tantur) some archaeological insights about the sites we will visit.

On the evenings *of* the visit, participants will be asked to work in teams of two or three, periodically changing teams, to reflect together on the theological significance of the places we visited; group reflections will be followed by a plenary session sharing the insights of each group.

On account of the brief and intensive nature of the onsite portion of the course, attendance of all parts of the program is required without exception.

3. Written Work (after Israel)

Option 1: A thematic series of 3-5 sermons (5,000 words in total) which mine the theological meaning of one or more of the places visited. These sermons should have a specific audience in mind (a preached retreat, a parish mission, or audience relevant to one's academic or ministerial interests) and trace themes, scripture, and "place" throughout.

Option 2: Another creative pedagogical project of similar length to Option 1. Possibilities include digital presentations, videos, structured meditations, etc.

Each student's plans for his or her written work need to be discussed with and approved by Fr. Kevin while onsite in Tantur. The work is to be completed upon the student's return to America. It must have been received by Fr. Kevin by 9:00 AM EST, Monday, July 18, 2016. Late work will receive a penalty of a full letter grade deduction for each day it is late.

Further Suggestions for Background Reading:

Benedict XVI. *Jesus of Nazareth*. 3 vols. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Elizondo, Virgilio. *A God of Incredible Surprises: Jesus of Galilee*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Doyle, Stephen. *The Pilgrim's New Guide to the Holy Land*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990.

Freyne, Seán. *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus Story*. London: T & T Clark, 2004.

Kopp, Clemens. *The Holy Places of the Gospels*. Freiburg: Herder, 1963.

Lassalle-Klein, Robert Anthony, ed. *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Christology for the 21st Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011.

Malina, Bruce J. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

Martin, James, S.J. *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. New York: HarperOne, 2014.

Meier, John P. *Jesus A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. 5 vols. New York: Doubleday / New Haven: Yale University Press.

Maps Which Correlate Geography and Scripture:

<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CP051GOSPELMAPS.htm>