

PYMBLE CATHOLIC PARISH

12  
DAYS

# St Paul & the Early Church

*Every 25 years, the Church declares a Holy Year, a profound gift of grace and mercy for all believers. In this dedicated Jubilee year, experience the journey of St Paul and his companions as they courageously preached the word of God and kept the early Christian communities vibrant and alive in faith. Be prepared to capture afresh the fervour and spirit of the Church's greatest evangelist.*



Accompanied by

**Fr Ireneusz Czech SDS**

**COMMENCES WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2025 • 12 DAYS / 11 NIGHTS**

Athens (2 nights) • Acropolis • Ancient Corinth • Kalambaka (2) • Meteora  
• Berea • Thessaloniki • Kavala (2) • Ancient Philippi • Patmos (2) • Samos (1)  
• Kusadasi (2) • Ephesus



The Library of Celsus, Ephesus

*the genuine pilgrim experience*

**harvest**  
journeys





Athens



Meteora

## pilgrim highlights

- + Walk the footsteps of St Paul in Athens and Corinth, visiting the Areopagus and the ancient ruins where he preached.
- + Marvel at the awe-inspiring Meteora monasteries, perched on towering cliffs, with priceless frescoes and a rich monastic history.
- + Visit Thessaloniki, where St Paul established the first Christian Church in Europe.
- + Renew your baptismal vows at the Baptistry of Lydia in Philippi, the site of St Paul's first European convert.
- + Experience the Cave of Revelation in Patmos, where St John wrote the Book of Revelation, and visit the Monastery of St John.
- + Explore the grandeur of Ephesus, from its Roman ruins to the House of the Virgin Mary and the Basilica of St John.

**SYMBOLS:** (B) Breakfast, (L) Lunch, (D) Dinner

## Itinerary

### DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER – ARRIVE ATHENS

*Athens today is the thriving capital of Greece, but, more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys.*

Welcome to **Athens**. Join with fellow pilgrims this evening at 6pm for a Welcome Dinner.

*Athens overnight (D)*

### DAY 2: THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER – ATHENS AND ANCIENT CORINTH

**Theme: The Athenians & The Corinthians**

*When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city which worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21).*

We begin our pilgrimage with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of “the Unknown God” (Acts 17:15-34). View the Ancient Agora and the **Plaka** (Old Greece) and explore the **Parthenon**.

Also see the **Kallimármáro Stadium**, dating back to 330BC and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896.

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** this afternoon where the apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. Visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. See the **Peirene fountain**, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally, we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where St Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18).

*Athens overnight (BD)*

### DAY 3: FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER - ATHENS TO KALAMBAKA

This morning we begin our day at the fascinating **Acropolis Museum**, built to house every artefact found on the rock of the acropolis and the surrounding slopes. We continue north today to **Meteora** and to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at

the foot of the majestic grey rocks.

*Kalambaka overnight (BD)*

### DAY 4: SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER – METEORA EXPLORATION

**Theme: The Monastics**

We spend some time today marvelling at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of **Meteora**. We will visit some of these living monasteries and view the extraordinary collection of priceless religious frescoes and other treasures that will make this a remarkable visit.

Enjoy some free time this afternoon.

*Kalambaka overnight (BD)*

### DAY 5: SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER - KALAMBAKA TO KAVALA

**Theme: The Bereans & The Thessalonians**

Today we journey north by coach to **Berea** (modern Veria). The “**Bema**” - an impressive monument to Paul - is believed to incorporate the steps from the original synagogue from which he preached the gospel to the Jews, who welcomed the word of God and began to study the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-12).

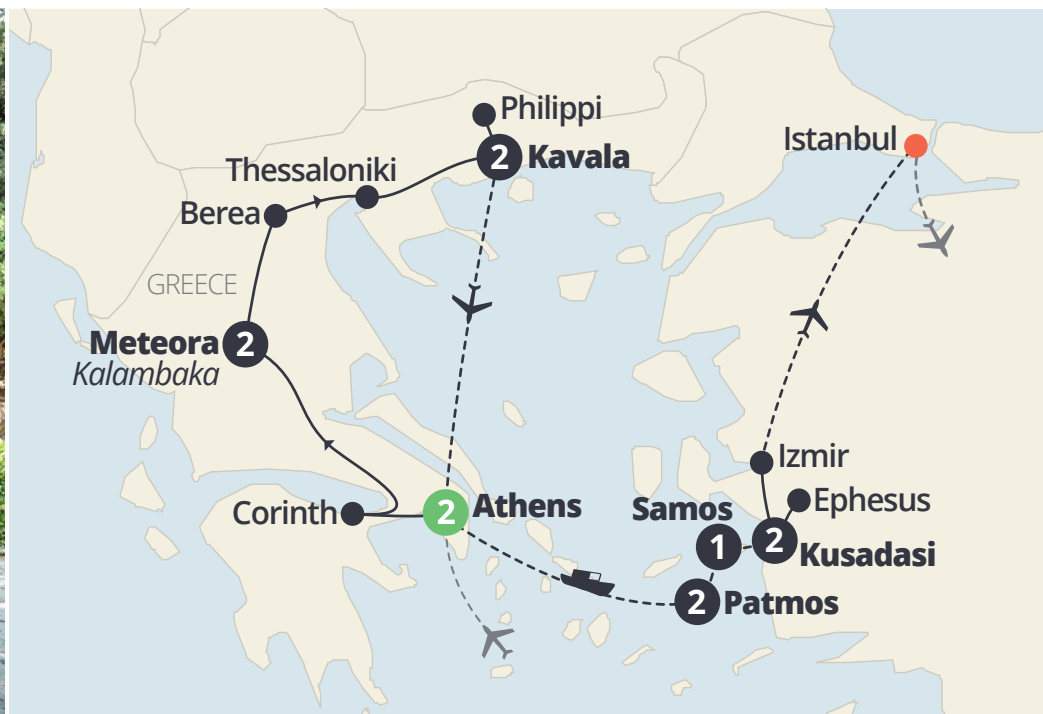
Continue on to **Thessaloniki**, Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe.

Our visit will include the ramparts of the city, the triumphal **Arch of Galerius**, as well as the **Rotunda** where we can see pieces of the pulpit from which Paul preached. View the **Roman Agora** where he also preached. Nearby we shall visit **St**





House of the Virgin Mary



**Demetrios' Church** dedicated to a Roman soldier who converted to Christianity and was later martyred. View its valuable mosaics and frescoes before descending into the crypt where we find the remains of some ancient Roman baths and streets.

Continue east along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to the port city of **Kavala** (ancient Neapolis), once named "Christoupolis" after being the first European city to accept Christianity. It was here that St Paul, St Timothy and St Silas first landed from Troas (Acts 16:11), one of the great moments in the history of Christianity in Europe.

*Kavala overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 6: MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER - PHILIPPI

*Theme: The Philippians*

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby **Philippi**, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40).

Visit the **Baptistry of Lydia** for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the **River Zygaktis** and renew our Baptismal vows. Visit the **marketplace** (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the **cistern** which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. In the **ancient theatre** we will hear the story of Paul's arrest, imprisonment, and miraculous release.

Remainder of the afternoon at leisure to rest back at our hotel.

*Kavala overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 7: TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER - KAVALA TO PATMOS

Today we are transferred to the airport for

our flight to Athens. On arrival we will be transferred directly to the Athenian port of Piraeus to embark our boat transfer to the Dodecanese Island of **Patmos**, where St John the Beloved wrote the Book of Revelation.

*Island of Patmos overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 8: WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER - PATMOS DAY

*Theme: The Patmosians*

Lying between the islands of Leros and Ikaria is the 'ascetic shaped' Patmos, called the 'Jerusalem of the Aegean' due to the overwhelming atmosphere of the island during the great celebrations of Christianity.

We begin our day with a walking tour of the main square of the village of **Chora**. This is the traditional settlement and capital of Patmos, where the narrow streets were designed to ward off pirates over the centuries. Ascend to the **Monastery of St John the Beloved**, a huge fortress-like building dating from the 11th century, for a visit and celebration of Mass.

Our exploration of this living monastery will culminate with time in the actual **Cave of Revelation** where God chose to reveal to St John the mysteries of the last book of the Bible – the Apocalypse.

The cave is now at the foot of the monastery, which houses priceless icons and manuscripts, sacred relics, and vestments embroidered with silver or gold threads and bejeweled with precious stones.

Later continue to the active **Convent of Evangelismos (Annunciation)** built by the hieromonk Nikiphoros who was cured from the plague after praying to St Luke the Evangelist. Visit the **Convent of Zoodochos Pigi** with icons dating from the 16th to the 18th century. Finally, we will enjoy a short scenic tour of the island.

*Island of Patmos overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 9: THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER - PATMOS TO SAMOS

Today, we depart Patmos by ferry and make our way to the picturesque island of **Samos**, nestled in the heart of the Aegean Sea. Renowned for its lush landscapes, pristine waters, and rich ancient heritage, it is a destination of both natural beauty and spiritual significance.

*Island of Samos overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 10: FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER - SAMOS TO KUSADASI

Depart Samos by ferry to **Kusadasi**, doorway to **Ephesus** and the **Churches of Revelation**.

On arrival in Kusadasi we will be met and transferred by coach to our centrally located hotel.

*Kusadasi overnight (BD)*

#### DAY 11: SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER - EPHEBUS

*Theme: The Ephesians*

We travel directly to **Ephesus** this morning, the most famous of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev 2:1-7) where St Paul spent more than two years in the course of his third missionary journey. It was to the Christian community of Ephesus that St Paul wrote his greatest and most challenging letter (the epistle to the Ephesians) and also succeeded in converting many away from worship of the god Artemis.

Our visit today will include the ruins where St Paul lived and preached. See the **prison of St Paul**; walk through the ancient marble streets founded in the 10th century BC and see this most 'complete' Roman city providing us with

CONTINUED →





Samos



Patmos

an excellent window into Imperial Rome. Pass the **Temple of Hadrian**, the **Library of Celsus**, the enormous **amphitheatre** (Acts 19:29–31), and finally come to the ruins of the **Christian Basilica** where the Third Ecumenical Council took place in 431AD, and where Our Lady was proclaimed “Mother of God”. We ascend the hill to the **House of the Virgin Mary** where it is said Mary spent the later years of her life. We celebrate our group Mass here in one of the chapels. Finally, we visit the restored remains of the 6th century **Basilica of St John at Celcuk** where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist.

*Kusadasi overnight (BD)*

## DAY 12: SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER - FLY TURKEY TO AUSTRALIA\*

This morning, we set out towards **Izmir**, once the site of ancient **Smyrna**, one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev 2:8–11). This was home to a lively Christian community under the pastoral care of its bishop – the saintly **Polycarp**. After Mass, we are transferred to Izmir airport for our flight to **Istanbul**. From Istanbul, we continue on with our homebound flight connections. (B)

*\*Flights leaving from Istanbul Airport (IST) must be booked from 6pm onwards and not earlier.*



### PILGRIMAGE DETAILS

TOUR CODE	PV25118
STARTS	Wednesday, 17 Sept 2025
FINISHES	Sunday, 28 Sept 2025
LAND ONLY	AUD \$6990 (Twin Share) *
SINGLE ROOM	AUD \$1750 Supplement
PREPAID TIPS	AUD \$180 Per Person

*\* Costs have been based on prices as at April 2025 and must remain subject to possible change in the event of significant exchange rate variations, airfare or tax increases or minimum group size factors (20) beyond Harvest's control. Refer to Harvest Booking Terms & Conditions for more details.*

### INCLUDED

**ACCOMMODATION & MEALS:** Based on reputable local 3-4 star superior hotels or quality religious houses as applicable • Meals as specified in Itinerary

**TOURING & TRANSPORTATION:** Deluxe Air Conditioned Coach touring • Professional Local Guides • Sightseeing and Entrance Fees

**OTHER:** Fully Escorted by Priest Chaplain • Porterage at hotels (where available) • Harvest Backpack, Pilgrim Journal and Travel Wallet

### NOT INCLUDED

International Airfares • Other meals not listed • Passport and Visa Costs (if applicable) • Items of a personal nature including phone calls, laundry, beverages, etc. • Travel insurance • Prepaid Tipping



### BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

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