

The Holy Fire and Pascha in Jerusalem

Holy Week and the Resurrection in the city where it happened, 2027

PASCHA Sunday 2 May 2027	HOLY FIRE Saturday 1 May 2027	TWO PROGRAMMES 10 days or 6 days	FROM \$2,438 USD
--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------

Once a year the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is sealed, the lamps are put out, and the Orthodox world waits in the dark. What follows on Holy Saturday in Jerusalem is the oldest continuously recorded Paschal observance in Christendom, and there is no substitute for standing inside it.

Mystakidis Tours has been bringing Orthodox pilgrims to the Holy Land from Athens since 1959. For 2027 we are operating our largest Paschal programme to date, built for parishes and for individual pilgrims from the United States and Canada, with a single, unhurried base in Jerusalem for the whole of Holy Week.

About access to the Holy Fire ceremony, read this before you book

Entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Holy Saturday is controlled by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem together with the Israeli police, who set the numbers admitted and operate checkpoints throughout the Christian Quarter. In recent years those numbers have been reduced substantially.

Mystakidis Tours applies to the Patriarchate on behalf of every pilgrim on this programme. No tour operator anywhere can guarantee entry, and we will not pretend otherwise. What we do guarantee is this: your application is made, you are led by staff who have worked this day in Jerusalem for decades, you are positioned as early as the police lines allow, and if the church itself is closed to our group we have secured fallback positions in the Christian Quarter where the Holy Fire is brought out and shared. Every pilgrim receives the Paschal candle and returns with the flame.

CHOOSE YOUR PROGRAMME

FLAGSHIP · FULL HOLY WEEK

The Whole Week

Saturday 24 April to Monday 3 May 2027 · 10 days, 9 nights

\$3,438

per person, twin share, land programme

- Lazarus Saturday at Bethany and the Palm Sunday procession from Bethphage
- Every service of Holy Week, from the Bridegroom to the Lamentations
- Bethlehem, Mar Saba, the Jordan River and the Mount of Olives on the quieter days
- Holy Fire, the Paschal Liturgy, and the Agape Vespers of Bright Sunday
- Single supplement \$1,138

SHORTER · THE GREAT DAYS

Holy Week Essentials

Wednesday 28 April to Monday 3 May 2027 · 6 days, 5 nights

\$2,438

per person, twin share, land programme

- Arrives Holy Wednesday, in time for the Holy Unction
- The Washing of the Feet, the Twelve Gospels, the Way of the Cross, the Lamentations
- Holy Fire on Holy Saturday and the Paschal Liturgy
- For pilgrims with limited leave, or a first pilgrimage
- Single supplement \$638

International flights are not included. Pilgrims arrange their own flights into Tel Aviv (TLV) and meet the group at the hotel; we send the arrival window to book against, and we are glad to help with flight options on request. Both programmes share the same Jerusalem hotel, the same guides and the same departure day.

DAY BY DAY · THE WHOLE WEEK, 24 APRIL TO 3 MAY 2027

DAY	DATE	WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE THERE FOR
1	Sat 24 Apr	Lazarus Saturday Arrival at Ben Gurion and transfer to Jerusalem. For those who land in good time, the Divine Liturgy at Bethany, at the tomb of Lazarus, where the week begins as the Gospel begins it. Welcome dinner at the hotel and an orientation from your guide covering the week ahead, the crowds, and the security arrangements you should expect.
2	Sun 25 Apr	Palm Sunday

DAY	DATE	WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE THERE FOR
		Morning Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the afternoon, the great procession from Bethphage on the Mount of Olives down through the Kidron and into the Old City, thousands of pilgrims carrying palm and olive branches. This is the most joyful afternoon of the week and the one photograph every pilgrim takes home.
3	Mon 26 Apr	<i>Holy Monday</i> Bethlehem. The Church of the Nativity, the Grotto, the Cave of Saint Jerome and the Shepherds' Field at Beit Sahour. Return to Jerusalem for the service of the Bridegroom in the evening.
4	Tue 27 Apr	<i>Holy Tuesday</i> The Judean desert. The Monastery of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified at Mar Saba, then Jericho, the Mount of Temptation and the Jordan River at Qasr al Yahud, where pilgrims renew their baptismal vows. Bridegroom service in the evening. <i>Please note that Mar Saba is closed to women by an ancient rule of the monastery; women of the group are received at the Women's Tower, from which the monastery is visible.</i>
5	Wed 28 Apr	<i>Holy Wednesday</i> The Mount of Olives: the Ascension, the Pater Noster, Dominus Flevit, the Russian convent of Saint Mary Magdalene and the Garden of Gethsemane with the tomb of the Theotokos. The Sacrament of Holy Unction in the afternoon. ESSENTIALS ARRIVE
6	Thu 29 Apr	<i>Holy Thursday</i> The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil in the morning. At midday, the Washing of the Feet performed by the Patriarch in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the most attended ceremonies of the week. In the evening, the Service of the Twelve Gospels and the bringing out of the Crucifix.
7	Fri 30 Apr	<i>Holy Friday</i> The Royal Hours at dawn. The Way of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, station by station, ending at Golgotha. In the afternoon the Deposition from the Cross, and in the evening the Eptaphios and the Lamentations sung around the Tomb itself. A long day, and the one pilgrims remember longest.
8	Sat 1 May	<i>Holy Saturday · The Holy Fire</i> A very early start. We move into the Christian Quarter before the police lines close and take our positions. The church is sealed, the lamps are extinguished, and the Patriarch enters the Tomb alone. The Fire is received and passes hand to hand out

DAY	DATE	WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE THERE FOR
		through the Old City. In the evening, the Liturgy of Saint Basil. <i>Please read the note on access and on physical demands before booking this programme.</i>
9	Sun 2 May	PASCHA The Resurrection service. Later in the morning, the Agape Vespers at the Holy Sepulchre, where the Paschal Gospel is proclaimed in many languages under the Patriarch. Festive Paschal meal together in the afternoon, lamb on the table, and the rest of the day free.
10	Mon 3 May	Bright Monday A final morning in the Old City for those with later flights, then transfer to Ben Gurion and the journey home. Pilgrims who wish to extend in Jerusalem, Galilee or Athens should tell us at the time of booking.

Holy Week services in Jerusalem are set by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and their times are published only in the weeks beforehand. The order of days above will not change. The hour of any individual service may, and your guide will confirm each evening for the day following. Bethany, Bethlehem and Jericho lie in the West Bank; travel there is by arrangement with our Palestinian partners and is subject to conditions on the day.

Holy Week Essentials, 28 April to 3 May 2027

The shorter programme joins on the afternoon of Holy Wednesday and follows days 5 to 10 above, sharing the same hotels, guides, coaches and departure day. It carries the Holy Unction, the Washing of the Feet, the Twelve Gospels, the Way of the Cross, the Lamentations, the Holy Fire and Pascha. It does not include Palm Sunday, Bethlehem, Mar Saba or the Jordan River.

WHAT IS INCLUDED, AND WHAT IS NOT

Included in the land programme

- Nine nights (or five on the Essentials) in a four star hotel in Jerusalem, twin share, on half board, breakfast and dinner daily
- All transfers between Ben Gurion airport and the hotel on the group arrival and departure days
- Private coach throughout, with a licensed Orthodox guide who remains with the group all week

Not included

- International airfare. Pilgrims arrange their own flights into Tel Aviv; we help with options on request
- Travel insurance, which is a condition of booking on this programme and is not optional
- Lunches, and drinks at any meal
- Gratuities to the guide, driver and hotel staff, budget approximately \$110 per pilgrim for the

- All entrance fees to the sites named in the itinerary
 - The Paschal candle of the pilgrim, and the lantern in which the Holy Fire is carried home
 - Application to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate for a place at the Holy Fire ceremony, made for every pilgrim on the programme
 - Escorted attendance at every service in the itinerary, with a printed order of the week
 - The Paschal meal on Sunday 2 May
 - A Mystakidis representative reachable in Jerusalem twenty four hours a day for the duration
- full week
 - The single room supplement, \$1,138 on the full programme and \$638 on the Essentials
 - Any visa or electronic travel authorisation required for entry to Israel, and the cost of obtaining it
 - Personal expenses, laundry, and anything not named above

HOW YOU PAY

STEP ONE	STEP TWO	STEP THREE	THEN
\$400	\$1,000	Balance	Documents
Per person. Holds your place; we send a secure payment link once your request is confirmed.	Per person, due Friday 16 October 2026, when the room block is confirmed.	Due Friday 22 January 2027, ninety days before departure.	Final travel pack, room list and service times issued Friday 9 April 2027.

Payment is by credit or debit card at registration, and thereafter by card, cheque or bank transfer. A parish that prefers to collect from its own pilgrims and remit in one payment may do so by arrangement, provided the individual registrations are completed online so that we hold each pilgrim's details directly.

If you have to cancel

WHEN WE RECEIVE YOUR CANCELLATION IN WRITING

WHAT IS RETAINED

On or before Friday 16 October 2026	The \$400 deposit only
17 October 2026 to 22 January 2027	\$1,400 per person
23 January to 26 February 2027	Fifty per cent of the total price
27 February to 26 March 2027	Seventy five per cent of the total price
From 27 March 2027, and for any pilgrim who does not travel	One hundred per cent

Holy Week is the single most heavily contracted week of the year in Jerusalem. Our suppliers take our money early and do not return it, which is why this scale is firmer than on our ordinary departures. Travel insurance covering cancellation is required of every pilgrim on this programme, and we will ask to see it. Group air, once ticketed, is governed by the airline's own conditions and is generally not refundable.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE, PLEASE READ THIS HONESTLY

This pilgrimage is physically demanding

Holy Saturday means rising before dawn, standing for many hours, moving through police checkpoints and dense crowds, and walking on stone and steps with no vehicle access. Holy Friday is close behind it. The Old City is not level and is not adapted. Pilgrims who cannot stand for three hours, who use a walking frame or a wheelchair, or who have a heart or respiratory condition should speak to us before registering so that we can tell you plainly which days will and will not be possible, and arrange an alternative programme for those days. We would far rather have that conversation in September than in Jerusalem.

Safety and the current situation

At the time of writing the United States Department of State places Israel and the West Bank at Level 3, Reconsider Travel, and Gaza at Level 4. The situation changes. We monitor it daily with our people on the ground, we will tell you what we are seeing rather than what is comfortable, and if we

Papers

A passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of return is required. Citizens of the United States and Canada do not need a visa for Israel but do need to obtain an electronic travel authorisation before departure; we will send the current instructions and the link with your confirmation,

judge that the programme cannot be operated safely we will say so and refund what our suppliers release to us. Every pilgrim should register with their government's traveller programme before departure.

and we will chase any pilgrim who has not completed it. Please send us a clear scan of the photograph page within fourteen days of registering, as the room list and the Patriarchate application are both built from it.

Mystakidis Tours

Family owned in Athens since 1959. Licensed and bonded, and operating pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Greece, Constantinople, Egypt and Sinai for parishes and pilgrims across Europe and North America.

To register, or to speak to someone

Telephone +1 (646) 475-7994 · Email sales@mystakidistours.com

Register online at mystakidistours.com/pascha2027

Prices are per person in United States dollars and are held until Friday 16 October 2026. Prices are based on a minimum of twenty pilgrims travelling on the programme and on tariffs and exchange rates current at the date of issue. This document is an invitation to register and is not itself a contract; the contract between pilgrim and operator is formed on our written confirmation, and our full booking conditions are provided at that point and are available on request beforehand.

Issued 26 July 2026. Orthodox Pascha 2027 falls on Sunday 2 May.