

ST MARK'S PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

At the beginning of March a group led by David Shreeve spent a week in the Holy Land. As we enter Holy Week, here are a few pictures and some personal thoughts.



In Jerusalem, we were able to start our journey from the Mount of Olives with its view across the Kidron valley to the Temple area and the walls of the city, where Jesus would have come on Palm Sunday and each day as he came and went from Bethany....



we walked on down through Gethsemane with 2000 year old Olive Trees that could in the night time peace of the garden have witnessed Jesus' agony and acceptance of his Father's will - there he was crushed like the olives would be in a press to bring us the oil of forgiveness and healing...

then to the site of the High Priest's house with its cave dungeons, where Peter denied even knowing Jesus, and later in Galilee found forgiveness and a new commission as he met the risen Jesus....

along the narrow, chaotic and noisy streets of old Jerusalem, through which Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha....



finally to an empty tomb in a quiet garden where there was peace to reflect on the presence of the risen Jesus.

This Holy Week, I will reflect differently on

- The historical reality of the events recorded in the Gospels
- That Jesus was crucified by an occupying power at a time of political unrest
- The contrast between our comfortable hotels and freedom to travel with the daily struggle of the ordinary people of Palestine for basic needs, and the restrictions on their lives.
- The peace and reconciliation which we can experience in our lives through God's gift of new life and the desperate need for that peace, justice and reconciliation in a deeply conflicted region