



Above, mission participants and University of Rochester students traverse a hill at excavations at Yodefata in Galilee Aug. 5.

where Israel Harel offers us cold water and a warm meeting room. Four hundred families — including 25 U.S. families — live here on land the government owns. Here a former Israeli general lives beside a poor Ethiopian family. Part of the settlement's mission has been to resettle almost 200 Ethiopian Jewish families. Outside, Ethiopian children clamor for attention from Sister Sobala, who dances with them, and photographers.

It is their duty to settle the land, Harel says, noting the Geneva Accords granted the right to use land that had been used by the army. He is concerned that should the Israelis accede 13.1% of the land to the Palestinians, this site would be given over, and he would have to leave.



Father Joseph Brennan explains some Old Testament stories concerning Bethlehem outside the Church of the Nativity Aug. 3.

**AUG. 4. DAY 5:** Today we drive down to Masada, past Bedouin camp sites. We take a cable car to reach the top of this historic site where in the year 73 nearly 1,000 Zealots committed suicide rather than become enslaved by the Romans. Jackhammers are at work here too, rebuilding the fortress and structures first built by Herod the Great.

"No hat, no Masada," our guide had told us, and now it makes sense. This 110-degree-plus heat is something we won't feel anywhere else, Larry Fine says.

When we reach remains of an ancient synagogue, Rabbi Katz offers a prayer "that nobody is in a position again to offer their own life rather than be enslaved. We pray our work and mission this year will move us to enrich the lives of others, so they do not feel the oppression of our ancestors here. As we go on with our mission, let us dedicate ourselves to life itself and not death."

That indeed has become the theme of Masada, where everyone marvels, however — while wiping away the ever-flowing sweat — at those zealots who fled up to this mound, protected until the Romans built a ramp that would break their stronghold.

We move on to the Ein Gedi Spa, where experienced pilgrims urge the others to enjoy swimming in the Dead Sea, describing it as the experience of a lifetime. The sand is hot, the water is warm and it lifts us up as we get in. Salt forms on the railing like ice on the jetties along Lake Ontario. On the return from the beach, Bishop Clark and several others stop for a mud bath, slinging mud over each other and just getting plain silly.

The bishop later says "it just felt that it would be a fun thing to do, in good spirit. ... True, I am the bishop. I also am a human being and somebody who came to learn here and share experiences." Having so many Catholics along, he said, increased his enjoyment.

"They are congregants, but also friends," he says. Later Rabbi Katz notes the respect everyone on the trip shows toward the bishop.

"He is private, reflective person," the rabbi says. "I saw a couple of things he did — what a magnificent pastor, how he reached out to a given individual here and there and was their pastor for the moment. Brilliant."

**AUG. 5. DAY 6:** As part of our visit to Rehovot, a sister city of Rochester's, we go to the Ayalon Institute. An enthusiastic young Israeli takes us on a tour of this largest munitions factory of the secret Israel Military Industry, built between the end of World War II and Israel's independence.

From this visit surfaces the friction between Christians' pacifist commitment and Jews' pride in the War of Independence. Larry Fine says later he noticed people asking, "Why are you celebrating this?"

"I hadn't felt how others would look at it," he admits. "I am still grappling with how to grapple with it."

"Ayalon brought out the dichotomy of Israel," Katz says later. "I am in the peace community back home. How can we celebrate the joy that (Jews here) made bullets? Well, I am also a Jew and I know the history ... That Israel couldn't get arms, the British were blocking them ... and that when the British left there was going to be a war ... It was an ingenious creation."

"Understand that when you want to come to Israel, you are coming to the biblical roots of your religious place," he says, but also understand that had Israel existed in the 1930s, "we wouldn't have lost 6 million Jews" in the Holocaust. More than ever, we are seeing how interconnected the Jews see their faith with their past, with their success in establishing Israel, and their independence for the first time in 2,000 years.

The day continues at Nazareth where the Rev. Dwight Cook captivates them as he reads at the Basilica of the Annunciation from passages from Matthew and John.

These church visits, Neil Jaschik remarks, are giving



Joan Pearson, a Catholic participant in the pilgrimage, prays at Tabgha, at the Sea of Galilee, Aug. 6. Tabgha is one place where Jesus multiplied the fish and the loaves.

him "more a sense of what inspires others. I'm seeing that these objects which have no relations to my tradition or background do to others. "The last time I was more a tourist.... (On this trip) I'm not watching strangers."

Next we stop at Yodefata, an archaeological dig of the University of Rochester. Several UR students there help explain the site. William Green, UR dean of undergraduate studies and educational director of the dig, explains the excavation is as close to Jesus' time as

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