



## Cruise Opportunity for Spiritual Discovery

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They that go down to the sea in ships shall see the works of the Lord, we're told in Psalm 107.

This coming fall, clergy and laity of the Baltimore-Washington Conference will be able to experience some of God's more remarkable works and wonders on a cruise sponsored by Bishop John Schol

The 11-day cruise will trace the fourth missionary journey of the apostle Paul to the city of Paul's destiny – Rome.

The study cruise, Nov. 12-25, will explore the places, events, theology and implications of Acts 27 and 28 with stops in the ancient and story-filled cities of Athens, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Malta, Sicily and Corinth.

While seeing the sights in these cities through the eyes of the Acts 2 church, people will gain new understandings of the biblical narrative. But even more importantly, the cruise opens up an opportunity for pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage, a spiritual discipline that goes back thousands of years, involves setting off on a journey in which the traveling is often more important than the destination.

But pilgrimages usually have a destination in mind. After Jerusalem and the Holy Lands, Rome is the most popular Christian pilgrimage site.

Journeying with a wide-open soul, pilgrims leave the cares of everyday living at home to open themselves to the thoughts and experiences that God provides.

In medieval times, going on a pilgrimage could open the doors of heaven. For today's disciples, such experiences allow a chance for the sacred to stir within our lives in unexpected ways.

Medieval pilgrims wore scallop shells as a badge to alert those whom they encountered that they were traveling outside the traditional map, on a more divine path. Traveling with others, in community, shaped the road as they moved, allowing the spirit to be their compass.

To pilgrims, horizons matter.

The bishop's cruise brims with possibility for spiritual transformation and adventure.

The itinerary includes the renowned Acropolis and Parthenon in Athens, temples, and palaces, and views of Mt. Etna from Syracuse, once known as the most beautiful of all cities. A tour of Vatican will reveal artistic masterpieces that rival any throughout history, including Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel and Pieta. A tour through ancient Rome will spotlight the Circus Maximus, the Arch of Titus and many other sites; and following a sail to the rock coast of Naples, Pompeii, the city that was buried for more than 1,500 years in the volcanic dust of Mt. Etna, will be seen uncovered.

In addition, throughout it all, the life and faith of Paul, one of the architects of the Christian faith, will be examined in the sites, sounds and sharing of stories.

The tour is sponsored by Educational Opportunities Tours. The inclusive cost is between \$2,298 and 4,148, depending upon the ship cabin that is chosen.

While it is possible to be a tourist on this trip, tourists often get caught up in the anxiety of schedules and of finding the new and curious. Traveling as a pilgrim is different.

A pilgrimage insists that we approach the things we see and experience with wonder, awe and faith. It allows you to discover the life you think you ought to be living and allows new doors to open.

At some point, we all should go down to the sea in ships to see the works of the Lord. For in the end, it's always better to travel well, than to arrive. Or, as coach and philosopher Yogi Berra said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

For more information on Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey Cruise into History, visit [www.eo.travelwithus.com](http://www.eo.travelwithus.com) or contact Olivia Gross at [ogross@bwcumc.org](mailto:ogross@bwcumc.org) or 410-309-3430. Remember to mention Melissa Lauber when you call. If enough people sign up in her name, she will get a free trip.