



Guest Speaker:  
**THE VENERABLE MIKE BESSON**  
Archdeacon, Diocese of West Texas

# JOURNEYS OF PAUL

## *Cruise*

9 Nights Aboard the Odyssey of the Seas • Round Trip from Civitavecchia, Italy

**OCTOBER 11 - 22, 2025**





## THE VENERABLE MIKE BESSON

Mike has served as Archdeacon for 5-years and arrived in the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas after serving as a parish priest in the Diocese of Texas; he has been ordained since 2004. Mike has been married to his wife Ellen for 32 years and they have an adopted son, Lorenzo, who is 16 years old. They live in San Antonio. In 2013, Mike traveled to the Holy Land, which he counts as a life changing experience. Seeing the scriptures come to life and visiting places he had previously only read about enabled him to understand the Bible in an entirely different way. Mike looks forward to traveling to the places associated with the Apostle Paul to experience the beauty of the area, and to see the scriptures come to life again!



**OCTOBER 9 - 12, 2025 | FOR \$1,298\***

### OCTOBER 9 - DEPART THE USA

Your pilgrimage begins as you depart the USA on your international overnight flight.

### OCTOBER 10 - ARRIVE IN ROME

Today, you will arrive in Rome, Italy, where you will be met by our representative and travel along the Appian Way. Step beneath the surface into the Catacombs of Callixtus, built along the Appian Way. Here, sixteen popes from the 2nd through 4th centuries were interred, though they have been removed to various churches over the centuries. Check into your hotel this evening and enjoy your dinner and rest.

### OCTOBER 11 - VATICAN CITY & CHRISTIAN ROME

Visit the Vatican and explore its museum. Marvel at the beauty of St. Peter's Basilica and stand in awe of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Next, proceed to the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. The present structure stands over the place where Constantine built the first church over Saint Paul's grave. The church features a portrait of every pope who has served the church. Climb the graceful Spanish Steps and stop at the famous Trevi Fountain before returning to your hotel this evening.

### OCTOBER 12 - ANCIENT ROME

Discover the history woven throughout Rome with visits to the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Forum, Circus Maximus, the Arch of Titus, the Baths of Caracalla and the Arch of Constantine today. After touring, you will be transferred to the Port of Civitavecchia to board the Odyssey of the Seas.

**Guests taking an extension may be on a different flight than their group and/or traveling companion.**

# ITINERARY

### October 11 – DEPART THE USA

Your journey begins as you depart the USA on your international overnight flight.

### October 12 – ARRIVE IN ROME

You will arrive in Rome, where you will be met by our representative and transferred to the Port of Civitavecchia to board the Odyssey of the Seas.

*\*Guests not purchasing air through ETS will have to purchase transfers to be included in group transfer.*

### October 13 – NAPLES (POMPEII)

Journey inland to ancient Pompeii, dating almost to the time of Paul, where you can see the spectacular ruins that were covered by ash from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.

### October 14 – AT SEA

### October 15 – SANTORINI

Arrive in Santorini today, one of the most beautiful of the Greek islands, where picturesque, whitewashed villages topped with brilliant blue domes stand in stark contrast to the sheer drop cliffs overlooking the Aegean Sea. The island perches on the edges of a volcano whose eruption 3,500 years ago is thought to have led to the collapse of the Minoan civilization. Explore the island on your own or join one of the optional excursions available for purchase onboard.

*Shore excursions today can be booked directly through Royal Caribbean and are not included.*

### October 16 – ATHENS & CORINTH, GREECE

Discover the rich architectural splendor of the ancient city of Athens as you explore the world-renowned Acropolis, the Propylaea, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheum. Stand on Mars Hill as the Apostle Paul did when he proclaimed, "I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Also, view the House of Parliament, the Presidential Palace, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This afternoon, tour the city of Corinth, where the Apostle Paul met fellow tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla and received a vision from the Lord saying, "I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." As Paul spoke, Crispus (chief ruler of the synagogue) and many others believed and were baptized, establishing the church at Corinth to whom Paul later wrote his two epistles. Discover the archaeological museum, marketplace, and temples. As you walk among the ruins, stand on the Bema, where the Apostle Paul stood before Gallio to face charges brought against him by the Jews.

### October 17 – EPHEBUS (KUSADASI), TURKIYE

Ephesus is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation and was once a bustling port town with wide, colonnade-bordered streets and a population of 250,000. Spectacular excavations have revealed much of the glory of ancient Ephesus, including the huge agora and library, but much has been lost. The ancient world once declared the Temple of Artemis to be one of the Seven Wonders of the World, but today, only a single column remains to mark its site. View the terrace houses, also known as "the houses of the rich," which give an accurate impression of the ancient lifestyle. Explore the Museum of Ephesus for an up-close look at ancient artifacts. You will have time to explore on your own and retrace some of the footsteps of Paul.

### October 18 – ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Enjoy the day on your own exploring Istanbul. Stroll the Grand Bazaar with 4000 individual shops, taste the world-famous baklava, or hop on board the Tunel, the second-oldest underground urban train in the world.

*Shore excursions today can be booked directly through Royal Caribbean and are not included.*

### October 19 – ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The bejeweled capital of Istanbul sits between two continents and is home to 450 mosques. We will walk through the Hippodrome Square and then you will visit the famous Blue Mosque (1616) with its six minarets and sparkling interior. Walk through St. Sophia (Hagia Sophia), which was the largest church in Christendom for 1000 years, built by Justinian (532-537 AD). The church has 107 columns, fossil-embedded, white marble floors, and beautiful glass mosaics. Also worth visiting is one of the best-preserved underground cisterns, also built by Justinian in 532 AD.

### October 20 – AT SEA

### October 21 – AT SEA

### October 22 – ROME (CIVITAVECCHIA), ITALY

Disembark the Odyssey of the Seas and transfer to the airport. Return home with a new understanding of the Bible.



## ALL-INCLUSIVE CRUISE PRICING\*

4V - INTERIOR STATEROOM	\$4,498*
2N - OCEAN VIEW STATEROOM	\$4,998*
2D - BALCONY STATEROOM	\$5,498*

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Admin. Fees • Port Charges • Cruise Taxes



### OCTOBER 22 – FLY TO ISTANBUL

Fly from Rome to Istanbul and check into your hotel for dinner and your overnight stay.

### OCTOBER 23 – ISTANBUL

Tour the Golden Horn by visiting the Greek Patriarchate and the Church of St. George there. Continue driving along the 1600 years old walls of Constantinople, which are in amazing condition with the contributions by Unesco. Today, you will also have the chance to catch the glimpse of the city from the Bosphorus on our private boat and sniff the beautiful smell of the spices in the Spice Market in the afternoon. Fly to the Cappadocia area this evening for dinner and your overnight stay.

### OCTOBER 24 – CAPPADOCIA

Drive to Cappadocia and visit the Zelve Valley. As you drive through Cappadocia, enjoy some free time at various photo stops in this magnificent landscape full of fairy chimneys. Visit the Goreme Open-Air Museum before returning to your hotel.

### OCTOBER 25 – CAPPADOCIA/ISTANBUL

You can take an optional hot air balloon ride over Cappadocia this morning for an additional fee. Fly this afternoon to Istanbul. Enjoy a cruise on the Bosphorus River cruise. Then, check into your hotel for dinner and your overnight stay.

### OCTOBER 26 – RETURN TO THE USA

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the USA.

**OPTIONAL HOT AIR BALLOON IS APPROXIMATELY \$250 PER PERSON.**



### OCTOBER 22 – FLY TO CAIRO

Disembark the Odyssey of the Seas in Civitavecchia and transfer to Rome Airport. Fly to Cairo, and upon arrival, you will be met by your tour guide and transferred to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

### OCTOBER 23 – MEMPHIS, SAQQARA, THE GREAT PYRAMIDS & THE SPHINX

Tour the rural region of traditional Egyptian farming and stop at an old, corn watermill. Travel as Abraham did to Memphis (Biblical Noph) and on to Saqqara, where you will see the Step Pyramid, the world's oldest stone structure. Visit the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx.

### OCTOBER 24 – CAIRO

This morning, visit the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities to view the unique collection of Pharaonic art and the renowned treasures of King Tutankhamun. Tour the Old City and see the Citadel of Saladin, built in 1183 AD, and view the Alabaster Mosque of Muhammad Ali. In Old Cairo, visit the Abu Serge Church, which was built over the traditional site of the house where the Holy Family lived during their stay in Egypt. Prepare for your return flight home.

### OCTOBER 25 – RETURN TO THE USA

