

Trip Philosophy: In 1219, in the midst of the Fifth Crusade, St. Francis of Assisi crossed enemy lines to gain an audience with the Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Kamil, ostensibly to help bring an end to the violent conflict. While the substance of their conversation is unknown, it is clear that Francis engaged the Sultan peacefully and respectfully, in stark contrast to the prevailing Christian practice of defaming Islam and its prophet, thereby earning the Sultan's admiration. As Franciscans, we believe that Francis' encounter with the Sultan resulted in the two men coming away with a deeper appreciation for, and understanding of each other's beliefs and values. Sectarian conflicts in our own time are painful reminders that we too are called to enter into dialogue with Muslims so as to evoke Francis' revolutionary idea to live in harmony with our Muslim brothers and sisters, and indeed with people of all faiths. Our cultural and religious awareness trip to Turkey will expose participants to the Islamic faith and practice in both its historical and contemporary expressions, from the Ottoman Empire to modern Turkish society. Our trip will also include a look at our early Christianity roots in Turkey, giving us a chance to walk in the footsteps of the apostles Paul and John, and gain an understanding of the struggles and growth of the early Church and the Byzantine Empire.

Development of Social and Cultural Awareness: In order to nurture an appreciation of the different cultural norms and the rich history of Islam in Turkey, participants will visit and take part in the following cultural experiences:

- Take tours of: Topkapı Palace, home of the sultan of the Ottoman Empire; Ayasofya Meydanı (Hagia Sophia) the Roman Basilica built in 360 A.D.; the Basilica Cisterns built in the 6th century during the reign of Emperor Justinian; Sultanahmet Camii or Blue Mosque as it popularly known; the Chora Church which houses some of the most beautiful and tender mosaics depicting biblical stories from the apocryphal Gospels; Galata Tower; Urgup- Goreme Open Air Museum; and Derinkuyu Underground City.
- See the splendor of the Suleymaniye Mosque and Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art along with other sites of religious and historical interest.
- Take a boat tour up the Bosphorus and see the beauty of Istanbul and the many historical landmarks that make up the rich history of this city.
- Attend several family dinners and a village breakfast where you will enjoy home-cooked food and warm hospitality of the Turkish people.
- Spend time sipping tea and bargaining for gifts in the Grand Bazaar and Egyptian Market (also known as the Spice Market).

Community Engagement through the Ministry of Presence: The Franciscan tradition offers some insightful wisdom on the importance of making the ministry presence part of our travel experience. An old legend states that St. Francis once said that his brother friars should, "preach the Gospel always and when necessary, use words." A ministry of presence is also about living the gospel as reflected in our actions and deeds; spreading the gospel message by giving to others our attention and time, two commodities that are important parts of any ministry experience. Our trip to Turkey is based on the principle that when we enter another culture, it is more important for the people to see us, get to know us, and to be known by us; this is the essence of a ministry of presence. Rather than coming with the intention of implementing programs or ministering to the temporal needs of the people in our host country, participants will engage in a ministry of presence, spending time with, and listening to our hosts as learners and ambassadors of our schools, faith traditions, and country.

Grow in your understanding of Islam: This cultural awareness trip is designed to challenge participants to develop a lived experience, and advanced understanding in the following areas:

- The fundamental beliefs of Islam and how it is practiced in modern Turkey.
- The similarities and differences between Islamic and Christian beliefs and practices.

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- The role and importance of Jesus and his mother Mary in Islam.
- The significance, rights and roles of women in Ottoman and modern Turkish culture and society.
- An appreciation of how Christian and Muslim cultures have influenced and shaped one other.
- The differences between the Sunni and Shia Islam.
- Insight into the inner mystical dimension of Islam known as Sufism.
- To understand the goals of the inter-religious dialogue as it is being done by the Franciscan Friars in Turkey.
- See how Turkish Muslims view the West, and their perceptions of sectarian violence in the world today.

Walk in the footsteps of the Apostles Paul and John, and Early Christians: No journey to Turkey would be complete without a pilgrimage to some of the sites where the early church grew and flourished for more than 1000 years. We will visit the following places:

- Tour the ruined city of Ephesus and learn about Paul's time there and the Ephesian Church he founded.
- See the ruins of the basilicas of St. John and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and learn about what local tradition has to say about them.
- Visit the House of Mary, the site believed by Christians and Muslims to be the place where Mary lived out her last years on earth.

Interfaith Advocacy: An important goal of our Cultural Awareness trip to Turkey is to promote dialogue with individuals and groups who are committed to peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims. Being opened to dialogue makes us more active in developing positive relationships. During our visit to Turkey we will engage in interfaith dialogue so as to be able to advocate for a greater understanding of Islam and Muslim peoples at home. We will visit the following organization to learn more about their efforts in this area:

- Hear from the Franciscan Friars at Santa Maria Daperis Church in the Beyoğlu area of Istanbul about their efforts to maintain religious dialogue. The Franciscan friars serve the Catholic population of Istanbul as well as engage in interfaith dialogue with Muslim clerics, and other Christian denominations who minister in the city.
- Meeting with Islamic Scholars at Bosphorus University (Bogazici) to learn about the similarities and differences between Christian and Muslim Faiths.
- Visit the Shrine of Jalaluddin Rumi and the Mevlana Museum and learn about the ascetic life of Turkish Sufis. Attend a Sufi Sama, in which worshippers whirl to achieve mystical union with the Divine.
- Visit Gazeteciler Ve Yazaklar Vakfı (The Journalist and Writers Foundation) and hear ways in which ordinary Muslims are working to foster greater understanding of their faith and beliefs. Visit Kimse Yokmu, an organization dedicated to relieving the suffering of the poor in earthquake ravaged areas of the world and how faith inspires them to risk their lives to save others.
- Participants will be given various readings and have discussions and with Fr. Michael Calabria, OFM, PhD., director of the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies at St. Bonaventure University and designated leader of future student trips to Turkey. Fr. Michael will be providing historical background and context for many of the tours we will undertake.

Commitment to Live Harmoniously with People of All Faiths: We believe it is our duty as people who seek to engage with other faiths to assume the responsibility to provide an alternative narrative to that of religious extremists. We believe God calls us to a deeper witness that recognizes and affirms God's spirit in other faith traditions, and to

implant these values in a world with competing narratives. As leaders we are to be prophetic, driven by a commitment to live out the commands to love God and our neighbor. We use our power as leaders in our faith traditions, schools, parishes, and everyday lives to call for justice and secure greater understanding and love for Muslim people and the faith of Islam. In that spirit, participants on this cultural and religious awareness trip to Turkey must be willing to commit themselves to the above stated values and be ready to promote understanding and tolerance of Islam in American society.

Scheduling and Logistics, Pre-trip Preparations: All transportation, tours, flights within Turkey, and meals will be arranged for by the trip leader, Br. Paul O’Keeffe in partnership with the Peace Islands Institute, a Turkish organization committed to peace building among diverse cultures and traditions. Every evening we will set aside time for reflection on our daily activities. All reading and preparatory documents will be sent to participants via email before the trip begins. Participants will receive hard copies of reading when they arrive in Turkey.

- All participants are required to obtain the necessary tourist visa which can be done on line at the following website: <https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/> (cost \$20, download and place with passport)

For more information on this or other trips offered from the Office of Missions and Evangelization please contact Br. Paul O’Keeffe at pokeeffe@thefranciscans.org

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USA	Istanbul	Istanbul	Istanbul	Ismir/Ephesus	Istanbul	Istanbul	Istanbul	USA		
Sun May 15	Monday May 16	Tuesday, May 17	Wed May 18	Thursday May 19	Monday May 20	Tuesday May 21	Wed May 22	Thursday May 23		
8:00 A.M.	Arrival/ Hotel Check in	Breakfast/ Orientation	Breakfast	Village Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		
9:00		Topkapı Palace Hagia Sophia	Visit -Chora Church -Galata Tower -Jewish Museum	Visit Ephesus	Flight to Sabiha Gökçen Airport Istanbul	Meeting with Islamic Scholars At Bosphorus University (Bogazici)	Visit GYV (Journalist and Writers Foundation)	Ataturk Airport		
10:00					Check in at Hotel					
11:00					Lunch					
12:00 Noon		Lunch at Ortaköy	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch Camlica Hill				
1:00 P.M.		Lunch	Boat Tour on the Bosphorus Museum of T & I Art	Ephesus Ruins	Mass	Visit: Grand Bazaar Spice Bazaar Turkish Bath (opt)	Visit Kimse Yokmu			
2:00		Underground Cistern/ Blue Mosque Suleymaniye Mosque							House of the Virgin Mary	Meeting with Franciscan Friars S. Maria Daperis
3:00			Flight to Ismir							
4:00				Dinner						
5:00		Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		Arrival in US	
6:00										
7:00		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Family Dinner	Dinner			
8:00		Free time/sleep	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection			Reflection
9:00			Free time/sleep	Free time/sleep	Free time/sleep	Free time/Sleep	Free time/Sleep			Free time/sleep
Departure in the PM for Istanbul	Istanbul	Istanbul	Istanbul/Ismir	Ismir	Istanbul	Istanbul	Istanbul			

Travel	Cultural Activity
Free Time	Community Engagement
Meals	Reflection