

# Itinerary of H.H. Pope Francis Bethlehem

Sunday, May 25, 2014

Jerusalem

## Annexation Wall/ Bethlehem Governorate

Total Length = 62km

Constructed	Under Construction	Projected
34%	20%	46%

(OCHA, 2014)

## Settlements / Bethlehem Governorate

There are 21 Israeli settlements accommodating nearly 105,000 Israeli settlers on Palestinian lands (ARJI, 2010)

## Closures / Bethlehem Governorate

23 closures, including 6 main checkpoints (OCHA, 2014)

## Aida Refugee Camp

Located between the towns of Bethlehem and Beit Jala on 0.71 km<sup>2</sup>. Established in 1950. The camp's original residents came from 17 villages in the Western Jerusalem and western Hebron areas. There are over 4,700 registered in the camp. (UNRWA).

15:20

## Phoenix Center

Greeting of children from the Refugee Camps

Founded in 2005 in order to empower the youth of Dheisheh Refugee Camp. The land was donated by the late president Yasser Arafat in one of the top hills of Bethlehem. The center serves hundreds of children and youth with cultural activities, folklore and sports. The Center also has a guest house. It is one of the many cultural centers developed by Palestinian refugees through the refugee camps in occupied Palestine and Diaspora.

## Dheisheh Refugee Camp

Located within the municipal boundaries of Bethlehem on 0.31km<sup>2</sup>. Established in 1949. The camp's original residents came from 45 villages in the Western Jerusalem and western Hebron areas. Like other West Bank camps, Dheisheh was established on land UNRWA leased from the government of Jordan. There are almost 13,000 registered in the camp. (UNRWA).

09:30

## The Presidential Palace:

Arrival Ceremony

10:00

Meeting the Palestinian Leadership

Built by order of President Yasser Arafat in order to receive visitors to Bethlehem. It was bombed and destroyed by Israel in 2001 and was later restored. The palace has received visitors such as US presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama, as well as Popes John Paul II and Benedict, UK PM Cameron as well as many other leaders from all over the world.

09:20

## The Helicopter Port (Heliport):

Arrival

Built by President Yasser Arafat in 1995. It was aimed at facilitating the arrival of VIP visitors to Bethlehem as well as the transportation of President Arafat himself, especially between his offices in Gaza City and Bethlehem. Located on a hill nearby Dheisheh Refugee Camp that President Arafat decided to divide in four sections: Heliport, Phoenix Centre, Palestine Al Ahliyya university and another section for a church, that is being used by the Lutheran Church (including a school and Dar Al-Kalima college), as well as a recreational area.

15:45

Farewell Ceremony

16:00

Departure

## Beit Jibrin

Located in the heart of Bethlehem on 0.02km<sup>2</sup>. Established in 1950. It is the smallest West Bank camp, covering 0.02 square kilometres. The camp's original residents came from the destroyed village of Beit Jibrin, on the western hills of Hebron. The camp is also often called Al-Azzeh camp, since more than 60 per cent of the camp's residents descend from the Azzeh family. There are over 1,000 registered refugees in the camp. (UNRWA)

11:00

## Manger Square / Nativity Church

Holy Mass in Manger Square

Lies in the center of Bethlehem on Manger Square. The oldest working Church in existence today. It was the first Church to be built by the Roman Emperor Constantine back in the fourth century A.D. over the Grotto where Mary gave birth to Jesus. Constantine and his mother Helena, built this church adorned with beautiful marble and mosaics. During 2002 it was besieged by Israeli Forces that shot against the church and burnt one of its lateral entrances. In June 2012, the Church of the Nativity and the "Route of the Pilgrims" (Star Street) were enlisted as the first World Heritage Site inscribed by the State of Palestine at UNESCO.

13:30

## Casa Nova

Lunch with Palestinian families

Opened in 1908 to serve pilgrims visiting Bethlehem, it is one of the most traditional guesthouses in Palestine, including their Jerusalem branch. It is ran by the Franciscan Order.

15:00

## Grotto of the Nativity

Private Visit

Inside the Church of the Nativity lies the Grotto of the Nativity, where there is a large fourteen pointed silver star marking the exact spot with the inscription: Hic de Virgin Maria Jesus Christus Natus Est – meaning, Here Jesus Christ was born the Virgin Mary.