

## Anthony Smith – Holy Land

It was a great privilege at the end of my second year to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with fellow students from Cranmer Hall. We experienced afresh Jesus' call to discipleship, as we traced his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. And we marvelled at the mystery of the incarnation, as we visited Nazareth and Bethlehem. The land into which Jesus was born was politically troubled, with the Jews living under Roman rule and under Herod the Great. And although we felt completely safe as Western tourists, it was sadly not hard to imagine what it must have been like to live in unsettled times in the first century.

We spent the first three nights in Tiberias, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The photo on the left was taken just after we had shared communion on the beach at Tabgha, which is traditionally associated with the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes. At the back left is Philip Plyming, Warden of Cranmer Hall, who led our pilgrimage. I am on the front row on the left.



From Tiberias we travelled down the Jordan Valley (in a coach with air conditioning!), walked along the Wadi Qelt (the ancient route from Jerusalem to Jericho), and visited Qumran, before arriving at Jerusalem, where we stayed for the remaining four nights. The Temple Mount is every bit as imposing as expected, and we were able to imagine what it would have meant for Jesus to set his face towards Jerusalem, knowing that he would face rejection by the Temple authorities and execution at the hands of the Romans. But the magnificent Church of the Holy Sepulchre was a reminder that not even death could overcome the Prince of Life.

