

# Father Steve's reflection: Living side by side

*The Western Wall had a great impact on several priests on our pilgrimage, as you'll see in this reflection from Father Steve Hook. - CG*



Bishop Denis J. Madden prepares to celerate the fractioning rite during the Liturgy of the Eucharist in a Mass for a pilgrimage of priests from Maryland inside the Tomb of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem Oct. 15. (Catholic Review photo | Christopher Gunty)

This entire pilgrimage was awe-inspiring, yet overwhelming. It is going to take me years to fully appreciate what I have experienced by my journey to the Holy Land and being able to walk where Jesus walked and pray where Jesus taught.

One of the highlights that comes to mind for me was actually the day we celebrated Mass at the Holy Sepulcher, then walked the Via Dolorosa through the streets of the Old City, which ended at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount with the view of the Dome of the Rock. It seemed to be the one place on earth where Christianity, Judaism and Islam converged, and at least while we were there, were living side by side.

As we approached the Western Wall, I was thinking to myself what it was that I wanted to pray for that day. The custom is to either write a prayer and place it in the wall or just touch the wall and voice your prayer in silence.



The Dome of the Rock overlooks Temple Mount and the Western Wall Plaza, one of the most sacred sites in the world for Judaism. (Catholic Review photo | Christopher Gunty)

I was thinking of so many things and people that I should include in my prayers but I

couldn't settle on any one person or request. So as I approached the wall, my mind was scattered in all directions. But as soon as my hands touched the wall, a prayer intention miraculously became clear: Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. It is a prayer that is mentioned throughout the Scriptures, which also say that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, which would be destroyed.

As I reflected upon this prayer throughout the rest of the trip, and even still today, I believe that is the, and ought to be, the ongoing and daily prayer of all peoples of faith. It is a prayer not only for the Jerusalem here on earth, but also a prayer of hope for all of us, as we await the coming of the new Jerusalem in the kingdom of God. **Father Stephen Hook** *Pastor, St. Augustine Parish, Williamsport, MD Oct. 30, 2010 See a related entry [here](#).*



Pilgrims approach the Western Wall, one of the most sacred sites in the world for Judaism. People of all faiths come from around the world to bring their prayers to this holy place. (Catholic Review photo | Christopher Guntz)