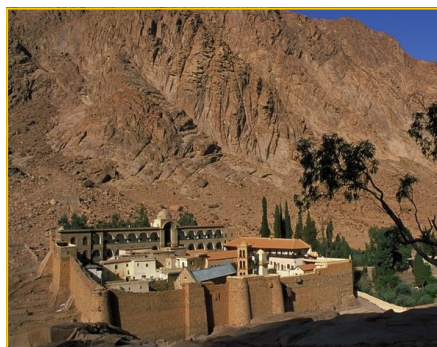


# *Called into the Desert:*

A pilgrimage visiting monasteries in Egypt

with AECA  
12th - 21st September 2011



A ten-day pilgrimage from Sinai desert via the Red Sea to Cairo

# Called into the Desert

## Monasteries in Egypt



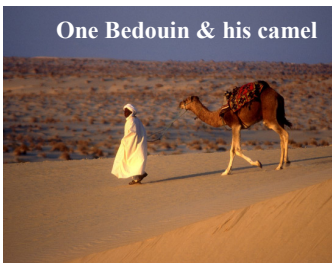
This tour offers an opportunity to connect with the ancient beginnings of our faith story, and to experience the exceptional quiet and very special qualities of the desert that have drawn so many over the millennia.

We fly direct from Gatwick to Sharm-el-Sheikh and after one night in this popular holiday destination, we set out to discover the rocky splendour of the other Sinai, centred upon St. Catherine's. Here, staying within the monastery grounds at the foot of Mount Sinai we spend two days at St Catherine's visiting the monastery with its 6th Century church built by the Emperor Justinian, the Burning Bush, the gallery of priceless icons, and finally climbing Mount Sinai and picnicing near the summit of

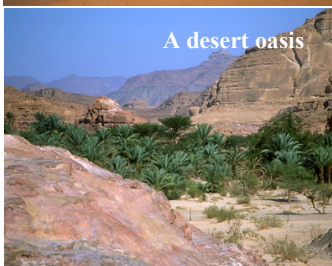
the God Trodden Mountain. On the Gulf of Suez we visit the early Christian monasteries of the Coptic saints Anthony and Paul, set in a remote and hostile landscape they still shelter communities of monks and their chapels are painted with intense wide eyed saints.

In Cairo, we venture off the beaten track into the ancient Coptic quarter to explore the roots of one of the oldest branches of the Christian church, experiencing a new life today, as well as seeing the wonders in the Egyptian museum and visiting the Pyramids. We also drive out into the western delta of the Nile to Wadi El Natrun where we visit the Monastery of St Macarius, from which many Coptic popes were selected.

### TOUR INFORMATION



One Bedouin & his camel



A desert oasis

The cost of the tour is £1,175 based on sharing a twin-bedded room. Some single rooms are available at a supplement of £245. The only extra to budget for is the insurance premium of £49 per person if required and a contribution to the group gratuity fund of £40 per person.

The tour takes you to remote parts of Egypt so please be aware that some of the hotels used in these areas are not up to the usual McCabe standard. However, be assured that they are appropriate for the tour and rich in charm. In particular we are delighted that in the Sinai you will stay at the St Catherine's Guesthouse. All rooms will have private facilities.

We have included breakfast and dinner daily in the price of the tour together with a comprehensive programme of sightseeing with guiding and entrance fees.

Flights are with British Airways from Gatwick to Sharm el Sheikh and from Cairo back to Heathrow. We have also included all airport taxes and the cost of an Egyptian visa.



Sunrise over the Sinai mountains

### TO MAKE A RESERVATION

To reserve your place on this tour please complete the enclosed booking form and send it, with a deposit of £100 per person plus the insurance premium of £49 (if required) to McCabe: (Please make cheques payable to McCabe Travel).

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Email: [a.petrine@mac.com](mailto:a.petrine@mac.com)

# Daily Programme

## Monday 12 September To the Sinai

We fly overnight from Gatwick to Sharm el Sheikh on British Airways BA2055 which departs at 2200 and arrives into Sharm at 0500.

## Tuesday Our first Bedouin Encounter



We leave Sharm and drive inland towards St. Catherine's stopping at the Bedouin encampment of Sheik Hamid,

before continuing to St. Catherine's Monastery, founded in 337AD, **where we stay for two nights at the guesthouse situated just outside the walls of the monastery.** We hope at some point to attend a service in the Monastery church.

## Wednesday Mount Sinai



After breakfast we climb the mountain and appreciate the incredible scenery. Camels can be taken for the first two-thirds of the

climb. (The cost of camel hire is not included in the tour price). We will have time for reflection at the summit, then a picnic lunch on the mountainside before walking back down the camel.

## Thursday St Catherine's Monastery

We visit the Greek Orthodox monastery, open to visitors only during the morning, where we will be able to see some of the outstanding collection of early Christian icons, art and documents, some of which are displayed in the modern museum. We will also see the Charnel House and the Burning Bush. **We leave St Catherine's and drive to El Sokhna on the Gulf of Suez where we stay at the Movenpick Resort on the coast for one night.**

## Friday Red Sea monasteries

We go first to the Monastery of St Anthony founded in the 4th Century by disciples of one the earliest and most influential of hermits. St Anthony (251-356) is known as the Father of Monasticism and was a formative influence on Coptic Christianity. A monk will guide us through the maze of churches and chapels to see the 12th Century wall paintings. The Monastery of St Paul of Thebes is set in an even

more remote and desolate area, and is built around the cave to which the saint retreated to escape the persecutions of Decius. The lively paintings on the walls show saints and angels and the story of the fiery furnace.



**We drive on to Cairo where we stay for five nights at the Pyramids Park Hotel in Giza beside the Pyramids.**

## Saturday The Pyramids and Sphinx

We begin our day by visiting the Anglican-run Deaf School where we celebrate Communion. We continue to Memphis, once the capital of ancient Egypt. This afternoon we visit the Great Pyramid, the only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, set amidst its sister Pyramids and the Sphinx. Evening optional Son et Lumiere presentation at the Pyramids.

## Sunday Coptic Cairo

This morning we visit Coptic Cairo including the Hanging Church and the Church of Abu Serga where tradition says Jesus took refuge in a cave under the altar when he fled from Palestine. We will have the opportunity to experience the Coptic liturgy. In the afternoon we visit the Egyptian Museum and end the day at the Khan al Khalili bazaar. We end the day with a felluca sail on the Nile.

## Monday Wadi El Natrun

We drive out through the Nitrian Desert to the lush oasis of Wadi El Natrun. where it is believed that the Holy Family spent time during their flight to Egypt. We visit the Monastery of St Macarius. Macarius retired to the desert in the fourth century and the desolate region became a sanctuary for the desert fathers and for cenobitic monastic communities.



## Tuesday El Fayoum Oasis

We drive today to the oasis of El Fayoum where we visit the monasteries of the Virgin Mary and of St Gabriel which dates back to the 7th century.

## Wednesday 21 September Homeward Bound

Our British Airways flight BA154 leaves Cairo at 0830 and arrives back in London Heathrow at 1135.

# TRAVEL TO EGYPT

## McCABE PILGRIMAGES

Our pilgrimage is being organised in association with McCabe Pilgrimages, a company well-known to us and Rosemary Nutt has assured us of her personal attention to the detail of our holiday. Now celebrating its 27th anniversary, McCabe has been responsible for organising very many of tours to Egypt over the years.

## TRAVELLING ALONE

Many of our passengers travel alone and object to expensive single room supplements. McCabe Pilgrimages will accept individual bookings on a 'guaranteed share' basis. We charge the basic price and accommodate you with a person of the same sex also requesting shared accommodation. If we do not find someone to share with you, you will be accommodated in a single room at only 50% of the usual single room supplement. For single travellers who do require single accommodation this should be requested when booking and, if available, the normal supplement will be payable.

## PASSPORTS, VISAS AND HEALTH

Please ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months after the time of this pilgrimage. If you need a new passport apply early as there can be considerable backlogs at the passport offices. We will arrange a group visa on your behalf in advance for Egypt so will request your passport details prior to travel. If you are holding a non-British passport, or require further advice, please consult the McCabe office. No inoculations are required. We, however, do advise you to consult your doctor regarding your own personal requirements.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

McCabe will arrange comprehensive travel insurance cover for each passenger unless otherwise indicated on the booking form. We have negotiated the premium (see 'Tour Information' section inside for rate) which as well as offering full medical and baggage cover also gives cover against loss of deposits. Cover is arranged by Preferential Insurance Services Ltd and is underwritten by Optimum Underwriting Limited as underwriting agents for Groupama Insurance Company Limited – each aforementioned organisation is authorised and regulated by The Financial Services Authority (FSA). The policy wording sets out full details of cover and will be sent to you with your confirmation invoice. This document also acts as your insurance certificate so that your booking reference number is also your insurance policy number.

A special feature of the McCabe insurance is that there is no age limit. Please, however, note it is a requirement that all insured persons must adhere to the Medical Health Requirements section on page 5 of the Policy wording document (which we will send you with your confirmation invoice). If you answer yes to any of the questions asked within this section you must contact the [HELPLINE 0843 208 1461](tel:08432081461). This is a confidential service that will decide whether or not this insurance is appropriate for you. If they decline to offer cover, or if you are unhappy with any aspect of the cover, you can return the policy within 14 days of issue and receive a full refund. In cases of difficulty, we have specialist insurers we can introduce you to.

McCabe Travel Ltd is an appointed representative of Preferential Insurance Services Ltd which is authorized and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as are both Optimum Underwriting Ltd and Groupama Insurance Company Ltd.

## AITO Quality Statement

McCabe Pilgrimages is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators. The Association represents Britain's leading independent tour operators and encourages high standards of quality and service. McCabe abides by the Association's Code of Conduct and adheres to the AITO Quality Charter which can be viewed on [www.aito.co.uk](http://www.aito.co.uk). Visit the website to find out more about the Association or call 020 8744 9280.



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