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**RE: Events at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher during Lent 2018**

1. In 2018 Lent will be observed from February 19, 2018 to April 8, 2018. During this period **major ceremonies and events will take place at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Saturdays and Sundays**, in addition to religious ceremonies conducted on weekdays.
2. Many visitors, pilgrims and believers participate in the religious ceremonies during Lent. Accordingly, **from February 19, 2018 through April 8, 2018, and particularly on Saturdays between 12:30 to 17:30, and Sundays from 07:00 to 13:00, we recommend that tourist groups and one day groups, avoid visiting the Church.**
3. It is also recommended that groups avoid visiting the Church on several dates in March & April, as specified below:

**A. Roman Catholic Palm Sunday on March 25, 2018**

- 1) The event will take place at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher from 07:00 to 12:00. **It is recommended not to conduct visits to the Church during these hours.**
- 2) The Palm Sunday Procession will begin at Bethpage Church and end at the New Gate, and will take place from 14:30 to 20:00.
- 3) On this date the police will oversee entry of pilgrims into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher due to the religious ceremonies.

**B. Catholic Holy Thursday ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on March 29, 2018**

- 1) On this date the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will be closed and entry will not be permitted.**

**C. The Roman Catholic Way of the Cross procession of the cross and the burial ceremony in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on March 30, 2018**

- 1) The Roman Catholic procession of the cross will start at 11:30 from the first station and make its way to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.
- 2) **The Church will open after 10:30, at the end of the religious ceremony.**
- 3) **Groups that want to participate in the procession will only arrive through the Lion's Gate.**
- 4) **It is recommended not to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher complex from 10:00 to 14:00.**
- 5) **Due to the processions of the cross taking place on this date the police will oversee entry of visitors/pilgrims in all the routes leading to Via Dolorosa and to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.**

**D. Orthodox Palm Sunday on April 1, 2018**

**Orthodox Palm Sunday at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will take place from 07:00 to 14:00.**

- 1) Entry of pilgrims into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will be overseen by the police due the religious ceremonies.
- 2) **It is recommended not to visit the Church during these hours due to the religious ceremonies of all denominations.**

**E. The Orthodox Holy Thursday ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on April 5, 2018**

- 1) The ceremony will take place in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher courtyard from 8:30 to 11:00.
- 2) The police will only oversee public entry into the church courtyard; entry of tourists into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher **will not be permitted during the ceremony.**
- 3) **It is recommended not to visit the Church during these hours.**

**F. Orthodox processions Way of the Cross and burial ceremonies in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on April 6, 2018**

- 1) The Ethiopian procession of the cross will take place from 09:00 to 10:00.
- 2) The Orthodox procession of the cross will take place from 10:00 to 11:30.

- 3) The Jesus burial ceremonies of the Orthodox denominations will take place at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher from 18:00 to 22:00.
- 4) **The Church will only open after 09:45 for the general public.**
- 5) **Visitor entry** into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will only be **through Muristan Street**; the police will oversee entry of the public into the Church.
- 6) Groups who want to participate in the cross processions will **only enter through the Lion's Gate** in the direction of the Protorium, "The Prison of Christ".
- 7) **It is recommended not to visit the Church for the burial ceremonies of Jesus during the hours specified above.**

**G. The Orthodox Sabbath of Light ceremony on April 7, 2018**

- 1) It is recommended not to visit the Old City on this day.
- 2) Entry of the public into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will be overseen by the police from the Jaffa Gate, subject to seat availability.
- 3) **Entry into the Church complex will only be permitted after 09:30**, after the Church opening ceremony has ended.
- 4) **Entry into the Church will only be through the Jaffa Gate.**
- 5) **The event will take place at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher from 07:00 to 16:00; it is recommended not to visit the Church during these hours, due the closing of the tomb to visitors.**
- 6) The police will oversee entry of pilgrims into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in light of the religious ceremonies that will take place in the Church.
- 7) **On this date street may be blocked by the police and visitors may be prevented from entering the Church courtyard.**

**H. General instructions**

- 1) During the months of March and April 2018 the police will oversee the entry of pilgrims into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher due to the numerous religious ceremonies planned to take place in the Church, and to ensure the pilgrims' safety and maintain public order.
- 2) **Entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher all days of the year, especially during the Sabbath of Light ceremony, is free of charge. Do not purchase a card/bracelet granting entry into the Church.**
- 3) Entry into the Church during the Sabbath of Light is subject to seat availability. It should be noted that the number of participants in the Sabbath of Light ceremony is limited.
- 4) Guides must conduct themselves in accordance with the sacredness of the place. Please ensure that persons in your group dress modestly.
- 5) You must obey police orders.

- 6) **Ask tourists not to bring chairs to the Church complex.**
- 7) For further information and if you have questions please call 050-6278064.