

## Reflection

Jesus has been up in the north, busily engaged in His ministry. People have been flocking to Him to learn, be healed, follow, and be near Him. I want you to choose and then consider one or two things from this Presentation and see how they apply to your life; what might they say to you?

(a) It could be the feeding of the 5,000. Will you let Jesus feed you? How? Think about that great passage in John 6 and relate it to the Eucharist. What does the Eucharist mean for you in a personal way? How might you deepen this?

(b) Jesus said to Peter and His disciples: 'But who do you say that I am?' Imagine Jesus standing before you, asking you this same question: How will you answer; what will you say?

(c) The Transfiguration. The Orthodox speak of our being called to deification: we are to become another Christ. God does this over a lifetime and beyond with our cooperation. How might you cooperate more fully? What is the next thing you have to do to help foster this?



## The Palestine of Jesus: Letting the geography of the land speak to us today Third Presentation



The Mount of Beatitudes

1. This series uses a PowerPoint presentation to explore Jesus' life through the land. The notes below complement the visuals.
2. **The Feeding of the 5,000, the primacy of Peter, John 21:** According to the local Church, this is the traditional site. In the morning, people used to come here to catch fish from the sea. A natural amphitheatre assists in Jesus' teaching.  
**This location is also called Heptapegon:** This translates to 'the place of seven springs' in Greek. Until fairly recently, these springs powered mills in the surrounding area, and the name was altered in Arabic to Tabgha.
3. **Church of the Primacy of Peter:** The Franciscan Chapel was built in 1933 on the ruins of a 4th-century church that was destroyed in the 13th century.
4. **This rock** is known in Latin as the 'Mensa Christ'. It is said that on this rock, Jesus conferred on Peter the responsibility for being the future head of the Church. (John 21.15-19 compared with Matthew 16.18) In Byzantine times, this rock would also have been venerated as the table on which Jesus offered breakfast to His disciples. (John 21.9)
5. **Cana in Galilee:** Nobody knows with certainty where 'the' Cana of Galilee was located. Four places have been suggested, two of them possibilities. Kafr Kanna is the traditional site.
6. **Mount of Beatitudes:** Near here are the remains of a 4th-century church with the remains of a little monastery which ceased to exist in the 7th century. This new church was built in 1938 on what is now called the Mount of Beatitudes. The octagonal shape of the church commemorates the eight beatitudes (Read Matthew. 5.3-10). There is an impression of immense tranquillity here, and you can see virtually all the places where Jesus lived and worked. Matthew goes up the Mountain, whereas Luke goes down to the plain for the Beatitudes. Nevertheless, we meet Jesus. Let the Scriptures be a daily meeting, not a proof text.
7. **Caesarea Philippi:** It was 46 km from Tiberius to Caesarea Philippi. Today, it is called Banyas in Arabic, a corruption of Paneas, which signifies a place sacred to the god Pan. Now, it is in Occupied Territory, and landmines are located to the north.
8. Caesarea Philippi was the furthest north Jesus went within the ancient borders of biblical Israel. It did not have a large population then, and His seclusion there would have given Him time to think before heading southwards again. We do not even know whether Jesus ventured into the city of Caesarea Philippi itself. Mark (8.27) speaks of Him being 'in the villages around' it. Mt. Hermon can sometimes be seen from 110 km away. Rising to 2,750m, it formed a natural barrier for Israel in ancient times.
9. The Jordan is by far the most important river in the region, and in antiquity, a spring in the large cave was one of its principal sources. Today, seismic activity makes the water emerge from a crack below the cave. Little wonder then that it became a place where a nature god was worshipped. In Alexander's time, it became a temple site for Pan.
10. Philip inherited the area from his father, Herod the Great (who had been given it by Augustus). In 2 BC, he built his capital here, dedicating it to Caesar and distinguishing it from the coastal town of Caesarea Maritima, named it after himself. Nevertheless, the name that took root was not Caesarea Philippi but Caesarea Paneas. Somewhere in this vicinity, Jesus promised Peter that he would be the rock on which He built His Church. (Read Matthew 16.13-20)
11. **Mt. Tabor:** 8 km from Nazareth. 600 m above sea level. The place is peaceful and calm, and it is little wonder that tradition locates the Transfiguration here. The site of the Transfiguration varied a bit at the beginning of the Byzantine period. Eusebius (d.340) was unsure whether it was here or Mt. Hermon, while the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (333) placed it on the Mt. of Olives. (Read Matthew 17.1-8)
12. American Franciscans built the Basilica in 1923-4. Nestled beside it are ruins of a medieval Benedictine monastery. The summit is equally divided between the Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholics; a wall built there highlights the character of the relationship.