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**Your wonderful trip of a lifetime is about to become a reality. You will find it inspirational and exciting. The following information will help you to prepare.**

**Departure:** Please be at the airport check in counter at least two to three hours before departure. Because of today's heightened security, it takes longer to check in for an international departure than a domestic.

**Airport / Airline Security:** For passenger protection and basic security, passengers and luggage are subject to routine inspection. Procedures somewhat differ by airline and in accordance with the regulations of each country. You may be asked to disembark and take all hand luggage and parcels with you sometimes at connecting stops. Everyone should accept any requests as the entire procedure is to insure maximum passenger comfort and security.

**Passport:** Due to heightened security, Passport information and status is critical. Your passport must be valid and cannot expire within 6 months of the return date for your tour. You may want to memorize your passport number. You will be required to write it a number of times—in the airplane prior to embarkation in each country, when cashing travelers checks, etc. Keep your passport with you at all times. EXCEPTION—If hotel or government officials request temporary custody in line of a routine procedure. DO NOT PACK YOUR PASSPORT IN SUITCASE. PLEASE BE SURE THAT YOUR PASSPORT IS SIGNED. It is also recommended to keep a copy in your luggage in case it is lost

**Visas:** For U.S. citizens, the Catholic Pilgrim Office will process your visa(s) when needed. Visa requirements vary for non-U.S. citizens and in that case, you must contact your consulate for your visa requirements & **secure the visa on your own for all countries on your tour.** If you obtain your own visa, be sure it/they are in order. The Catholic Pilgrim Office is not responsible for inconvenience or extra expense incurred as a result of insufficient or inaccurate documentation.

**Group Travel:** The important thing to remember in group travel is that it is often necessary to set aside individual personal desires and idiosyncrasies for the overall comfort, convenience and pleasure of your group. Everyone will have a great trip, but please remember that it takes longer

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to move large groups of people than a single person, so be please be patient.

**Punctuality:** All scheduled activities must move on time. You are responsible for keeping up with your group's schedule for those times when you are on your own. If you do not rendezvous with your group on time, you may be left behind or cause a delay for the entire group.

**Health:** Be sure to take an adequate supply of the medicines you are taking, as well as an extra prescription for the same. Please keep all medications in their original containers to avoid possible security problems. Also, you may want to bring an extra pair of eyeglasses or prescription. Recommended is a personal medical kit containing aspirin, personal pills an medicines, entro-vioform (protection against diarrhea), motion sickness pills, allergy pills (if necessary), bandages, tape and small bar of soap. You may also consider having a physical and/or dental check-up before leaving on your journey.

**What to take:** Two words say it best—TRAVEL LIGHT. Even though your luggage will be handled for you most of the time, you'll enjoy your journey more with a suitcase that isn't too heavy. Consider one that's flexible so you can fit in some souvenirs along the way. Most airlines allow only one carry-on bag (not including a purse, camera case, briefcase, etc.) which will fit under seat or in the overhead compartment. Please be sure not to carry scissors, knives, nail clippers or any other item which might be considered a weapon (by whatever stretch of the imagination). Otherwise, it may be confiscated. A lot of clothes aren't usually needed. Here's a hint: Stay with one or two color schemes so you can mix & match. Most of your clothes should be wash and wear. Laundry and dry cleaning services are sometimes inconvenient to obtain and/or expensive. It's a good idea to take a plastic raincoat or collapsible umbrella and at least one warm sweater or coat (if you are traveling in the winter.) Above all, give your feet a vacation. Bring a good pair of comfortable walking shoes, already broken in. Most religious sites frown upon overly-revealing attire. For special occasions, men usually wear coats and ties, and women dresses.

**Electrical current:** Electrical current in most countries is 220v, so your appliances such as hairdryers and electric shavers require a converter, unless they are dual rated. Sockets are also sometimes different. Electronic items that have transformers, such as laptop computers, are usually dual-

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rated. Compact converter kits are available in department or electronic stores. If you're planning to buy a travel size hairdryer or electric shaver for your trip, you still need the proper plug fitting. Most hotels provide hairdryers.

**Meals:** Breakfast and dinner are usually included every day (see your brochure.) However, if you go out to eat, there will be no refund for unused meals. Lunches are usually a separate cost. Coffee or tea is included with breakfast. But, it is customary overseas that beverages are not included with lunch and dinner and are at an extra cost if requested. If special meals are required on any of your flights, please contact our office to arrange this prior to departure.

**Tiping:** The general rule in travel is that tips are accepted and expected by just about everybody. Each tour member is asked to contribute to a general "tip fund" to reward good service of guides, drivers, waiters, maids, hotel porters, etc. Customary tips are usually included in the price of your tour. If not, your tour leader will collect tips to pay on your behalf. However, if you've asked for a special service or if you've received outstanding service, you may always express your appreciation at your discretion and it is not an obligation.

Take enough camera memory sticks, film or flash supplies with you, because prices are usually high for all that is imported from the USA. Modern x-ray machines do not damage most film. However, if there is any question, ask that it be hand carried through security so as not to expose your film.

**Customs:** Customs regulations permit \$800 duty free merchandise per person to be brought back to the USA. Additionally, you may mail a \$50 gift package to the USA each day and this is exclusive of your normal \$800 allowance and need not be declared. If you take expensive jewelry, foreign cameras, furs or other such items abroad, be sure to declare them to the US Customs before leaving so that their return to the USA will not be at issue.

**Hotels:** Your check-in / check-out schedule should be arranged for you, in coordination with the travel plan for your group. Checking in and out abroad, as in the USA, is usually in the morning or early afternoon. The hotels will make every effort to have your rooms ready for occupancy upon arrival and if your rooms are not ready, please relax, be patient and have a look around.