

# The MAGI Travelogue



*Start your journey here*

As we celebrate Epiphany and commemorate the Magi who visited Jesus after his birth (Magi Travel's feast day!), we send this e-newsletter with wishes of a healthy and joyous 2025 for you and your loved ones!



## River Cruises Gaining in Popularity

River cruising is the biggest growth sector across all travel, having surpassed pre-pandemic levels, and industry analysts predicting continued growth over the next five years. Passengers appreciate the ability to unpack once, as well as the intimacy of smaller ships.

Magi partners with AmaWaterways to bring groups on European river cruises. Fr. David Belt, pastor of St. Stephen the Martyr in Omaha, Nebraska, traveled with our most recent group this past fall.

Upon his return, Fr. Dave said: *"It was one of the best travel experiences I've ever had. The food was amazing. The service was spectacular. Some of the most powerful Masses were on the ship, including sunrise Mass. The group experience was great, including highlights like the Chef's Table dinner and the private excursion with Mass at Melk Abbey, but also having time on our own. I would highly recommend it to anyone."*



Fr. David Belt & group during pre-cruise tour of Prague

Magi has groups planned for various river cruises in 2025 and 2026. View their itineraries here:

- [September 8-18, 2025: Rhine River Cruise with Abbot Michael Liebl, O.S.B.](#)
- [September 17-27, 2025: Danube River Cruise with Fr. Charles Lachowitzer](#)
- [September 30 - October 11, 2025: Danube River Cruise with Fr. Joseph Gillespie, O.P.](#)
- [November 28 - December 8, 2025: Christmas Market Cruise on the Rhine with Fr. Tom Fangman](#)
- [December 5-15, 2025: Christmas Market Cruise on the Rhine with Fr. Steve Binsfeld](#)
- [April 19 - May 1, 2026: Douro River Cruise with Fr. Geoffrey Fecht, O.S.B.](#)



## You Can Now Renew Your Passport Online

Yes, you read that right. No more mailing in your precious travel documents.

U.S. citizens can now renew their passports online, a significant improvement that eliminates the hassle of mailing in physical documents. This new service streamlines the passport renewal process, allowing you to complete the entire process from the

comfort of your home. The option is available to Americans seeking to renew an adult passport that has expired within the last five years or will expire in the coming year.

For most destinations, your passport needs to be valid for at least six months after your scheduled return date. So check your passport expiration date and apply online next time!

[How to Renew Online](#)

## Q & A with Bishop James Golka

Bishop Golka, of the Diocese of Colorado Springs, has taken numerous pilgrimages with Magi over the years. He recently sat with us to discuss travel and his experiences on pilgrimage with Magi.

**Q: What is it about travel that appeals to you, both personally and as a religious leader?**

**A:** When I was a seminarian and I got to spend a semester in the Holy Land, and as a student, that was the best semester of my life, by far. That experience taught me that to be in this space has so much more meaning than just reading about it in a book. During that time, I was really aware that I want to come back here again someday, and I want other people to see this. That opportunity opened many doors for me that maybe would not have opened otherwise. I'm a visual learner, but also experiential, so to be in the place really just touched me in a deeper way



way.

People would joke with me about sites in the Holy Land and say, “Did this really happen here historically?” We can say historically, it sure looks like it. But for me, the important thing is that for 2000 years, people have been gathering in this particular site to celebrate this particular aspect of our faith, this particular biblical event. Having an opportunity to visit those places where so many pilgrims have come before, while seeking a deeper knowledge and experience of Christ, for me, that was always palpable. You could just tell something important has happened here and still does happen here by our presence today.

**Q: Was that semester in the Holy Land your first time abroad?**

**A:** That's pretty much the first time. On the way over there, my friend and I traveled separately, and went through Switzerland and Italy, and then through Greece on our way to the Holy Land. Then when we ended, I went down to Tanzania to visit a friend who's a missionary. So I got to visit other places then, but I come from a family that didn't really have resources to be able to travel much, and never really had much opportunity until I was a seminarian, and then subsequently as a priest who had the opportunity to take other people on pilgrimages—a great opportunity and gift to me too.

**Q: What's been your experience traveling with Magi?**

**A:** Magi always has a good itinerary. They give the priest input into making sure that he can get to sites that he wants to see or thinks his people want to see. The hotels are always excellent and in excellent locations, and I've been on other pilgrimages where the hotels were not so quality, and it made a difference. There's something to be said for being able to come home at night and relax in a place that's beautiful and located near important sites, so I love that Magi does that. The tour guides are always trusted, easy to get along with, and knowledgeable. I would also say that I've been on other pilgrimages with other groups where the tour guides were non-practicing Catholics, and I've never had that with Magi. You always had a person of faith with you, who you could tell was equally drinking in the experience along with you.

*The interview continues, read the full interview by clicking below:*

[Interview with Bishop James Golka](#)

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