

## Yes, still alive, In Israel no less!



Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, Israel



You need to click on this photo of the USA's contribution to the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. It's pretty amazing.

Why no entries for a while? Been kinda busy globe-trotting again, this time taking my wife to Israel, a rather more "spiritual" trip than those past. On a Gate1 tour with a mixed group including Jews and Christians. An amazing journey, starting in Tel Aviv, a very modern city not unlike San Francisco. Thankfully just a bit less crowded, but you end of having to dodge an awful lot of powered scooters, far more than you see in the bay area.

Today we drove from Tel Aviv north to Caesarea (you want to talk about history, this place has it in spades), then inland to Tiberius, via Nazareth. Nazareth being one heck of a busy and big place; any thoughts that there'd be some feeling of "wow" or wonderment is quickly displaced by "How can you get through this maze of streets and cars and people that just goes on forever?" Nothing is very interesting until it is. And it is once you get to where you're going, inside, where a beautiful church has been built upon the ruins of another beautiful church which was built upon the ruins of a secular something-or-other which was built upon the ruins of an earlier church. All of which are built upon the land of Mary's (mother of Jesus) home, which is a very big thing if you're Catholic (I'm not) but still a bit thing if you're Christian (I am). The specifics for why (it's such a thing) is that it's the location where the angel told Mary that she was to become pregnant with Jesus.

Very interesting, to just about anyone I suspect, are the 40 or 50, could be more, depictions of Mary with Jesus both on the outside and inside of the church, each from a different country. And each with its own flavor of who Jesus is. There are white, asian, african... it's really pretty amazing because one tends to think of Jesus as being, well, like yourself. And that other cultures have the same, in my case, white, Jesus. They're all labeled by country. The really impressive displays are inside the church, and yes, you go looking for the one from the USA, and wouldn't you know it that it's in a pretty prime position and stands out from the rest. It's

beautiful, but somehow you wonder if it might just be a bit overboard because it's from the USA. I've included a photo of it here.

I'd like to say I'll start posting regularly, but things go a mile a minute on this tour, plus figuring out some shop stuff back home. Worst thing about the time difference is that it makes me pretty much 24/7 because things are happening back home while I'm trying to sleep, which keeps me from sleeping. And of course when I'm up, I'm still thinking about it! Hopefully some Tylenol PM will help.