



# HOLY LAND INSTITUTE

a ministry of St. Thomas More Catholic Church

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## Sarah

### First of the Matriarchs Exalted over Many

**Hear the story from Genesis of Sarah who, with her husband Abraham, set out for Canaan when called by God. Infertile, far from her homeland, and twice abducted, she found that the Lord was her constant companion. She would give birth to laughter in the form of her son Isaac, and her descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.**

Pope Benedict XVI chose the “Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church” as the theme of the Synod of Bishops on the Bible held in Rome October 5-26, 2008. The synod reignited a passion for the Word of God in the Church as an aid to ecumenical dialogue. At the same time, the Holy Land Institute, a ministry of St. Thomas More Church in San Francisco, prepared a series of talks on the Bible starting with the Matriarch Sarah. Her voice was heard by God, and she played an important role in the Genesis story of Abraham, the Patriarch of the Jewish, Christian, and Moslem faiths. An understanding of the text is key to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

Yielding to Pope Benedict’s call to offer support and encouragement to contemporary Holy Land Christians lest the land become an archeological site without an ecclesial life, the Holy Land Institute organizes pilgrimages that along with visits to Biblical sites include encounters with the “living stones” who today inhabit the region where Abraham and Sarah lived and prayed. Contemporary Christians represent a religious minority among the other descendants of Abraham, and all have stories of turmoil, suffering, cooperation, and hope for peace.

#### Presenters:

Monsignor Labib Kobti, a native Lebanon and pastor of St. Thomas More Church, was educated in Jerusalem and Rome and has degrees in theology and a doctorate in canon law. He has taught and done pastoral work in the Holy Land and for the past 16 years has been ministering to Arab-American Catholics among others.

Dr. Claudia Devaux, with degrees in international and multicultural education and theology as well as computer science and French, spent more than two decades as a marketing executive of a major international company and has taught in France, China, and the US. She is the author with the late George Bernard Wong, SJ, of *Bamboo Swaying in the Wind: A Survivor’s Story of Faith and Imprisonment in Communist China*. Visits to the Middle East have intensified her interest in connecting and interpreting the stories of the “people of the book”—people of the past and people of the present.

#### St. Thomas More Catholic Church

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