

A TOURIST PRAYER

Heavenly Father, look down on us your humble, obedient, tourist servants, who are doomed to travel this earth, taking photographs, mailing postcards, buying souvenirs, and walking around in drip-dry underwear.

We beseech you, oh Lord, to see that our plane is not hijacked, our luggage is not lost, and our overweight baggage goes unnoticed.

Protect us from surly and unscrupulous taxi drivers, avaricious porters, and unlicensed English-speaking guides.

Give us this day divine wisdom and guidance in the selection of our hotels, that we may find our reservations honored, our rooms made up, and hot water running from the faucets (if at all possible.)

We pray that the telephones work and that the operators speak our tongue, and that there is no mail waiting from our children which would force us to cancel the rest of our trip.

Lead us, dear Lord, to good, inexpensive restaurants where the food is superb, the waiters friendly, and the wine included in the price of the meal.

Give us the wisdom to tip correctly in currencies we do not understand. Forgive us for undertipping out of ignorance and overtipping out of fear. Make the natives praise us for what we are, and not what we can contribute to their worldly goods.

Grant us the strength to visit the Museums, the Cathedrals, the Palaces, and the Castle listed as 'musts' in the guidebooks.

And if perchance we skip an historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have mercy on us, for our flesh is weak.

(This part of the prayer is for husbands.) Dear God, keep our wives from shopping sprees, and protect them from 'bargains' they don't need or can't afford. Lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

(This part of the prayer is for wives.) Almighty God, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them to us. Save them from making fools of themselves in cafes and nightclubs. Above all, please DO NOT forgive them their trespasses for they know EXACTLY what they do.

(All together) And when the tour is over, and we return our loved ones, grant us the favor of finding someone who will look at our pictures and slides, and listen to our stories, so our lives as tourists will not have been in vain.

This we ask in the name of Conrad Hilton, Thomas Cook, American Express and Jay Smith World Travel Service, Inc. And oh yes, Lord, please have mercy and bestow an abundance of patience and wisdom on Tour Escorts, for every so often they too make 'little' mistakes, and I'm not sure whether they know or do not know what they do.