

So what is a pilgrimage?

By Father Daniel Schuster

A Pilgrimage is not a trip or a vacation. It is a spiritual journey, with a holy destination. A pilgrim is transformed by the journey. It is similar to the walk to Emmaus in Luke's Gospel. The journey of a pilgrim is not just about "you" getting something out of it. It is about visiting God in another place. That other place is a spiritual hotspot (similar to a Wi-Fi hot spot). It is about strengthening your sense of mission and making your lives an offering. Pilgrims get uncomfortable at times since they travel and lodge in close quarters and only seek the basic necessities. Ancient pilgrims relied heavily on walking, which was dangerous.

We will be very comfortable, but there is no whining on pilgrimage. You tell me what you need today, and I'll tell you how to get along without it! Leave a part of yourself behind. Namely, the ego. Take something with you that you will share with others. Encounter real beauty, truth and goodness. Reverence a place that you can encounter God in a unique setting without familiar distraction. It is all about the journey, then destination, then the re-integration. Leave certain things behind on this pilgrimage: Cell phones. Worries. Attitudes.

Adoration (see Catechism): *Adoration* is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory," respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God. Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

Leave your nets behind!

20 Pilgrimage Points

1. Pilgrims are not tourists.
2. Pilgrims pray immediately when they reach a destination; before they go taking pictures and buying souvenirs.
3. Pilgrims leave their homeland behind and do not look back.
4. Pilgrims get comfortable with being uncomfortable.
5. Pilgrims love the Paschal Mystery and live the Paschal Mystery.
6. Pilgrims do not whine.
7. Pilgrims get sore feet.
8. Pilgrims put the will of the group over their own individual will.
9. Pilgrims long to reach not only their earthly destination, but their heavenly destination. And they want to experience part of their heavenly destination on earth.
10. Pilgrims pray, fast, and give alms.
11. Pilgrims are generous.
12. Pilgrims pray like they have never prayed before.
13. Pilgrims celebrate the mass with devotion and a sense of mystery.
14. Pilgrims learn about the faith at every opportunity.
15. Pilgrims return to their homeland transformed.
16. Pilgrims love to sing.
17. Pilgrims keep diaries.
18. Pilgrims rely on God alone.
19. Pilgrims experience Jesus Christ in the Church.
20. Pilgrims are open to realizing how narrow of a worldview they previously held, and so learn to see the Church as a truly universal (i.e. Catholic) reality.