

Catechetical Minute – Why Pilgrimage?

Pilgrimage is deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture. In many ways, the story of salvation begins with a pilgrimage. God called Abraham to leave his homeland and journey to an unknown land in faith.

- The Israelites spent forty years journeying through the desert toward the Promised Land.
- The Jewish people regularly made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great feasts, and even Jesus Himself journeyed to Jerusalem throughout His life.
- In the Gospel of Luke, we hear how the Holy Family traveled there each year for Passover.

From the earliest centuries, Christians followed this biblical pattern.

- In the fourth century, believers began traveling to places associated with the life of Christ, especially Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Calvary.
- Pilgrimages soon expanded to the tombs of the Apostles, the shrines of martyrs, and other holy places where God had worked powerfully through His saints.

But what exactly is a pilgrimage?

- A pilgrimage is much more than religious tourism. Pilgrimages are spiritual journeys – outward signs of an inward desire for conversion and growth in holiness (Joan Watson, *Making a Pilgrimage*, 3)
- A pilgrim leaves behind the routines and comforts of daily life in order to seek God with greater intentionality.
- Scripture reminds us that "we have here no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come" (Hebrews 13:14).
- Our entire life is a journey toward our true homeland in Heaven. A pilgrimage helps us remember that reality.

Why, then, do Catholics make pilgrimages?

- First, pilgrimages help us encounter God in a deeper way. Stepping away from ordinary routines creates space for prayer, conversion, and listening to the Lord. "Through them the Holy Spirit gently fashions us to be ever more closely conformed to the mind and the heart of Jesus Christ" (Pope Leo XIV)
- Second, pilgrimages immerse us in the history of our faith. Visiting holy places reminds us that Christianity is not a set of ideas, but a living faith rooted in real people, real events, & real places.
- Third, pilgrimages unite us with the communion of saints. We are reminded that we belong to a family of faith that stretches across centuries and continents.
- Finally, pilgrimages teach us trust. Like Abraham, the Israelites, and the disciples, we learn to rely on God as we journey. Faith is a journey and Christians are called to be pilgrims who continually move closer to Christ.

As we undertake any pilgrimage, may we remember that its ultimate purpose is not simply reaching a destination. Rather, it is allowing God to draw us more deeply into relationship with Him and to prepare us for the greatest pilgrimage of all: our journey to the Father's house in Heaven.

I discovered pilgrimages when I began discerning for the priesthood. Now that I am a priest, I lead pilgrimages in place of taking vacations. Priests travel for no charge on pilgrimages, so I am often blessed to be able to make multiple pilgrimages each year.

In the bulletin, you will see the next four pilgrimages I have planned. Please note that our October parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been changed due to difficulties with air travel. Instead,

we will be going to France in October. I invite you to join me on any of these journeys and pilgrimage together, if you are able.

Minuto Catequético – ¿Por qué hacer una peregrinación?

La peregrinación tiene raíces profundas en la Sagrada Escritura. En muchos sentidos, la historia de la salvación comienza con una peregrinación. Dios llamó a Abraham a dejar su tierra y ponerse en camino hacia una tierra desconocida, confiando en Él.

- El pueblo de Israel pasó cuarenta años caminando por el desierto rumbo a la Tierra Prometida.
- Los judíos hacían peregrinaciones regularmente a Jerusalén para las grandes fiestas, y el mismo Jesús viajó allí varias veces durante su vida.
- En el Evangelio de San Lucas escuchamos cómo la Sagrada Familia viajaba cada año a Jerusalén para celebrar la Pascua.

Desde los primeros siglos, los cristianos siguieron este ejemplo bíblico.

- En el siglo IV, los creyentes comenzaron a viajar a los lugares relacionados con la vida de Cristo, especialmente Jerusalén, Belén y el Calvario.
- Con el tiempo, las peregrinaciones también incluyeron las tumbas de los Apóstoles, los santuarios de los mártires y otros lugares santos donde Dios obró grandes maravillas por medio de sus santos.

Pero, ¿qué es exactamente una peregrinación?

- Una peregrinación es mucho más que turismo religioso. Es un camino espiritual: un signo exterior de un deseo interior de conversión y crecimiento en la santidad (JW, 3).
- El peregrino deja atrás las rutinas y comodidades de la vida diaria para buscar a Dios con mayor intención y dedicación.
- La Escritura nos recuerda que “no tenemos aquí una ciudad permanente, sino que buscamos la futura” (Hebreos 13, 14).
- Toda nuestra vida es un camino hacia nuestra verdadera patria, que es el Cielo. La peregrinación nos ayuda a recordar esta realidad.

Entonces, ¿por qué los católicos hacemos peregrinaciones?

- Primero, porque nos ayudan a encontrarnos con Dios de una manera más profunda. Al alejarnos de la rutina diaria, abrimos espacio para la oración, la conversión y la escucha de la voz del Señor.
- Segundo, porque nos sumergen en la historia de nuestra fe. Visitar lugares santos nos recuerda que el cristianismo no es un conjunto de ideas, sino una fe viva basada en personas reales, acontecimientos reales y lugares reales.
- Tercero, porque nos unen a la comunión de los santos. Recordamos que formamos parte de una familia de fe que se extiende a través de los siglos y por todo el mundo.
- Finalmente, porque las peregrinaciones nos enseñan a confiar. Como Abraham, el pueblo de Israel y los discípulos, aprendemos a depender de Dios mientras caminamos. La fe es un camino, y los cristianos estamos llamados a ser peregrinos que cada día se acercan más a Cristo.

Cuando emprendamos cualquier peregrinación, recordemos que su propósito principal no es simplemente llegar a un destino. Más bien, es permitir que Dios nos atraiga a una relación más profunda con Él y nos prepare para la peregrinación más importante de todas: nuestro camino hacia la casa del Padre en el Cielo.

Los invito a acompañarme en cualquiera de estas peregrinaciones y caminar juntos en la fe, si les es posible.

WE ARE

Pilgrims

A JOURNEY OF FAITH TOWARD OUR TRUE HOME

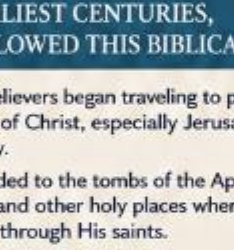
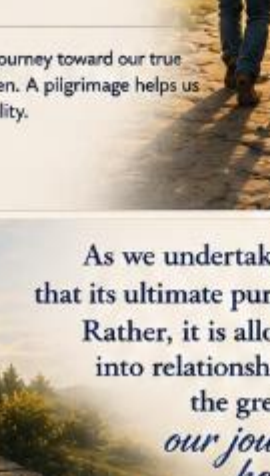





1. PILGRIMAGE IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN SACRED SCRIPTURE.

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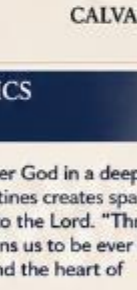





2. FROM THE EARLIEST CENTURIES, CHRISTIANS FOLLOWED THIS BIBLICAL PATTERN.

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Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Calvary



3. BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS A PILGRIMAGE?

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4. WHY, THEN, DO CATHOLICS MAKE PILGRIMAGES?

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1 First, pilgrimages help us encounter God in a deeper way. Stepping away from ordinary routines creates space for prayer, conversion, and listening to the Lord. “Through them the Holy Spirit gently fashions us to be ever more closely conformed to the mind and the heart of Jesus Christ” (Pope Leo XIV)
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2 Second, pilgrimages immerse us in the history of our faith. Visiting holy places reminds us that Christianity is not a set of ideas, but a living faith rooted in real people, real events, & real places.
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