



WHY A PARISH PILGRIMAGE?

Message from Our Pastor

*According to the word experts the word *parish* has its roots in the Greek word, *paroikia* which means sojourning. As disciples of Jesus, baptized into his life, fed by his Body, we become sojourners, pilgrims on the way to the heavenly Jerusalem. We are companions on the journey, breaking bread and drinking wine...*

For all those of us who have travelled internationally, we know what it is like to be stopped at the border crossing and questioned: Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going? These questions not only apply to our earthly travels, they apply to our spiritual lives too.

We have undergone a significant change here in our parish over the past year as parishioners have left St. Patrick's and "crossed" over into the new terrain of building a new community, the parish of Blessed Frederic Ozanam. This change has challenged us to ask those same fundamental questions of ourselves as a parish. Who are we? Where are we from? Where are we going? Indeed every Sunday, we have beseeched the Lord praying that God lead, guide and bless our parish as we strive to discern his vision for our parish. This has been a regular subject of discussion at our parish Stewardship Council and I have asked different parishioners to put their ideas in writing and submit them to me.

To deepen this prayerful exercise we will undertake a parish pilgrimage. After all, this is what "parishing" is all about. "Parishing" is acknowledging that we are sojourners. We are pilgrims on a journey. But the only way we can ever begin to find our way is to subject ourselves to the guidance of the Lord. It is the Lord who calls us forth in order to draw us into an ever deeper covenant of love. Like Abraham and Sarah who were called forward in faith; like Moses and the Israelites who were called to journey toward the Promised Land; like Mary and Joseph who had to journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and then to Egypt, the Lord draws his people out in order to speak to them and invite them to trust in his compassionate and tender love for them.

In the ancient and venerable tradition of our Christian heritage I invite you to undergo a parish pilgrimage. Like the heroes of our faith, God wants us to take some time away from the security of our routines, our home life and simply spend quality time with him. Yes, we sojourn every Sunday when we come together as a parish to celebrate the Eucharist, but it is good to occasionally give to the Lord more than an hour, to give him the best part of our day.

Come to Mary Lake Shrine on Saturday, June 23rd. As parishioners, as sojourners who believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life let us come together in faith celebrating who we are as a parish, acknowledging where we have come from and asking the Lord to show us the way forward.

In Christ,

Father Dominic

