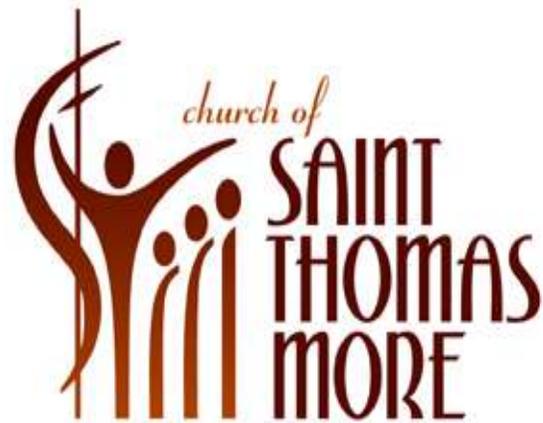


Lent – A Journey

Pilgrimages are rooted in our human experience. Somewhere inside us is a need to travel a distance, sometimes at great inconvenience and discomfort, to seek out a significant place, a person or an event.

From ancient days, Jerusalem has been a point of pilgrimage. Jews continue to journey there to celebrate Passover. Christians make spiritual journeys to the Holy Land. For us, Lent can be seen as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way.



On Ash Wednesday we sign ourselves with ashes and embark on our spiritual pilgrimage. Through the Gospels this year, we will relive some of the wondrous acts that Jesus displayed in his journey to Jerusalem. All along the way, we will listen to his words as pilgrims attentive to the familiar stories of other Lenten days.

We will encounter Jesus being tempted in the desert, and know our own temptations. Later, we'll be among the privileged few to see Jesus transfigured on a mountaintop as a voice from the clouds calls him "beloved". As we make our way toward Jerusalem, we'll meet some very memorable people. We'll overhear the conversation between Jesus and a woman at a well and find in Jesus "living water" so we are never thirsty again. We'll see with new eyes as Jesus heals a blind man and calls us to address our own blindness. As Jesus mourns the death of his friend Lazarus, we'll remember again that Jesus himself is the resurrection and the life, and if we believe in him, even if we die, we shall live.

Finally, we will walk triumphantly into Jerusalem, singing "Hosanna", only to witness again the final days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Fortunately for us, that is not the end of the pilgrimage. In Jesus, we will journey through death to new life.

We know that, with Jesus leading us, we will reach Jerusalem. We walk with hope-filled hearts, bearing the smeared cross of Ash Wednesday's ashes. We are marked and we are confident, knowing full well that at the end of this year's pilgrimage, we will bask in the grace of redemption found in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Steve Raml
Director of Liturgy & Music