



Marian Pilgrimage How-To Guide

Step 1: Prepare for Your Pilgrimage – consider praying at least one Hail Mary before contemplating intentions

Where are you going to honor Mary?

A church dedicated to her, a statue of her, even a place of natural beauty in your local neighborhood or backyard can all serve as holy sites to bring Mary your prayers and intentions. Make sure the route is walkable. If you do not have someone to pick you up at the holy site, you should check that it will be manageable to walk back. **You should follow all guidelines and expectations for social distancing in your state with your planned pilgrimage.**

What are your prayers and intentions you are bringing to Mary?

A pilgrim must carry specific intentions to the holy site; otherwise, it is simply a walk, not a pilgrimage. Take time to consider for whom and for what you can walk, carrying these prayers to Mary, the Queen of Heaven and Our Lady of Sorrows, who knows the whole range of emotions we are experiencing in these trying times.

Consider writing down your intentions. Ask others who are not able to walk if they have intentions you can carry for them. Let those for whom you are praying know that you are bringing them to Mary.

Step 2: Cross the Threshold – consider praying Psalm 84 and the Hail, Holy Queen before you make that first step. The threshold held immense significance to the people of the Bible. It was the entrance to the home, to the place of hospitality. It was also the exit into a world filled with danger and unknowns. Pilgrims become such when they step out of their homes and begin their journey. Huston Smith writes, “To set out on a pilgrimage is to throw down a challenge to everyday life.” Please, be aware of your changed relationship to daily life when you take that step.

You have chosen to become displaced. Even a pilgrimage to a place within your own neighborhood creates a strangeness. We hope this displacement allows the voices of Mary and the Trinity to become clear to you.

Step 3: On Pilgrimage – consider praying the Rosary and the Magnificat as well as taking time to walk in silence. You might be walking two blocks to the local church or five miles to a scenic outlook where you can recognize Mary’s presence. Whatever the distance, be present and prayerful, reflecting on your intentions and allowing the rhythm of walking to influence your rhythm of prayer. MCP operates on the Emmaus model, recognizing that Christ walks with us and leads our hearts to burn with desire for him. Know that he walks with you to encounter his and our mother. See our prayer resources for different prayer ideas for your time walking.

Of practical note is to make sure you have the right clothing, footwear, and gear for the distance you will cover. Any pilgrimage longer than a few blocks should be accompanied by water. Ones of multiple miles require food as well.

Step 4: At the Holy Site – consider praying the Memorare and Psalm 122

Lift up your prayers and intentions to Mary, God, and the saints. Take joy in having reached a holy place through your dedicated effort.

For individuals, prayer probably continues in silence, though a yelp of joy could be appropriate, barring any solemn services occurring at the time. Consider taking a picture or making a quick video to share your pilgrimage with others.

Step 5: The Return – consider reading Luke 24:13-35 – The Road to Emmaus passage

Get back safely to your home, taking joy in honoring Mary in a physical manner. Reflect on how the experience has affected your faith as well as how it might lead you to change yourself, your family, your friends, and your community for Christ.