Pilgrimage 2011
Commissioning and Blessing for Pilgrims

These are modified from the Book of Blessings. It may also be appropriate to have the pilgrims develop, write and lead their own prayer service.

Commissioning and Blessing at Mass
Before the final blessing, the pilgrim leader introduces the Pilgrimage and what the pilgrims have been doing to prepare. He or she then introduces the pilgrims as follows:

Our parish is sending the following adult pilgrims to guide, learn and celebrate with our youth: List Names

Our middle school students who will join with their peers in great friendships and discoveries: List Names

Our high school students who will join with their peers in great friendships and discoveries: List Names

Our young adults who will join with their peers in great friendships and discoveries: List Names

Blessing of Pilgrims

After the pilgrims are introduced and standing before the congregation the priest goes to aisle, facing pilgrims.

To Pilgrims: My brothers and sisters, you have been preparing for this journey to the Take up Your Cross Pilgrimage for some time. In doing so, you have been participants in a journey or pilgrimage that can change your life. Bow your heads and receive God’s blessing.

To Congregation: Please extend your right hand in blessing over these pilgrims.

All-powerful and merciful God,
you reign from your throne of service.
Help these, our sisters and brothers, to continue their pilgrimage as they journey from their homes.
Show them the way of service to each other and those they meet.
Help them understand and appreciate all they encounter.
Under your protection let them reach their destination and come home at last, to a welcoming and loving community.

May the Lord remain constantly at your side and in His mercy guide your journey in ways that are pleasing to Him.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
Amen

Adapted by Donald J. Smith, Diocese of Rochester, Used with Permission
Commissioning and Blessing Outside Mass

Leader who is not on pilgrimage:
The priest or other parish representative joins the pilgrims as they prepare to set out for the Take up Your Cross Pilgrimage. If the leader is joining the pilgrims on pilgrimage, make changes accordingly (you to we or us, etc.)

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen

Leader: May God, our strength and salvation, be with you all.
All: And also with you.

Leader: Brothers and sisters, as you set out, you should remind yourselves of the reasons for your resolve to go on this holy pilgrimage. The place you intend to visit is a gathering of devotion and prayer. People are traveling there in great numbers to be strengthened in the Christian way of life and to become more determined to devote themselves to the works of charity. You must also try to bring something to the faithful who are there; your example of faith, hope and love. In this way both they and you will be enriched by the help you give each other.

Reading (Luke 24:13-16, 28-32)

A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

The Gospel of the Lord
All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Leader: God is the beginning and the end of our pilgrimage. Let us call on God with confidence, saying

R. Lord, be our companion on our journey.

Father all-holy, of old you made yourself the guide and the way for your people as they wandered in the desert; be our protection as we begin this journey, so that we may return home again in safety. We pray to the Lord. R.
You have given us your only Son to be our way to you; make us follow him faithful and
unswervingly. We pray to the Lord.  \textit{R.}

You gave us Mary as the image and model for following Christ; grant that through her example
we may live a new life. We pray to the Lord.  \textit{R.}

You guide your pilgrim Church on earth through the Holy Spirit; may we seek you in all things
and walk always in the way of your commandments. We pray to the Lord.  \textit{R.}

You lead us along right and peaceful paths; grant that we may find peace in our pilgrimage.
We pray to the Lord.  \textit{R.}

For these and all the prayers we hold in our hearts we pray.  \textit{R.}

\textbf{Prayer of Blessing}

All-powerful God,
you always show mercy toward those who love you and you are never far away from those
who seek you. Remain with your servants on this holy pilgrimage and guide their way in accord
with your will. Shelter them with your protection by day, give them the light of your grace by
night, and, as their companion on the journey, bring them to their destination in safety.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
\textbf{All: Amen.}

\textbf{Concluding Rite}

\textbf{Leader:} May the Lord guide us and direct our journey in safety.
\textbf{All:} Amen

\textbf{Leader:} May the Lord be your companion along the way.
\textbf{All:} Amen

\textbf{Leader:} May the Lord grant that the journey you begin, relying on him, will end happily through
his protection.
\textbf{All:} Amen
Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a celebration of the merciful love of God. Through the gift of this sacrament, we are brought back together with the Father (reconciled) through the saving action of Jesus Christ, His Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This gift, given to the Church by Jesus himself on the evening of the Resurrection (see John 20:21-23), brings the sinner into the embrace of the Father, Who seeks us out and forgives. No one is beyond that embrace; no one is too far gone. Now, we who approach this sacrament with faith in God’s love and mercy and an honest awareness of our sins, with a sincere heart to try and live better, experience the depth of God’s love.

Reconciliation and the Seal of Confession

The Seal of Confession or the Seal of the Confessional is the absolute confidentiality for Roman Catholic Priests of anything that they learn from penitents during the course of confession. This aspect of confession should encourage young people to open up and share their true selves in order to experience the power of forgiveness through the Sacrament.

Biblical Reference of the Sacrament

The Gospel of John gives the biblical context for the sacrament of Reconciliation. In John 20:19-23, Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. They had been distraught and miserable as their leader, friend, and companion had been killed on the cross. While they had been told by Jesus himself that he would resurrect, the disciples where challenged by what this all meant. The disciples were also terrified by the fear of their own persecution! So, “on the evening of the first day of the week,” when they were locked up in fear, the resurrected Jesus appeared to them. (Jn 20:20) Jesus encouraged them to go forth and spread the good news of his resurrection. He said to them, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (Jn 20:21) Jesus not only gave the disciples clear direction for their ministry, but he equipped them for it by breathing in them the Holy Spirit, who would be their guidance and strength on their journey as Disciples of Christ. In this passage, the disciples, who resemble the predecessors of our priests, are also given the special ability to forgive sins, which we now refer to as the Sacrament of Reconciliation.


Quotes from the Catechism on Reconciliation

"Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion." (CCC, 1422)

It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus’ call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin. It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction. (1423)
Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called \textit{animi cruciatus} (affliction of spirit) and \textit{compunctio cordis} (repentance of heart). (1431)

The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works). (1438)

The process of conversion and repentance was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father: The fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy - all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. the beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life - pure worthy, and joyful - of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart of Christ Who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way. (1439)

The formula of absolution used in the Latin Church expresses the essential elements of this sacrament: the Father of mercies is the source of all forgiveness. He effects the reconciliation of sinners through the Passover of his Son and the gift of his Spirit, through the prayer and ministry of the Church:

\begin{quote}
God, the Father of mercies,  
through the death and the resurrection of his Son  
has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us  
for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church  
may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (1449)
\end{quote}

Only God forgives sins. Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven." Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name. (1441)

In this sacrament, the sinner, placing himself before the merciful judgment of God, anticipates in a certain way the judgment to which he will be subjected at the end of his earthly life. For it is now, in this life, that we are offered the choice between life and death, and it is only by the road of conversion that we can enter the Kingdom, from which one is excluded by grave sin. In converting to Christ through penance and faith, the sinner passes from death to life and "does not come into judgment." (1470)
Reconciliation Glossary and Activity

The following terminology can be used as part of an activity with young people. Write the words on a newsprint or a chalkboard. Invite the students to define the terms. See how many they can guess.

**CONTRITION:** The sorrow for and hatred of committed sins, coupled with the firm purpose to sin no more. Contrition is necessary to make a good Confession and for the priest, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to forgive a person for their sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

**PENANCE:** In general, an attitude of the heart in which one experiences regret for past sin and commits to a change in behavior or attitudes; particular acts of penance may include the practice of spiritual disciplines such as prayer or fasting, or participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

**ABSOLUTION:** An essential part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in which the priest, through the power of the Holy Spirit, pardons the sins of the person in confession, in the name of God and of the Church.

**MORTAL SIN:** An action so contrary to the will of God that it results in a complete separation from God and God’s grace. As a consequence of that separation, the person is condemned to eternal death. This type of sin requires three conditions: it must involve grave matter, the person must have full knowledge of the evil of the act, and the person must give his or her full consent in committing the act.

**VENIAL SIN:** A less serious offence against the will of God that diminishes one’s personal character and weakens but does not rupture one’s relationship with God.

**SIN OF OMISSION:** Failure to do something good or neglecting one’s conscience to do something good such as helping someone when one knows he/she could have done so, failure to attend mass when it was possible to do so.

**RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION:** One of the seven sacraments of the Church where a person receives forgiveness of sins and is reconciled through both God and the Church.

**CONVERSION:** A profound change of heart, turning away from sin and toward God.

**CONSCIENCE:** The “interior voice” of a person, a God-given internal sense of what is morally wrong or right. It leads people to understand themselves as responsible for their actions, and prompts them to do good and avoid evil.

**EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:** Prayerful reflection on and assessment of one’s own words, attitudes, and actions in light of the Gospel of Jesus; more specifically, the conscious evaluation of one’s life in preparation for reception of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

**SEAL OF CONFESSION:** The priest’s obligation to keep absolutely secret what a penitent has told him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation; also known as the sacrament seal.
Step by Step Guide for Reconciliation

Preparation
Before going to confession, take time to compare your life with the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the example of Christ and then pray to God for forgiveness.

Going to Confession
After the priest welcomes you, both of you make the sign of the cross. Then you may wish to indicate facts about your life, the time of your last confession, difficulties in leading the Christian life, and anything else that may help you feel at ease.

Confession of Sins and Act of Penance
Confess your sins. The priest then offers suitable advice and gives acts of penance or satisfaction, which may include prayer, self-denial, or works of mercy.

Prayer of the Penitent
Pray a prayer expressing sorrow for your sins and resolving not to sin again. Two suggested prayers are given here:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. (Rite of Penance, no. 45)

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit restore me to friendship with your Father, cleanse me from every stain of sin in the blood you shed for me, and raise me to new life for the glory of your name. (Rite of Penance, no. 91)

Absolution
The priest extends his hands over your head and pronounces the formula of absolution, making the sign of the cross over your head during the final words. You answer, ‘Amen.”

Dismissal
The priest dismisses you with the command to go in peace. Continue to express your conversion through a life renewed according to the Gospel and more and more steeped in the love of God.
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

It’s not easy to walk into a confessional. Harder yet is being honest with yourself enough to walk in prepared to talk about what he’s done wrong and how he can make amends.

To thoroughly examine your consciences, here are the 10 Commandments with corresponding questions helpful in preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation.

1. First Commandment
   - Do you worship the false gods of status, consumerism or peer approval?
   - Do you ignore or avoid old friends in order to be part of the popular crowd? Do you make unreasonable demands on your parents for clothes or money?
   - Do you give support to your peers when they tell racial or ethnic jokes? Do you show indifference toward the poor and think of them as losers by social standards?

2. Second Commandment
   - Do you use language that you would never speak in front of your grandmother?
   - Is your language a reflection of a low opinion of others and insults?

3. Third Commandment
   - Do you skip mass because few of your friends go to church or because you feel that the gift of God's presence should be as entertaining as MTV?

4. Fourth Commandment
   - Do you thank your parents for what they do for you?
   - Do you offer to help around the house?
   - Do you value your family members as much as you do your friends?

5. Fifth Commandment
   - Do you value your life and that of others?
   - Do you drink and drive or travel with those who do?
   - Do you experiment with drugs and show no regard to their effect on your grades, your self-respect or your relationships?
   - Have you ever hit your girlfriend or boyfriend?

6. Sixth Commandment
   - Do you use other people for your own selfish pleasure?
   - Do you lie to get others to act against their values?
   - Do you see sex as a way to be popular or to rebel against your parents?

7. Seventh Commandment
   - Do you cheat on tests or homework?
   - Do you ever shoplift or take things that don’t belong to you?

8. Eighth Commandment
   - Do you gossip or pass on rumors that hurt other people?
   - Can you be trusted to keep a confidence?
   - Do you lie to protect your own ego, even if someone will be hurt?

9. Ninth Commandment
   - Are you envious of others? Do you resent their popularity or success?
   - Do you feel you have to put others down in order to feel better about yourself?

10. Tenth Commandment
    - Do you resent your parents when they tell you they cannot afford to buy the things that you feel you need to keep up with your friends?
    - Do you ever ask your parents what their financial worries are?
We Don’t Really Eat Christ’s Body - Or Do We?

This article by Mary Beth Bonnaci could be used to educate young people about the Real Presence prior to participating in Eucharistic Adoration.

It's easy to go to Mass on auto pilot. You genuflect, go into the pew, sit down, stand up, kneel, mumble prayers, think about your girlfriend or your plans for the afternoon, mumble prayers, stand again, shake someone’s hand, kneel, get up, walk up the aisle, receive the body and blood of Christ...

Hey, wait a minute! Receive the body of Christ? Take His actual flesh into your mouth and into your digestive system, eat the flesh of a guy who lived 2000 years ago? You do that? You do it without even thinking about it?

Maybe it’s time to do a little thinking. Do you believe that’s what you’re doing? Or is Communion just another part of the Mass for you? Do you take it seriously, or is it just one more hoop to jump through before you get to go home and talk on the phone?

A lot of Catholics aren’t too clear on this whole concept of the Eucharist. They’re not too sure what it is. The Church doesn’t really believe it’s the actual body and blood of Christ, does it? It’s just a symbolic thing, right? A meal, right? I Mean, otherwise it’d be too gross to even think about, much less do.

Well, guess again. The Church does believe the Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ. After the words of consecration (“This is My body ..." and "This is My blood..."), the bread and wine are no longer bread and wine. They’ve become Jesus Christ: body, blood, soul and divinity. He’s there.

So how did we come up with this one? Did a bunch of bishops get together? (“Hey guys, here's a good one. We’ll make them believe that the wine becomes blood. That’ll freak them out!”) No. We don’t need to make this stuff up. Like everything else, we believe it because Christ told us it’s true.

It all happened in the Gospel of John. Jesus was teaching His disciples, talking about bread. And He said something really astounding. He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you have no life in you ... for My flesh is real food indeed and My blood is real drink indeed" (Jn 6:53-55). He was pretty adamant on the point.

The disciples figured He didn’t really mean it. They asked again. And again. He insisted He meant it. "Real food indeed. Real drink indeed." They should've known when He said, "Truly, truly." He wasn’t fooling around.

They naturally freaked out. Living the commandments was fine. Loving your neighbor was nice. But cannibalism wasn’t really their gig. The next chapter says, "After this many of His disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him" (Jn 6:66). He lost a lot of support. But He never said, "Come on, guys! I didn't really mean it! It's just symbolic." He let them go. Christ wouldn’t do that over a misunderstanding. He meant what He said.
So how do we get this bread which is really His body? He told us at the Last Supper. "And He took bread and when He had given thanks He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." And likewise he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (Lk 22:19-20).

So Christ made things pretty clear. Unless we eat His flesh, we have no life within us. Receiving the Eucharist is a big deal. It's essential to our life in Him. It's essential to staying on the right side of the gap between God and man.

It's a pretty awesome thing when you think about it. God, the big God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who created the universe and holds it in existence -- He comes into you in a very real, very physical way. He becomes tangibly present in your body, He gets as close as He possibly could.

When you understand that, you get a little better understanding of people who go to Mass every day. They're not just going to sit down, stand up, mumble prayers and kneel. They're going to receive the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. They're going to drink Him into their lives, literally, so that He remains present to them. They're going so that, with Him constantly present, they'll be better able to love as He loves. They'll be stronger Christians and live better lives. They don't go because they're really good people. At least that's not why I go. I go because I need a lot of help.

All of this tells us something about how we should approach Communion. He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Not "Do this thinking about your homework," or "Do this without paying attention." Receiving the Eucharist is a profound act. It's as close as you'll get to God in this life. If we want to receive all the benefit we can from it, we need to have the right attitude. Our approach needs to be prayerful, respectful and reverent.

We also need to approach the Eucharist "clean." We can't just sin all week, and then expect to receive the body and blood of Christ. Receiving worthily means that going to Him with a clear conscience. If you've committed a serious sin which you haven't confessed, to go to Communion would be another serious sin. It's a "slap in the face" to God. Far from strengthening your faith, receiving Communion unworthily will diminish it. I believe it was Voltaire who said that the way to lose your faith is to commit a serious sin and then go to Communion. It's a "grace drain" and it's really wrong.

So the Eucharist is serious business. It's the best thing we have going in our day to day life -- constant, ongoing contact with the living God. It's our "daily bread" that nourishes our spiritual life. It provides our recommended daily intake of grace.

Don't take the Eucharist lightly. Pay attention to the consecration. Something really incredible is happening. And don't settle for "starvation rations:" Receive the Eucharist often. It's your spiritual food. You need it.

On Eucharistic Adoration...

Have you ever been over at a good friend’s house for supper, someone that you really enjoy being with, and when you finish eating, you want to spend more time with that friend, so you talked in the living room, or went outside on the porch? Eating a meal with your friend was satisfying, but you still wanted to relax and just hang around for just a little while longer.

Well, since the Mass is the source and summit of our Christian life, it means a lot to us; it is a holy meal where we partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus. But like any friend, we need some extra time together to develop our friendship with Jesus even more. We can do this with Jesus in our adoration of Him before the tabernacle or by worshiping Jesus exposed in the monstrance for adoration. So be a good friend to Jesus, and stick around a while longer.

Thirty minutes isn’t long enough to...

- List all the things in your life for which you are thankful...
- Name all the people who ever touched your life with their faith...
- Consider all the sins you have committed...
- Find at least one element of Christ in all your classmates...
- Name the traits of Christ in all your family members...
- List all the ways that God has blessed you...
- Consider all the folks you would like God to bless...
- Name all those people who need your prayers...
- List all the reasons you are glad you’re alive...
- Name all the reasons you should love God...
- Close your eyes and put yourself totally and completely in the presence of God...
Saying the Rosary

The Rosary will be part of the prayers pilgrims say while walking along the pilgrimage route. Some familiarity with the process of saying the Rosary might be helpful.

1. While holding the Crucifix in the hand, make the Sign of the Cross and recite the Apostles’ Creed.
2. On the first large bead, recite the Our Father.
3. On the three small beads recite the Hail Mary for an increase in the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, followed by praying the Glory Be.
4. For each decade identify the mystery and meditate on the mystery; then recite on the larger bead the Our Father.
5. On the ten small beads, recite the Hail Mary, keeping in mind the mystery.
6. Recite the Glory Be, followed by the Fatima prayer.
7. Repeat this for five decades and conclude by praying the Hail Holy Queen.
**Prayers of the Rosary**

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<tr>
<th>Sign of the Cross</th>
<th>Hail Mary</th>
<th>The Glorious Mysteries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.</td>
<td>Hail Mary, full of Grace. The Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou amongst women, And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God Pray for us, sinners, Now, and at the hour of our death. Amen</td>
<td>The Resurrection of our Lord The Ascension into Heaven The Descent of the Holy Spirit The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven The Crownning of Our Lady in Heaven</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Apostle’s Creed</th>
<th>The Mysteries</th>
<th>Fatima Prayer</th>
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<tr>
<td>I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He went down to the dead. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.</td>
<td>The complete Rosary is composed of twenty decades. It is divided into four distinct parts of five decades each, which may be said separately at different times of the day. They comprise: Note: If you say only five decades a day, it is customary to say the Joyful Mysteries on Monday and Saturday, the Luminous Mysteries on Thursday, the Sorrowful Mysteries on Tuesday and Friday, and the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesday and Sunday.</td>
<td>O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Our Father</th>
<th>The Joyful Mysteries</th>
<th>Hail, Holy Queen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.</td>
<td>The Annunciation The Visitation The Nativity The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple Jesus is Lost and Found in the Temple</td>
<td>Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Glory Be</th>
<th>The Luminous Mysteries</th>
<th>P. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.</td>
<td>The Baptism of Jesus The Miracle at Cana The Proclamation of the Kingdom The Transfiguration The Institution of the Eucharist</td>
<td>Let us Pray: O God, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life. Grant, we beseech Thee that in meditating upon these mysteries of the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Agony in the Garden The Scourging at the Pillar The Crowning with Thorns The Carrying of the Cross to Calvary The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus</td>
<td>O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.</td>
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Why The Cross?

Ray Vander Laan has conducted dozens of tours to Israel, and the same thing happens each time he lead the group to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. Located just outside the city, it is one of the suggested sites for Golgotha.

One of the first questions he is asked is, “Was Jesus crucified here?” In his response, we learn a great deal that can be helpful as we use the Pilgrimage Cross in our ministry.

This article, written by Ray Vander Laan several years ago, is reprinted with permission.

“Archaeological evidence seems to indicate He wasn’t,” I reply as we stand at the base of a rocky cliff. “I also believe that Jesus was not crucified on the top of a hill; but at the foot, similar to where we are now standing.

“The Romans introduced crucifixion to Israel,” I continue. “Jews had previously put people guilty of blasphemy and sexual immorality to death by stoning, but the Romans crucified their victims at the base of a hill so the condemned would be easily seen by passerby.”

During Palestine’s 400-year occupation by Rome, thousands were crucified, and this form of execution was governed by specific rules. The idea was to make this horrible procedure as painful as possible and an example to others. Jesus’ long suffering on the Cross was dreadful.

Directed by Almighty God, no events have been more central or history-changing than the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Messiah. Before crucifixion existed, ancient biblical texts revealed God’s carefully detailed plans regarding Jesus’ death. Let’s take a look at the facts.

ROMAN CUSTOMS

1. Roman crucifixion took place in a public location outside the city (Psalm 22:6-7, 17).
2. The Romans normally crucified people naked (Matthew 27:35).
3. Romans preferred a cross in the shape of an uppercase T rather than a lowercase t. Crosses were quite low, only 5 to 6 feet off the ground (Matthew 27:48).
4. The condemned person was nailed to the cross through the wrists and ankles. In John 20:27, the Greek word for “hand” refers to the part of the arm from the palm to the wrist. Evidence indicates that the spikes were driven through the bones of the arm where they join at the wrist.

ROMAN PROCEDURES

1. The Romans first flogged the condemned person, which often left the prisoner near death (John 19:1, Isaiah 53:5).
2. The crossbar was tied to the prisoner’s shoulders. He was paraded through the streets for humiliation and as an example (Psalm 22:6). A soldier carried a sign indicating the crime the person had committed (John 19:16-19).
3. At the place of execution, the prisoner's wrists were nailed to the crossbar. The bar was lifted and placed on the stake, which was already in the ground. The condemned person's ankles were then nailed to the stake. Finally, the sign identifying the person's crime was attached to the stake. The prisoner, in excruciating pain, eventually died of asphyxiation and loss of blood (Psalm 22: 14, 16; John 19:19).

During the time of Christ, crucifixion was a regular occurrence. So what made Jesus’ crucifixion any different?

1. Prisoners could remain conscious for days. Sometimes the Roman soldiers shortened the prisoner’s suffering by breaking his legs. Because his legs no longer supported the weight of his body, he suffocated faster. Jesus died without any broken bones (John 19:33; Exodus 12:46; Exodus 34:20).

2. Roman soldiers kept the victim's possessions (Matthew 27:35; Psalm 22:18).

3. Prisoners could talk only in short bursts because of the stress on their diaphragms. As Jesus hung on the cross, His statements were short:
   - “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).
   - “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
   - “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22:1).
   - “I am thirsty” (John 19:28).
   - “It is finished” (John 19:30).
   - “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

THE LAMB OF GOD

During my Israel tours, I explain to the group that Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem on the 10th day of the Jewish month the day the Passover lamb was chosen for the Passover offering. As each Jewish family selected a lamb to die on Passover (Exodus 12:3), their most passionate desire was for a Messiah, a savior, to come. Jesus' arrival on this particular day was as if God was saying: “Here’s my lamb. Will you choose Him?”

Could the similarity between the Passover lamb and Jesus’ destiny to become God's sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world be just a coincidence? Traditionally, the daily sacrifice was slaughtered at 3 o’clock in the afternoon, including on the day of Passover. At that time, the priest stood at the pinnacle of the temple and blew the shofar, or the ram’s horn.

As Jesus hung on the Cross, He heard the piercing blast of the shofar carry across the city. Jesus recognized that the hour of His sacrifice had come. When the knife slit the throat of the Passover lamb, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “It is finished.” At that moment, the Passover lamb, and God’s substitute our Passover Lamb died at 3:00 p.m.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away your sins and the sins of the world. Have you asked God’s Son to forgive you for your wrong actions and attitudes? Is salvation your greatest need? If so, you can accept Jesus for who He really is and receive eternal life.
A “POLITICALLY CORRECT” MESSIAH

Culturally, Passover was a time when the Jewish longing for a messiah intensified. Jewish tradition states that the Temple door was to remain open on Passover eve just in case the Messiah arrived.

During this festival, Jewish people celebrated deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but in Jesus’ time it angered them that Jerusalem was under foreign control. Messianic fervor fueled a dangerous atmosphere.

Antonia, the Roman fortress that housed Roman soldiers in Jerusalem, was located at the north end of the Temple Mount. During Passover, Antonia was reinforced with extra troops. Episodes involving bloodshed during Passover were not unusual.

Nationalistic Jews used the people’s awareness of prophecy to declare themselves as messiahs to gain a following, which sometimes erupted into riots. “Messiahs” and their followers who created problems for the Romans were often killed. Making a public spectacle was tantamount to a death wish.

Why would the Romans feel threatened by a Jewish rabbi from Galilee riding a donkey and surrounded by a joyful crowd waving palm branches?

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people chanted “Hosanna” and shouted “Please save us, O son of David!” (Matthew 21:9). In effect, they were proclaiming Jesus as military and political savior. The Jews wanted a warrior-messiah who, like David triumphed over the enemy. Hosanna, a nationalistic chant, had become a prayer for political deliverance. It meant “Give me my freedom.” Originally, hosanna and the palms were linked to the Jewish feast of Sukkot, which included the hosanna prayer from Psalm 118:25-26. Composed of two Hebrew words hosha meant “save” and na added a sense of urgency. Thus, hosanna meant “Please save!” or “Help, please!”

The palm, a symbol of Jewish national identity, had little to do with peace and love. Palm branches were to the Jews what the Stars and Stripes are to Americans. The waving of the palm branches led Jesus to weep.

When messianic anticipation was at its highest, Jesus proclaimed His messianic identity. Those assembled along the road into Jerusalem did not recognize Jesus’ true identity as the promised Messiah who would bring eternal salvation (Zechariah 9:9-10), not just destroy the enemy of the day.

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Pilgrimage Follow Up

Welcoming Home Ceremony

It is important to welcome home our pilgrims. Now that they have had this experience, the parish or school has an obligation to recognize the experience and change in the pilgrims. Just as we send them on pilgrimage, we must welcome them home from pilgrimage.

Following Communion the pilgrims are called by name to stand before the congregation. Adults and youth should be called forward together with no distinguishing between them.

Presider:
Your pilgrimage has been a privileged period of grace given to you and to us by God. The places you have visited and the people you have met are signs of that house not built with hands, namely the Body of Christ, in which we are the living stones built upon Christ, the cornerstone. As you have returned home, live up to the vocation God has given you: to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims for his own, so that you may everywhere proclaim the goodness of him who called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

Bow your heads and ask for God's blessing.
Blessed are you, O God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
From all races of the earth
you have chosen a people dedicated to you,
eager to do what is right.
Your grace has moved the hearts of these, your friends,
to love you more deeply and to serve you more generously.
We ask you to bless them,
so that they may tell of your wonderful deeds
and give proof of them in their lives.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen

Turning to the people:
And for those of us receiving these pilgrims back into our community, bow your heads and ask for God’s blessing.

Blessed are you, O God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through your Son you made the deaf hear
and you gave sight to the blind.
Your grace has worked through this community,
teaching us to love and serve.
We ask you to bless us,
so that we might listen to the lessons
and see the proof of your presence in the lives of these pilgrims.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen