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
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. 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. 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. R.

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

For these and all the prayers we hold in our hearts we pray. R.

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.
All: Amen.

Concluding Rite
Leader: May the Lord guide us and direct our journey in safety.
All: Amen

Leader: May the Lord be your companion along the way.
All: Amen

Leader: May the Lord grant that the journey you begin, relying on him, will end happily through his protection.
All: Amen

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