



## NCYC 2017 FORMATION SESSIONS

Ready-made session plans for group leaders

Author: Deacon Bill Hathaway, St. Edward, Lowell

These sessions were written for group leaders to help them prepare their pilgrims for NCYC 2017.



## December 2016 Group Session

### Overview

The December Group Session has two purposes. First, it provides an introduction to NCYC for those who have never attended and it is a vehicle for those who have attended to reflect on their experiences.

Second, it begins to develop the concept of “Pilgrimage” to the group.

Three special notes about this session:

- The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers (NFCYM) is very late in providing information about NCYC 2017 to the general public (including most Youth Ministers!). As a result, many of the resources suggested are from NCYC 2015. While most are great for 2017 you might have to explain the 2015 branding.
- You really, really, should become at least a little familiar with the material Kevin Driscoll has prepared and available on the Diocese of Gary website at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and especially Kevin’s cost estimates. You **WILL** be asked about cost as soon as you open the gathering for questions.
- Finally, since December is a very busy time you might not want to devote an entire youth ministry gathering to NCYC. Feel free to take the information provided and adapt it for your own circumstances. While that is recommended all future program guides it’s especially important for December 2016.

### Session Preview

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Getting to know you (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary “The Way Video” for December (5 minutes)
- What is NCYC?(20 minutes)
- Pilgrimage? (5 minutes)
- Discussion - Questions, concerns and solutions (variable - use 15 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## Preparation

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. If desired, it could be part of an information booklet/handout prepared for your group.
- Part of the explanation of “What is NCYC?” includes comments from past participants. Make sure that they know you’ll be asking them to speak for a couple of minutes so that they can prepare before the gathering.
- Since you’ll probably want to show several videos during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested.
- View the videos listed in the Resources section to determine if you want to use any of them.
- During the “Discussion” portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used for the opening Ice Breaker and to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- Copies of the opening prayer for each participant or the prayer available to be projected with you’re A/V equipment.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gather recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Getting to Know You** (10 minutes)

***Tell the participants that they will have the opportunity to speed interview three different people and then give a quick summary of the interview to the group.***

***As people to pair up. They are to ask each other the following two questions:***

- What's your name?
- What was the best trip you went on?

***Give the participants only a minute or so to answer.***

***Ask your group to find another partner and answer these two questions:***

- What's your name?
- What one thing you'd make sure you bring on a long trip?

***Keep the conversation moving!***

***Ask your group one more time to find another partner and answer these two questions:***

- What's your name?
- If you could take a trip to any place in the United States, where would it be?

***After the last questions are asked and answered go to each person, have them say their name and then the three people who interviewed them quickly give the answers to the interview questions.***

## **Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for December** (5 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for December.***

*Make sure you view it before the session and prepare a few remarks about it that might pertain to your group.*

*Kevin Driscoll will email group leaders the link to the video, or you can find the latest video at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com)*

## **What is NCYC?** (20 minutes)

NCYC is short for National Catholic Youth Conference.

It's a gathering of Catholic Youth and Youth Ministers from the whole United States as well as some foreign countries. It's held every two years - the next one will be in Indianapolis from November 16 through November 19 - the weekend before Thanksgiving. NCYC is sponsored by the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers (NFCYM).

Let me give you a little history before we get into the details.

The first NCYC was held way back in 1983 in a split venue with around 3,300 people attending. For those of you who aren't great at doing mental calculations, that was 33 years ago!

Attendance grew slowly, breaking the 10,000 attendee barrier in the 1995 NCYC in Minneapolis when 11,000 participated.

In 1999 the NCYC in St. Louis had over 22,000 participants.

In 2011 NCYC was held in Indianapolis as were the NCYC in 2013 and 2015 when more than 25,000 people participated. Indianapolis is such a great convention city that NCYC 2017 will be there also.

That's great for us. Indianapolis is close enough to keep transportation costs low and we're used to the climate! Can you imagine what the people from Hawaii felt like when the temperature dipped to 27° and more than an inch of snow fell in 2015?

If you go to the "Official" website or look-up NCYC on the Internet you might see it listed as a three day event. That's not quite right. Here's how the event breaks down for people from the Diocese of Gary:

- Thursday is a travel, check-in, acclimatize and begin the experience day. Yes, Thursday and Friday are school days in most school corporations but attendance at religious events is an excused absence. After arriving in Indianapolis we'll check into our hotel, take a quick walk around, grab something for supper and then go to Lucas Oil Stadium for the Opening Session. When the Opening ends at 10pm it's a short, 20 minute walk back to the hotel. We're lucky because we're staying close enough to easily walk.
- Friday is a full day of activities
- Saturday is also a full day of activities - closing with a huge Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium that will probably end between 10:30p and 11p. Since it's so late when we get done we'll stay one more night in Indy.
- Sunday it's pack-up and head back home.

So what happens between the Opening Session and the Closing Mass? If you haven't been there you wouldn't believe it. There are additional sessions in Lucas Oil Stadium where everybody attends - morning and evening on Friday and Saturday morning. All of the Lucas Oil Stadium events include almost an hour of live entertainment before the actual session with nationally known performers.

There are numerous workshops and break-out sessions during the day. These range in size from maybe 30 people attending to mega-workshops where thousands might participate. In 2015 there were more than 120 workshops spread over Friday and Saturday so there's something to interest everyone!

But that's not all! There are opportunities for Confession, daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and much more.

And then there's what NCYC calls the Thematic Park - a huge area at the Indianapolis Convention Center that, as the 2015 NCYC Program states, includes "colleges, companies, ministries, organizations, religious communities and vendors." In 2015 more than 150 groups had booths and open floor areas. In addition there's entertainment, the opportunity to participate in service projects and the opportunity to meet and visit with some of the many Bishops who participate in NCYC.

***The next section is optional and depends on the ability to show videos and the time allotted to the next item.***

Words don't really convey the feel of the event. Let's take a look at a (couple of) videos to help you get a feel for NCYC.

***This next portion really ought to be included if you have anyone in your group who as attended a previous NCYC. Personal testimony is always very powerful. Make sure that those who will be sharing have prepared their comments!***

Let's hear from some people who have participated in NCYC in the past.

*Comments...*

Thanks for sharing! I hope that all of this has given you an idea of what NCYC is all about.

## **Pilgrimage? (5 minutes)**

One of the exciting things about NCYC is that the Diocese is treating it as a Pilgrimage with a number programs to support that. While we'll have much later here's a brief introduction.

What's a Pilgrimage? Some people say that it's "praying with your feet." It is a "journey of faith" and going to celebrate at a holy place. It's more than just getting into a car and driving - it's a whole process in which the actual journey is just a part.

Certain times in Jesus' life have been referred to as a journey or pilgrimage.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph journeyed to Jerusalem each year for Passover and Luke especially notes a journey when Jesus was 12. (Luke 2:41-52).

Jesus went to Jerusalem because of a Feast and cured a sick man on the Sabbath in John 5:1-18. The Bible suggests that this was the Jewish Pentecost or Shavuot (Feast of Weeks).

In John 7 Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) or Sukkot.

These three Jewish Feasts are known as Pilgrimage Feasts because Jews travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate them (cf Acts 2).

Pilgrimages became popular in Christianity at a very early date and have remained popular even today. In August over 80 people from the Diocese of Gary joined over 300,000 Pilgrims from the United States and approximately 3 million Pilgrims from throughout the world as they journeyed to World Youth Day.

We'll have lots more about Pilgrimages as we prepare for our journey to Indianapolis and NCYC!

## **Discussion - Questions, concerns and solutions**

(variable time - use 15 minutes to keep total to one hour)

***Use this time to cover any aspects of NCYC that are particular to the Parish. While there are too many possible topics to list them all it's reasonable to expect interest in the following areas:***

- Cost
- Hotel
- Roommates
- Transportation
- Fundraising
- Safety
- Chaperones
- Registration Deadlines
- Schedule going forward
- Cost

## **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

## Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Videos and Pictures**

Three promotional videos for NCYC are available on Youtube:

- 2017 Promo - [is.gd/ncycyoutube1](https://is.gd/ncycyoutube1)
- 2015 Promo 1 - [is.gd/ncycyoutube2](https://is.gd/ncycyoutube2)
- 2015 Promo 2 - [is.gd/ncycyoutube3](https://is.gd/ncycyoutube3)

While there are some references in the 2015 promos specific to that year, they are certainly usable in an information session - you need to view them and decide which works best for your group.

You can find many, many more videos available on Youtube, including one Kevin Driscoll posted of Bishop Hying's talk at NCYC 2015: [is.gd/hyingncyc](https://is.gd/hyingncyc)

Make sure that you scroll through the Diocesan picture albums from NCYC 2013 and NCYC 2015. You can find them at [is.gd/garypics](https://is.gd/garypics)

## **General Pilgrimage Resources**

Wikipedia has a short entry for Christian Pilgrimages as well as a longer one for pilgrimages in general. A quick read but not terribly informative.

Wikipedia Christian Pilgrimage - [is.gd/ncycres01](https://is.gd/ncycres01)

Wikipedia Pilgrimage - [is.gd/ncycres02](https://is.gd/ncycres02)

The Catholic Encyclopedia (1911) has a rather long article on Pilgrimages but it is somewhat esoteric.

[is.gd/ncycres03](https://is.gd/ncycres03)

From World Youth Day a short but adequate discussion of Pilgrimages.

[is.gd/ncycres04](https://is.gd/ncycres04)

A review of the book, *The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*, offers some insights and is a quick read.

[is.gd/ncycres05](https://is.gd/ncycres05)

Although they could have been included in the introduction they weren't and so here are the 8 practices: 1)Hearing the Call and Responding, 2)Packing lightly, 3)Crossing the Threshold, 4)Walking, 5)Being uncomfortable, 6)Beginning again, 7)Embracing the Unknown, 8)Coming Home.

From a Catholic Church in Alberta Canada - Life as a Pilgrimage

[is.gd/ncycres12](https://is.gd/ncycres12)

A Speech to a group of pilgrims by Pope Francis. Note especially point #1 in which he instructs them to be “pilgrims” and not “wanderers” in life.

[is.gd/ncycres07](http://is.gd/ncycres07)

A message by Pope Francis to another group of pilgrims. This is good and could be used as a handout to aid discussion/reflection.

[is.gd/ncycres08](http://is.gd/ncycres08)

The idea of being a Pilgrim People is found frequently in Papal documents. As an example read *Evangelii Gaudium* by Pope Francis and do a search for “pilgrim.” There are 13 entries.

[is.gd/ncycres09](http://is.gd/ncycres09)

A Pilgrim People by the Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

[is.gd/ncycres10](http://is.gd/ncycres10)



While it's from 2004 that was a Lectionary “A” Year - just like 2017 so read this reflection on the Readings for the First Sunday of Advent. You might even use this to begin the conversation in November!

[is.gd/ncycres11](http://is.gd/ncycres11)

## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is a preliminary schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings. The Pilgrimage Committee will be refining this in December. A final list will be available in January.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February 2017 - The Call
- March 2017 - What Brings Me Here
- April 2017 - Defining Expectations
- May 2017 - Expectations Continued
- June 2017 - Beginning the Movement
- July 2017 - Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018



# January 2017 Group Session

## Overview

The January Group Session is similar to the December Session but begins to look more deeply into the aspects of “pilgrimage.” Like the December Session, it provides an introduction to NCYC for those who have never attended and it is a vehicle for those who have attended to reflect on their experiences.

In the December Session the concept of “Pilgrimage” was presented. This month we take a closer look at the “stages” a Pilgrimage consists of. We’ll be stepping through these stages this year as we continue The Way to NCYC and beyond.

Four special notes about this session:

- Unfortunately, there’s been no change in availability of NCYC information from the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers (NFCYM). There were a number of resources offered in the December 2016 Group Session package that were from NCYC 2015. Those are still available.
- One more time - You really, really, should become at least a little familiar with the material Kevin Driscoll has prepared and available on the Diocese of Gary website at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and especially Kevin’s cost estimates. You **WILL** be asked about cost as soon as you open the gathering for questions.
- We do suggest that January is the time to begin scheduling sessions/meetings where the main focus is The Way to NCYC. That doesn’t mean that only those planning on attending NCYC should attend. What’s included has value beyond NCYC and participating in the sessions just might help someone make the decision to attend.
- Since many Youth Ministries were on “Christmas Schedule” in December you might have not used the December Group Session with your group. If that’s the case please take one more look through the December Session to see if there’s anything there that you’d like to include in January. As an alternative, you might want to use the December Session outline as the basis for an “Information Meeting” for potential participants and families. If needed, you could also plan a short “Pre-Meeting” to provide an introduction to those potential participants and families who weren’t able to attend your other NCYC meetings. As always, these Sessions shouldn’t be considered as a mandatory presentation you have to follow exactly. Rather, they’re offered as a resource for you to use as you see fit for your ministry.

## Session Preview

- Pre-Meeting offered for those who haven't participated in earlier informational sessions (Optional - see above)
- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Getting to know you (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for January (5 minutes)
- Pilgrimage - One More Time (10 minutes)
- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Am I Too Busy? Presentation and discussion (variable - use 25 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## Preparation

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. It sounds like there's some consensus building to adopt this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We'll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.
- Copies of the "Too Busy" handout.
- There's an optional video from Bishop Hying that can be used to close the discussion. See it at <https://is.gd/Dh8qbS>. Watch it to decide whether you'll use it or not.
- The main section in the presentation uses a story to try to get across the idea of importance. Several people who reviewed this presentation thought the story a little hokey. Read it and feel free to make your own metaphor.
- Since you'll probably want to show at least the January "The Way" video during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested.
- During the "Am I too busy..." portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used for the opening Ice Breaker and to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- If you prepared handouts for the December session and/or Information Sessions you might want to have some extras available for this gathering for attendees who are just coming to the NCYC experience.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

- Review the December 2016 Group Session package for information you might want to use if this is your first NCYC Pilgrimage gathering. Find it at <https://is.gd/mDmo3T> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gather recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Getting to Know You** (10 minutes)

***Tell the participants that they will have the opportunity to share a favorite vacation or trip that they've taken or made.***

***As people to pair up. They are to ask each other the following two questions:***

- What was a vacation or trip you've made that you really enjoyed?
- What made it so special?

***Give the participants a couple of minutes to share with each other.***

***After an appropriate time (you'll know based on how the conversations are flowing) ask each person to give a very short, one or two sentence recap of what their partner told them in response to the two questions. The meeting leader or someone on the ministry team might want to model the response first - short and succinct. If you have a very large group you might have to limit the responses to a subset of participants.***

## **Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for January** (5 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for January.***

*Make sure you view it before the session and prepare a few remarks about it that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **Pilgrimage?** (10 minutes)

One of the exciting things about NCYC is that the Diocese is treating it as a Pilgrimage with a number programs to support that. NCYC is the every-other-year gathering of high school aged Catholics from around the US and neighboring countries.

What's a Pilgrimage? Some people say that it's "praying with your feet." It is a "journey of faith" and going to celebrate at a holy place. It's more than just getting into a car and driving - it's a whole process in which the actual journey is just a part.

Pilgrimages became popular in Christianity at a very early date and have remained popular even today. In August over 80 people from the Diocese of Gary joined over 300,000 Pilgrims from the United States and approximately 3 million Pilgrims from throughout the world as they journeyed to World Youth Day.

In July/August this year Bishop Hying will be leading a pilgrimage group of young adults (20's and 30's - post high school) on a 71-mile walk along the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain.

So, is a pilgrimage just throwing some clothes in a bag and starting walking?

Well, it could be but it really shouldn't be.

See, if you wait to the last minute you'll get something from the pilgrimage but it won't be anything like what it could have been. To get the most benefit from a pilgrimage you really have to do some things ahead of time.

And, if you're doing this pilgrimage on your own and not part of a larger group, you might find that you don't have any place to stay and nothing to eat and no way to pay for your pilgrimage expenses and maybe not even a good idea how to take the first step and make sure it's in the right direction.

We'll be covering the practical NCYC things separately - things like how much is this going to cost and how are we going to pay for this - what sort of fun raising are we going to do? Things like how are we going to get to Indy and back and who's going to room with who?

Right now let's talk about the Spiritual Steps or Spiritual Phases of a pilgrimage:

While different people have identified different steps let's talk about a list with 11 steps.

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?
- What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?

There are a lots of steps listed - as we keep moving toward NCYC you'll get a pretty good idea of what they each are.

Any questions?

OK - let's look at #1 on the list

## **Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Am I Too Busy?**

*(variable time - use 25 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

***Please take a look at the end of the Resources section for an alternate presentation that uses a purchased resource.***

Jesus didn't do everything people asked him to do and he didn't expect his disciples to do so either. There were times when he needed to stop what he was doing and to step back a bit to be able to do what he needed to do in the way he needed to do it.

Here are a couple of passages from Scripture that show this:

At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place (to pray). The crowds went looking for him, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent."

Luke 4:42-43

The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.

Mark 6:30-32

See, Jesus knew that he couldn't do everything that people were asking him to do. The first passage happens when Jesus is in Capernaum. He was teaching, preaching, healing, curing and the people didn't want him to go. They wanted Jesus to stay with them always.

But that wouldn't be doing the work of the Father. Jesus came to be Savior for all - not just the people in Capernaum.

So what does Jesus do? He goes off to a deserted place - a place that was free of distractions. He goes off to be with the Father and to refresh the ministry that was doing the will of the Father.

And after that he had to tell the people in Capernaum that he was sorry that he couldn't stay with them at that time but needed to go and share his ministry with others - spreading the Father's Word near and far.

The second passage occurs right after Jesus' disciples come back after having been sent out and reporting all the good works that they had done.

But note that Jesus doesn't immediately send them back out to work miracles in his name - to teach and preach.

Instead, Jesus tells the apostles to come away by themselves to a deserted place - a place where they could center themselves and focus on what was really important.

Right after this moving away and focusing Jesus, assisted by the disciples, feeds the multitude with five loaves and two fish after a day of teaching them.

A pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to step away from the everyday demands on our time to focus on what's really important. A pilgrimage isn't locking yourself away in the silence and isolation of a cave but is placing yourself on a journey to a destination that lets you put away for a time the distractions that keep you from what's most important. It's also a time to determine what actually is important, what is worthy of our time and what is secondary.

Let me tell you a story.

It had been a tough day at school for Lucy. Lots of tests and quizzes that day and a ton of homework to look forward to. She had just gotten off the school bus and was walking into her house when she got a “text” from WXYZ Radio - a station she sometimes listened to. She had entered a contest for tickets to a concert she really wanted to go to and the text told her that she was a winner - and not just two tickets but four and a backstage tour before the concert! All she had to do was to post a link to the concert page on her Facebook timeline and to call the station to confirm the post and to verify her winning. The catch was that she had to do that within five minutes of opening the text.

So Lucy opens her Facebook app and starts entering the concert link when she notices that her best friend, Sarah, had posted that she was really sad - her family had just suffered a major loss.

Wait - what was the loss? Sarah hadn't put in any details! So Lucy finishes entering the link and then texts Sarah “What's wrong?” Sarah responds immediately with some details that weren't all that calamitous but, yeah, they'd make Lucy sad if it happened in her family.

Lucy replies to Sarah “So sorry” and then “I'm coming over at 6pm.” Lucy then sends a text to Marsha, Betsy and Julie, three of Sarah's really good friends, “Meet at Sarah's 6p IMPORTANT.” Betsy replies can't make 6 how about 7?” Lucy sends a text to everyone that it's now 7p.

Finally, Lucy calls the radio station only to be told that she missed the deadline by one minute. What? No - they couldn't make an exception in this case - sorry.

We're all busy today - really busy and there isn't enough time in the day to do everything that we want to do and that other people ask us to do.

Let's spend the next 15 or so talking about the questions on this handout.

### **Am I Too Busy?**

Am I too busy? Do I feel stressed about fitting everything in?

Do I ever fall asleep worrying about all the things I didn't get done and still have to do? How often?

Do I find it hard to say NO?

Have I ever missed doing important things because I was so busy with things that really weren't all that important?

Do I get enough sleep?

How much time do I spend on my phone, computer, tablet... each day? Be honest!

If I'm talking to someone and I get a text do I have to look at it right away or do I finish the conversation?

What's the difference between important and urgent?

*Hint - Urgent only refers to time and not whether something is important.*

*Important is spending more time with family - Urgent is clicking “Like” in the next 2 minutes do your friend can reach 1000 Likes - Urgent and Important is calling the fire dept when your house is burning*

How much time do I spend reflecting on what's really important and what's not?

What are the five most important things to me right now? Why?

Do I have time to spend with my family?

Do I have any downtime by myself?

Do I have time to say a prayer when I wake up and before I go to sleep?

***To facilitate conversation you might have a few personal answers to share. As the discussion proceeds you might make reference to pilgrimages as a time and process that help us focus.***

***One optional closing to this section might be to view Bishop Hying's short video "How Do I Get To Heaven?" - part of the C4 Series on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee website. You can find it at <https://is.gd/kvzi2j>. You can also view it directly on YouTube at <https://is.gd/Dh8qbS>. The video is a little less than three minutes long***

***If you'll use this start with what immediately follows - otherwise at the line beginning with  
\*\*\****

Let's watch a quick video before we close.

***Show video.***

***\*\*We had a good discussion but we really didn't have anywhere near enough time to cover this. Please take the handout of the questions we asked and make some time in your busy schedule to think about them some more - especially the questions about what is really the most important.***

### **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

## Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

# Am I Too Busy?

*Think about the following questions - share with the group if you're comfortable.*

Am I too busy? Do I feel stressed about fitting everything in?

Do I ever fall asleep worrying about all the things I didn't get done and still have to do? How often?

Do I find it hard to say NO?

Have I ever missed doing important things because I was so busy with things that really weren't all that important?

Do I get enough sleep?

How much time do I spend on my phone, computer, tablet... each day? Be honest!

If I'm talking to someone and I get a text do I have to look at it right away or do I finish the conversation?

What's the difference between important and urgent?

How much time do I spend reflecting on what's really important and what's not?

What are the five most important things to me right now? Why?

Do I have time to spend with my family?

Do I have any downtime by myself?

Do I have time to say a prayer when I wake up and before I go to sleep?

## Too Busy - Some Links

Here are a few links you might find helpful about “busy teens” and “busy adults.” If you have any others that you think are really good send them to Kevin Driscoll so that they can be shared with the group!

**Helping Too-Busy Teens Beat Burnout** - from the Focus on the Family Website. Not a bad summary with a few suggestions for action. Find it at - <https://is.gd/6dNqGv>

**Too-Busy Teens Feel Health Toll** - A little dated but only because of references to “Blackberries” instead of “i-phones.” Find it at - <https://is.gd/UvEyFQ>

**Escape from the matrix** - Talks about FOMA (Fear Of Missing Out). Find it at - <https://is.gd/Js2ofy>

**Teens, Technology and Friendships** - Pew Research on Social Media. Find it at - <https://is.gd/Ehlt42>

**Saving the Self in the Age of the Selfie** - American Scholar Magazine - A longer but interesting article. Find it at - <https://is.gd/pEmzLs>

## **Steps in making a pilgrimage**

The following is a preliminary schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings. The Pilgrimage Committee will be refining this in January. A final list will be available in February.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February 2017 - The Call
- March 2017 - What Brings Me Here
- April 2017 - Defining Expectations
- May 2017 - Expectations Continued
- June 2017 - Beginning the Movement
- July 2017 - Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and processing

## **An alternate path to the discussion**

The following is from Bill Hathaway:

There's a resource that I often use in presentations, programs and ministries that is, unfortunately not free.

It's the NOOMA video series put out by FLANNEL - a Christian ministry dedicated to the use of video for spreading the message of Christ.

The NOOMA video series features Rob Bell (<https://is.gd/uUuR9I>).

At the time the videos were produced Bell was a megachurch pastor. He's since then fallen out of favor with many - you can read the details in the Wikipedia article linked above.

I first was introduced to the NOOMA series at a retreat for clergy and have since used some of the films at many talks and presentations. While geared to adults most are perfect for high school aged viewers.

With two exceptions the films present a Catholic approach to the subject of the film - even though Bell might dispute that claim. The major exception is NOOMA #4 "Sunday" that displays a very non-Sacramental understanding of religion. The other, NOOMA #15 "You" doesn't have faulty theology but does begin in a way that some might find challenging.

NOOMA #20 "Shells" speaks directly to the questions of being too busy and choosing what's most important. You might consider using it but it is completely optional.

Sometimes it seems that both teens and adults are more open to videos than being talked to - even poorly done videos. The NOOMA series videos are all well done.

Here's the link to the NOOMA site - <https://is.gd/U4iZF7>.

The videos can be purchased individually or as a package. At various times during the year they're offered at significant discounts. Before you buy check with others in your Parish who might have already purchased a set.

## **Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Am I Too Busy?**

*(variable time - use 25 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

Let's take a look at a short video to set the stage for our discussion

### **Watch NOOMA #20 "Shells"**

A pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to step away from the everyday demands on our time to focus on what's really important. A pilgrimage isn't locking yourself away in the silence and isolation of a cave but is placing yourself on a journey to a destination that lets you put away for a time the distractions that keep you from what's most important. It's also a time to determine what actually is important, what is worthy of our time and what is secondary.

We're all busy today - really busy and there isn't enough time in the day to do everything that we want to do and that other people ask us to do.

Let's spend the next 15 or so talking about the questions on this handout.

### **Am I Too Busy?**

Am I too busy? Do I feel stressed about fitting everything in?

Do I ever fall asleep worrying about all the things I didn't get done and still have to do? How often?

Do I find it hard to say NO?

Have I ever missed doing important things because I was so busy with things that really weren't all that important?

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***To facilitate conversation you might have a few personal answers to share. As the discussion proceeds you might make reference to pilgrimages as a time and process that help us focus.***

***One optional closing to this section might be to view Bishop Hying's short video "How Do I Get To Heaven?" - part of the C4 Series on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee website. You can find it at <https://is.gd/kvzi2j>. You can also view it directly on YouTube at <https://is.gd/Dh8qbS>. The video is a little less than three minutes long***

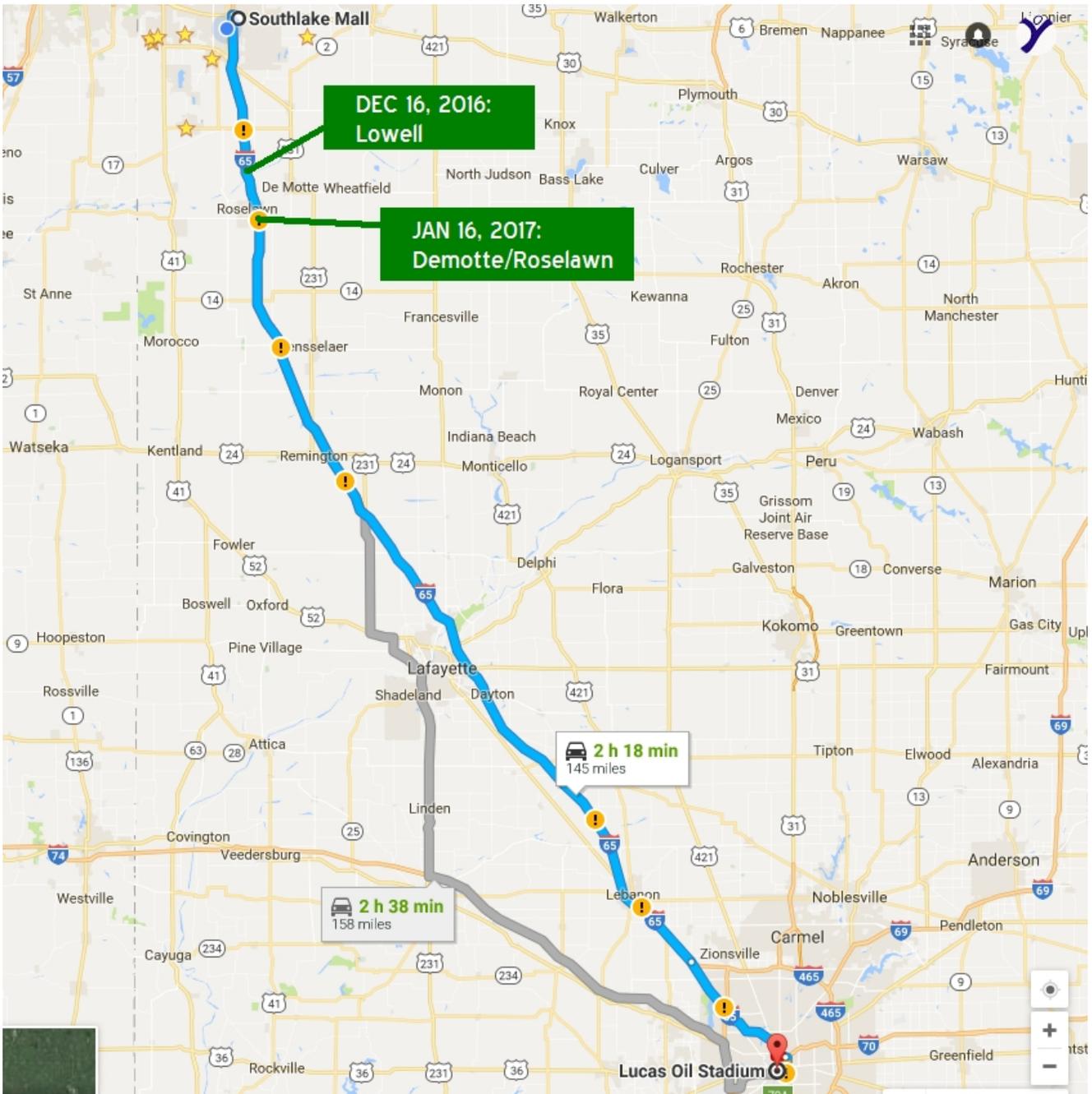
***If you'll use this start with what immediately follows - otherwise at the line beginning with "\*\*\*"***

Let's watch a quick video before we close.

**Show video.**

We had a good discussion but we really didn't have anywhere near enough time to cover this. Please take the handout of the questions we asked and make some time in your busy schedule to think about them some more - especially the questions about what is really the most important.

+ + +



How is your “walk” to Indianapolis going?



# February/March 2017 Group Session

## Overview

The February/March Group Session asks the dual questions “Should I go on the NCYC Pilgrimage?” and “If I go what am I bringing along?”

Unlike the earlier sessions, this one assumes that the participants know what NCYC is and, while they might still have lots of questions, know the basis details of the experience.

Special notes about this session:

- Some of the questions that we’ll ask Session participants to share are personal and require some familiarity and comfort with the group. If this is the first time your group is meeting or if there are a lot of new faces at this session you might want to adjust the questions and discussions.
- Please be sure to at least scan the Group Session packages for December and January for background on the session calendar/plan and for access to resources that you might find useful. Kevin is keeping the older sessions available on the Diocese of Gary NCYC website [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) - click through to “Pilgrimage.”
- Good news from Kevin - “It is confirmed: the diocese has been placed at the Courtyard by Marriott-Downtown Indianapolis. (For those who attended NCYC 2011, '13, and '15, it is the same hotel.) All previously-published estimates are now confirmed, as the prices were based on our placement there.”
- Good news (part 2) - Keynoters and Emcees have been named for NCYC 2017. Of special note TobyMac is the special, opening night music guest. According to Spotify, his most liked song is “[Me Without You](#).” Checkout the YouTube version at <https://is.gd/94kbs5>. You might want to use this as an opening or closing for your gathering or as a NCYC promo at your regular Youth Ministry meetings. Also check out [tobymac.com](http://tobymac.com) for more. See addition info about Keynoters and Emcees at [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com).
- Not so good news - While the Diocese of Gary NCYC website is fantastic, the “official” NCYC website ( [www.ncyc.info](http://www.ncyc.info) ) is still way behind in getting information posted. Check periodically for updates.
- *Mea Culpa* x 2 - First - sorry we missed the February standalone session. However, compressing the sessions by one actually makes things flow a little smoother. Promise the April Session will be out early!

Second - as we were preparing this session we had the (belated) insight that maybe the answers to the reflection questions might be part of a **Pilgrim's Journal** the NCYC participants could keep, documenting their experience. It's probably too late to recover answers from last month's "Am I Too Busy" reflections but, for this session you might want to offer the handouts pre-punched for a three-ring binder or give each participant a pocket folder for them to keep their reflections in. Just one note - for some people "journaling" is anathema to their nature so suggest but don't force!

- Since Diocesan costs have been firmed up now might be a good time to establish a budget for the Parish participation.
- For an eclectic weird playlist of music that might be of some use see the Resources section. We're also looking for YOUR suggestions.
- Finally, we're beginning Lent on March 1. The discussion questions for this session are a great way to begin our own Lenten preparations. If you have a little extra time you might consider reading from the Gospel about Jesus' time in the desert for the opening of your session. See Resources section below for a copy.

## **Session Preview**

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Getting to know you (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for February and for March (10 minutes)
- The Call - What Brings Me Here? - Do I Really Need This? Presentation and discussion (variable - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## **Preparation**

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. We've adopted this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We'll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.
- Copies of the "Do I Really Need This?" handout.
- Since you'll probably want to show at least the February and March "The Way" videos during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested.
- During the "Do I Really Need This" portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils.

- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used for the opening Ice Breaker and to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- If you prepared handouts for the December session and/or Information Sessions you might want to have some extras available for this gathering for attendees who are just coming to the NCYC experience.
- Do you have final cost figures for your own group you can pass out?
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

### **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

### **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gather recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Getting to Know You** (10 minutes)

***Tell the participants that they will have the opportunity to share their answers to a couple of questions with a partner and then with the larger group.***

Wow - I wish I could do THAT! Let's share something about our most personal, our deepest and most private thoughts!

***Ask people to pair up. They are to ask each other the following two questions:***

- If you could have any "super power" what would it be?
- Why?

***Give the participants a couple of minutes to share with each other.***

***After an appropriate time (you'll know based on how the conversations are flowing) ask each person to give a very short, one or two sentence recap of what their partner told them in response to the two questions. The meeting leader or someone on the ministry team might want to model the response first - short and succinct. If you have a very large group you might have to limit the responses to a subset of participants.***

## **Diocese of Gary "The Way Videos" for February and for March** (10 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for February and for March.***

*Make sure you view it before the session and prepare a few remarks about it that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **The Call - What Brings Me Here? - Do I Really Need This?**

*(variable time - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

***Please take a look at the Resources section for some ideas about how to frame the discussion.***

Did you ever feel that you needed to know all the answers?

That if you didn't have the answers you just didn't have it all together? That maybe there was something wrong with you because you just didn't know?

Has anyone ever told you that there are some questions we shouldn't even think about - shouldn't ask? Maybe questions like why is there evil in the world? Why does God let evil things happen? Is there even a God?

If someone has told you that don't believe them! Listen how Psalm 13 starts:

How long, LORD? Will you utterly forget me? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I carry sorrow in my soul, grief in my heart day after day? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Psalm 13: 2-3

And sometimes we just don't believe:

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

John 20: 24-25

Sometimes when we have a good idea about what we should do we question our own ability.

The word of the LORD came to me: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said, "I do not know how to speak. I am too young!"

Jeremiah 1:4-6

See, we all have questions and concerns and doubts. We all have times when we just don't feel God's presence in our lives. We all sometimes wish that we were stronger, wiser - that we understood more.

Many times we can find answers to our questions; many times we can learn the skills and gain the knowledge that will let us overcome adversity - that will get us out of trouble.

But not always.

Sometimes there aren't any answers that will satisfy our questions, our concerns, our fears or our longing.

Sometimes we learn that maybe a definitive answer isn't what's most important but maybe it's how we respond to the question or trouble that is what's really important.

Sometimes we learn that maybe words can't convey the answers but experiences can.

And you know, as important as questions are, as much as troubles are a part of everyday life, sometimes we need to take a breather and step back.

Sometimes we concentrate so much on questions and problems that we can't see the answers we do know, the blessings we have, the future that lies before us.

A pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to ask questions, to seek answers, to find quiet time to explore alone and time together with others to celebrate life and experience joy - to count our blessings and to look to the future.

Some people have the very mistaken idea that going on a pilgrimage is only for someone who's really holy, someone who feels really close to God and is sure they're on the right path.

So sure, someone like that should go on a pilgrimage so that they can grow in holiness - grow closer to God.

But pilgrimages are especially important for those with questions - someone who doesn't have all the answers.

There's a website - Busted Halo - that's made for young adults today. A few years ago it carried a blog from a young woman who decided to make a pilgrimage in Spain - *El Camino de Santiago*. Here's how she began her blog:

Why would a woman with serious doubts about her Catholic faith embark on a 480-mile pilgrimage trail across northern Spain? Maybe I'll know by the time I finish. For now, the answer to that question is this: I just know it's something I'm supposed to do. My gut, my intuition, my heart, my God has never steered me wrong. From the moment I decided to take this journey, everything has fallen into place — as it usually does when you trust in God.

I will fully admit, however, that I had my doubts — and still do. Doubts not only about my ability to complete this pilgrimage, but also doubts about my faith...

Yet here I am, about to embark on a religious pilgrimage. ...

I talk to God frequently. I also question him plenty. The most important part? I listen. When I'm unsure what decision to make — small or big — I ask God. And when I listen — to my heart, my gut, my intuition, my God — I never regret it.

Rebecca Gallo

<http://bustedhalo.com/blogs/this-pilgrims-path>

If we're going on a Pilgrimage it helps if we know what we're bringing along.

Lent, the season we're in, is also a pilgrimage that calls upon us to look at our lives so that, by knowing ourselves, we can grow individually, communally and to be ready for our Easter celebration.

Over the next couple of months we'll talk about our expectations for NCYC - what we hope to experience, learn, encounter. Tonight let's reflect a little about our questions and hopes - our troubles and our blessings.

Let's spend the next 25 minutes or so reflecting on and talking about the questions on this handout.

### **Do I Really Need This?**

Do I have questions that I don't know the answers to yet?

About me, about God, about things that are happening?

What are some?

How does not knowing the answers affect me?

Do I have concerns about my life, my friends/relationships, my school?

What are they?

What would help ease those concerns?

What are some of the things that really give me joy - make me happy?

What are some things that I'm good at and that I take pride in doing?

What are some things that I wish I could do better?

What are some of the special blessings in my life right now?

Who are some of the special people in my life right now who make those blessings possible?

***To facilitate conversation you might have a few personal answers to share. As the discussion proceeds you might make reference to pilgrimages as a time and process that help us ask questions, find answers, experience life in the love of God.***

We had a good discussion but we really didn't have anywhere near enough time to cover this and, truthfully, some of our biggest questions, concerns, fears and hopes are things that we just don't feel comfortable talking about. Please take the handout of the questions we asked and make some time in your busy schedule to think about them some more.

If you think it helpful use these handouts as part of a journal you keep about your NCYC pilgrimage experience.

### **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

## Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

# Do I Really Need This?

*Think about the following questions - share with the group if you're comfortable.*

Do I have questions that I don't know the answers to yet?

About me, about God, about things that are happening?

What are some?

How does not knowing the answers affect me?

Do I have concerns about my life, my friends/relationships, my school?

What are they?

What would help ease those concerns?

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## Jesus in the Desert

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.

The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."

At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

## Do I really need this? - Some Links

Here are a few links you might find helpful about asking questions, growing in Faith and a few other things. If you have any others that you think are really good send them to Kevin Driscoll so that they can be shared with the group!

There was a Methodist minister, James Fowler, who also happened to have an interest in studying how people's faith developed. His most famous work is *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. Dr. Fowler suggested that we grow in faith through six stages. Sometimes a person's growth stops and they're "stuck" in one stage or another. While of academic interest, there's also something here that might help us as we work with people seeking to know God and to draw closer to God.

**What Stage Is Your Faith?** From the Catholic website *Patheos* has a short description of Fowler's stages. Note especially the discussion of Stages 3 and 4. Find it at - <https://is.gd/imoRn3>

**Stages of Faith - An Interview with James Fowler** is another summary. Find it at - <https://is.gd/YdAuSR>

Asking questions, even questions of God or about God is found in many places in the Bible. There are a couple of references in the body of the presentation. Take a few minutes skimming the Psalms and you'll find many more.

**Doubting Thomas and Mercy** is a short article about a good disciple. Find it at - <https://is.gd/tvTrHq>

For some deep background on the place of reason in the development of Faith consider the following (not easy reads but worthwhile):

**Faith, Reason and the University - Memories and Reflections** by Pope Benedict. While it raised controversy because of a reference to Islam it shows the Pope's understanding of reason as a component of Faith. Find it at - <https://is.gd/LlglBJ>

**Fides et Ratio** is Pope John Paul II's encyclical on Faith and Reason. Find it at - <https://is.gd/wJKb6g>

## A Pilgrimage Play List

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Why?</b>
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.

## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April 2017 - Defining Expectations
- May 2017 - Expectations Continued
- June 2017 - Beginning the Movement
- July 2017 - Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?



## April/May 2017 Group Session

### Overview

The April May Group Session asks “What expectations do I/We have for our NCYC Pilgrimage?”

With the deposit deadline coming up quickly it's assumed that many, if not most, of the participants at your session will have made the decision to attend NCYC. Still, there will likely be some who are still debating about whether to participate or not. Having an understanding of what expectations individuals and the group bring might convince some to go!

Special notes about this session:

- Discussions about expectations will likely intertwine both individual and group items - it's difficult to keep them totally separate. During the discussion try to separate them as you list them for the group since group expectations will play a big role in how you plan the continuing NCYC experience.
- Please be sure to at least scan the earlier Group Session packages for background on the session calendar/plan and for access to resources that you might find useful. Kevin is keeping the older sessions available on the Diocese of Gary NCYC website [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) - click through to “Pilgrimage.”
- Good news - the official NCYC website is now pretty well fleshed out. If you haven't gone there recently you really should. Quickly take note of the “**Leaders Only**” section. There are a lot of webinars available - some past ones that can be viewed on demand and several planned for the near future. Take a look - you might find something helpful for you parish/group. [NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info)
- Great news - Remember our upcoming gathered event on Sunday - May 21 - 3:30p to 6p. We'll walk the Stations of the Cross at the Shrine of the Christ's Passion in St. John together. From the bulletin suggestion: “The walk is symbolic of our prayerful walk with Jesus to Indianapolis.” You could say that the Stations of the Cross really begin at Station Zero - Christ's Agony in the Garden. It was there that He made the final commitment to do not what He willed but what the Father willed. The opening of the discussion narrative provides a way to work that into the discussion. Check out [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) for details
- For an eclectic weird playlist of music that might be of some use see the Resources section. We're also looking for YOUR suggestions.

- Finally, we're in the middle of the Easter season. The discussion questions for this session are a great way to segue into a discussion of what are expectations are as disciples of Christ. Something to think about - maybe one of the reasons that the importance of religion in the world today, and especially in Western society, is that many people have no expectations about their Faith. They don't expect anything from it and so are willing to invest little in it. Expectations of eternal life are of ultimate importance but perhaps difficult for younger people to appreciate fully. Some of the expectations your group discusses should probably focus on things beyond NCYC itself.

## **Session Preview**

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Getting to know you (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for April and for May (10 minutes)
- Great Expectations - What Am I/We going to get out of this? Presentation and discussion (variable - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## **Preparation**

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. We've adopted this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We'll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.
- Copies of the "What Am I/We going to get out of this?" handout.
- Since you'll probably want to show at least the April and May "The Way" videos during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested. Consider also showing some of the new videos available on the national NCYC website ([NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info))
- During the "What Am I/We going to get out of this?" portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils. Remember to try to keep group expectations separate from individual expectations.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used for the opening Ice Breaker and to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- A few minutes to discuss fundraising and other logistical items might be in order.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gather recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Getting to Know You** (10 minutes)

***Tell the participants that they will have the opportunity to share one thought with the group after a minute or two of reflection.***

Memorial Day is coming up quickly. It's a time when we remember those who have died in the service of our Country while serving in the armed forces. They gave their lives so that the ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence would become a reality:

"...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

***Ask:***

What's one positive expectation, one hope, that you have for our Country in the future?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share one hope.***

## **Diocese of Gary "The Way Videos" for April and for May** (10 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for April and for May.***

*Make sure you view them before the session and prepare a few remarks about them that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **What Am I/We going to get out of this?**

*(variable time - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

***Please take a look at the Resources section for some ideas about how to frame the discussion.***

Sometimes we do things with no expectation of anything happening. That's especially true with young kids who do what Mom and Dad tell them just because it's Mom and Dad doing the telling.

But as we grow up almost everything we do comes with expectations, with hopes:

- We go to a party because we expect/hope to have fun.
- We join a sports team because we expect/hope to win.
- We practice playing a musical instrument because we expect/hope to become proficient at it.
- We go to school because it's fun and learning is a wonderful thing all by itself but also because we expect/hope to use our education to get a job in the future.
- We take a job because we expect/hope to make money to pay the bills and to have enough left over to spend on things we like.

Jesus had expectations too. They are spelled out in the Gospels - especially in the Gospel of John:

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. ... Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me,

because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. ... For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him [on] the last day.”

John 6: 35, 37-38, 40

And later:

When Jesus had said this, he raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

John 17:1-5

When Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and committed himself to do the Father's will he expected, he hoped, he knew that what was coming wouldn't be in vain. When he walked the Way of the Cross he knew that he would be glorified and the result would be Salvation for all of us.

We all have all have expectations about the things we do. It's just natural. And while we sometimes don't think about those expectations they're almost always there. When we talk to a new kid at school we might do it because we're just a friendly person but also probably because we know what it's like to be the new kid and we expect/hope that our talking to him or her will make them feel and may he or she will become a friend.

If we're going on a Pilgrimage it helps if we know what we expect from the experience.

Take a few minutes to look at the questions on the handout and think about your answers. You can jot them down if you'd like. Then we'll spend some time discussing them. By knowing what are expectations are we can better plan our ongoing NCYC experience and help us to get the most out of it.

### **What Am I/We going to get out of this?**

What do I expect for myself?

Will I -

- Meet new people?
- Grow closer to current friends?
- Learn new things? - What kind of things?
- Hear great speakers?
- Listen to fantastic music?
- Engage in new activities?
- Get away from my (fill in the blank) for a long weekend?
- Learn to pray in different or deeper ways?

- Experience thousands of people sharing the same Faith?
- Grow in my own Faith?
- Help learn what God has in mind for me?
- Have quiet time alone that I don't get at home/school?
- Become a better disciple? (Find out what that really means?)
- What else? These aren't all the expectations and hopes - what are some of yours!!!

What do I expect for my group?

Will We -

- Grow closer as a group?
- Learn new ways to pray together?
- Chill out together?
- Take time to plan future activities?
- Don't bug each other too much?
- Respect privacy?
- Learn different ways of praying we can bring back to our Parish or School?
- What else? These aren't all the expectations and hopes - what are some of yours!!!

***To facilitate conversation you might have a few personal answers to share. As the discussion proceeds you might make reference to pilgrimages as a time and process that help us ask questions, find answers, experience life in the love of God.***

We had a good discussion but we really probably didn't cover all of our expectations. Please take the handout and think about the questions some more. If you come up with new group expectations please share them at future gatherings so we make sure that our NCYC experience is the best possible.

If you think it helpful use these handouts as part of a journal you keep about your NCYC pilgrimage experience.

### **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

## Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

# What Am I/We going to get out of this?

*Think about the following questions - share with the group.*

What do I expect for myself?

Will I -

- Meet new people?
- Grow closer to current friends?
- Learn new things? - What kind of things?
- Hear great speakers?
- Listen to fantastic music?
- Engage in new activities?
- Get away from my (fill in the blank) for a long weekend?
- Learn to pray in different or deeper ways?
- Experience thousands of people sharing the same Faith?
- Grow in my own Faith?
- Help learn what God has in mind for me?
- Have quiet time alone that I don't get at home/school?
- Become a better disciple? (Find out what that really means?)
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- Don't bug each other too much?
- Respect privacy?
- Learn different ways of praying we can bring back to our Parish or School?
- What else? These aren't all the expectations and hopes - what are some of yours!!!

## The Last Supper Discourse

John's Gospel tells of Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles and then giving them his new commandment (Mandatum):

So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?"

You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.

If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet.

I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.

Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it.

John 13:12-17 NAB

Following this John relates the discourse of Jesus - his continuing to explain to the Apostles what was, is and will be.

To prepare for the session it would be good to skim over this - beginning with John 14 ([usccb.org/bible/john/14](http://usccb.org/bible/john/14))

## **The Stations of the Cross**

Meditations on the Stations of the Cross from the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana.

### **The First Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to Die**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

God is condemned...to death! Pilate represents the world with its ambitions, comfort, and empty promises. He finds truth uncomfortable and thus closes his mind to Jesus: "What is truth?" And He hands Jesus over to be crucified.

Have I become a Pilate to Jesus? I have remained silent in public when Truth is denied, condemned, and rejected. The innocent suffer and die while I condemn Christ, remaining silent and refusing to act.

Jesus, forgive me for all the times I have failed to defend you and your little ones in the world, especially the unborn. May I never again be afraid of the Gospel!

### **The Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

"The Sin of the Century is the loss of the sense of sin." The weight of the sin of the world is laid upon the already bruised, lacerated, and bleeding shoulders of Jesus. How excruciating is that cross that I helped fashion! And, yet, for love of me and for love of them, He stretches to embrace it...He kisses it...and carries my guilt away. "Upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, by His stripes we have been healed" (Is. 53:5).

Jesus, in pondering this Station of the Cross, give me a true sense of sin so that I might come to know True Love.

### **The Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Oh the Humility of God! We do not have a God Who saves us from afar, but rather One Who became like us in all things except sin. We do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with us, but rather One who allowed Himself to be beset with weakness. Under the crippling weight of the Cross Jesus fell with me, so that with Him I might get back up and follow after Him.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine!

### **The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

There is a proverb, "Behind every great man there is a great woman." Behind the Great Man of Sorrows is the bereft Mother of Sorrows. Jesus could have arranged for His Mother to be "out of town" on Good Friday. And yet Jesus loved Mary more than that. He allowed her the privilege of being with Him in His sorrow. Mary loved Jesus enough to let Him suffer and die in order that we might live.

How unlike Jesus and Mary I am! How impure yet is my love! Mary, you understood God's Plan in the life of your Son. You met Him along the way and were a consolation to Him in His pain and loneliness. Teach me about the mystery of suffering! Do for me what you did for Jesus!

### **The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

The slow death march suddenly halts. Jesus seems unable to proceed much further. The soldiers, not wanting Him to die prior to crucifixion, force Simon to help Jesus. Can we not imagine that what Simon initially shunned he in due time came to embrace as an honor and grace?

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). Jesus, give me your Cross! May I not need to be forced, but may I willingly help you carry your Cross in the sick, the lonely, the prisoner, and the dying.

### **The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Little things done with great love. How moving is this example from tradition! A courageous woman approaches the inapproachable Man of Sorrows, with nothing to offer Him but to wipe His blood and dust stained Face with her veil! And yet, even more amazing, Jesus lets her love Him! In extending mercy to Mercy, she receives Mercy! His true image is left imprinted on her veil.

Jesus, save me from my damnable pride. Never let me refuse to give and receive such little acts done with such great love.

### **The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls for the Second Time**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Jesus rolls to the ground, again. Is He tempted to stop now? I would be! He has come so far in loving me, and yet the hill of Calvary is yet at a distance. It would be so much easier to succumb to temptation, weakness, and pain, considering the past struggle exerted enough. No! Jesus does not stop. He gets up and continues on.

My Lord, like you, may I get up one more time than I fall.

### **The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Every fall, every hesitation of Jesus in His progress along the way unleashes a renewed inundation of scourging by the barbaric soldiers. And yet, Jesus stops when He notices this group of pious women weeping, and has words for them. His head is pounding with migraines, His body faints from loss of blood; His lips are swollen from the many falls and ensuing blows of the soldiers. Jesus lovingly bears it all to enter the suffering of others.

When I hurt, I too often hurt others. I turn within in self-pity and become oblivious to those suffering around me. Jesus hurts and in that pain He perceives mine and reaches out. Jesus, help me to forget my own suffering and become sensitive to the suffering of my brothers and sisters.

### **The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Third Time**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Jesus collapses a third time. Again ensue the barrage of kicks, whipping, and mocking. The addict and the habitual sinner all find the inspiration and the strength to continue the daily battle with ourselves, the world, and the devil as Jesus slowly but resolutely rises yet again and sets His Face forward toward Calvary.

“For the sake of the joy that was laid before Him, He endured the Cross and its shame” (Heb. 12:2).  
Jesus, give me hope! Then, like you, let me become an apostle of hope for all those tempted to despair.

### **The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Finally we arrive at the place of destiny. The cup of suffering is full. Can the Son of God be further abused? The soldiers grab at His garments and wrench them away exposing His Sacred Body. His wounds are once again opened and He grimaces in pain. Yet, a far deeper wound is that of His soul. The Fairest of Men, the Most Chaste Jesus, sees and now experiences the Wounds of Humanity present today – pornography, masturbation, adultery, sexual abuse. The Temple of God, once radiant in beauty, is robbed of His dignity.

Jesus, lover of chastity, make me chaste! Jesus, abused, heal all who have been robbed of their dignity through sexual sin.

### **The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

The trembling Body of Jesus is stretched out across the cold cross. A soldier, hammer in hand, selects some large nails from a rusty bucket. Breathless, Mary watches. The pounding of the hammer begins, interspersed with shrill cries. Jesus prays aloud, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” As He had taught His disciples, Jesus forgives and prays for His enemies.

Father of Mercy, Your Beloved Son, nailed to the Cross, prayed to You for me. I know You always hear and answer Your Son. I, too am your son! Answer my prayer! Give me your Son’s forgiveness. Forgive all those who cause me pain.

### **The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies Upon the Cross**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

The sun darkens as the last semblance of life fades from His Face. Jesus lifts His eyes toward heaven and prays a final time: “Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk. 23:46). He takes His last breath, and then gives up the spirit. A soldier, seeing the manner of His death, said: “Truly this man was the Son of God” (Mk. 15:39).

Holy Spirit, breathe into me Jesus’ final breath! In flame me with Jesus’ divine thirst for souls, His trust and surrender. Give me the Spirit of Jesus Crucified so that I might “daily carry in my own body the dying of Jesus” (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10) and thus help others to believe in Him.

### **The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

The limp, lifeless Body of Jesus is lowered from the Cross into the arms of His grief stricken Mother. She holds His head to her bosom and she often did in Bethlehem. At the Foot of the Cross Mary adores her God, dead in her arms. Life has died and all seems empty of promise. Yet, Mary hopes against hope. She believes His words, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). Mary waits and so must I.

### **The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb**

We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee - Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world

Mary is not able to hold Jesus long. His Body must be buried quickly. The Passion continues. The Sacred Body of Jesus, lifeless, remains the Son of God. God experiences being a corpse and is buried. The Soul of Christ, also united to the Person of the Son, descends into the Hell of the Just. The great silence of Holy Saturday prolongs the self-emptying of Jesus. What is emptied will be soon filled.

Jesus, mould me in Your likeness. Share Your Passion with me. And, as Mother Teresa would often pray, let me always remember that Your Passion ends with the joy of the Resurrection.

<https://is.gd/vbJ5qV>

### **Additional Meditation**

LifeTeen also has a meditation on the Stations of the Cross you might find helpful - <https://is.gd/zlElmK>

## A Pilgrimage Play List

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Why?</b>
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.

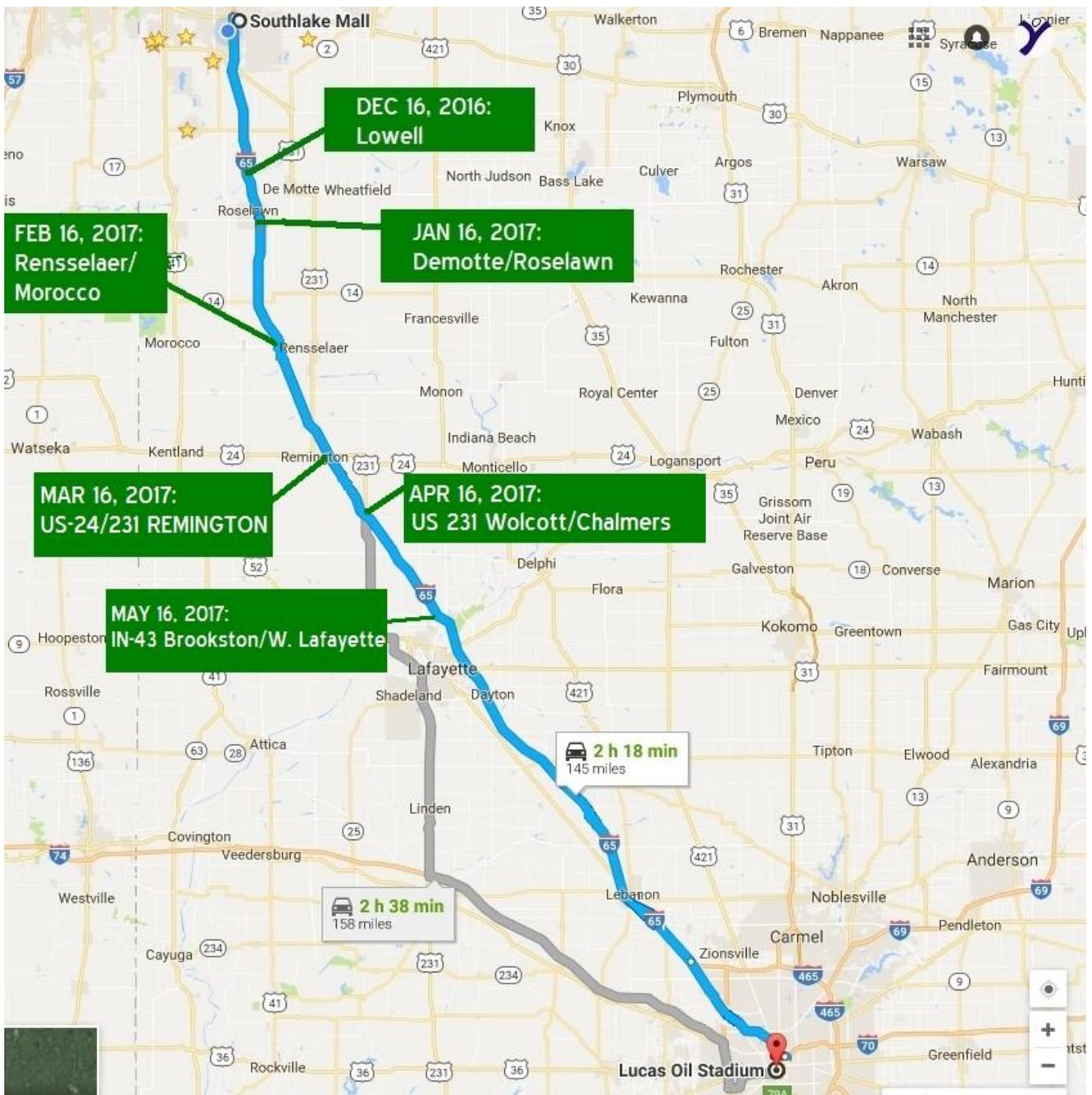
## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April/May 2017 - Defining Expectations
- June 2017 - Beginning the Movement
- July 2017 - Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?



How is your “walk” to Indianapolis going?



## June/July 2017 Group Session

### Overview

The June/July Group Session asks “What do I/we need to do to appreciate the Pilgrimage scenery?” Why combine the months? With people drifting off for vacations and other summer activities it will be more difficult to plan gatherings. At the same time, remaining connected becomes even more important to keep the participants engaged.

WOW! Registration deadline has come and gone (although new pilgrims can still register) and the Diocese of Gary has nearly 300 participants already signed up! That’s the highest ever!

Special notes about this session:

- The last group gathering asked about expectations. This session starts to put those expectations into practice, both as individuals and as a group. If you have a list of Group Expectations from a previous session use those. If you haven’t yet put together your Group Expectations take some time at the beginning of the discussion period to talk about what your group expects to get from NCYC and then use that list to continue the discussion.
- Please be sure to at least scan the earlier Group Session packages for background on the session calendar/plan and for access to resources that you might find useful. Kevin is keeping the older sessions available on the Diocese of Gary NCYC website [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) - click through to “Pilgrimage.”
- Good news - the official NCYC website is now pretty well fleshed out. If you haven’t gone there recently you really should. Quickly take note of the “**Leaders Only**” section. There are a lot of webinars available - some past ones that can be viewed on demand and several planned for the near future. Two recent ones included “Calling All Parents” and “Meet Our NCYC Keynoters”. Take a look - you might find something helpful for you parish/group. [NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info)
- Thank you to all who participated in our large Pilgrim Gathering at the Shrine of Christ’s Passion. Check out [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) for pictures!
- For an eclectic weird playlist of music that might be of some use see the Resources section. We’re also looking for YOUR suggestions.
- Finally, while the first couple of Sundays after Pentecost are special solemnities (Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi) we’re in the season of Ordinary Time. Two things to keep in mind about this:

First, the “ordinary” in Ordinary Time comes from the ordinal numbers - you remember - 1st, 2nd, 3rd... In the older Missale the Sundays in the period we’re in now had names like “*Dominica Quinta post Pentecosten*” - the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. In the current Missale these become Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Second, we need to remind ourselves that there’s nothing “ordinary” about Ordinary Time. It’s in the small things that we often find the greatest benefit.

Speaking of counting Sundays, right now might be the time to put up a countdown sign in the Youth Ministry Gathering Space or even the Church entrance counting down the months/weeks/days before NCYC.

## **Session Preview**

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Process the Stations of the Cross event (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary “The Way Video” for June and for July (10 minutes)
- “Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?” Presentation and discussion (variable - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## **Preparation**

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. We’ve adopted this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We’ll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.
- Copies of the Group Expectations from the last pilgrimage session. Alternatively, you could have the Group Expectations listed on a flip chart, blackboard or PowerPoint.
- Copies of the “Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?” handout.
- Since you’ll probably want to show at least the June and July “The Way” videos during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested. Consider also showing some of the new videos available on the national NCYC website (**[NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info)**)
- During the “Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?” portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils. Remember to try to keep group expectations separate from individual expectations.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- A few minutes to discuss fundraising and other logistical items might be in order.

- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gathered recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Process the Stations of the Cross event** (10 minutes)

Use this as the Ice Breaker for this gathering.

If no one from your group participated in the Stations of the Cross event chose another activity that many of your teens might have been involved in - this might include a Memorial Day celebration, end of school event or something similar.

### ***Ask:***

What were your general impressions?

What's one thing that stood out - that you especially remember? Why?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share.***

## **Diocese of Gary "The Way Videos" for June and for July** (10 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for June and for July.***

*Make sure you view them before the session and prepare a few remarks about them that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?**

*(variable time - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

***For previous sessions it was possible to suggest a dialog that could be used. Since this discussion will revolve around the list of Group Expectations from the previous session and since each group's expectations will be different we're only able to offer a sample "introduction" for you to use. See the Resources section below for some additional thoughts.***

Last time we got together we talked about what expectations we have. You could call these expectations the "scenery" of our pilgrimage. They're what we hope to see, hope to experience and hope to share.

But just putting them on paper isn't enough.

Sure - lots of things at NCYC happen spontaneously. And there are always surprises - that's part of what's need about NCYC - celebrating the surprises.

But..... It also helps to be proactive - to take an active role on getting ready so that we can best appreciate all of the scenery - both the expected and the surprises.

So, let's look at our list of Group Expectations and see if we can come up with some concrete things we can start doing right now so that we can appreciate the scenery.

### ***Group Discussion***

## **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

# Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

Adapted from the Pilgrims' Prayer

Camino de Compostela

<http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/upload/WYDUSA-Pilgrimage-Prayer-Guide.pdf>

# Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?

*The list of concrete steps your pilgrims as individuals and as a group can start taking will depend significantly on what expectations your group has about NCYC. With that understanding, here are some suggestions that you might consider.*

- Design and have made your group t-shirt or other distinctive apparel.
- Begin wearing it to gatherings, meetings, etc.
- Consider having the group attend a Sunday Mass together once per month starting now and going through December.
- It's Summer and there's no school - what about attending a weekday Mass together once per week.
- Set up a "Pilgrimage Blog" and invite your pilgrims to share on it. Use the blog to document activities and, after NCYC use it as the basis for a "Book of Memories" to give to each pilgrim. (Hint - include pictures!!!)
- Set up one or more social media accounts to share.
- Adult leaders - using the above send out a "Pilgrim Prayer/Reflection" each morning.
- Better yet - assign days to each pilgrim to do so (be prepared to offer friendly reminders the evening before)
- Do some research on the NCYC keynoters. Ask pilgrims to share some thoughts about them on your blog.
- Take one song a week from Toby Mac's repertoire and use the lyrics as a discussion topic on your blog or other social media. As additional artists are announced expand this to include some of their works.
- Develop a "pre-activity" prayer that you can use before each fundraising activity. It could be the prayer that we use for opening our meetings or it could be one that the group develops.

# Blogs, etc.

Not super tech savvy but still want to do the blogging, facebook, tumblr, twitter, Instagram, etc... thing?

Here are a couple of suggestions for NCYC leadership teams:

- Contact Kevin - he won't be able to provide personal guidance but might be able to share your needs with other NCYC leaders who will be happy to help.
- For blogs do a web search for "starting a free blog" and you'll be offered thousands of links. One that looks reasonably good (and not too commercial) is <https://www.bloggingbasics101.com/>
- For facebook, if your Youth Ministry doesn't have one already consider setting up a "Page." See <https://is.gd/j4Ca7u>

## A Pilgrimage Play List

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

Song	Artist	Why?
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.
Touch the Sky	Hillsong United	Talks about a very "pilgrim" and very Christian attitude of letting go to gain: My heart beating, my soul breathing I found my life when I laid it down Upward falling, spirit soaring I touch the sky when my knees hit the ground

## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April/May 2017 - Defining Expectations
- June/July 2017 - First Steps and Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

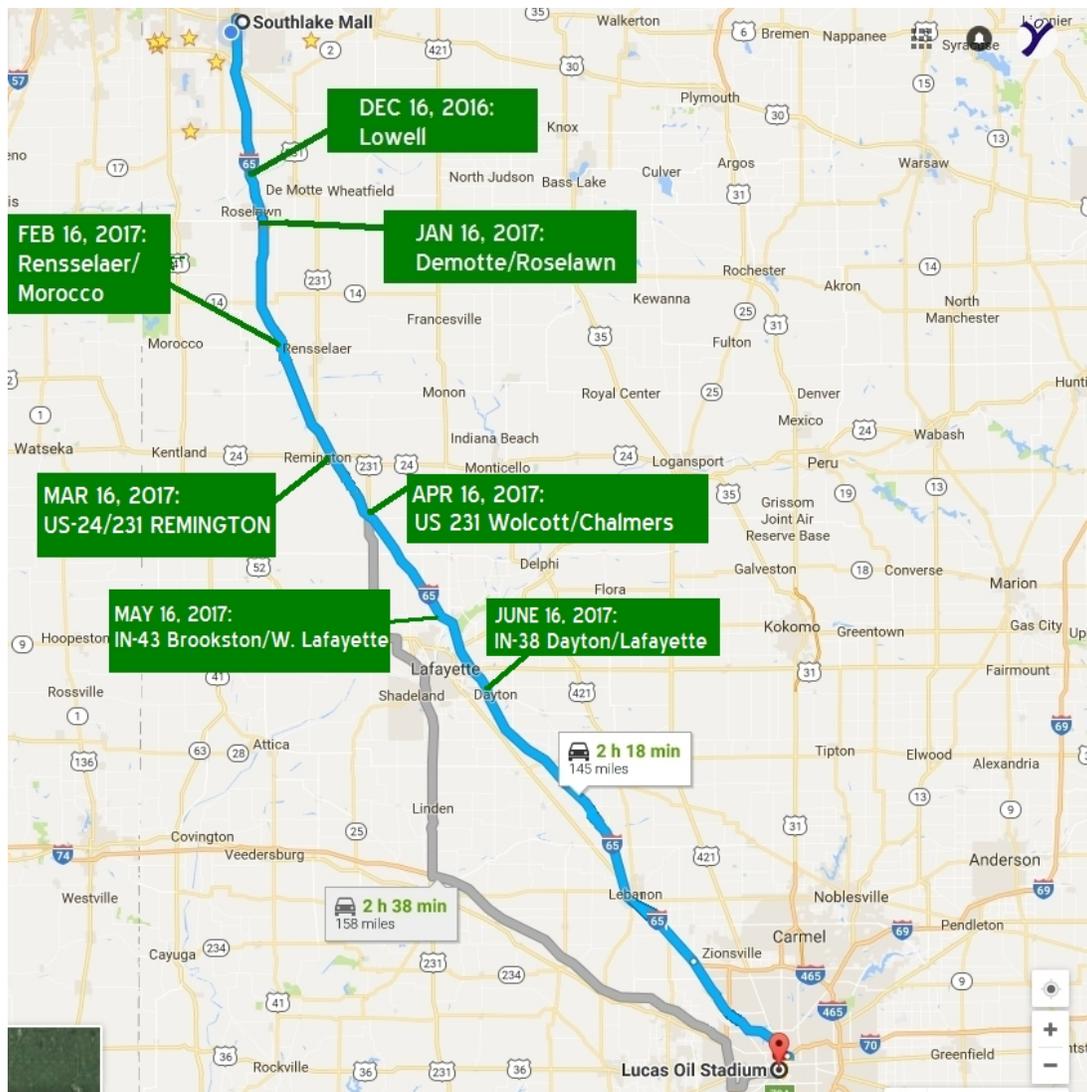
Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?

## LIST OF CURRENTLY-REGISTERED NCYC PARISHES/CLUSTERS/SCHOOLS:

The first deadline has passed, and already we have surpassed the previous record attendance for a diocesan delegation to NCYC! Our previous high was 257 (2013 & 2015), and as of today we sit at 280 (teens and adult leaders). And we haven't even started adding teens yet (and you will, I promise)! Currently registered:

**Andrean High School, Merrillville** · **Holy Name, Cedar Lake** ·  
**Holy Spirit, Winfield** · **Our Lady of Grace, Highland** · **Our Lady of Sorrows, South Haven** · **La Porte Catholic Church** · **St. Ann, Gary** ·  
**St. Edward, Lowell** · **St. Elizabeth Seton, Valparaiso** · **St. Helen, Hebron** ·  
**St. John Bosco, Hammond** · **St. John the Baptist, Whiting** ·  
**St. Mary, Crown Point** · **St. Mary, Griffith** · **St. Matthias, Crown Point** ·  
**St. Michael, Schererville** · **St. Patrick, Chesterton** · **St. Paul, Valparaiso** ·  
**St. Teresa of Avila, Valparaiso**



How is your “walk” to Indianapolis going?



## August 2017 Group Session

### Overview

The August Group Session asks your group to consider “Transformations” - those already realized, those currently underway, those to come.

Our latest gathered experience - *Called to the Living Waters* - just finished.



For almost all, school resumes this week with a new grade, new classes, maybe a new building, new opportunities and maybe some old baggage brought along.

There are some important “haves” to remember:

- Have we turned in all the necessary information?
- Have we started fundraising?
- Have we been meeting as a Pilgrimage Team within our Parish or Cluster?

Bishop Hying recently mentioned that he had just read an article that loneliness had more of an impact on premature death than obesity or smoking. He also mentioned that he'd seen data showing that rather than helping reduce isolation and loneliness social media was exacerbating it.

One of the great benefits of NCYC is the sense of belonging and self worth that flow from the gathered experience. Those are also two of the reasons that Youth Ministry is so important for young people today and they're a big part of the reason why we are seeking to experience NCYC as a Pilgrimage.

Speaking to one of the young adults just returned from the Diocesan *Camino de Santiago* experience she related how each person started with their own pace but soon found others to walk with - a group of fast walkers, a group of slow walkers, a group who liked to take long breaks to admire the scenery, etc. These groups tended to stay together once the day's hiking was finished because they had shared something important on "The Way." That's what we hope your group is becoming - people sharing more than just a common destination and recognizing that the journey is as important as the destination.

**In the Resources section you'll find that we've duplicated two articles from the June/July package since you might not have been able to implement them with people dispersed for the Summer.**

**If that's the case and you haven't had time to consider some concrete actions for you group to take then we strongly suggest that you do that rather than the August program listed below. For your convenience we've added a modified version of the June/July program at the end for you to use.**

Special notes about this session:

- The last group gathering asked your Group to take their expectations for the NCYC Pilgrimage and to generate some concrete plans for making those expectations a reality. This month's group exercise asks the pilgrims, both individually and as a group to reflect on changes they may have already experienced, are currently experiencing and hope to experience.
- In today's world many (most?) people concentrate on the "right here, right now," living from moment to moment and being dragged along by events rather than following a well laid out path. We're so busy, with so many demands on our time that it's hard to step back and, as we suggested last month, to enjoy the scenery or even to clearly see the path ahead. Don't be discouraged if your group isn't any different. As Pilgrim Leaders we aren't asked to do the impossible but to offer opportunity, resources and especially a model for our pilgrims to follow - trusting that the Lord will do the heavy lifting.
- Please be sure to at least scan the earlier Group Session packages for background on the session calendar/plan and for access to resources that you might find useful. Kevin is keeping the older sessions available on the Diocese of Gary NCYC website [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) - click through to "Pilgrimage."
- Good news - the official NCYC website continues to grow. If you haven't gone there recently you really should. Quickly take note of the "**Leaders Only**" section. There are a lot of webinars available - some past ones that can be viewed on demand and several planned for the near future. Two of the new ones planned include: "Called To A Pilgrimage Of Faith" on August 30 and "Last Call For NCYC!" on October 26. This last one is billed as a "talk through" of what to expect at NCYC 2017. Can't make the specific webinar time? No problem since all of the webinars are archived. Take a look - you might find something helpful for you parish/group. [NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info)
- Thank you to all who participated in our large Pilgrim Gathering at the Beach. Check out [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) for pictures!

- For an eclectic weird playlist of music that might be of some use see the Resources section. We've added a few songs - thanks for your suggestions! We're also looking for YOUR suggestions.
- Finally, and a repeat from last month's program, right now might be the time to put up a countdown sign in the Youth Ministry Gathering Space or even the Church entrance counting down the months/weeks/days before NCYC.

## **Session Preview**

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Process the Living Waters event (or alternate) (10 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for August (and maybe the June and July videos if your group hasn't already viewed them) (10 minutes)
- "Beginning the Transformation" Presentation and discussion (variable - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## **Preparation**

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. We've adopted this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We'll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.
- Copies of the "Beginning the Transformation" handout.
- Since you'll probably want to show at least the August "The Way" videos during the presentation make sure that your audio/visual equipment is set-up before the gathering and tested. Consider also showing some of the new videos available on the national NCYC website ([NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info))
- During the "Beginning the Transformation" portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils. Remember to try to keep group expectations separate from individual expectations.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- A few minutes to discuss fundraising and other logistical items might be in order.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gathered recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Process the Living Waters Beach event** (10 minutes)

Use this as the Ice Breaker for this gathering.

If no one from your group participated in the Living Waters Beach event use the “Alternate.”

### **Ask:**

What were your general impressions of the Living Waters Beach experience?

What's one thing that stood out - that you especially remember? Why?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share.***

## **Alternate Icebreaker** (10 minutes)

Use this as the Ice Breaker for this gathering if no one participated in the Living Waters Beach event.

### **Opening:**

Remember way back in grade school you were probably asked at the beginning of the school year to write a paragraph or two about “What I did on my Summer vacation?” Let's do that now!

### **Ask:**

Think about one thing that happened this Summer that you'd like to share. It could be some big trip you took or something as simple as the perfect day of having nothing to do and just “vegging out.”

Why was it special?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share.***

## **Diocese of Gary “The Way Videos” for August** (10 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary “The Way Video” for August.***

*Make sure you view them before the session and prepare a few remarks about them that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **Beginning the Transformation**

*(variable time - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

Last time we got together we talked about some specific, concrete things we could do to “Appreciate the Scenery” - to make our expectations for NCYC a reality.

Today let's spend a little time sharing with each other some changes we've seen.

Let's start with something easy - we're at the beginning of a new school year. What's different between this August and last August? New classes? New school? More responsibility since I'm moving up in the High School grades? Tougher and/or more interesting courses?

### **Group Discussion**

OK - now a little harder. What are some changes in my personal life? Finding new friends? Old friends drifting away? Births, deaths, changes in family situations, either in my own family or the families of relatives and friends?

Share some of these if you feel comfortable.

### **Group Discussion**

Now even a little tougher because we all together here. Have you noticed any changes in our group of pilgrims to NCYC? How we interact as a group? The things we share? The things we're doing together?

### **Group Discussion**

Sometimes change just happens automatically - say moving from a Freshman class to a Sophomore class. But very often we can make changes happen! What are some changes, some transformations that you'd like to see our group of pilgrims make? Try to be specific!

### **Group Discussion**

Finally, and hardest of all, what are some changes I've noted in ME? Do I like them or not? Are they positive or maybe not so much? What transformations would I like to see in MYSELF? Be more open? Spend more time studying? Talk face to face more with friends, with brothers and sisters, with parents?

Spend a couple of minutes thinking about these. We won't ask you to share them but spend at least a little time at home thinking (and maybe praying about) these.

## **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

# Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

Adapted from the Pilgrims' Prayer

Camino de Compostela

<http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/upload/WYDUSA-Pilgrimage-Prayer-Guide.pdf>

# Beginning the Transformation

Today let's spend a little time sharing with each other some changes we've seen.

Let's start with something easy - we're at the beginning of a new school year. What's different between this August and last August? New classes? New school? More responsibility since I'm moving up in the High School grades? Tougher and/or more interesting courses?

## ***Group Discussion***

OK - now a little harder. What are some changes in my personal life? Finding new friends? Old friends drifting away? Births, deaths, changes in family situations, either in my own family or the families of relatives and friends?

Share some of these if you feel comfortable.

## ***Group Discussion***

Now even a little tougher because we all together here. Have you noticed any changes in our group of pilgrims to NCYC? How we interact as a group? The things we share? The things we're doing together?

## ***Group Discussion***

Sometimes change just happens automatically - say moving from a Freshman class to a Sophomore class. But very often we can make changes happen! What are some changes, some transformations that you'd like to see our group of pilgrims make? Try to be specific!

## ***Group Discussion***

Finally, and hardest of all, what are some changes I've noted in ME? Do I like them or not? Are they positive or maybe not so much? What transformations would I like to see in MYSELF? Be more open? Spend more time studying? Talk face to face more with friends, with brothers and sisters, with parents?

Spend a couple of minutes thinking about these. We won't ask you to share them but spend at least a little time at home thinking (and maybe praying about) these.

## Loneliness

Here are links to some articles about loneliness and the problems it causes. Most contain additional links to additional information. While loneliness is often perceived as mainly affecting older people it also has a significant impact on young people and, in fact, a sense of loneliness and isolation seems to be growing among young people.

Psychologist Examines the Profound Power of Loneliness - <https://is.gd/0eswMe>

We Must Confront The Epidemic Of Youth Loneliness - <https://is.gd/OpZtsN>

Loneliness Might Be A Bigger Health Risk Than Smoking Or Obesity - <https://is.gd/CKzs8F>

Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality (Abstract) - <https://is.gd/4FHIHg>

Why Loneliness May Be the Next Big Public-Health Issue - <https://is.gd/uXSAoI>

In social isolation, or loneliness, a marker for early death more accurate than obesity - <https://is.gd/ZSDKWH>

US psychologists claim social media 'increases loneliness' - <https://is.gd/4OpNVX>

Feeling Lonely? Too Much Time On Social Media May Be Why - <https://is.gd/oVJ7rL>

Social Media Is Increasing Loneliness Among Adults, Say Psychologists - <https://is.gd/s0T8J3>

# Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?

*The list of concrete steps your pilgrims as individuals and as a group can start taking will depend significantly on what expectations your group has about NCYC. With that understanding, here are some suggestions that you might consider.*

- Design and have made your group t-shirt or other distinctive apparel.
- Begin wearing it to gatherings, meetings, etc.
- Consider having the group attend a Sunday Mass together once per month starting now and going through December.
- It's Summer and there's no school - what about attending a weekday Mass together once per week.
- Set up a "Pilgrimage Blog" and invite your pilgrims to share on it. Use the blog to document activities and, after NCYC use it as the basis for a "Book of Memories" to give to each pilgrim. (Hint - include pictures!!!)
- Set up one or more social media accounts to share.
- Adult leaders - using the above send out a "Pilgrim Prayer/Reflection" each morning.
- Better yet - assign days to each pilgrim to do so (be prepared to offer friendly reminders the evening before)
- Do some research on the NCYC keynoters. Ask pilgrims to share some thoughts about them on your blog.
- Take one song a week from Toby Mac's repertoire and use the lyrics as a discussion topic on your blog or other social media. As additional artists are announced expand this to include some of their works.
- Develop a "pre-activity" prayer that you can use before each fundraising activity. It could be the prayer that we use for opening our meetings or it could be one that the group develops.

*(From June/July program)*

# Blogs, etc.

Not super tech savvy but still want to do the blogging, facebook, tumblr, twitter, Instagram, etc... thing?

Here are a couple of suggestions for NCYC leadership teams:

- Contact Kevin - he won't be able to provide personal guidance but might be able to share your needs with other NCYC leaders who will be happy to help.
- For blogs do a web search for "starting a free blog" and you'll be offered thousands of links. One that looks reasonably good (and not too commercial) is <https://www.bloggingbasics101.com/>
- For facebook, if your Youth Ministry doesn't have one already consider setting up a "Page." See <https://is.gd/j4Ca7u>

*(From June/July program)*

## A Pilgrimage Play List

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

Song	Artist	Why?
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.
Touch the Sky	Hillsong United	Talks about a very "pilgrim" and very Christian attitude of letting go to gain: My heart beating, my soul breathing I found my life when I laid it down Upward falling, spirit soaring I touch the sky when my knees hit the ground
All Things Possible	Mark Schultz	Reminds us that with God's help "All Things Are Possible." The chorus especially reminds us that when things just don't seem to be going right God is there. Even when it feels like the light is fading And I've lost my way Still I'm holding on to the One who's making All things possible
Believe	The Bravery	Kinda dark song but maybe it expresses the feeling of many young people today - wanting and needing something to believe in and it's especially believing in myself. Maybe better used as a reflection song for the adult leadership team?

Song	Artist	Why?
Thrive	Casting Crowns	<p>Update song with appropriate lyrics for group reflection”</p> <p>So living water flowing through            God we thirst for more of You            Fill our hearts and flood our souls            With one desire</p> <p>We know we were made for so much more            Than ordinary lives            It's time for us to more than just survive            We were made to thrive</p>
Do Something	Matthew West	<p>Reminds us that sometimes we're the answer to someone's prayers,            the solution to a problem, a blessing for others.</p> <p>So, I shook my fist at Heaven            Said, "God, why don't You do something?"            He said, "I did, I created you"</p>

## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April/May 2017 - Defining Expectations
- June/July 2017 - First Steps and Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?

# **Alternate Program to use if your group hasn't already developed specific actions to take for the NCYC Pilgrimage**

## **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

## **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gathered recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Process the Living Waters Beach event** (10 minutes)

Use this as the Ice Breaker for this gathering.

If no one from your group participated in the Living Waters Beach event ask the “Alternate.”

### **Ask:**

What were your general impressions?

What's one thing that stood out - that you especially remember? Why?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share.***

## **Alternate Icebreaker** (10 minutes)

Use this as the Ice Breaker for this gathering if no one participated in the Living Waters Beach event.

### **Opening:**

Remember way back in grade school you were probably asked at the beginning of the school year to write a paragraph or two about “What I did on my Summer vacation?” Let's do that now!

### **Ask:**

Think about one thing that happened this Summer that you'd like to share. It could be some big trip you took or something as simple as the perfect day of having nothing to do and just “vegging out.”

Why was it special?

***Give the participants a minute or so to reflect and then ask them to share.***

## **Diocese of Gary “The Way Videos” for August** (10 minutes)

***Show the Diocese of Gary “The Way Video” for August.***

*Make sure you view them before the session and prepare a few remarks about them that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **Appreciating the Scenery - What Do I/We Need To Do?**

*(variable time - use 30 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

***For previous sessions it was possible to suggest a dialog that could be used. Since this discussion will revolve around the list of Group Expectations from the previous session and since each group's expectations will be different we're only able to offer a sample “introduction” for you to use. See the Resources section above for some additional thoughts.***

Last time we got together we talked about what expectations we have. You could call these expectations the “scenery” of our pilgrimage. They're what we hope to see, hope to experience and hope to share.

But just putting them on paper isn't enough.

Sure - lots of things at NCYC happen spontaneously. And there are always surprises - that's part of what's need about NCYC - celebrating the surprises.

But..... It also helps to be proactive - to take an active role on getting ready so that we can best appreciate all of the scenery - both the expected and the surprises.

So, let's look at our list of Group Expectations and see if we can come up with some concrete things we can start doing right now so that we can appreciate the scenery.

### **Group Discussion**

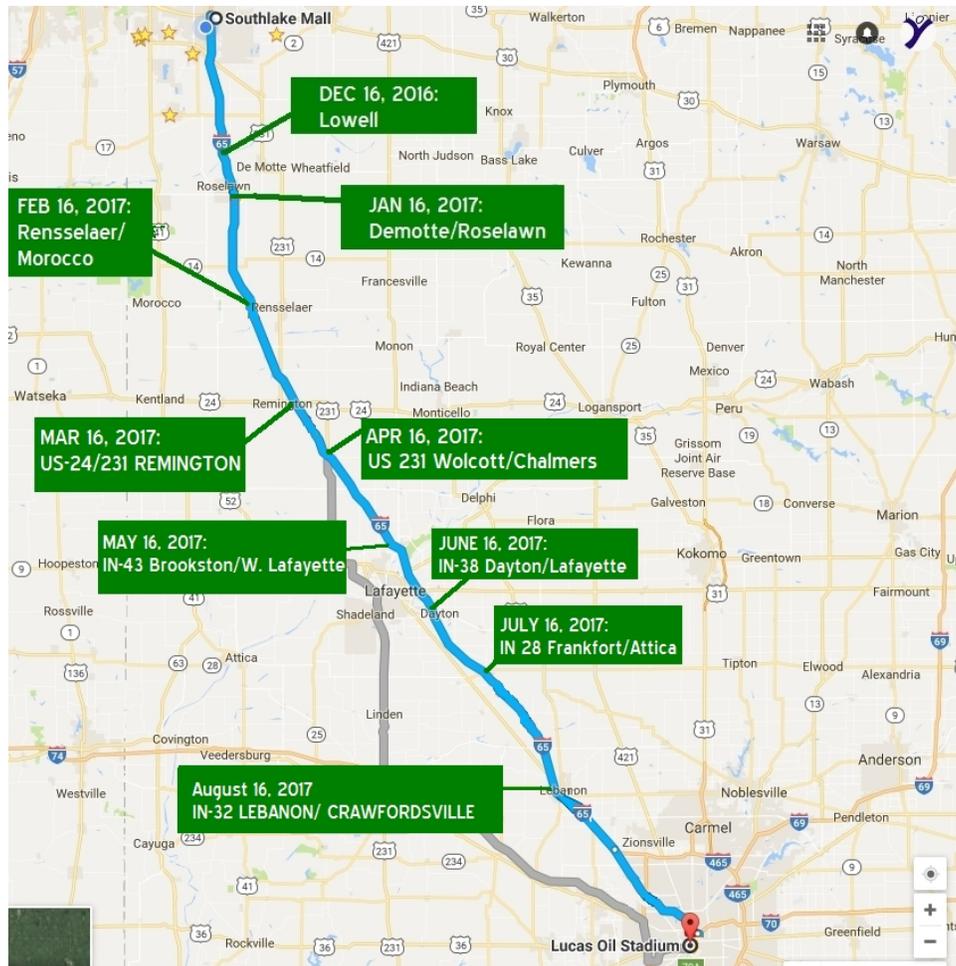
## **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...



How is your “walk” to Indianapolis going?



# September 2017 Group Session

## Overview

The September Group Session asks your group to consider “Packing for the Journey” - what should we bring along that we need/want on our pilgrimage. As important a consideration is what we want to leave behind.

School's started - for most there's already been 3 or 4 weeks of classes. Fall sports are happening which means that for many high schooler's (and parents!) the weekend is a really busy time.

Perhaps you're finding it increasingly difficult to get all of your NCYC Pilgrims together in one place, at one time. Don't give up - we're almost ready to depart! Your efforts are about to bear fruit.

Several things have happened since the August Group Session package was published. First, the US was reminded that there still exists a significant amount of hatred and intolerance because race, ethnic origin and religion. Bishop Hying celebrated a Mass just this past weekend in which our Diocese collectively prayed for justice.

The other things that all of your teen and adult pilgrims will be aware of are the two hurricanes that struck the US mainland. Probably fewer are aware of the huge earthquake in Mexico, devastating fires in the West and the Northwest as well as other hurricanes and tropical storms that continue to spawn and pose a continuing threat to life and property.

Rather than an ice-breaker this month we've included a special prayer that you can use to help open and focus your session.

Special notes about this session:

- The last gathering asked your Group, both individually and collectively to reflect on changes they may have already experienced, are currently experiencing and hope to experience. This month's group exercise asks the pilgrims, again both individually and collectively to reflect on what they want to pack for the trip and what they want to leave behind.
- For this session a visual aid might be in order. Consider bringing a backpack to your gathering with way more stuff than will fit in it. You can use this during your opening of the discussion. If you do this make sure that you include several things that are clearly inappropriate to take - maybe a large “boom box” or something similar.

- In the August Leaders mailing Kevin included an NCYC schedule that was customized for the Diocese of Gary. If you haven't already done so you might want to print that out for your Pilgrims. Make sure that you use Kevin's version and not the one found on the national NCYC website ([ncyc.info](http://ncyc.info)).
- The detailed schedule of individual breakout sessions is coming together. You might want to provide this to your pilgrims as a copy or mention of the web address. <http://www.ncyc.info/breakouts/>
- Please be sure to at least scan the earlier Group Session packages for background on the session calendar/plan and for access to resources that you might find useful. Kevin is keeping the older sessions available on the Diocese of Gary NCYC website [NCYC2017.com](http://NCYC2017.com) - click through to "Pilgrimage."
- Good news - the official NCYC website continues to grow. If you haven't gone there recently you really should. Quickly take note of the "**Leaders Only**" section. There are a lot of webinars available - some past ones that can be viewed on demand and one planned for October - "Last Call For NCYC!" on October 26. This one is billed as a "talk through" of what to expect at NCYC 2017. Can't make the specific webinar time? No problem since all of the webinars are archived. Take a look - you might find something helpful for you parish/group. [NCYC.info](http://NCYC.info)
- For an eclectic weird playlist of music that might be of some use see the Resources section. We've added a few songs - thanks for your suggestions! We're also looking for YOUR suggestions.
- Finally, and a repeat from last month's program, right now might be the time to put up a countdown sign in the Youth Ministry Gathering Space or even the Church entrance counting down the months/weeks/days before NCYC.

## Session Preview

- Opening Prayer (5 minutes)
- Opening Prayer - Part 2 (5 minutes)
- Diocese of Gary "The Way Video" for September (10 minutes)
- "Packing for the Journey" Presentation and discussion (variable - use 35 minutes to keep total to one hour)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- Social time

## Preparation

- Arrange for meeting place well ahead of meeting
- Have ample chairs for expected participants
- Name tags and markers for participants, if appropriate.
- Equipment to show the September Pilgrimage video found at as well as "I Shall Not Want" (see below)
- Copies of the Opening Prayer for each participant. We've adopted this prayer for many/most of the NCYC Pilgrimage related gatherings. We'll continue to include a copy of the prayer in future Monthly Session packages. Alternately, you could have a large poster of the prayer or the ability to project it for all to read.

- If desired - copies of Opening Prayer - Part 2 for each participant. If you know of special Parish or community needs you might want to have the petitions written out. If you choose to have someone else lead this prayer it would be good to let them know ahead of time.
- Copies of the “Packing for the Journey” handout.
- Copies of the any/all of the three attached NWIC letters from Bishop Hying that you’d care to share. It’s probable that most of you teen Pilgrims will not have read these and pretty likely that most of your adult Pilgrims won’t have either.
- A copy of the song “I Shall Not Want” by Audrey Assad and something to play it on. While optional this is really a great song to use to reflect on the baggage that we carry that might not be very helpful. You can find the official video of that song on Audrey’s website <http://www.audreyassad.com/> The embedded video is stored on youtube - you can find it directly at <https://is.gd/t6M1Ck> The song is also available on Spotify and most other music websites
- During the “Packing for the Journey” portion you might want to have a blackboard, white board, flip chart or something similar to write on. If these are not available, ask someone to be a scribe before the gathering begins and provide them with paper and pencils. Remember to try to keep group expectations separate from individual expectations.
- It might be a good idea to have enough paper and pencils available for each participant. These can be used to take notes during the discussion and Q/A portion.
- A few minutes to discuss fundraising and other logistical items might be in order.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

### **Before Gathering Begins**

Welcome people as they arrive. Introduce yourself and those assisting you. If you are providing name tags please ask them to fill out a name tag and have them put it on. As time allows introduce the attendees to each other.

### **Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

***When all have gathered recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Opening Prayer - Part 2** (5 minutes)

### ***Introduction***

A lot has happened in our country and around the world since our last gathering. Besides praying for ourselves and other Pilgrims to NCYC let us remember in our prayers others who are in need. Our response is "Let Us Pray to the Lord."

### ***Prayer***

For those who have lost their lives in the two recent hurricanes, in fires and floods and earthquakes

For those who have been injured

For those who have lost their homes

For those who have lost possessions

For those have been displaced

For first responders

For medical personnel

For those working to restore power

For all volunteers

For those who support those efforts with donations

For those who suffer because of their race, religion and national origin

For peacemakers

For those who fail to see others as brothers and sisters all made in God's image and likeness

For justice, peace and healing

(Add special intentions and perhaps:)

And for who or what else shall we pray

## **Diocese of Gary “The Way Videos” for September** (10 minutes)

**Show the Diocese of Gary “The Way Video” for September.**

*Make sure you view them before the session and prepare a few remarks about them that might pertain to your group.*

*You can find the latest video and other NCYC Pilgrimage resources at <https://is.gd/QhT1H8> or go to the main NCYC page at [ncyc2017.com](http://ncyc2017.com) and click through to the resource section.*

## **Packing for the Journey**

*(variable time - use 35 minutes to keep total to one hour)*

Last time we got together we talked about some changes we’ve seen in ourselves and in our group.

As we change, our ideas of what’s important change. Today let’s spend a little time discussing what we’re going to bring on our Pilgrimage to NCYC in November.

*(Optional - pull out your demo backpack and “stuff”)*

We can’t take everything. Some things we’d like to take but we just can’t fit everything in our pack. Bringing too much makes the journey harder - might even make it impossible to continue. It’s hard to believe but on the Camino de Santiago pilgrims often discard things they’ve packed - sometimes really expensive things - because they realize that trying to continue with the item puts the whole pilgrimage experience in jeopardy.

Besides - some things are just not right to bring along on a pilgrimage

Let’s start with something easy - how many changes of clothes - how many outfits, shoes, hats, coats - do we need to bring along? How many snacks do we need to stash in our bags? Do I really need that laptop, tablet, etc? Do I really need to bring along my special pillow?

What are your ideas?

### **Group Discussion**

*(allow the discussion to continue a little but this is really just a warm-up for what follows)*

Now even a little tougher because we’re all together here. What things do we need to bring for our group? Are we going to bring breakfast snacks for all to share, what about group t-shirts, banners or other things like that?

What do you think?

### **Group Discussion**

*(again allow the discussion to continue a little but this also is really just a warm-up for what follows)*

Now even tougher.

Think about the following questions/situations.

This pilgrimage is about having fun, fellowship with friends and growing in my Faith - How will I keep these in balance?

Our journey down and back is about a 2 hour drive - how do I handle car trips? Am I planning on talking with others or putting on a head set and listening to music?

How am I at sharing a room? Sharing a bathroom sink?

What if a roommate snores? Am I easily awoken? Do I need ear plugs?

Am I nervous about being in a big crowd? Getting lost? Feeling out of place?

What attitudes or feelings do I need to bring along to help me get the most out of NCYC?

What attitudes or feelings do I need to leave behind so that I get the most out of NCYC?

*(optional)*

To help us think about these questions let's listen to Audrey Assad as she sings "I Shall Not Want"

Think about these for a bit and then we can share some thoughts about what to bring and what to leave behind.

### **Group Discussion**

***It's probably good to have some idea of what responses you'd like to hear so that you can steer the discussion. Some suggestions might be:***

#### ***To Bring***

*An open mind  
Humility  
Patience  
Tolerance  
Inquisitiveness  
My Faith  
Understanding*

#### ***To Leave***

*The opposites of the other column  
Fear (be careful to note the difference between fear and prudent caution)*

### **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

Let us gather in a circle for our closing prayer.

I'd ask each person to share one person or thing that they'd like the group to pray for tonight.

***It might be good to ask one of your assistants or you, yourself, to be ready to start the process. After all who desire have shared...***

Our Father ...

# Resources

# Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
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we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
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Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

Adapted from the Pilgrims' Prayer

Camino de Compostela

<http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/upload/WYDUSA-Pilgrimage-Prayer-Guide.pdf>

## Opening Prayer - Part 2

For those who have lost their lives in the two recent hurricanes, in fires and floods and earthquakes

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who have been injured

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who have lost their homes

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who have lost possessions

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who have been displaced

- Let us pray to the Lord

For first responders

- Let us pray to the Lord

For medical personnel

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those working to restore power

- Let us pray to the Lord

For all volunteers

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who support those efforts with donations

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who suffer because of their race, religion and national origin

- Let us pray to the Lord

For peacemakers

- Let us pray to the Lord

For those who fail to see others as brothers and sisters all made in God's image and likeness

- Let us pray to the Lord

For justice, peace and healing

- Let us pray to the Lord

# Packing for the Journey

We can't take everything to NCYC. Some things we'd like to take but we just can't fit everything in our pack. Bringing too much makes the journey harder - might even make it impossible to continue. It's hard to believe but on the Camino de Santiago pilgrims often discard things they've packed - sometimes really expensive things - because they realize that trying to continue with the item puts the whole pilgrimage experience in jeopardy.

Besides - some things are just not right to bring along on a pilgrimage

Let's start with something easy - how many changes of clothes - how many outfits, shoes, hats, coats - do we need to bring along? How many snacks do we need to stash in our bags? Do I really need that laptop, tablet, etc? Do I really need to bring along my special pillow?

## **Group Discussion**

Now even a little tougher because we all together here. What things do we need to bring for our group? Are we going to bring breakfast snacks for all to share, what about group t-shirts, banners or other things like that?

## **Group Discussion**

Now even tougher.

Think about the following questions/situations.

This pilgrimage is about having fun, fellowship with friends and growing in my Faith - How will I keep these in balance?

Our journey down and back is about a 2 hour drive - how do I handle car trips? Am I planning on talking with others or putting on a head set and listening to music?

How am I at sharing a room? Sharing a bathroom sink?

What if a roommate snores? Am I easily awoken? Do I need ear plugs?

Am I nervous about being in a big crowd? Getting lost? Feeling out of place?

What attitudes or feelings do I need to bring along to help me get the most out of NCYC?

What attitudes or feelings do I need to leave behind so that I get the most out of NCYC?

Think about these for a bit and then we can share some thoughts about what to bring and what to leave behind.

## **Group Discussion**

# **I Shall Not Want**

Audrey Assad

From the love of my own comfort  
From the fear of having nothing  
From a life of worldly passions  
Deliver me O God

From the need to be understood  
From the need to be accepted  
From the fear of being lonely  
Deliver me O God  
Deliver me O God

And I shall not want, I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness I shall not want

From the fear of serving others  
From the fear of death or trial  
From the fear of humility  
Deliver me O God  
Deliver me O God

And I shall not want, I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness I shall not want

No, I shall not want, I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness I shall not want

## **Humility is the foundational virtue that builds up the spiritual life within us**

As published in the Northwest Indiana Catholic on September 10, 2017

During the preparation of the gifts at Mass, the priest washes his hands and asks the Lord to forgive his sins. Liturgical historians point out that this ablution was added to the Eucharist back when people would offer animals and produce as the collection offering rather than money. As with many liturgical actions, this hand washing had a practical explanation - the priest's hands were dirty after receiving these gifts - and later gained a spiritual meaning - asking for pardon and mercy.

During the old rite of the coronation of a new pope, the Holy Father would be carried through St. Peter's Basilica amid incense, applause, pomp and splendor, and then suddenly the procession would halt without warning. A cowled monk would step forward, light a taper which quickly burned out and proclaim, "Sic transit gloria mundi," which is Latin for "Thus passes the glory of the world."

This ritual reminded the new pope to not let all of this fanfare go to his head, but rather, to ponder the brevity of life, the need for humility and trust in the grace of the Lord.

I have written on humility before in this column, but I return to it again because this virtue is so essential to the spiritual life. The opposite of pride, humility is the profound recognition of our radical need for God and our absolute poverty. Humility destroys arrogance because it recognizes that all of our gifts and talents come from the hands of the Lord. It knocks out complacency and self-sufficiency because we come to know that, without God's help and mercy, we are lost and hopeless.

Humility inspires gratitude and generosity because it freely passes on what it feels to unworthily retain for self. Pride aggressively seeks the highest place because it feels endlessly entitled; humility joyfully takes the lowest seat because it recognizes the enormity of what has already been given.

God assuming flesh, Jesus eating with sinners, Christ washing feet, the Eucharist making the Lord vulnerable for us, the Son of God laying his life down on the cross as a common criminal, God inviting us to follow him but never forcing his way, all remind us that God is more humble than we are. If the Lord could do all that he did for us without counting the cost or standing on his own infinite dignity, how much more humble, simple and docile we should become as servants of the living God and the Kingdom of heaven!

Humility is the foundational virtue that builds up the spiritual life within us. Without it, no real progress in the Holy Spirit is even possible.

Giving preference in traffic or a checkout line, overlooking others' faults, admitting our ignorance and sin, asking for forgiveness, accepting fraternal correction and just consequences, performing a lowly task for another person, not seeking to be the center of attention nor needing to dominate every conversation, listening more than speaking - all of these little actions express the humility of Christ and allow us to become ever more like the Master.

The word "humility" comes from the Latin "humus" which means "earth." To renounce our pride is to stay grounded, centered, lowly, so that when we do fail, we don't have far to fall. As St. Teresa of Avila said, "Sometimes the Lord waters our souls with the seeming bitterness of humiliations in order to strengthen our virtue and trust."

I thought of this saintly line when I threw out a bad first pitch (after a pretty good practice session) at the Rail Cats game last month! Because of Christ's unconditional love for us and the victory of the cross and resurrection which penetrates every fiber of our being as Christians, we need not fear mistakes, failures, ignorance, inadequacy or even sin, as long as we do our best and put our trust in the Lord.

St. Paul went so far as to say that he boasted of his weaknesses because then the strength of the Lord would be manifest within him. How liberating to not always need to be right, in control, strong and perfect. Our faith in Jesus allows us to simply be ourselves, drop our facades, cease pretending to be something we are not, not be so concerned with what other people think of us and accept our weaknesses and limitations.

Even though it takes a lifetime to work into a fuller humility, wisdom does come with age and experience. As we go through life, hopefully we can laugh at ourselves more, accept the imperfection of everybody and everything around us with better grace and be more docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

In times past, popes needed a reality check from a little monk; at every Mass, the priest washes his hands, acknowledging his unworthiness and need for mercy; we can ponder a crucifix and taste the astounding humility of Christ; and we can accept the setbacks, criticisms, failures and weaknesses of our human condition with lowliness and grace, all because God loves us.

When the perfect, infinite and unconditional love of God poured out in Christ truly becomes the basis of our self-esteem, self-confidence and a healthy self-love, then nothing can really shake us up too much. If we are so grounded in the Lord, so in love with Jesus and so purified of false pride, that we can almost disappear into Christ, then we become like the drop of water put into the wine at the preparation of the Eucharistic gifts at Mass – fully immersed in Christ.

+Donald J. Hying

<https://nwcatholic.com/index.php/2011-10-28-15-52-16/bishop-hying-column>

Accessed 2017-09-12

## **Use Jesus as the model of resistance to the deadly cycle of fear, anger, revenge and hatred**

As published in the Northwest Indiana Catholic on September 3, 2017

Everyone I speak to these days is disturbed by the violence erupting all over the country and world. Steady terrorist attacks, ISIS threats against the pope and the Vatican, extremist groups fighting, hurting and even killing each other, the continued carnage on the streets of Chicago, the ceaseless taking of unborn life through abortion, children who are abandoned, abused and neglected, the fact that 22 U.S. veterans kill themselves every day, and the list goes on.

When it comes to respect and reverence for the dignity and lives of other people, we seem to be moving in the wrong direction. Where does all of this destructive hatred come from?

Legalized abortion has normalized the destruction of unborn children. We have embraced the insanity of a law that says if the child is wanted by the mother, the child is human and has a right to life; if the child is not wanted by the mother, the child can be destroyed. No one else, including the father, has anything to say about it.

How can anyone not see that the systemic, state-sanctioned killing of millions of unborn children has coarsened and diminished our respect for human life in all its forms? If we do not respect the life of a child in the womb, then why reverence other vulnerable lives, why respect the rights of people who differ from us, why not attack and kill those who threaten us in some way?

Ponder the violence of movies and video games. The average American child has been exposed at a very tender age to thousands of scenes of violence in which people are virtually attacked and killed, whether it is on the big screen at a movie theater or the little screen of their video game.

How does this steady bombardment of terrible images not impact the consciences and hearts of our young people? Tragically, some of our youth act out in real life the virtual violence they have witnessed throughout their entire existence. Victims themselves of a violent culture, they act out the destruction they have seen and felt.

I have written before about the terrible impact of bullying, scape-goating and name-calling that has infected every niche of our society. We see such negative behavior in our political discourse, the national media, Facebook, our schools, places of work and homes. I would add the marked increase in reckless and dangerous driving as another area of concern.

This morning, I was almost driven off the freeway by a truck driver who was impatient because I wasn't going fast enough for her. Tailgating, speeding, disregard of stop signs and red lights, weaving in and out of traffic seem to have reached epidemic proportions. This is just another example of disregard for human life, safety, courtesy and the need to think of the other person. In many ways, our social fabric has come apart, as anger, self-interest and tribalism have fragmented our communal cohesion.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to embrace peace and to shun violence, to love our enemies, pray for our persecutors and turn the other cheek, to break the deadly cycle of violence, revenge and hatred through forgiveness, reconciliation and charity. As

I understand the Gospel, Jesus calls me to not add to the violence, rage and hatred that are already in the world.

Environmentalists speak of the need to reduce our carbon footprint; I need to reduce and eliminate my anger and negativity footprint. This effort is much more important than we may think in terms of our spiritual growth and living out the faith. We often act out of unresolved fear and anger.

How and where do we find healing and peace within ourselves, so that we can be instruments of that reconciliation for others? Do my words build up or tear down? Do my actions heal and invite or hurt and exclude? In what ways, perhaps very subtly, do anger, fear and violence control me?

Jesus was able to preach the Gospel with authority, face the anger of the Pharisees and Romans with equanimity, love the crowds of people pushing against him with patience and ultimately forgive his killers because he was so deeply grounded in his relationship with the Father. Knowing himself to be loved as the Son, Jesus could share that love with everyone he met and resist the urge to enter the deadly cycle of fear, anger, revenge and hatred.

The torrent of mercy flowing from the Cross is the divine grace that alone can heal humanity of its spiritual sickness and self-loathing.

We live in a critical moment of history which will direct the future course of our nation and world. God has placed us as bearers of the Gospel, as protagonists of the Kingdom, smack dab in the middle of this very messy and sometimes frightening world to be light, salt, hope and peace for others.

As we celebrate Mass next Saturday, September 9 for racial justice, healing and peace, we ask the Lord to stir our hearts towards a holy boldness, to be patient, forgiving and courageous as we act out the Good News and lovingly challenge the forces of destruction and darkness in our world.

The future of humanity depends on it.

+ Donald J. Hying

<https://nwcatholic.com/index.php/2011-10-28-15-52-16/bishop-hying-column>

Accessed 2017-09-12

## **Through Christ's saving death, we learn there is no room for exclusion or hatred**

As published in the Northwest Indiana Catholic on August 27, 2017

We live in very disturbing and violent times. Just in the past two weeks, the lunacy in Charlottesville, Virginia took three lives and injured many; terrorism in Spain killed thirteen and wounded a hundred, random people were stabbed in Finland; police officers were shot in various cities and CBS news ran a feature detailing the virtual elimination of children with Down Syndrome in Iceland through systemic abortion.

Those perpetrating all of this violence justify it in the name of some ideology, whether it is racism, fascism, religious fanaticism, or even a redefinition of whose life counts.

For a long time now, we have witnessed an increasing polarization in our country and world, where a rational and respectful mutual exchange and discussion of ideas and beliefs has become almost impossible. We sadly see a tribalism developing which needs to scapegoat, demonize and even destroy those who disagree with the current, insular "group think."

The function of our government and the correcting balance of a two-party system have broken down almost to the point of complete gridlock. The name-calling, mud-slinging and outright hatred exhibited by some of our leaders has created an environment of intense pessimism, fear and distrust. Regardless of our political point of view, we would all agree that the founders of our nation had something better in mind than what we are currently suffering through.

I see the same dynamic in the Church at times. Some prelates who make sweeping negative judgments of those who disagree with their take on matters doctrinal, pastoral or political, influential theologians and writers who question the motives of anyone who embraces a different point of view than theirs, and ecclesial ministers who ostracize and marginalize those who may have a differing ecclesiology or spirituality; all contribute to a culture of polarization, confusion, fear and division which is not the mind and heart of Christ.

Most people are intelligent enough to have a nuanced opinion of important matters. Economy, poverty, sexuality, immigration and religion are complex realities which defy simplistic assessments and judgments. Yet the polarization created by extremist tribalism disallows thoughtful conclusions. If you question anything the leftist camp embraces, you are an intolerant hate-monger. If you question anything the right wing camp believes, you are a wild-eyed liberal intent on bringing America down.

I can question some of the injustices of capitalism without being a socialist. I can be against abortion without being against women. I can have opinions on terrorism without being an Islamophobe. I can advocate a rational compromise on the question of illegal immigration without being labeled as anything but a thoughtful and concerned citizen. I can hold up traditional Church teaching without being rigid.

As a society, we have allowed the two extremes to define the national discussion and social agenda for too long with devastating and even deadly results. The majority of us who live somewhere in the complex center of things need to reclaim the issues and the common good.

On Saturday, Sept. 9 at 10 a.m. at our cathedral, I invite you to join me as we celebrate a special Mass for peace, healing and justice in our country and our communities. We need to come together and pray for our nation, world and Church. The bishops have chosen this day as appropriate because it is the feast of Saint Peter Claver, the patron of racial justice. A Spanish Jesuit priest, Claver traveled to Colombia at the height of the evil slave trade.

Not content with simply condemning the racist dehumanization of enslaved Africans, the saint would enter the hold of the recently arrived slave ships, offering food, medicine and love to these oppressed people who were in the midst of a living hell. His example of love, compassion and justice still inspires us today.

As Christians, we need to be ever more sacrificial and courageous, daring to love everyone, living in reconciliation and peace, shunning every type of violence, hatred, scape-goating and polarization. We need to be willing to embrace dialogue and compromise when possible, refusing to label and marginalize others.

The Church lays out for us the transformative path of the Gospel in obedience to and imitation of Jesus Christ who laid his life down for us on the cross, accomplishing our salvation by absorbing all of humanity's hatred and evil. In Christ, God himself became the scapegoat, the criminal, the one rejected and murdered in order to forever heal the wound of our violent hatred.

Because of Jesus' saving death, we must exclude no one. Because of his forgiveness, we must hate no one. Because of his life within us, we must love everyone. The infinite mercy flowing from the Cross is the only power that can heal us in this harsh and dreadful moment.

We dare to hope and struggle for peace, justice, mercy and truth because this love never fails.

+ Donald J. Hying

<https://nwcatholic.com/index.php/2011-10-28-15-52-16/bishop-hying-column>

Accessed 2017-09-12

## A Pilgrimage Play List

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

Song	Artist	Why?
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.
Touch the Sky	Hillsong United	Talks about a very "pilgrim" and very Christian attitude of letting go to gain: My heart beating, my soul breathing I found my life when I laid it down Upward falling, spirit soaring I touch the sky when my knees hit the ground
All Things Possible	Mark Schultz	Reminds us that with God's help "All Things Are Possible." The chorus especially reminds us that when things just don't seem to be going right God is there. Even when it feels like the light is fading And I've lost my way Still I'm holding on to the One who's making All things possible
Believe	The Bravery	Kinda dark song but maybe it expresses the feeling of many young people today - wanting and needing something to believe in and it's especially believing in myself. Maybe better used as a reflection song for the adult leadership team?

Song	Artist	Why?
Thrive	Casting Crowns	Update song with appropriate lyrics for group reflection" So living water flowing through God we thirst for more of You Fill our hearts and flood our souls With one desire  We know we were made for so much more Than ordinary lives It's time for us to more than just survive We were made to thrive
Do Something	Matthew West	Reminds us that sometimes we're the answer to someone's prayers, the solution to a problem, a blessing for others. So, I shook my fist at Heaven Said, "God, why don't You do something?" He said, "I did, I created you"
Lost In My Mind	The Head and Heart	Not a bad reflection song that notes our dependence on each other
Word of Life	Jeremy Camp	A prayer of petition similar to the Psalms Word of life Speak to my weary heart Strengthen my broken parts Lead me to Your open arms

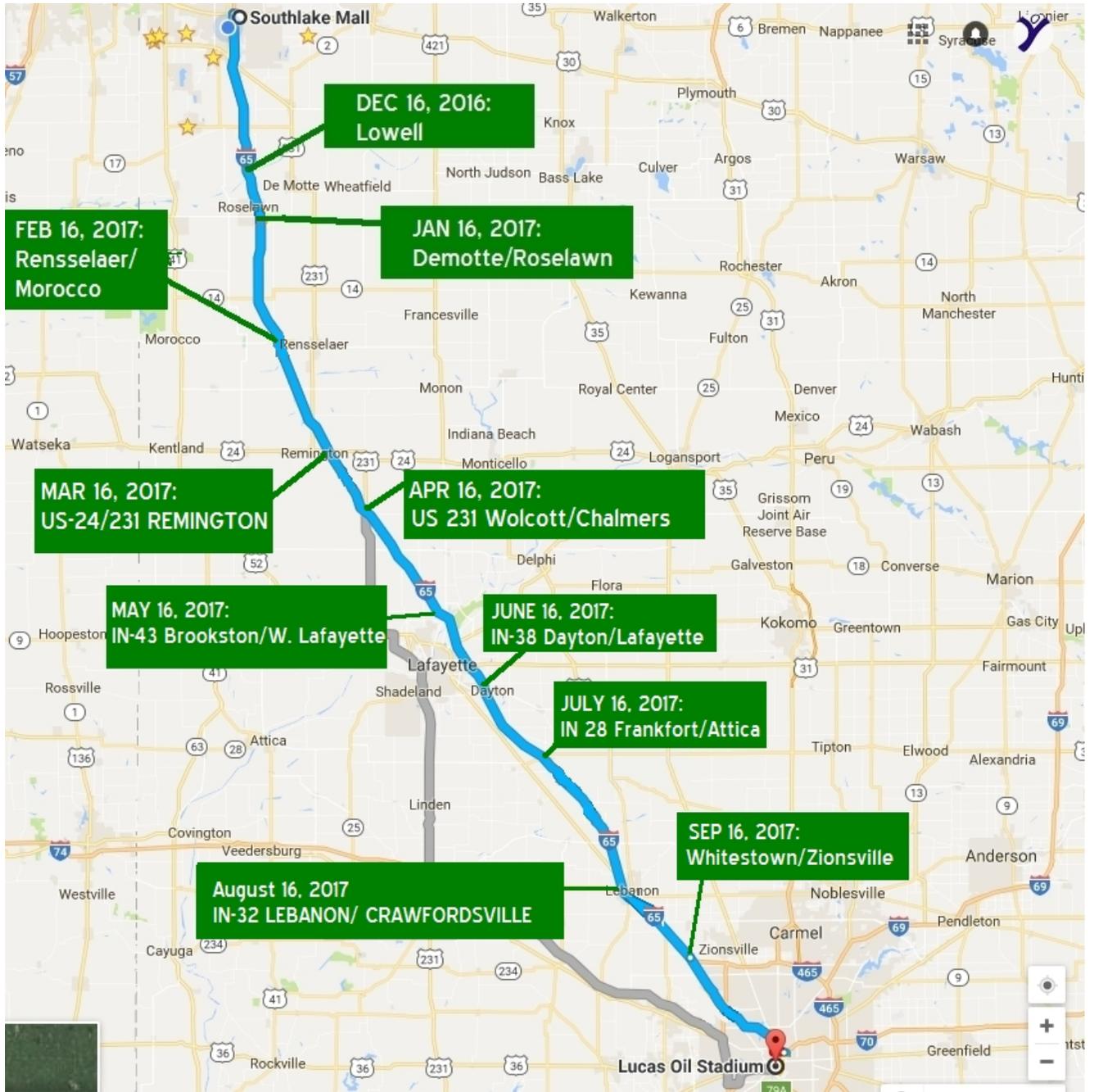
## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April/May 2017 - Defining Expectations
- June/July 2017 - First Steps and Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?



How is your “walk” to Indianapolis going?



## November 2017 Group Session

### Overview

The November Group Session really isn't like the past ones. Those included suggestions for meetings in your own Parish setting.

By now you're most likely really, really busy seeing to last minutes details, putting out (hopefully only) small fires and generally wondering why you ever volunteered to help lead this Pilgrimage. Additionally, you're probably wondering how the heck you're going to pull off Thanksgiving with only three days time for prep after you get back from NCYC.

Time is short - by the time you read this there will be just a couple of weeks before **D - Day** (aka Departure Day - November 16).

Take a really deep breath and thank God that you are an integral part of this Pilgrimage and know that God is with you and your Pilgrims.

The October Theme listed below is Liminality - Standing on the threshold of departure. The November Theme is, naturally, Departure and Arrival.

So, here's what's in this Month's Group Session Package:

Under "Resources" you'll find excerpts from *The Roman Ritual - Book of Blessing* that contain two blessings especially for Pilgrims. The first is a blessing for Pilgrims on their departure. The other is a blessing for Pilgrims either as they leave to return home or once they have arrived at home. Be sure you read the "Special notes" section immediately following.

The usual "Group Session" section has been changed to a short session that can be used Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening before your group splits up and heads to their rooms. Optimistically, we'd like to say "heads to their beds" but realistically we know that it will likely be some time before the excitement of each day dissipates enough to be able to sleep.

While it's certainly possible to return to the hotel from Lucas Oil Stadium in the evening and just hit the elevators, it seems a shame to not spend at least a few minutes together. There should be room available in the hotel lobby for your group to gather or, if your group is small enough, you might want to hold the session in your room or the room of another leader. The good news if you choose to do this is that it will be quieter and you could pass around cookies or some similar snack. The bad news is that your room would need to be at least half-way clean!

You'll find in the "Resources" section a sheet that contains multiple copies of the "Pilgrims' Prayer" that we have been using. Perhaps printing this out on card stock and giving one to each Pilgrim to carry along

might be useful. Also useful might be having additional copies to hand out again to Pilgrims have lost their first (or second or third) copy.

Speaking of going and coming - maybe now would be a good time to finally look at the music playlist and have some of those songs available on phones for the trip down and back?

Finally, if your group is going to be sharing a meal together, even if it's only breakfast bars in the hotel lobby make sure that you pray together. It's an important part of our Catholic/Christian heritage; it's one more opportunity to emphasize the Pilgrim nature of NCYC; it's a great witness to non-NCYC people about the Faith of our young people and their leaders.

Special notes about these sessions:

- The blessings from the Book of Blessings were written for use by a priest or deacon. You can tell this because in the Prayer of Blessing the celebrant asks God's blessing on a group in the name of the Church. To modify, if necessary for use by a lay leader, change the words of the Prayer of Blessing to be an inclusive "we" instead of "them" and "their."
- Another possibility would be to gather all the Pilgrims together at one Mass the weekend before NCYC and ask the celebrant to offer a modified version of the blessing, perhaps just the Prayer of Blessing portion, for the Pilgrims. It would be good for the parishioners to see the Pilgrims gathered together as a group.
- The evening session before dispersing to rooms is just a suggestion. You really need to adapt it based on your own group and their special needs.
- In the August Leaders mailing Kevin included an NCYC schedule that was customized for the Diocese of Gary. If you haven't already done so you might want to print that out for your Pilgrims. Make sure that you use Kevin's version and not the one found on the national NCYC website ([ncyc.info](http://www.ncyc.info)).
- The detailed schedule of individual breakout sessions is coming together. You might want to provide this to your pilgrims as a copy or mention of the web address. <http://www.ncyc.info/breakouts/>
- Finally, and a repeat from last month's program, right now might be the time to put up a countdown sign in the Youth Ministry Gathering Space or even the Church entrance counting down the months/weeks/days before NCYC.

## **Session Preview**

- Opening Prayer (1 minute)
- Discussion/Questions/Petitions (10 to 15 minutes)
- Closing Prayer (1 minute)

## **Preparation**

- Make sure that you tell your group that you will be gathering before they head to bed. Tell them where to meet and, if you're not all sitting together and walking back from Lucas Oil Stadium, what time to meet. Explain, if you wish, that this isn't an optional part of the evening but that they're expected (required) to participate.
- Copies of the Pilgrims' Prayer for each participant.
- Snack for social time after the formal gathering, if desired.

## **Opening Prayer** (1 minute)

***When all have gathered recite the following prayer together:***

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.

Be for us our companion on the walk,

Our guide at the crossroads,

Our breath in our weariness,

Our protection in danger,

Our home on The Way,

Our shade in the heat,

Our light in the darkness,

Our consolation in our discouragements,

And our strength in our intentions.

So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound

at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue

we return safely to our homes filled with joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

## **Discussion/Questions/Petitions** (10 to 15 minutes)

Before we split up to head off to our rooms let's take just a couple of minutes talking about today. Let me start off with a question-

*(Here are a number of questions you might ask. Sometimes it helpful to explain that you'd like an answer from each person and then go around the group with each person answering. If you'd rather not do this it's still important to ensure that everyone is taking part in the discussion.)*

### ***Group Discussion***

- What did you think about today? The trip down, the hotel, the food, the events, etc.
- What was one thing that surprised you today? Why?
- What was the best part of the program(s) in Lucas Oil Stadium today? Why?
- What was the best breakout session you attended? Why?
- Was there something today that made you feel especially close to God?
- Was there something today that made you feel especially close to others in our group?
- Was there something today that you didn't like? Why?
- What did you think of the displays in the huge hall?
- Did you take part in any of the volunteer opportunities? Why did you pick the one(s) you did?
- Of the songs played in the program tonight which was your favorite?

- Are you getting comfortable finding your way around?
- Anything you need from the leaders for tomorrow?

(You might end the discussion with this)

- Let's go around the group and tell us who you want us to especially pray for tonight

### **Closing Prayer** (1 minute)

Let us pray together the Our Father (or Hail Mary or Glory Be, etc.).

# Resources

# Opening Prayer

O God, who brought your servant Abraham  
out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
protecting him in his wandering across the desert,  
we ask that you watch over us, your servants,  
as we walk in the love of your name to NCYC.  
Be for us our companion on the walk,  
Our guide at the crossroads,  
Our breath in our weariness,  
Our protection in danger,  
Our home on The Way,  
Our shade in the heat,  
Our light in the darkness,  
Our consolation in our discouragements,  
And our strength in our intentions.  
So that with your guidance we may arrive safe and sound  
at the end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue  
we return safely to our homes filled with joy.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. James the Apostle, pray for us.

Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

Adapted from the Pilgrims' Prayer

Camino de Compostela

<http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/upload/WYDUSA-Pilgrimage-Prayer-Guide.pdf>



## ***Group Discussion***

- What did you think about today? The trip down, the hotel, the food, the events, etc.
- What was one thing that surprised you today? Why?
- What was the best part of the program(s) in Lucas Oil Stadium today? Why?
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- Was there something today that made you feel especially close to God?
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- Was there something today that you didn't like? Why?
- What did you think of the displays in the huge hall?
- Did you take part in any of the volunteer opportunities? Why did you pick the one(s) you did?
- Of the songs played in the program tonight which was your favorite?
- Are you getting comfortable finding your way around?
- Anything you need from the leaders for tomorrow?

(You might end the discussion with this)

- Let's go around the group and tell us who you want us to especially pray for tonight

## Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your (thy) gifts, which we are about to receive, from your (thy) bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Grace After Meals

We give You (thee) thanks, almighty God, for all Your (thy) benefits. Who lives and reigns now and forever. Amen.

V. May the Lord grant us His peace.

R. And life everlasting. Amen.

### **A Pilgrimage Play List**

Do you ever use music in your presentations to make or reinforce a point? Here are a few songs that might be useful for this session. Note that you don't have to play the whole song!

Have your own? Send them (Song Title, Artist & Why?) to Bill Hathaway at [sted-cff@att.net](mailto:sted-cff@att.net) and we'll include them in future session packages to build up a Pilgrimage Playlist.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Why?</b>
I Want To Know	Kongos	Talks about asking questions but also about making decisions
In The Light	DC Talk	Speaks to the desire in all of us to find Truth, Light and Righteousness
I Shall Not Want	Audrey Assad	Audrey lists fears and needs that can keep us from fully recognizing God's love. It includes some fears and needs that we often don't think about
Never Alone	BarlowGirl	Perfectly captures those time when we feel dry, empty and alone - especially when we think God isn't close.
Crawl (Carry Me Through)	Superchick	Very similar to "Never Alone" but with an even stronger message that despite whatever comes our way God is with us.
I Am Not Alone	Kari Jobe	One more song in the "Never Alone" category.
Open My Hands	Sara Groves	Even in times of trouble, when we don't understand, God withholds nothing from us when we approach with open hands, open minds and open hearts.
He Knows My Name	Francesca Battistelli	Even when we look in the mirror and don't see perfection we know that we're special because God knows my name.
Blessings	Laura Story	This song points out that we often experience blessings but sometimes just aren't able to recognize them.
It's Not Over Yet	For King and Country	Despite problems we encounter "it's not over yet" - our future still lies before us.
Eric Clapton	Presence of the Lord	Isn't this the guy who sang "Cocaine"? Yes, but for a low key, R&B kinda thing that makes a great reflection song this is good.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	A little alternative? "Maybe I'm foolish, maybe I'm blind - Thinking I can see through this and see what's behind - Got no way to prove it so maybe I'm lied - But I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all"
Ball of Confusion	Love and Rockets	Kinda expresses in music what many people think about the world today.
Touch the Sky	Hillsong United	Talks about a very "pilgrim" and very Christian attitude of letting go to gain: My heart beating, my soul breathing I found my life when I laid it down Upward falling, spirit soaring I touch the sky when my knees hit the ground
All Things Possible	Mark Schultz	Reminds us that with God's help "All Things Are Possible." The chorus especially reminds us that when things just don't seem to be going right God is there. Even when it feels like the light is fading And I've lost my way Still I'm holding on to the One who's making All things possible
Believe	The Bravery	Kinda dark song but maybe it expresses the feeling of many young people today - wanting and needing something to believe in and it's especially believing in myself. Maybe better used as a reflection song for the adult leadership team?
Thrive	Casting Crowns	Update song with appropriate lyrics for group reflection" So living water flowing through God we thirst for more of You Fill our hearts and flood our souls With one desire  We know we were made for so much more Than ordinary lives It's time for us to more than just survive We were made to thrive
Do Something	Matthew West	Reminds us that sometimes we're the answer to someone's prayers, the solution to a problem, a blessing for others. So, I shook my fist at Heaven Said, "God, why don't You do something?" He said, "I did, I created you"
Lost In My Mind	The Head and Heart	Not a bad reflection song that notes our dependence on each other
Word of Life	Jeremy Camp	A prayer of petition similar to the Psalms Word of life Speak to my weary heart Strengthen my broken parts Lead me to Your open arms

## Steps in making a pilgrimage

The following is the schedule for the monthly Parish Gatherings.

- January 2017 - Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage
- February/March 2017 - The Call - What Brings Me Here
- April/May 2017 - Defining Expectations
- June/July 2017 - First Steps and Appreciating the Scenery
- August 2017 - Beginning the Transformation
- September 2017 - Packing for the Journey
- October 2017 - Liminality
- November 2017 - Departure and Arrival
- December 2017 - January 2018 - Return and Processing

Some details:

- Receiving the Idea of Pilgrimage - Why are pilgrimages important? Why do people need them? What happens if someone never makes a pilgrimage?
- The Call - I've heard about pilgrimages but is it something that I should do right now? Is this something I need?  
  
What Brings Me Here - I'm going on a pilgrimage! But what are my specific needs, wants and hopes? What do I bring along when I make the pilgrimage journey?
- Defining Expectations - What do I expect to get from this pilgrimage? How do I think it will change my life? What do the people I'm going on the pilgrimage with expect?
- Beginning the Movement - Let me start to make a few changes to be really ready! But what changes?
- Appreciating the Scenery - What are some of the sights along the way and at my destination that I especially want to see? What are some distractions it might be better to avoid?
- Beginning the Transformation - Have I noticed any changes in Me? Have I noticed any changes in those making the pilgrimage with me? What more do I need in preparation right now?
- Packing for the Journey - What should I bring? As importantly, what should I leave at home on this pilgrimage?
- Liminality - We're standing in the doorway - last minute things I/We need before we step over the threshold?
- Departure and Arrival - Experience what we've been preparing for!
- Return and Processing - I'm back. So what? Now what?

## CHAPTER 8

# ORDERS FOR THE BLESSING OF PILGRIMS

### INTRODUCTION

590 Whether in a traditional or a modern form, a pilgrimage to a holy place, to the tomb of a saint, or to a shrine should be regarded as having pastoral value. Pilgrimages are occasions for conversion, spiritual growth, and the advance of the apostolate.

591 The proper, that is, spiritual, character of the Christian pilgrimage must be carefully explained and inculcated ahead of time, so that the pilgrims will truly be “traveling heralds of Christ”<sup>24</sup> and will experience fully the good effects of their pilgrimage.

592 For such pastoral purposes it will often be useful to arrange a special celebration for the blessing of the pilgrims at their departure or on their return.

593 When, instead, the celebration of Mass, the liturgy of the hours, or some other liturgical service is preferred as the beginning or end of a pilgrimage, the celebration may be concluded with a blessing of the pilgrims taken from the orders in this chapter.

594 The present order may be used by a priest or deacon. While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the celebrant should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

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<sup>24</sup> *Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity Apostolicam actuositatem, no. 14.*

## I. ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF PILGRIMS ON THEIR DEPARTURE

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

595 When the group of pilgrims has gathered, Psalm 122 or some other suitable song may be sung. After the singing, the celebrant says:

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

**Amen.**

596 The celebrant greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

**May God, our strength and salvation, be with you all.**

All make the following or some other suitable reply.

**And also with you.**

597 In the following or similar words, the celebrant prepares those present for the blessing.

**Brothers and sisters, as we set out, we should remind ourselves of the reasons for our resolve to go on this holy pilgrimage. The place we intend to visit is a monument to the devotion of the people of God. They have gone 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. We must also try to bring something to the faithful who live there: our example of faith, hope, and love. In this way both they and we will be enriched by the help we give each other.**

### READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

598 A reader, another person present, or the celebrant reads a text of sacred Scripture.

**Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians: 5:6-10**

*We are away from the Lord.*

**So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.**

599 Or:

*Isaiah 2:2-5--Let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

*Luke 2:41-51--They went up to Jerusalem for the celebration as was their custom.*

*Luke 24:13-35--Jesus approached and began to walk along with them.*

*Hebrews 10:19-25--Let us draw near in utter sincerity and absolute confidence.*

*1 Peter 2:4-12--As strangers and in exile.*

600 As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung or said, or some other suitable song.

**R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Psalm 24

**The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. R.**

**Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD or who may stand in his holy place? He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain. R.**

**He shall receive a blessing from the LORD, a reward from God his savior. Such is the race that seeks for him, that seeks the face of the God of Jacob. R.**

Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14 R. (see v. 4)

**One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord.**

601 As circumstances suggest, the celebrant may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

INTERCESSIONS

602 The intercessions are then said. The celebrant introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following intentions those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The celebrant says:

**God is the beginning and the end of life's pilgrimage. Let us call on him with confidence, saying:**

**R. Lord, be the companion of our journey.**

Or:

**R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

Assisting minister:

**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. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You have given us your only Son to be our way to you; make us follow him faithfully and unswervingly. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You gave us Mary as the image and model for following Christ; grant that through her example we may live a new life. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**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. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You lead us along right and peaceful paths; grant that we may one day see you face to face in heaven. (For this we pray:) R.**

#### PRAYER OF BLESSING

603 With hands outstretched, the celebrant continues with the prayer of blessing.

**All-powerful God, you always show mercy toward those who love you and you are never far away for 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.**

**R. Amen.**

#### CONCLUDING RITE

604 The celebrant concludes the rite by saying:

**May the Lord guide us and direct our journey in safety.**

**R. Amen.**

**May the Lord be our companion along the way.**

**R. Amen.**

**May the Lord grant that the journey we begin, relying on him, will end happily through his protection.**

**R. Amen.**

605 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

## II. ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF PILGRIMS BEFORE OR AFTER THEIR RETURN

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

606 When the group of pilgrims has gathered, a suitable song may be sung, for example, *Urbs Jerusalem beata*, or some other song related to the place and circumstances of the pilgrimage. After the singing, the celebrant says:

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

**Amen.**

607 The celebrant greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

**May God, our hope and our strength, fill you with peace and with joy in the Holy Spirit. Glory to God now and for ever.**

All make one of the following or some other suitable reply.

**Amen.**

Or:

**Glory to God now and for ever.**

608 In the following or similar words, the celebrant prepares those present for the blessing.

**Our pilgrimage has been a privileged period of grace given us by God. We who have come in trust to this holy place are moved with a new resolve to be renewed in heart.**

**The sanctuaries that we have visited are a sign 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 we return home, let us live up to the vocation God has given us: to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims for his own, so that we may everywhere proclaim the goodness of him who called us from darkness into his marvelous light.**

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

609 A reader, another person present, or the celebrant reads a text of sacred Scripture. Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the first book of Chronicles: 29:9-18

*We stand before you as aliens, we are only your guests.*

**The people rejoiced over these free-will offerings, which had been contributed to the LORD wholeheartedly. King David also rejoiced greatly.**

**Then David blessed the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, praying in these words:**

**“Blessed may you be, O LORD, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity.**

**“Yours, O LORD, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, O LORD, is the sovereignty; you are exalted as head over all.**

**“Riches and honor are from you, and you have dominion over all. In your right hand are power and might; it is yours to give grandeur and strength to all.**

**“Therefore, our God, we give you thanks and we praise the majesty of your name.**

**“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and we only give you what we have received from you. For we stand before you as aliens: we are only your guests, like all our fathers. Our life on earth is like a shadow that does not abide. O LORD our God, all this wealth that we have brought together to build you a house in honor of your holy name comes from you and is entirely yours. I know, O my God, that you put hearts to the test and that you take pleasure in uprightness. With a sincere heart I have willingly given all these things, and now with joy I have seen your people here**

**present also giving to you generously. O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep such thoughts in the hearts and minds of your people forever, and direct their hearts toward you.”**

610 Or:

Luke 24:28-35--They recounted what had happened on the road.

John 5:1-15--Pick up your mat and walk. John 9:1-38--I left, and washed, and returned able to see.

Acts 8:26-35--He had come on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and was returning home.

Hebrews 13:12-21--Here we have no lasting city; we are seeking one which is to come.

611 As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung or said, or some other suitable song.

### **R. How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord mighty God!**

Psalm 84

**My soul yearns and pines  
for the courts of the LORD.  
My heart and my flesh  
cry out for the living God. R.**

**Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest  
in which she puts her young--  
Your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my king and my God! R.**

**Happy they who dwell in your house!  
continually they praise you.  
Happy the men whose strength you are!  
their hearts are set upon the pilgrimage. R.**

**When they pass through the valley of the mastic trees,  
they make a spring of it;  
the early rain clothes it with generous growth.  
They go from strength to strength;  
they shall see the God of gods in Zion. R.**

Psalm 122:1-2, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

**R. (see v. 1) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.**

612 As circumstances suggest, the celebrant may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

INTERCESSIONS

613 The intercessions are then said. The celebrant introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following intentions those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The celebrant says:

**The Lord of heaven willed that in Christ's humanity the fullness of divinity should dwell as in its temple. Let us pray to him, saying:**

**R. Look down from heaven, O Lord, and bless your people.**

Or:

**R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

Assisting minister:

**Father all-holy, in the Passover exodus you prefigured the blessed road of your people toward salvation; grant that in all the paths we follow we may remain wholeheartedly faithful to you. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You set your Church in this world as a sanctuary from which the true light would shine for all to see; grant that many people will enter this sanctuary and walk in your ways. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You have told us that here we have no lasting city; grant that we may always seek the city that is to come. (For this we pray:) R.**

Assisting minister:

**You teach all the faithful to perceive the signs of your presence along all the pathways of life; grant that like the disciples**

**of Emmaus we may come to recognize Christ as the companion of our journey and know him in the breaking of the bread. (For this we pray:) R.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

614 With hands outstretched, the celebrant continues with the prayer of 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.**

CONCLUDING RITE

615 The celebrant concludes the rite by saying:

**May God, the Lord of heaven and earth,  
who so graciously has accompanied you on this pilgrimage,  
continue to keep you under his protection.**

**R. Amen.**

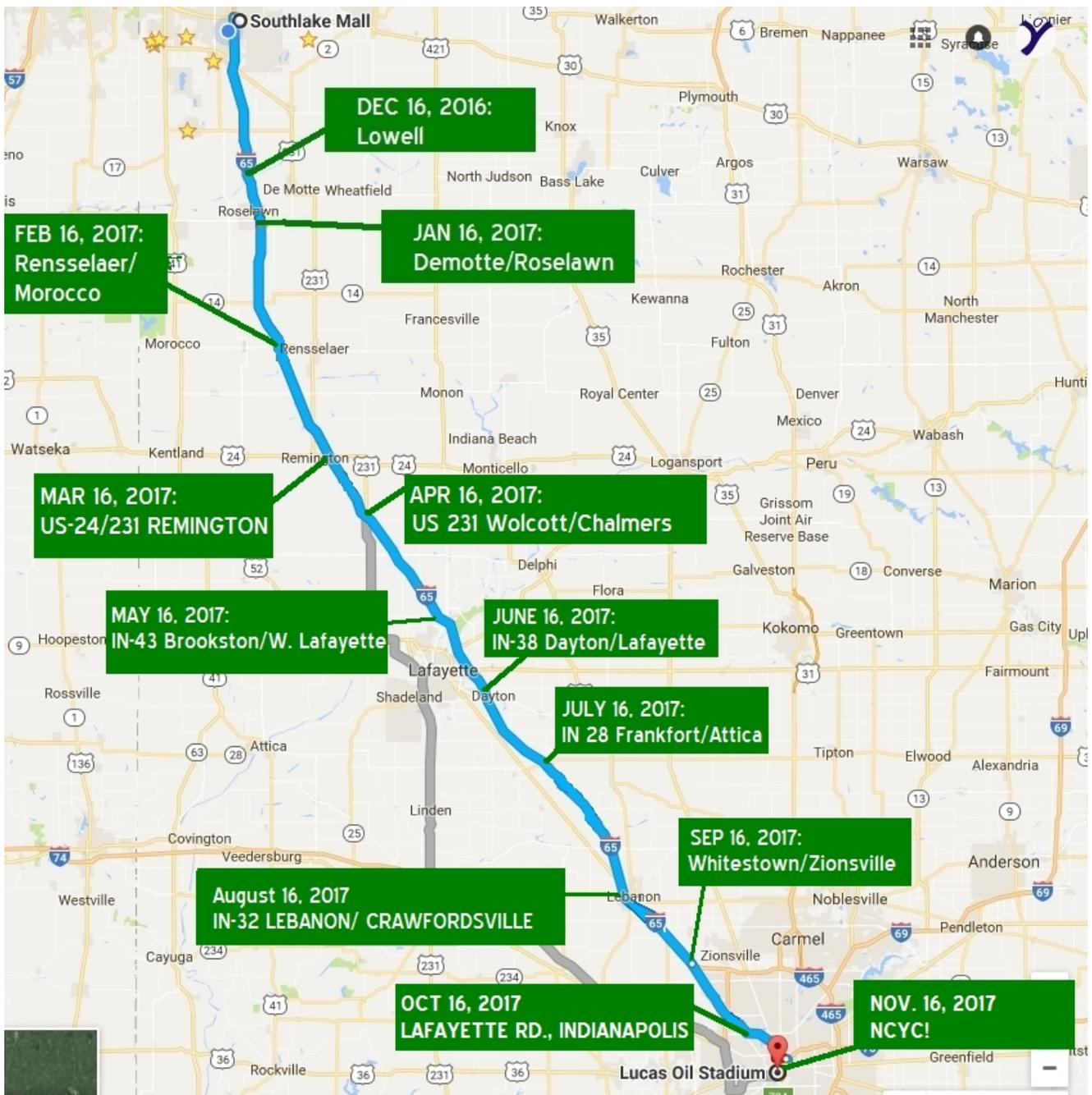
**May God, who gathered all his scattered children in  
Christ Jesus,  
grant that you will be of one heart  
and one mind in Christ.**

**R. Amen.**

**May God, whose goodness inspires in you  
all that you desire and achieve,  
strengthen your devotion by his blessing.**

**R. Amen.**

616 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.



## YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR SPIRITUAL WALK TO INDIANAPOLIS!

It was more than “going to NCYC”...

It was a **Spiritual Pilgrimage to Encounter Christ at the National Catholic Youth Conference!**