

Dear Little Flower,

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has just taken a journey of what he called *The Pilgrimage of Penitence* to Canada. The purpose was to ask for forgiveness from our brothers and sisters in the indigenous Canadian Communities who have suffered abuse because of some Christians. His journey was striking to me, because the Lord continues to call us ever to go deeper into the message of forgiveness and mercy and healing as a Church, especially in times of difficulty, struggles, anger and pain.

In my previous letter, I expressed my desire that I would want to be a good shepherd for you, a good friend of Jesus with you, a spiritual companion, a good father. How do I intend to do this, with my limited time with you? - I prayed and asked the Lord. The Holy Spirit led me - and is now moving me - to take a pilgrimage with you - a Spiritual Pilgrimage. The Lord spoke to me: ***Take them - the ones I will give you - into a spiritual journey, a spiritual pilgrimage.***

The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares that: "Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey towards heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal and prayer" (2691). In our House Tradition (the Catholic Church), we recognize three major pilgrimages around the world, namely: 1. **The Romeria** (a pilgrimage through the major shrines and basilicas in Rome, with our Blessed Mother); 2. **The Camino de Santiago de Compostela** (the threading of the same roads, mainly in the Iberian Peninsula, that led St James to journey to 'the ends of the earth' proclaiming the good news of repentance and the mercy of God); 3. **The Pilgrimage to the Holy Land** (a journey that would take us to the Holy Sites and Roads where the Lord Himself has walked). Now, I don't mean to take you there physically - I personally would not have the financial means to do so even if I wanted to. However, we could take a ***spiritual journey*** together, using symbols, mysteries and the life that these pilgrimages already bring the people of God.

In this light, my first journey with you will start soon: A DIGITAL JOURNEY of ***the 33 Days to Morning Glory***. This is a do-it-yourself retreat that focuses on the spirituality of our Blessed Mother (Marian Spirituality), which will culminate at the dedication and consecration to Jesus through Mary. Our parish, the Little Flower, will be consecrated to Jesus through Mary on September 8, 2022 (our Blessed Mother's Birthday). ***The first journey we take as His little children is with our Mother.*** (More details to follow - please continue to check out our bulletin and website on "ways to participate" in this first pilgrimage).

Moving forward, I ask that all our ministries and activities in the parish take the same initiative to bring all their programming with the intention of taking on the idea of a journey with each other - a Spiritual Pilgrimage towards a deeper relationship with God and one another.

I am looking forward to being with you - together in our parish journey. *Buen Camino! (Good journey).*

Your Parish Priest,

Fr. JC Merino