

PILGRIM'S TRAVEL COMPANION

August 27 - September 9, 2025

A JOURNEY OF HEART, HEALING, & HOPE
WITH FR. JC MERINO



Name: _____

Church of the Little Flower

Dear Pilgrim,

Your journey begins here—not simply with packing a suitcase or receiving an itinerary, but with the stirring of something deeper: a quiet whisper from the Lord, calling you to step away from the noise of daily life and enter into a sacred path of healing and hope.

Our pilgrimage will take us across lands steeped in faith and marked by the footprints of saints: **Medjugorje**, where Our Lady continues to invite the world to conversion, peace, and prayer. **Montenegro** and the Adriatic coast, revealing nature's majesty and God's fingerprints in beauty. **Dubrovnik**, a jewel of history and resilience, reminding us that faith endures through every storm. **Rome**, the Eternal City, where we'll walk with Peter and Paul and stand at the heart of our Church. **Monte Cassino**, birthplace of Benedictine spirituality—where ora et labora (pray and work) shaped Christian Europe. **San Giovanni Rotondo**, the home of St. Padre Pio, where wounds became windows to grace. **Loreto**, where the Holy House of Nazareth rests, carrying the silence of the Annunciation. And finally, **Assisi**, the peaceful sanctuary of St. Francis and St. Clare, where simplicity radiates divine joy – and where then St. Carlo Acutis requested to be laid to rest.

But this is not just a journey through geography and history. This is a journey of the heart – *your* story, and *your* heart. You may be carrying burdens, questions, wounds, or weariness. Or maybe you're coming with quiet expectation, gratitude, or longing. Wherever you are on your journey — come as you are. Christ, our gentle Healer and Guide, walks with us. Mary, our Mother, intercedes. The saints accompany us.

Let each stop along the way be a holy pause: a chance to encounter God, to listen, to weep if needed, to rejoice when grace overflows, to surrender what has weighed heavy, and to welcome the peace the world cannot give.

Pilgrimage changes us — inwardly. And when we return home, we do not go back the same. A pilgrim always carries something home: a renewed heart, a rekindled hope, a clearer sense of mission.

So I invite you now—before we board a plane or step on a bus—to begin this journey in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit: "What do You want to do in me, Lord, during this pilgrimage?"

Know that I will be with you praying for you, and your intentions, each day leading up to our departure. May this be a time of deep healing, joyful encounter, and abiding hope.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace—pray for us.
St. Francis and St. Clare—pray for us.
St. Padre Pio—pray for us.
Sts. Peter and Paul—pray for us.
St. Therese the Little Flower—pray for us.
All holy men and women—pray for us.

Your guide, friend, and priest,
Fr. JC Merino



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August 27, 2025

Dear Pilgrims of Hope,

Peace in Christ.

As you set out on The Pilgrimage of Hope, know how close you are to my heart. I had so longed to walk this journey with you in person, but the Lord has written a different path for me in these days. My Papa fell ill while traveling from Manila and is now in the ICU in San Francisco. What I thought would be a joyful reunion has become instead a pilgrimage of its own – one of waiting, discernment, and walking closely with him in his fragility.

Even in this unexpected turn, I see God's hand at work. Papa has had the grace of reconciling with his brothers and sisters here in San Francisco after many years of distance. That gift of healing reminds me of the very heart of our pilgrimage together: that the Lord never abandons us, and that His plan, though often hidden, is always one of mercy, hope, and love.

I carry each of you and your intentions with me, and I ask that you carry mine as well – for my Papa's health, for my family's strength, and for my own openness to God's will. Though we may be apart in distance, we walk together in the Spirit, bound by the same faith and the same Lord who leads us forward.

So, walk with hope. Walk in healing. Walk with heart. And may every step you take open you more deeply to the God who surprises us with His grace.

With gratitude and prayer,

Fr. JC Merino

This is the day the *Lord* has made;
Let us *rejoice* and be glad in it.

PSALM 118:24

The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

The Pilgrim's Prayer

O God,

Be for us our companion on the walk,
Our guide at the crossroads,
Our breath in our weariness,
Our protection in danger,
Our refuge 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
enriched with grace and virtue
may we return safely to our homes
filled with joy.
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

trust your
JOURNEY