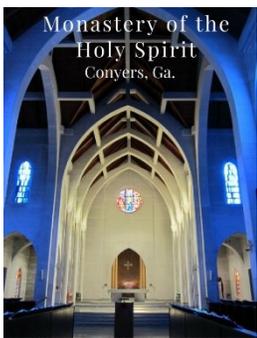


Parish Pilgrimages

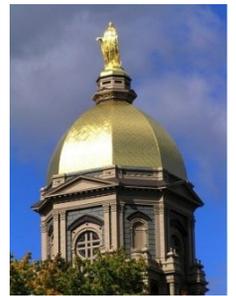
The Lord Jesus is readily available anywhere, anytime and under any and all conditions.

Even so, the Lord Jesus is more easily met and communicated with in certain more favorable environments or conditions.

“Holy Places” or places of pilgrimage certainly fit that bill.



The U.S. is one of the newer countries of the world but it still has “Holy places” worth the time and effort to go to for prayer and reflection – such as Holy Spirit Trappist Monastery in Conyers, GA; Mother Angelica’s Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Birmingham, AL; The Shrine at Notre Dame University; Our Lady of the Snows Shrine, in Belleville, IL; The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in New Franken, WI.



Canada has St. Joseph Oratory of Mount Royal, Montreal and Basilica of Saint Anne de Beupre, Quebec.

And of course the most famous one in Mexico – Our Lady of Guadalupe.

If you are even any where close to one of these U.S. or Canadian or Mexican Holy places, take time out to visit. It will be a big plus to you and your family’s faith journey.

Hundreds of our parishioners have been able to go much further to distant and more ancient and even more widely acclaimed places of pilgrimage.

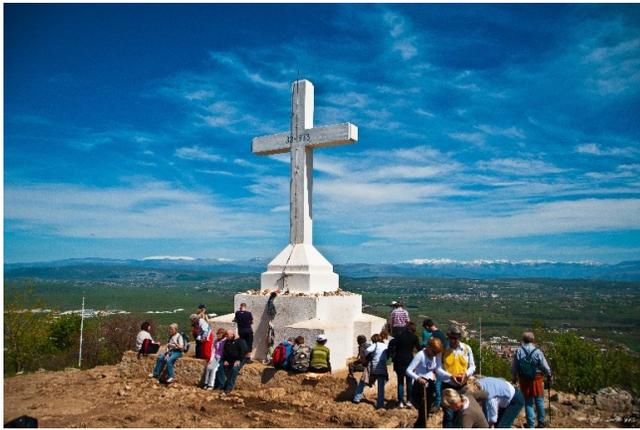


I have led pilgrims over the years to Rome, Fatima, Lourdes, the Holy Land, Knock (Ireland), Lough Derg (Ireland), Uganda Martyrs Shrine and Medjugorje and World Youth Day (Denver, Co.) and St. John Paul II visit to Philadelphia.

Apart from the two Irish pilgrimages (which I’m privileged to participate in every year

while on vacation) my two very favorite places of pilgrimage are the Holy Land and Medjugorje.

While I loved my two visits to Lourdes, and actually witnessed one miracle there, somehow I keep going back to Medjugorje every two years and we usually have 20+ pilgrims each time. Medjugorje is still not officially approved by the Pope. Countless books are written about it. Many, many miracles are recorded. Thousands upon thousands of pilgrims are there everyday except during the cold winter months. The parish Church in Medjugorje, St. James, is crowded each day on the hour, for Masses in Spanish, Polish, English, Italian, German, Filipino (Tagalog), Croatian, etc. Confessions are celebrated daily in dozens of languages by dozens of priests both indoors and outdoors. About 12,000 people gather at an outdoor shrine at night before an enlarged Host (the Blessed Sacrament) for an international Holy Hour of Prayer.



Within walking distance of St. James are two “mountains.”

Mount Krizevac – which has the 14 Stations of the Cross on the way up.

Mount Podbrdo – where Our Lady appeared several times to six Croatian youth in 1981. It has the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries on the way up and down and the luminous mysteries at the scene of the Apparition.

Some people climb both mountains on their bare feet. So far, with my shoes on, I really get inspired, going up both, sometimes with a group but preferably on my own.

If your finances can be arranged and you have a choice of going on a cruise or a pilgrimage, definitely go on the pilgrimage. You will enjoy both but the pilgrimage will have a more lasting good effect on your life.

An 8 to 10 day visit the Holy Land will give you spiritual goosebumps. I have been three times. It is safe. While all guides are extremely well trained and knowledgeable on the Bible, I would strongly advise that you insist on a Christian guide – such as a Franciscan priest. Whether near or far try to give yourself and/or your family the experience of a Catholic pilgrimage.

