

Welcome to the School of the Pilgrim! The School of the Pilgrim offers people an opportunity to step away from what the late poet John O'Donohue called the “religion of rush” by re-introducing people to the ancient and contemporary practices of thoughtful and intentional pilgrimage. This time away from the hectic pace of our current culture allows the space to further explore our spiritual identity and growth

To that end, the School of the Pilgrim is invested in helping people explore the way that the life of faith—personally and communally—is an ongoing, all-encompassing journey first revealed in intentional pilgrimages. Often times we are not aware that we are on an ongoing journey until months after we finish an actual pilgrimage. The School of the Pilgrim is dedicated to accompanying people both on an external pilgrimage *and* the internal ‘pilgrimage of life.’

To this end the School of the Pilgrim is both a school of thought and a way of living, in which we strive to understand and live our lives as pilgrims on an ongoing, unfolding pilgrimage of spiritual growth. When we go on pilgrimage we teach each other the prayers, songs, and sacred rites of pilgrimage, followed by a time of reflecting on these practices and how they might be integrated into a new pilgrim’s daily spiritual life. These programs are arranged by request from individuals, groups, and faith communities. For some groups we may spend a half-day or entire day in a workshop on pilgrimage, while others may want a three to four day weekend pilgrimage. During this time we focus on re-learning the ancient practices as well as creating contemporary sacred practices of pilgrimage.

There are also longer guided opportunities, undertaking an intentional pilgrimage either here or abroad for 10-12 days. Past pilgrimages have included Chimayo in northern New Mexico, St. Patrick’s Purgatory in Ireland, Canterbury and Lindisfarne in England, and portions of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, along with Israel, Egypt and Guatemala, and hopefully soon taking groups to Peru, Cambodia, India, and Nepal. Equally important to us after going on an intentional pilgrimage is the follow-up: for six months after pilgrims return home, a member of the staff of the School will ‘be a pilgrim companion’ to each pilgrim as they return home to their congregations. We do this by meeting weekly, for an hour, via modern technology of internet services, discussing topics and issues that come to light as each pilgrim integrates what was first learned on pilgrimage back home, right where they live and worship

The beauty of pilgrimage is that it can take place where ever a group of people, who have a thirst and hunger for the spiritual life, are gathered together. Pilgrimage welcomes people of all ages, abilities, economic and social classes, genders, ethnicities, and faiths. Pilgrimage can take place at traditional holy sites around the world, on a mission-service trip here or abroad, following the footsteps of those who walked with civil rights leaders in Selma, or to a church’s homecoming gathering.

In the end, our hope is that by taking an “outward bound” experience of pilgrimage, leaving behind the frenetic pace of the world, we may all discover the inward, sacred path that we have always been on in life but may have forgotten. And it is on this daily path that we hope that we will all discover or re-discover the Spirit who accompanies us on this trail as we follow the Pilgrim God. Welcome to the School of the Pilgrim!