



# From the Rector

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

Summer is the time of pilgrimages. We make our treks to the shore, the mountains, to vacation sites all around. This year, we are a little more conscious of costs with the squeeze on household budgets and the cost of gas to travel. Airline travel seems more like a chore than a pilgrimage. Trains are regaining popularity once again. Buses are used more frequently.

A pilgrimage is a journey to a specific place. We are seeking a significant place, a particular experience. There is the family trip to the beach, crowding in a house filled with family and friends, praying that the rain will hold off. So many of these places are places of memories. I remember the antics of Uncle Don and Uncle Jim. I remember the food prepared by Aunt Bev and Aunt Marion. I see mom and dad in a different role ... often more playful and much more relaxed. The siblings are able to bear each other and the cousins offer new games and challenges.

For me, there are the memories of the family reunions with homemade banana ice cream, hotdogs and hamburgers, Grandma's potato salad, pickled eggs and beets, more pickles than I could ever count, softball games and people everywhere. If any of these comments evoke memories for you, then you have a sense of what pilgrimage is ... we been on journeys many times in life.

A holy pilgrimage is not much different. It involves travel to a place, people and more. The only difference is that along the way we hope to meet God. Sometimes it is the place or places that evoke a profound sense of God. Other times it is the prayers we discover, the dreams that reveal something new and exciting, or the new people we meet along the way.

All followers of Jesus would do well to look at life (and even vacation) as a pilgrimage. It offers us the chance to move, to change, to renew, to refresh ... and even let God break through our busy and cluttered lives. I try to make every summer a mini pilgrimage. It may not be as extensive as our recent Irish pilgrimage, but it can

still be spiritually profound.

One of the things I have always done on vacation is look for a church to visit. I must confess, I want to find someplace offering Holy Communion. But it is also fun to go. We often increase the size of the congregation two-fold, but there is something special for me on these trips. I know there won't be the full choir, the priest in charge might be on vacation, but there is something that draws me to Church. I often find a little surprise, a nice revelation along the way. Coffee hour is a must, to see how we will be treated and learn about others. It only takes a little bit of my time, but it holds out the promise of being deeply satisfying.

During July, I have been reading for my daily devotions from the "Celtic Daily Prayer", a book used by the Northumbrian Community. I was a little surprised when the writer indicated the theme for July would be "pilgrimage." But more I read, the deeper my awareness became of the importance of pilgrimage, both the day-to-day pilgrimage of life; and the special pilgrimages we make throughout our lives, especially in summer!

God is waiting out there for us. Take time to look for the divine. Open yourself to the possibility of an insight or revelation during your journeys. Let vacation be a spiritual experience as well as all the other things you hope or plan. May God bless you and your loved ones along the way. With warmest regards, I remain, faithfully yours in Christ,

*Fr. Pat*