How to Go on a Pilgrimage

#1) Prepare

- Reflect on your pilgrim journey of life:
  - Where am I going in my life? Where have I been?
  - What challenges and sufferings have I faced along the way?
  - What blessings and graces has God given me in those hardships? What special joys has he given me?
  - How have I seen God’s hand guiding me on my journey towards heaven?
  - Do I seek heaven as my final goal?

- Reflect on this particular pilgrimage experience:
  - Learn about the holy place that you will be visiting.
  - What does this site potentially have to offer for my spiritual life?
  - What does the history of this place have to teach me about the Church and God’s work here in the Pacific Northwest?
  - What spiritual insight or resolution do I hope to gain during this trip?
  - What do I need to leave behind on this journey to be fully present to the work of the Holy Spirit? (i.e. stress of school, troubling relationships, technology distractions, etc)

- In prayer, ask for particular graces that you need as you offer yourself to God on this journey

#2) Be open to the experience

- Make a conscious effort to open yourself to God in prayer.
  - When we give a few minutes to God, he blesses us abundantly in return. You’d be surprised what he can do with a few minutes of genuine prayer and openness!

- Try everything! You may encounter many new or less than exciting things.
  - a new form of prayer;
  - talking to a new person;
  - trying to be engaged when you feel bored

- SIMPLICITY: don’t over complicate it...just be open and receive
  - Dress simply for travel and prayer
  - Leave all technology and any unnecessary STUFF at home
  - Don’t worry about what you look like, who you sit by, or getting just the right photo.
  - Accept everything that comes to you, even if you don’t like it or normally would say “no”. Try to see what God is telling you through it
**Examples:**
- eat whatever food is offered to you;
- sit in whatever seat is open, even if it isn’t by a friend;

- Don’t complain when you get tired or bored

- **Consider:**
  - What is God trying to show me right now?
  - How are the physical aspects of this journey (car ride, the walk, hunger, thirst, tiredness) like my journey of faith? How do they reflect the journey of life?

- Call upon the Jesus and the saints as you visit these churches.
  - Many parishes have a patron saint with a beautiful story that you can learn from.
  - Ask for their intercession for something in your life.

#3) **Reflect upon your return, then act!**
- What event, situation or insight was most meaningful during this experience?
- What surprised me the most?
- Do I feel like I have arrived somewhere “new” in my faith life after this trip?
- What resolutions can I make to ensure that I will continue moving forward in my journey towards God?
- What do I feel God is calling me to do or change after this experience?
- Remember, you have made a humble and generous gift to God by giving him this time in pilgrimage. Look for the ways he will bless your life in return.