



February, 2010

Greetings to all as Lent approaches...

The light of the Olympic torch has touched down in Regina: one of many places in the country on its trek to the cauldron which will mark the beginning of the Winter Games. On its journey through the nation there is a sense of destination as it gathers the interest, support and spirit of so many on its path.

So often it is the journey which marks important events. Before the advent of the Common Era, it was the custom to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Hajj is the highlight of the spiritual journey of a Muslim, going to Mecca to follow in the flight of Mohammed. Geoffrey Chaucer records the colourful experiences of the pilgrims going to Canterbury. In the present, many pilgrims gather on El Camino, following the path that will lead to Compostela.

There is something very moving and even compelling to be on the road with other travelers seeking a common destination. Surely if it is simply a matter of arriving, there are many modern conveyances which can transport us there quickly. Is it not a matter of taking the time to ponder the journey, to absorb the presence and the stories of others on the way, and to unburden ourselves in order to arrive at the destination refreshed?

Lent does not necessarily entail Spain, southern England or international airports, but it is a pilgrimage. We leave the warp and woof that make up the fabric of our lives and move out on the road to retrace the steps that lead to Jerusalem and the events of Palm Sunday, the Garden, and Good Friday. Our destination is the empty tomb, but that is only the beginning. A notable traveler will be He who knows the way very well and wants to be our companion and guide. There will be others, many of whom we know, but there will be some who want to participate and will need encouragement and friendship.

It is a holy season because we are going to a holy place. The food and drink, guides, maps, support, first aid for the journey are available for every pilgrim. You will find what you need to make the Lenten journey a refreshing and renewing time. You will enjoy reaching out to and being helped by others.

May our journey bring us to a new sense of the light that comes with the Risen Christ.

*God of pilgrims, teach us to recognize your dwelling-place in the love, generosity, and support of those with whom we share our journey, and help us to worship you in our response to those who need our care; for all the world is your temple and every human heart is a sign of your presence, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Yours faithfully,

*James +*