



VIRGINIA SUPPLEMENT

*Embrace the Challenge
Stand Up—Stand Out—Be Visible
Be Proud to Be A Knight Templar*



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Greetings Sir Knights,

Pilgrimage, Why?

The definition of a pilgrimage is: (1) A journey, often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person searches for new or expanded meaning about one's self, others, nature or a higher good or (2) A long journey, especially one undertaken as a quest or for a votive purpose, as to pay homage. It can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life.

Why make these journeys? People in the medieval times spent years making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land just to see the Holy Mount. After their journey did they return home and change their hamlet or town? Become a religious leader? No one really knows how the "average" pilgrim was affected, because all the records are about high-profile people.

Where hardship was a certainty, and death was a possibility, on these early journeys people still made them. Each pilgrim had their own reasons for accepting these risks. Possibly the thought that seeing or touching one of the places that Jesus had been would atone for their misdeeds or cure some disease they or a family member had was their motivation.

Today we can take a trip to anywhere in the world in a matter of hours. Flying with food, drink, movies, tablets with games, etc. We no longer have to deal with the uncertainties that the ancient pilgrims did. Almost all the benefit of a pilgrimage is in making the journey. Why should we as Sir Knights, contribute to send others on a pilgrimage?

Why not send us to the Holy Land to see and experience our Christian heritage. The answer is in our hearts. If we sent ourselves, would we have any impact on those around us? Probably not. Many people take cruises to all kinds of historic places, yet what they remember most is the food, the rough weather, who they met, etc., almost nothing about the actual historic place.

We send ministers and pastors on the Holy Land Pilgrimage because they are going there to learn, not just for themselves but for their congregations. Yes, they might talk about the local food, maybe even the same food that Jesus ate, but that will not be the highlight of the trip. I have been to the Middle East and if one looks past the present, the past can be seen, and lessons learned. That is what the Holy Land Pilgrimage gives the pilgrim. They learn from the past and bring lessons back for the future.

I believe that it is our duty as Sir Knights to send as many ministers to the Holy Land as possible. It enables them to connect their classroom experiences to actual places and discover things like traveling to Bethlehem, with your pregnant lady by donkey, was a lot tougher than it reads in the Bible. The list of lessons that they can bring back is certainly very long.

There are awards that can be worn for contributing to the Holy Land Pilgrimage and I will not slight a Sir Knight who contributes for that reason. My Commandery is a Cap and Mantle unit and we do not wear any awards. I believe that the true award for helping send a minister on a Holy Land Pilgrimage is worn on the heart and in the mind of a Sir Knight. I remember that Masonry recognizes a man for the internal virtues and not the external appearances.

Pilgrimages, Why? Because it is the right thing to do, especially in today's secular and "me" focused world.

Courteously,
S. K. Chuck Trude
Chairman, Holy Land Pilgrimage Committee