

Lent 2017, Fr. John D. Hoke
Penitential Preparation for Palm Sunday:

Looking forward to the Palm Sunday Procession, consider this question, are we called to be a 'Pilgrim' or a 'Tourist'?

1. A tourist looks forward to seeing and doing something new different, to have fun and entertainment, and adventure, plus resting from work. In spite of being away from home, home is very much a tourist's mind.
2. A pilgrim lets go of what he/she has at home, looking for a new home, takes a great deal of courage and sacrifice. The focus is no longer on what one has, but what one doesn't have, but longs for a new home, a new way of life. Willing to labor and suffer for the sake of what is not yet, to seek what is hoped for and to have great faith in what is not seen.
3. A tourist wants to see, experience here and now, something of wonderment and wow. With little or no effort, they prefer to have a comfortable and pleasurable journey. A Sightseer, seeing a lot and not seeing with depth, looking all around but not deep down.
4. A pilgrim has total trust in God, not knowing where they are going, how they are going to get there. They do not put trust in them self but in God, His angels, saints, Holy Word and the Pillar and Fortress of Truth, i. e., Christ's Church. A pilgrim walks in trust, not having an agenda or firm schedule.
5. A tourist makes up his/her own list of where to go, what to see and do. A tour guide is only there to make sure they have a comfortable trip and see what they want to see. They are on a firm tight schedule, if delayed, they then respond with frustration anger over a loss of control.
6. A pilgrim is on a journey to become a new person.
7. A tourist is on a journey to see something different, interesting; this leads to rubbernecking, useless dangerous curiosity.
8. A pilgrim's neck is stretched out straight ahead, not letting earthly sights to be a distraction. Their prayers are focused. They can adjust to the left of right, not being stiff necked, but always centered on finding the excitement and the real thrill in the world beyond this one.

9. A tourist enjoys what they have seen and done, might even brag about it when they return home, which was their real goal, a safe and sound return home.
10. A pilgrim might return home again, but will always follow another route and come back a different person; nothing is ever the same after they have seen the Kingdom and the King.
11. A tourist is always asking are we there yet? The tourist is impatient and weary of the journey.
12. A pilgrim knows, that we are never there 'yet'. There are always more miles to go. A pilgrim accepts the long journey as an essential part of letting go of this world and learning to find refreshment in the Lord of the Journey, as He says 'He is the Way'.

Now, try to let your self be guided by the Holy Spirit to figure out; is your spiritual life one of a 'pilgrim' or a 'tourist'? Maybe it is a little of both. How do we want to be in Christ?

Sometimes it is helpful to exchange the image of a tourist for an image of a vacationer. Rather than wanting to be renewed by travel, on vacation we just want to be left alone. Being alone could be good, as long as we want to be alone with Christ. Is going on vacation from our baptismal vocation of growing in grace a sin?