

PACEM in TERRIS

P E A C E O N E A R T H

A Pilgrim's Path

A pilgrim is “a person who travels a distance to a holy place to seek God.” The distance can be a few feet, the next room—or halfway around the world. A holy place can be the Holy Scriptures, a worship service—or a hermitage at Pacem in Terris.

As pilgrims, we enter the desert of the hermitage to be alone with God, and we become “hermits.” In the silence and solitude of the hermitage we begin our personal pilgrimage, this time inward.

The Lord travels with us. The holy place we travel to is our heart, right into the dwelling place of God. However the path is often littered with “stuff”—clutter of the body, soul, and spirit that needs to be picked up and removed in order to move past it—and the Lord helps clean up the mess. Sometimes he points out something we have never noticed—and he shows us how a situation or a person needs to be approached and/or cared for with his love.

We arrive—it is a gentle entry into our heart. We rest in the stillness of God's love and we know hope as we have “sips” of the joy of the Resurrection. Our spirit sings, “Alleluia! Alleluia!”



A pilgrim follows a path to the cross at the edge of the prairie, a favorite destination of hermits at Pacem.

In the quiet of our heart we hear the “whisper” of God when he speaks. As we leave the quiet we know the healing of God's love through the holy rest and healing for body, soul, and spirit. We have been nourished and strengthened in our faith by the presence of Jesus with us on our pilgrimage. We are ready to continue on our journey in the world. ♦

“A hermitage exists to remind the world that there is an eternal life beyond the changing seasons of this earthly one.” —Mount Carmel

A Blessing for Pilgrims

All powerful God,

You always show mercy to those who love you and you are never far away from those who seek you.

Remain with your servants on this holy pilgrimage and guide their way in accordance with your will.

Shelter them with your protection by day, give them the light of your grace by night, and as their companion on the journey, bring them to your destination in safety.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

“Silence
makes us pilgrims.
It guards
the fire within.
It teaches us
how to speak.”

Henri Nouwen

Just a note...

Imagine this—meeting all kinds of different people from all walks of life while sharing a simple meal. That’s the privilege I’ve had in being at the Pacem dinner table five nights a week for many years.

As I’ve dined with our hermit guests, it feels as if the world has come to the table. I’ve connected with many wonderful and interesting people. Listening to their stories has given me hope, knowing that so much good goes on in the world in such hidden ways everyday. Meals at Pacem are truly nourishing to the body, soul, and spirit!

Thank you dear Pacem hermit guests for all you have given me during my years as part of the Pacem staff. It is a joy to serve you in my role as kitchen manager.

May God bless each and every one of you!

Susan Wanchena

The Cross on the Prairie

A story from Pacem’s past by founder Shirley Wanchena.

After we had purchased the land for Pacem, the first thing we wanted to do was erect a cross to proclaim this place belonged to God. My son Jeffrey built a 10-foot wooden cross, and on Pentecost Sunday, 1982, a few family and friends trudged through brush and woods to the prairie. A hole was dug, and the heavy wooden cross fell into place with a loud thump. With thanksgiving, we prayed for what was and for what was to come. Our priest friend, Father Nolan, blessed the cross and the land. Everyone and everything felt soaked in the Spirit of Pentecost.

The following week I made a pilgrimage to the land to pray at

the cross. But as I headed across the prairie, the cross wasn’t in sight. Impossible! Then there it was—toppled on the ground with bullet holes in it. Crying, I prayed and asked God to forgive whomever had done this and to forgive us all for the ways—little and big—we desecrate the cross. With a heavy heart, I went home and told my family. Jeffrey returned to the land and restored the cross to its place.

The next week, I returned to make sure everything was okay. But once again, the cross wasn’t to be seen. Moving closer, I saw it on the ground again, this time dragged a bit further away. A ragged note was tacked to the vertical post.

Behind the Scenes...



The hermitage area after a late winter snow has a special quiet and beauty.



And the hermitage area in early spring is a wonder to behold, as well!

It read: *We know who you are but we don’t know what you are.*

Praying for wisdom, I wrote a note in reply: *We are Catholic Christians who are establishing a hermitage retreat center where people of all faiths will come to pray and give glory to God.* The note included our phone number with an invitation to please call if they had any questions. Jeffrey returned the next day, restored the cross to its stand, and tacked my note to the cross.

The cross has remained standing. And twenty-five years later, thousands of pilgrims have trod the path we first walked—to visit the cross on the prairie, and to pray on this holy land. Glory to God! ◆

Alleluia! Alleluia.

Easter blessings to you from your Pacem family.



We have been on a pilgrimage together as we have journeyed through the forty days of Lent, culminating in the holy passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We attended the last supper and, with Peter, struggled to let Jesus wash our feet. We tried to stay awake in the garden and witnessed the agony of our Lord's heart as he accepted God's plan. Then, walking through the crowds, we watched our Lord stumble while carrying his cross.

It is impossible to describe the end of that journey—his pain was excruciating to witness. Yet there, as close as they could stand, were his mother and his two friends, John and Mary Magdalene. They didn't hide from his pain. They stood in the mystery of it all: Why suffering? Why pain? Why death? And none of them, not even his mother, knew the end of the story.

Death came to Jesus. His mother and friends could not share

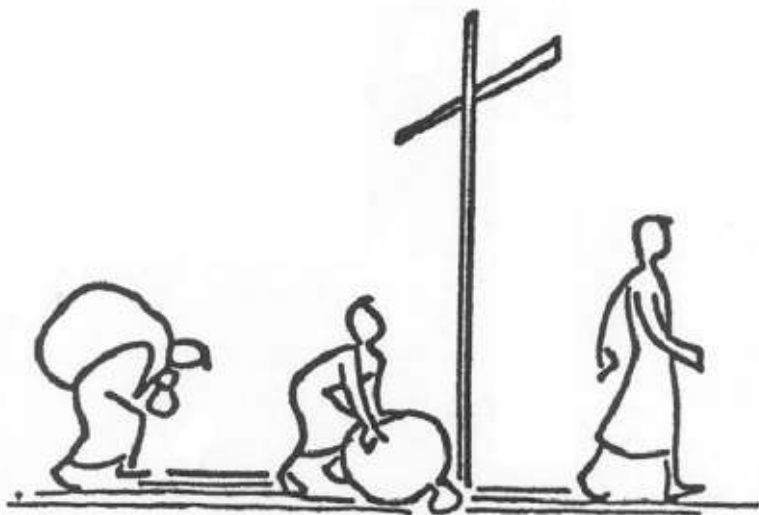
that journey with their beloved son and friend. They had to walk away in sadness, remembering his love, pondering what he had told them.

And then—on the third day—Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! They ran, singing and shouting with great joy, "Christ has risen! Truly, he has risen! Christ has risen!"

Now we come to the end of our 2007 Lenten pilgrimage and together we can sing and shout, "Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! Truly he is risen! Our Lord and Savior, Savior of the world, has risen and walks with us!"

Now we can live immersed in the love of the Cross, standing in the hope of the Resurrection, and embracing the faith that will lead us on our pilgrimage every year and on our final pilgrimage to heaven where there are no more tears, no more pain—only Love. ◆

Glory to God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



from our hermit's hearts

♥ "While here, God has shown me it is time to lower the walls of my heart that have hindered me from loving others. And I have been challenged to bring simplicity and silence into my daily life."

♥ "Thank you so much for providing the Lord a chance to grab me by the collar and work in my life. Sorry, I forgot to leave the key; it's in the mail!"

♥ "I am forever grateful to God for his manifold grace during my entire visit to Pacem in Terris! Be prepared to receive visitors from Africa this year!"

—A hermit from Nigeria

♥ "As I am leaving early this a.m., let me take this opportunity to thank you for your diligent work and ministry. It is like that of the four friends hoisting the handicapped man through the roof for a personal encounter with Christ. I say a resounding 'Thank you, friends!'"

♥ "The Lord showed me his love and kept the worries of the day away. And this time with him will help me recognize his voice as I return home."

♥ "Pacem is indeed holy ground, and we must remove our shoes so the total contact between this divine peace and our needy souls can be made."

♥ "I have been coming to the hermitage since 1996, and each time I come I leave with a feeling of peace, serenity, and a closeness with my Lord and Savior."

♥ "My recent stay in the hermitage was just what I needed; some self-care."

—A minister

Pacem Profile

Joe and Lori Leis had long desired “to go to the missions” someday. Little did they know it would be a domestic mission 20 miles from their home! More than ten years ago, they took turns being Pacem hermits, while the other one cared for their four children. Six years ago they became secular Franciscans. And now they’ve sold home and business to join our staff at Pacem, doing what we all do—whatever needs to be done. Welcome!



Joe-and-Lori: We kind of say that like one word when we speak of the newest members of our Pacem staff!

With Grateful Hearts

We say a big “thank you” to all who have responded so generously to our annual appeal. And thank you for your faithful support throughout the year. Closing the gap between our hermitage donations and the true cost of a hermitage stay is an ongoing need. Hermit guests of all faiths who are students and/or in some kind of ministry often are less able to make a full contribution—yet the fruits of their faith and prayer reach out to the local and global community. Thank you for helping them and us!

Looking way ahead . . . Would you please remember us when you are writing or updating your will? Making a bequest in your will or naming Pacem as a beneficiary of an insurance policy would leave a legacy of your personal love and faith. Future generations of pilgrim hermits would be blessed by your generosity. They may not be able to thank you personally, *but God will!*

The legal title is:

**Pacem in Terris
26399 Highway 47 NW
Isanti, MN 55040**

“The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And, on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Dear friends,

I’ve been on pilgrimage for seventy-nine years and still traveling! The scenery is breath-taking, passing through the mountains and valleys of life while experiencing the words of the Psalmist written over two thousand years ago: “...Our life is over like a sigh. Our span is seventy years or eighty for those who are strong. And most of those are emptiness and pain...” (Ps. 90, JB). But do you know what? We know Jesus! We are Easter people! Jesus travels with us. As we trudge along our pilgrim’s path, he fills our emptiness with love—he pours it directly into our hearts and also arranges for regular infillings from family, friends, and other surprising sources along the way. Okay, that fills the emptiness—but what about the pain? Take it from a veteran traveler, Jesus heals! Just like our mother used to wipe up our spilled milk after us or wipe away our tears, Jesus redeems our “spills” along the way. He heals our bumps and bruises; he comforts us through the painful valleys. As we journey, we carry with us the joy and hope of the Resurrection. That’s why we are Easter people! Rejoice!

My prayers for a blessed and glorious Easter,

Shirley Wanchena