

## **Our 40 Desert-Days With Jesus** *Lenten Pilgrims*

A Lenten pilgrim is not a metaphysical-tourist ready for the next attraction in the Holy Land of our pietistic imaginations. The Lenten pilgrim, to the contrary, has renounced the allure of the mountaintop-moment of spiritual-transfiguration and has joined in Christ's last days on a journey toward the cross. Rejection, mockery, denial by one's own friends, unjustified suffering and death await. Buckle your seatbelts.

The spirituality of the Lenten pilgrim, however, is not about glorifying suffering. It is about God's glory being shown to us precisely in this most shockingly-unexpected fashion—in Jesus' willingness to take on all of our suffering as God's very own, and turning it into Life.

Our Easter-spirituality will be about the results of such extravagant and undeserved Love. It is important during Lent, however, not to fast-forward too quickly to the Happy Ending. For it is in owning Christ's suffering and death that God's triumph over death, too, will become our own. To "share in his resurrection" the Lenten pilgrim must first be "buried with Christ in his death." Redemption is a costly and dangerous business. To be a Lenten pilgrim is:

- To own the cross marked on our foreheads in baptism
- To abide with Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane
- To own up to our own denials of God's way of loving
- To stand together at the foot of the cross in fear and defeat
- To go to the tomb with the women in the dark Easter morn

The Lenten pilgrimage is a journey of those who "walk as yet by faith" alone. It is a journey toward Love, toward Life so strong that even the powers of death cannot defeat it. It is a pilgrimage from our new birth in Christ in baptism, through our living and dying, to participation in Life Eternal. It is the pilgrimage of the whole People of God, our individual journeys bound together through our life in the church. During this season of Lent.

"Grant to us, "let us pray as a pilgrim people, that God's "Holy Spirit may lead us in holiness and righteousness all of our days."

God's blessed love blessing the dear people of St. Johns, *NLJ+*

Liturgy Conversations (Nip & Tuck) have been moved to: Tuesday March 26 and Tuesday April 9 @ 12:30 in the Al Durrance Room.

March 18th @ Noon all those interested in Pastoral Care Ministry will gather in the Al Durrance Room.