

JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS

December Newsletter

Message from the Board

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

For whatever reason, I was awake around 4 am this morning thinking about work and all of the tasks that need to be completed, YESTERDAY! Where did yesterday go?

I am sure all of you, at one time or another, have these mornings when your eyes pop wide open, thoughts of work slaps you in the face, and then stiffness sets in your shoulders as you begin your day. Here we go again!

I try to begin each day with reading the daily scripture and doing a personal reflection. This regimen allows me to focus my daily compass on what is really important, and you know the whole day really goes better.

I then walked outside and felt the cool morning air at 57 degrees F. It was refreshing and I decided a little more release of tension was needed. I ventured off with my oldest black lab on a short walk and run. It was very satisfying and energizing.

You know, in the hustle and bustle of our modern society and in the times we live, particularly during this very long pandemic, it is very easy to feel overwhelmed at times with trying to manage work, family responsibilities and watching all of the unbelievable circumstances of our world – both good and bad.

Just like we all heard in the very first talk on our Pilgrim Journey Weekend about

Priorities, everyone of us have set priorities for our lives, and these priorities are changing all of the time, depending on life circumstances. To better manage your life and reduce the level of stress you experience, it is important to maintain some sort of balance.

As a refresher from the talk, the three main points to think about when considering your priorities were:

1. Where do you spend your time?
2. Where do you spend your money?
3. What do you think about?

Now while I can advise, also can tell you what your priorities should be, that is for

SAVE THE DATES!

All of the weekends have been moved to 2021 and these are the dates we have scheduled with Pax Christi:

2021 Weekends

Corpus Christi
Men's
March 4 - 7

Corpus Christi
Women's
April 22 - 25

Corpus Christi
Men's
June 17 - 20

Corpus Christi
Women's
July 22 - 25

Corpus Christi
Men's
September 16 - 19

Corpus Christi
Women's
October 21 - 24

now while I nor anyone else can tell you what your priorities should be - that is for you decide. What I can tell you is that we all must do a regular self-evaluation to see how we are performing in relation to our priorities. This is important for balancing your life.

My prayer for this Community is that God is the Top Priority on this list - always.

If God is at the Top of your list, everything else will fall into its proper place.

De Colores

Paul M. Pilarczyk

President

Journey to Damascus – Corpus Christi

j2damascus@yahoo.com

General mailbox for JTD Board of Directors

Website & Pilgrim/Team Applications

If you are looking for a member of the Board of Directors, look no further! Pop on over to the Journey to Damascus website and you can find all of the email addresses for each of the current Board members.

<https://www.journeytodamascus.org/>

Updates from the Lay Directors

After careful review of an August 2020 guidance document from the Diocese of Corpus Christi (DoCC), the Board of Directors has approved for 2021 Teams to resume planning meetings in person, should they so choose, but with the understanding that they must exercise COVID-19 safeguards including social distancing, masks, sanitizers, temperature checks, etc., as is detailed in guidance issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), State & local authorities, and the guidelines from the Diocese of Corpus Christi (DoCC). As an alternative to in person meetings, the Teams can also elect to meet via electronic social platforms including Facetime, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Webex, etc. Keep in mind though, that as of the August 2020 guidance from the DoCC, overnight stays are currently not permitted, which means that this DoCC guideline will need to be lifted in order to permit Journey weekends to occur. Hopefully later this year or even early in 2021, we are hopeful for a change to allow it. As we move toward 2021 with the anticipation of resuming Journey Weekends, the JTD Board will continue working to develop

October 21 - 24

**2021 Weekends
JTD - Austin**

**Check back for more
information!**

Contact Us

**Corpus Christi
Journey to Damascus
PO Box 948
Corpus Christi, TX 78403
j2damascus@yahoo.com**

additional guidelines as new directives are received from the CDC and DoCC. In the meantime, please keep our community in your prayers especially for the end of this pandemic.

Reunion Groups

Covid-19 and Reunion Groups

We all know that the Covid-19 virus has changed the way we work, study, live and pray. One of the main things we have learned is that we have had to make adjustments in the way we approach these tasks. The secret is to perform these tasks without losing site of the goals to be accomplished. This applies to our Reunion Groups.

Although the basic outline of the Reunion Group remains the same. The methods of communication will vary making adjustments in order to keep the members of the group safe from the virus. Some examples of procedures that have been used:

1. Setting up a virtual Zoom meeting. The procedure for a Zoom meeting was explained in the August 2020 Reunion Group article.
2. Meeting face to face using social distancing and full use of masks.
3. Some Reunion groups are sharing daily Scriptures and having discussions either my Email or text messages.

There are other methods of worship that can be useful to reunion groups. There are new avenues that have become available due to the virus. Many churches are livestreaming daily Masses. Also, Father Pete Elizardo at Corpus Christi Cathedral has a livestream rosary every night at about 9pm. There are over 200 people praying together as the Body of Christ. *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* Matthew 18:20. These are examples that reunion groups could coordinate and share prayerful time. These are interactive which allows us to become members of the Body of Christ. Another method available is an app called Laudate. This app offers daily readings, Saints of the Day, Liturgy of the Hours, Bible verses of the day and much more.

If you are staying at home quarantined, one of the best ways to share Christian Action is to pick up the phone and call someone just to say you are thinking of them. This may be the only voice a shut-in hears that day. Sending handwritten notes or cards also lets others know we are all part of the Body of Christ.

We must continue our Life in Piety as we endure Covid-19. It is up to each one of us to connect with each other on our 4th day Journeys.

Blessings

De Colores

Allen Daehne

4th Day Committee Member

Some Words from the Wise

Brought to you from the desk of Monsignor Roger Smith

Dear brothers and sisters in the JTD Community,

With Sunday, November 29th, we began the Holy Season of Advent. Just as Lent is a penitential season and our liturgical color is purple, so also is Advent, but with a different spirit. Certainly, with the threat of Covid-19, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas, will be like none other we have experienced. Perhaps because of all this, we all can find time to draw closer to God.

The four Sundays of the Advent season really have two focuses. In the first two weeks, our Sunday readings call us to look to the Second Coming of Christ, inviting us to be prepared for that day of judgment by turning away from sin and more seriously embracing a life of virtue and service to others. The last two Sundays of Advent call us to prepare our hearts, as did Our Blessed Mother Mary, to celebrate that First Coming of the Lord our Savior, when he came among us born as the tiny child of Bethlehem. As she brought the Savior into the world, we also are called to bring forth the Savior into the world by our lives and our witness.

In a true sense, Advent is a time of waiting. All of us have the experience of waiting for something to happen. When we wait for a bus or a plane or some other perhaps special event, and although it has not yet arrived, we are filled with expectation and certainty that at some moment it will arrive. During Advent, as I said, we are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus because this coming will bring to completion all God's plans for the world and humankind. However, as we wait in hope for that day, we also know Jesus is already with us in so many ways. He is with us through the Holy Spirit that dwells in us by our baptism. He is with us through his Mystical Body the Church. He is with us through the Word of God in Sacred Scripture. He is with us through the Sacraments in our Churches, especially the Holy Eucharist. He is especially with us through our love and compassion for one another. As we hear in St. Matthew's account of the Last Judgement, "What you did for the least of my brothers and sisters you did for me." Therefore, during the Advent season, we are conscious of the fact that God is already present with us while we await the fulfillment of God's plans.

However, our waiting is not a passive waiting. Three years ago, my nephew and his wife gave birth to two identical twin girls. Because of modern sonograms, they knew months ahead of time that their first children were going to be twins, and they began preparing by buying the supplies they knew they would need to take care of them – car seats, double strollers, cribs, clothing etc. Their waiting was not one that was idle but one filled with preparation, and so it must be with us. As we wait for the Lord's coming and prepare to celebrate his first coming, we are called to repent of selfishness and sin and to look for ways that we can grow in prayer, generosity, love and humble service to our brothers and sisters.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, just as Mary said "yes" entrusting herself

completely to God's divine plan in her life and then nine months later rejoiced to give birth to Christ our Savior. Let this Advent season be a time for each of us to imitate Mary's humble and obedient "yes" allowing the Lord to take on flesh in our lives, to that just as Mary brought Christ to birth, we also may bring Christ to birth in our own lives and in our world, always trusting in God's divine will and providence, assisted by his grace.

Monsignor Roger Smith

Pastor St. Patrick's Catholic Church

Agape Appeal

GOAL

Due to an increase in food and lodging costs over the last few years, the Annual Agape Appeal will be used to off-set these increased expenses for the Team and Pilgrims.

The Annual Agape Appeal's goal is to:

- Never turn anyone away by making the weekend affordable for **ALL**.
- Provide a sustainable, annual fund to insure the continuation of JTD for **ALL**.

The intent of this appeal is to assist those who need monetary support in order to attend this Christian weekend. No one should be turned away due to financial need.

By joining our resources, we can insure JTD's continuation for friends, family and strangers.

AGAPE DONATION

Suggested donations:

- \$5.00 each month
- \$60.00 Annually
- \$30.00 Semi-annually
- \$15.00 Quarterly
- \$100.00 Husband and wife

Or... Whatever you can GIVE

It's not about how **MUCH** each one can give.
It's about how **MANY** will give.

Only \$5.00 a month folks!

UNITY

With God all things are possible.
And by uniting together, we can change the world!

Please sign up for the JTD News Letter at:
www.journeytodamascus.org
All the information on how to send your Annual Agape Appeal will be available.

Please make checks Payable to Journey to Damascus and write **JTD Appeal** in note section of check. Please include your name, address, email address and phone number.

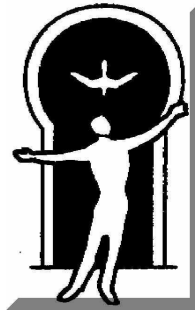
You may send it to **JTD Appeal**, P.O. Box 948, Corpus Christi, TX 78403.

Please help spread this opportunity by word of mouth or social media to encourage **all** the JTD community members to participate in this appeal.

De Colores

Sr. Angela Murdaugh Scholarship Fund

We are also very pleased to announce the establishment of the Sister Angela Murdaugh Scholarship Fund. The goal is to be able to pay the weekend fee for one pilgrim per JTD weekend from this scholarship. To raise money to fund this endeavor we are selling JTD car emblems. The cost of the emblems is \$10. If you would like to order emblems for yourself, as gifts for your Reunion group please contact Dale Hernandez at dale_hernandez@yahoo.com.



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