

Jesuit High School Campus Ministry

Senior Pilgrimage 2026

choose good and the courage to remain steadfast in faith, even if the world should push in another direction. Pope Leo XIV

A pilgrimage is a journey. This journey is primarily for a religious purpose. Religious pilgrims have made treks all over the world, throughout history, for these reasons ... a journey for worship, to seek spiritual aid, or to fulfill a promise.

We invite you to join the **31st Annual Senior Pilgrimage**. It is a twelve-mile walk along the Cowlitz River in Washington to St. Francis Xavier Church. St. Francis Xavier Church is the oldest mission (1838) church in the Pacific Northwest, the place where two priests were summoned by trappers to bring the word of God to their families and the Native Americans in the region. It was there that Frs. Demers and Blanchet created the Catholic Ladder, a teaching mechanism, to teach the settlers and Indians the history of the Church and the movement of the Spirit. It is also reported that in 1842, Fr. Pierre De Smet, SJ, visited this mission to say Mass.

We will leave at 7:00 AM on Saturday morning, September 19th. Our Pilgrimage will follow the Cowlitz River for a while, and then through a valley to the plateau where the church and cemetery rest. During the hike, we will stop along the way and hear from classmates and teachers, we will walk during periods of silence, we will sing, we will learn. After the walk and a washing and resting of feet, we will assemble the camp, eat a good meal, celebrate Mass and the evening will be topped off by a campfire. We will sleep that evening beside the church. The next morning, we will awake and eat breakfast and break camp and head home. **We should arrive at Jesuit around 1:55 PM on Sunday, September 20th. The cost is \$75.00 and should be turned in with your application.**

To prepare for a hike such as this, there will need to be prayer, so we encourage you to take a look at your Bible and find Psalm 25, Matthew 6, and 2 Peter 1:3-11.

To prepare for a hike such as this, there will need to be some physical preparation, so get comfortable shoes and walk for a mile three times a week if you are not already physically active. **Don't try to break in new shoes on this hike.** The road is paved the whole way and there are some significant inclines and declines that will make blisters a very unpleasant reality. We will have follow vans for people whose feet and legs turn or twist the wrong way.

To prepare for a hike such as this, there will need to be a sense of journey, so join us with a sense of humor, and a joy that your friends will be with you. St. John Paul II spoke often of times such as this in his youth where friends could share faith and stories and it was in that experience that his faith was strengthened and formed. And Pope Leo XIV said last year, "A pilgrimage has a vital part to play in our life of faith for it removes us from our homes and our daily routines and gives us time and space to encounter God more deeply."

As always, if you cannot handle the cost for the Pilgrimage, or any retreat at our school, see Mr. Clarke in the Campus Ministry Office, Lower Arrupe.

Campus Ministry Team: Director Don Clarke, Associate Mike Hughes, John Andreas, Kathy Baarts, Deborah Golik, Malia Bernards, Lauren Lakey, Amanda Case, Erin DeKlotz, Malia Bernards, Emily Keller, Lara Shamieh, Hannah Nightingale, Francisco Hernandez, Tim Massey, Greg Moore, Konrad Reinhardt, Kayla Hambley, Laura Schick, Russ Fiorella

INFORMATION FOR FACULTY/STAFF AND STUDENT PILGRIMS

What to bring on Friday, September 18, to be taken to the destination by truck:

Your own tent (*mark your belongings well*) and a flashlight.

-sleeping bag and pillow (a pad or air mattress is a great addition)

-change of clothes for the evening & day (bring wet weather gear ... just in case)

-toiletry articles (a toothbrush is a commonly forgotten item)

-a towel

-a hooded sweatshirt or stocking cap to keep your head warm at night

Dress code on the walk is to be modest. We ask that no sleeveless t-shirts be worn by males. We also ask that you not roll down your sweatpants and that no spaghetti straps be worn either. Please make sure that your midriff is covered and that any message on your shirt is appropriate.

IMPORTANT ABOUT TENTS - please make sure you have all the supplies, stakes and tarps to set it up! A ground tarp will help you stay dryer and warmer against the cold ground.

The truck will be open for loading before school and during lunches on Friday September 18.

Please realize that the Pilgrimage is a stressful endeavor and you should be in relatively good health. If you have any unusual health condition that might have a bearing on the walk, please notify Mr. Clarke. A good example of this might be if one were allergic to bee stings, tell Mr. Clarke and bring proper medication.

Please be at Jesuit at 6:45 on Saturday morning, Sept. 19, the busses will leave promptly at 7:00 am

What to bring on Saturday morning:

we will not wait

a good night's sleep

A **day pack/backpack** that should contain

two pair of socks

extra pair of shoes

bag **lunch** (or 2) for Saturday

snacks

a light jacket or sweatshirt

an open and trusting attitude, a sense of humor

water bottle with water (there will be places to fill it up along the way)

if the weather is nice, a pair of shorts and a light shirt should be fine for the walk

What not to Bring:

-any personal computer device (tablet, Nintendo, psp, etc)

-homework ipads

- MP3/type (*other personal sound transmitting devices*)

-drugs -alcohol-tobacco or chew - internet devices/Kindle/iPad/iWatch/iAnything

Please! We ask you to leave your phone off. It is vital to the success of this retreat. It is important that you go on this Pilgrimage without being yanked back into a place to where you may not be walking. Challenge yourself to leave it off and not to use it. If anything were to ever happen where you had to use it, you certainly would be allowed.

Your parents should know that the phone for JHS students and staff during the day is 503-799-8143.



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To reserve a spot "for sure" please turn in this page to campus ministry office by Friday, September 11, 2026

Student's Name (print): _____

Parent/guardian cell phone: _____

- Please list any **food allergies/food preferences (or leave blank)** _____
- Do you have a tent in good working condition that you can bring? _____ How many people _____
- Do you know how to set it up? *yes* _____ Will you please practice setting it up? *yes* _____

LEGAL STUFF

+The pilgrim promises that s/he will not bring or use any alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs on the pilgrimage and understands that if s/he does, his/her parents will be informed, and s/he will be sent home. Her/his parents will pick him/her up from St. Francis Xavier Church. The student will face disciplinary action at school. All school behavioral rules will apply on the walk.

+The parents consent to come pick up the child if necessary (because of behavior that is seriously disruptive of the Pilgrimage... please know that cell phones could be a legitimate reason).

+The parents will notify Mr. Clarke, Campus Minister, if they are not at home the weekend of the Pilgrimage and supply an alternate contact person and phone number.

Student Signature of agreement: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature of agreement: _____



The medical release form for this weekend will be the JHS UNIVERSAL MEDICAL INFORMATION & RELEASE that was submitted to the office at the beginning of the year.

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\$ The cost of the Pilgrimage is \$75. You can pay one of 3 ways:

- 1) **\$75 Cash** (attach to application form)
- 2) **\$75 Check** made out to “**Jesuit High School**” (attach to application form)
- 3) **Online Card** (use QR code at right **OR** use link below – also posted on Jesuit’s website)



Use this link for card payment: <https://www.jesuitportland.org/spiritual-life/campus-ministry/retreat-offerings/senior-retreats-payment-form>

If there is a problem with the \$75.00 payment for this overnight retreat, please see Mr. Clarke.

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Short and Choppy History of St. Francis Xavier Mission

First mission in the Pacific Northwest, established in December 1838 on Cowlitz Prairie north of Toledo, WA

St. Francis Xavier Mission on Cowlitz Prairie near Toledo is the first permanently established mission in the state of Washington.

In response to several appeals, two Catholic priests -- Father Francois Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers -- traveled overland from Montreal to the Oregon Country to help fulfill the spiritual needs of Hudson's Bay Co. employees and the early settlers of the area, and to convert Indian tribes to Christianity.

On Sunday, Nov. 25, 1838, Francis Norbert Blanchet celebrated Holy Mass for the first time in the lower Oregon Country at Fort Vancouver.

On Dec. 16, 1838, Fr. Blanchet celebrated Mass in the home of Simon Bonaparte Plomondon, who retired from the Hudson's Bay Co.

Fr. Blanchet laid out 640 acres for the mission. A log church was soon erected under the direction of Fr. Demers. He brought a 50-pound bell with him on Oct. 13, 1839, and had it placed in a 40-foot tower. Fr. Demers also laid out the original Mission Cemetery.

The first chapel later became the missionaries' residence. In 1840, a new log chapel, 25 feet by 60 feet, was constructed and the smaller chapel became the missionaries' residence. Fr. Blanchet devised a system for teaching religion to the Indians by painting a series of lines and dots, along with other symbols, on a 6-foot parchment, which later became known as the "Catholic Ladder."

According to Jesuit historian Fr. William Bischoff, SJ, Fr. Peter John DeSmet SJ sang a High Mass at the Cowlitz Mission in June of 1842. (The Jesuits in Old Oregon, pg. 36)

In 1864, Fr. Richard started a day school. Then in 1877, under the direction of Fr. Hylebos, a convent and boarding school were built. They were later turned over to the Sisters of Providence.

In 1901, the first of three fires to plague the mission broke out, destroying the church. The resident priest, Fr. Van Holderbeke, later died from injuries suffered during the fire. Fr. Palmer directed reconstruction of the church, then Fr. Flavin had a new rectory built

The Franciscans of the St. Louis Province started ministering at the mission in 1908. In 1911, they reopened a day and boarding school and the Franciscan Sisters oversaw the operation until it closed in 1973. The Franciscans left the parish in 1996.

A second fire destroyed the mission church and rectory in 1916. The parish built a new church, dedicated in 1917 by Bishop O'Dea. Volunteers also constructed the parish hall in 1923.

On Ash Wednesday in 1932, the mission church once again fell victim to flames. But again the church was rebuilt.

It has been a home to the parish ever since then and in September of 1996, Jesuit High School started walking the 12 mile Pilgrimage to the oldest Catholic Mission in the Northwest.

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