

Catholic Journeys

"As Christians we are a pilgrim people," said James "Jimmy" Hyland, owner and operator of Catholic Journeys. "We are all on a life pilgrimage from God, to God."

Back in the Middle Ages pilgrimages were popular, but it was not like going on a vacation. Pilgrimages often took years. Journeys were long and dangerous, and many died en route. They usually traveled in groups and would stay in monasteries or hostels along the way.

Pilgrims undertook these journeys to holy places because it was important for their faith. If they had committed grave sins, they believed that by going on a pilgrimage they could show God how sorry they were. Sometimes, they were sent on these journeys by a priest as a penance. Sometimes, they went for healing of a physical condition.

Pilgrimages are popular

again today, and Catholic Journeys helps more than 1,000 pilgrims every year journey to holy places such as the Holy Land, Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Though the reasons for making a pilgrimage are similar to those in the Middle Ages, the results for today's pilgrims are life-changing, and Catholic Journeys is proud to be a part of that. For many, the pilgrimage "jump starts" the conversion process – the decision to turn toward God. Pilgrims often come home and begin to incorporate God into their daily lives through prayer and ministry work in their parish and community. Many garner needed support and encouragement through fellow pilgrims.

One such group is the "Sojourners of the Burning Heart," a group of young adults who travel annually to Medjugorje and who meet monthly for Mass and fel-

lowship. In June 2011, a local filmmaker and his son accompanied this group on their pilgrimage to Medjugorje with Catholic Journeys. The documentary, "The Sojourners," resulted from that journey and catalogs the faith journeys of many of the pilgrims.

The world premiere of the film was Feb. 29 at Notre Dame Seminary with more than 400 people in attendance, including Archbishop Gregory Aymond.

"It's a great movie," Archbishop Aymond said. "It truly is a story of discipleship."

Catholic Journeys offers the "Sojourner Experience," enabling people to begin their own spiritual journey on the same pilgrimage to Medjugorje as seen in "The Sojourners" movie.

Although Catholic Journeys offers pilgrimages and retreats to many shrines worldwide, the most popular



Photo | COURTESY JIMMY HYLAND

Jimmy Hyland has priests accompany the many pilgrimages he arranges throughout the world.

destination, by far, is Medjugorje. Hyland traveled to Medjugorje in 1987 individually and started taking group pilgrimages there shortly after that.

Hyland said it is exciting times for Medjugorje. By the end of 2012, the Vatican Commission on Medjugorje, headed by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, will conclude its work on the apparitions and plans to make a pronouncement to the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith and then Pope Benedict XVI. Hyland said five of the visionaries have been interviewed by the commission.

"Once this occurs, we expect even more people will want to make this sacred Journey," Hyland said.

Catholic Journeys is located at 3501 North Causeway Blvd., Suite 300, Metairie, LA 70002; 834-4951 or 1 (800) 715-6670; fax, 834-4957; website www.catholicjourneys.com.



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For more information contact Jimmy Hyland

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