

July 2016

Dear Hopeful Fellow Pilgrim,

Perhaps the cost of the Hiking with Jesus pilgrimage isn't an issue for you. We've worked hard to keep the costs down. In fact, we're not even covering all of our costs. Still, \$3,500 is more than many people can easily come up with.

You may want to consider asking relatives and friends to help out. Often lay people going on short-term missionary trips raise funds to meet their expenses. A pilgrimage is not a missionary endeavor. But if you're going in order to listen to Jesus, to hear what he is calling you to do with your life, the pilgrimage can lead on to a lifetime of being on mission in one way or another. That's something you can legitimately ask others to contribute to.

Of course, it depends on your age and circumstances. If you're 55, you're a bit on the old side. If you're 20 but you're parents are borrowing to keep you in college, it doesn't make sense to ask *them* to help fund a trip. But if you're young, strapped for cash, and have some relatives or friends who have some resources, consider asking for help.

How might you go about it?

Think of it as asking someone to make an investment in your future and in the future of the Church.

Describe the pilgrimage and explain how it's designed to help participants listen for Jesus' voice as we crisscross the land where he walked. Show them the brochure or direct them to the website. If it's not obvious, explain why you're having difficulty affording it.

Pray before you ask. Tailor your presentation to the person you're seeking help from. Open your heart; be personal. Explain why you're attracted to this pilgrimage. If you're hoping it will be life-changing, say that.

In some cases, you might want to send a short letter first and follow up with a face-to-face conversation. In other cases, a conversation first might be better, with a letter sent afterwards.

If the person declines to offer financial help, no harm is done. You've informed them about the pilgrimage and you can count on their praying for you. Regardless of whether the person makes a financial contribution, promise to pray for them on the trail. After the pilgrimage, let them know what it was like and what impact it had on you.

Peace,

Father John Linden, chaplain (Lansing, MI; [jlinden@dioceseoflansing.org](mailto:jlinden@dioceseoflansing.org))  
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