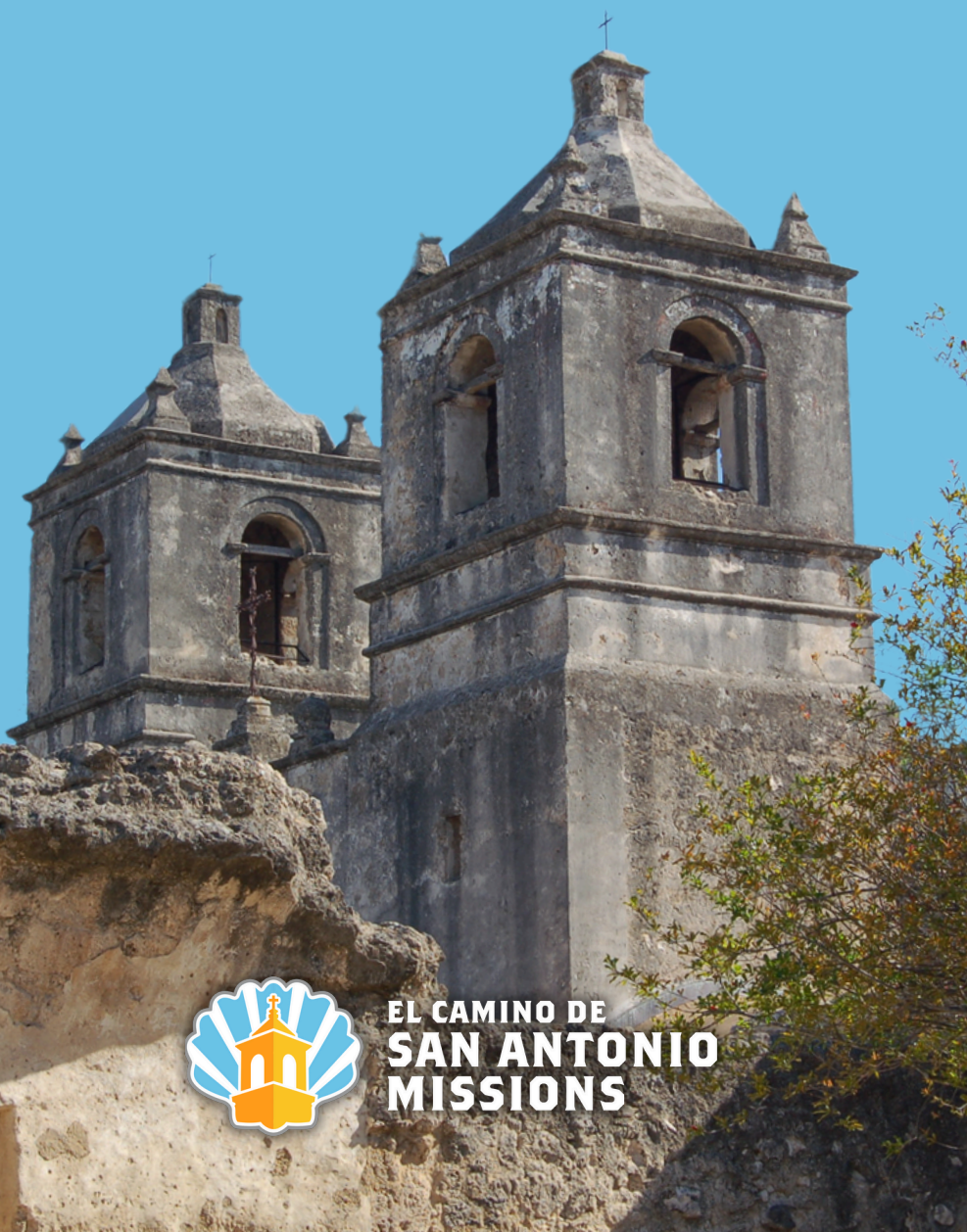


# LENTEN

## PILGRIMAGE GUIDE



EL CAMINO DE  
**SAN ANTONIO**  
**MISSIONS**

# **LENTEN PILGRIMAGE**

**1) INTRODUCTION**

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## **Lenten Meditation**

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive.

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply.

Based on Pope Francis' Message for Lent 2020

# Pilgrimage Preparation Prayer for a Mission Pilgrimage

**We begin this pilgrimage in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

**R/. Amen**

Peace be with you.

**R/. And with your spirit.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, men and women through the ages have made great sacrifices to make a journey of faith so their relationship with you may be strengthened. Lord, we undertake this pilgrimage not only on behalf of ourselves but also for all those we carry in our hearts and on behalf of the whole Church. Lord Jesus, be our companion as we walk with our brothers and sisters in faith. May “your Word be a lamp for my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119: 105). Lord, may our hearts “burn within us” (Luke 24:32) during this journey of faith.

Send your Holy Spirit that we may have contrite hearts ready to receive your graces and healing. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**R/. Amen.**

“Gladden the soul of your servant; to you Lord, to you I lift up my soul. Lord, you are kind and forgiving, most loving to all who call to you. Lord, hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help.” Psalm 86:4-6

# Mission Nuestra Senora de la Concepción de Acuna

Established in East Texas in 1716 moved to San Antonio 1731



Mission Concepcion church dedicated in 1755. Neglected for a period after 1819 until the Brothers of Mary came in 1855, it was used again for church services in 1861. It is the best preserved Spanish mission in Texas, and considered by some to be the oldest unrestored stone church in the United States.

The Franciscans were master navigators of the stars and oriented Mission Concepcion to its site which results in a special illumination on the Feast of the Assumption when a light flows through a circular window onto the picture of the Immaculate Conception above the altar.

At one time colorful geometric designs covered it and some frescos are still visible inside the church and several of the rooms.

# Reflection

## *Virgin Mary, the First and Most Perfect of Christ's Disciples*

“Let us give thanks to God for the mystery of his crucified love; and authentic faith, conversion and openness of heart to the brethren: These are the essential elements for living the season of Lent. On this journey, we want to invoke with special trust the protection and help of the Virgin Mary: May she, who was the first to believe in Christ, accompany us in our days of intense prayer and penance, so that we might come to celebrate, purified and renewed in spirit, the great paschal mystery of her Son.”

General Audience Ash Wednesday, 2014 Pope Francis



# Meditation

- Through her pilgrimage of faith, Mary walked into the night of faith at the foot of the cross. She abandoned herself entirely into God's loving and providential care. Do we rely on the Father during times of trouble? Do we live with hope?
- Mary listens and hears the word of God announced by the angel Gabriel. How do we listen to the voice of God? What prevents us from hearing?
- Mary made the ultimate commitment and accepted the sacrifice it entailed. How can she help us to be more humble and also more courageous in following the Word of God?

## Prayer

### Stabat Mater

“At the cross her station keeping,  
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,  
Close to Jesus to the last.

Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,  
All his bitter anguish bearing,  
Now at length the sword had pass'd.

Oh, how sad and sore distress'd  
Was that mother highly blest  
Of the sole-begotten One!”

**Amen**

# Mission San Jose de San Miguel de Aguayo

Established 1720



The Stone church was completed in 1777 and was noted as the most beautiful of all the Spanish missions to date which is why it is called the “Queen of the Missions”. It was built of stone from a quarry near Mission Concepcion.

The side “Rosa’s “ window is credited to Pedro Huizar and legend has it that he carved the window as a monument to his sweetheart Rosa. Tragically, on her way from Spain to join him, Rosa was lost at sea. Pedro completed the window as a declaration of his love. It was used to display the Eucharist to those outside particularly during the Feast of Corpus Christi.

The façade of the church contained geometrical color designs of yellow, red, blue and black. The intricately carved front door carvings have been restored. The ornate carvings on the front tell a story of the genealogy of Jesus and our salvation. It also honors the mendicant orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans.

# Reflection

## *Be Reconciled to God*

“Let us give thanks to God for the mystery of his crucified love; and authentic faith, conversion and openness of heart to the brethren: These are the essential elements for living the season of Lent. On this journey, we want to invoke with special trust the protection and help of the Virgin Mary: May she, who was the first to believe in Christ, accompany us in our days of intense prayer and penance, so that we might come to celebrate, purified and renewed in spirit, the great paschal mystery of her Son.”

General Audience Ash Wednesday, 2014 Pope Francis





# Meditation

- Can we disconnect? Do we have a place of silence, where we are free to hear the Lord's word and experience his loving call?
- Are we sensitive to those in our midst who quietly cry out for our help and encouragement?
- During Lent, are we joyous heralds of the Lord's message of mercy and hope? How do we experience the joy of spreading the good news?

# Prayer

"Christians pray in the knowledge that, although unworthy, we are still loved. Prayer can take any number of different forms, but what truly matters in God's eyes is that it penetrates deep within us and chips away at our hardness of heart, in order to convert us ever more fully to God and to his will."

— Pope Francis, 2020 Message for Lent

Almighty and ever living God,  
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your  
Lent. May this time be one of prayer and outward focus;  
seeking you in those we often ignore. Help us live a Lent  
focused on prayer, generosity, and encounter.  
Give us hearts hungry to serve you and kindle in our hearts  
the flame of your love.

**Amen**

# Mission San Juan Capistrano

Founded in East Texas in, 1721 moved to San Antonio 1731



The stone church was completed by 1756. A simple church, it had colorful frescos on the walls. Construction was started on a larger church but not completed. Following 1825 the church began to deteriorate. In 1907 repairs were undertaken and the church was used once more for services.

The original altarpiece no longer exists—the current piece is a donation of the same time period. Statues of the Virgin Mary, San Juan Capistrano and St. Francis are displayed.

# Reflection

## *Call to Holiness*

“Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy.” (Mt. 5:48)

“We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission.... We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelizing efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord’s eyes. In this way, every minute of our lives can be a step along the path to growth in holiness.”

~ Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*



# Meditation

- How can you be a “contemplative in the midst of action” in your own life?
- A gifted noble and lawyer St. John of Capistrano was named governor of Perugia, Italy at age 26. He joined the Franciscans four years later and became an evangelist and ultimately a warrior. Though not all of us are asked to make such radical changes, we are all called to continual conversion. What changes might God be asking you to make as you answer the call to holiness?
- What areas of your life do you find most difficult to integrate into your path to holiness? What practical steps can you take to make these areas a means of personal growth and of giving glory to God?

# Prayer

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
that I love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
to defend all that is holy.

Guard me so, O Holy Spirit,  
that I may always be holy.

**Amen**

# San Francisco de la Espada

Founded in East Texas in, 1721 moved to San Antonio 1731



Mission San Francisco de Espada started as a smaller chapel of a larger church that was never completed. It was originally designed to be taller and therefore the unique door would have been larger and more proportional.

A large kiln and brickworks were developed here and bricks from Mission San Francisco were used in the other missions. The interior of the church is simple with the focal point being the statute of St. Francis which is original to the church. The church was secularized and its land was distributed to a number of converts whose descendants still live in the area.

By the mid 1800's Espada was in ruins. However the mission was rescued by a French born priest, Fr. Bouchu, who had a special love for Mission San Francisco. He completely restored the building doing much of the work himself.

# Reflection

## *Living Water*

There came a woman of Samaría to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaría?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” Jesus said to her, “Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” Jesus said to her, “Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.” -Jn 4:4-26



# Meditation

- How will I be a wellspring to help others quench their thirst?
- The Samaritan woman believed Jesus as the Messiah and became an evangelist to her people. How do I evangelize my friends and family?
- The Samaritan woman was an outcast and an enemy of the Jews. Do we welcome those outside our social set; the strangers and foreigners?
- How do I quench my spiritual thirst? Do I let Jesus show me that he knows and understands me?

# Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

**Amen**



**El Camino de San Antonio Missions** is an evangelization initiative of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. El Camino leads pilgrims on a spiritual and historic trail connecting the San Antonio Mission Churches and the Cathedral, which are active parishes, a National Park, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This journey offers a blend of spiritual reflection, cultural heritage, adventure, history, and natural beauty.

**✕ Where to Start:** Begin at the **Padre Margil Pilgrimage Center** behind Mission Concepción. Here, you will learn all you need to know to make your pilgrimage meaningful. **Hours and location below.**

**When to visit:** the Missions are open 9am-5pm Mon-Sun.

**What to bring:** a hat, water bottle, and sunscreen.

**Journey with us** throughout the year! We host pilgrimages, cultural events, and prayer services throughout the year. [Signup for our newsletter to keep in touch!](#)

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