

Guidance For Our Pilgrimage

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR ENTERING THE SITE

Metanoia is a Greek word. It can be translated as repentance. It means to turn around and look at who we are and what we have done. Ashes have served this purpose for Christians. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is a time of “metanoia”. For those who wish to participate, we are invited to receive ashes as we board the bus and prepare to “turn around” to see who we are and what we have done.

1. We will want to be respectful of the history as we learn, by being at the site, that what happened those long years ago continues to haunt us and speak to us.
2. We will want to listen with the heart and the mind to the stories we will hear from the Descendants as they relive the past through their cultural memory. It will be difficult for the Descendants to speak of the Sand Creek Massacre. It isn't just history for them; it's an ongoing event as it will become for us.
3. The Descendants who will be with us are delightful and kind. We have much to learn from them and they have the desire to invite us into their story because it is, in part, our story.
4. There is a vast difference between a tourist and a pilgrim. We are not tourists visiting a place we haven't been out of a sense of curiosity. We are pilgrimages who are striving to claim our church's role in an unspeakable act. We need not feel compelled to apologize, but we desire to understand that what was done was wrong, and to grasp the full significance of the Massacre so that it can teach us about ourselves and so that it can inform how we think and act in the future.
5. It goes without saying that we will want to be very careful what pictures we take especially if we would like a picture of one of the Descendants. We will need to ask for permission. When the Descendants speak of the Massacre they will speak softly and reverently. We will want to listen carefully and quietly.

“OUR QUEST IS NOT FOR THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OURSELVES. WHAT WE LOOK FOR IS NOT HOW TO GAIN A FIRM HOLD ON OURSELVES AND ON LIFE, BUT PRIMARILY HOW TO LIVE A LIFE THAT WOULD DESERVE AND EVOKE AN ETERNAL AMEN.” Abraham Heschel