

SACRED HEART PARISH, KIMBERLEY
PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH, 2026
THEME: FRANCIS, GO AND REPAIR MY CHURCH: PREPARING FOR OUR
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year is a Jubilee Year. The Church celebrates 800 years since St. Francis of Assisi died. It is very significant for us that this year, we are starting our preparation for the 100 Years Anniversary of Sacred Heart Church, Kimberley.

During his life, as Francis was praying in the Church of San Damiano, Jesus spoke to him from the Cross of San Damiano saying: "Francis, go and repair my Church which as you can see is falling into ruins." Francis went and sold his horse and took money from his father's business and started the work of repairing the Church: stone by stone, with his hands, he rebuilt the broken-down Church. Francis later understood that Jesus was asking him to revive the faith of the people at a time when there were much corruption, spiritual coldness and forgetfulness of the things of God and eternal realities. Francis did not start a political protest or try to rewrite church law. Instead, he began by rebuilding his own life and inspiring others to follow Jesus closely in simplicity, service, radical poverty, humility, love and living the Gospel.

I have some good news. After much prayer and reflection, I have a sense that the Lord is asking us to rebuild our own Church, the house of God. Our Pilgrimage of Faith this year is a campaign to rebuild both physically and spiritually. We have already begun the spiritual through different activities being initiated in the parish.

For the physical, the exterior of our Church needs some attention. Our Church is like a city on a hill. In the olden days, a city on a hill, especially at night, is filled with light giving direction to people who are searching for their way. Our Church is meant to attract people, who are searching for their way to life's meaning, fulfillment, searching for their way to Jesus. Many years ago, there was a flood in the city, people came up to the Church to find refuge. It is indeed wonderful that the Avenue where our Church is located is called Church Avenue. Our Church continues to be a place of refuge for the human person, for our community.

What do we need? The Cross on top of the roof is in bad shape. We need to repair our Cross and all the wood fascias. It is so bad now. I am afraid some day it might fall and injure someone. The restoration of the Cross is a sign that we want to enthrone Christ in the City, to give Him a prominent place as our Saviour, the King of kings, our Redeemer. When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. (John 12:32)

We also noticed some cracks on the walls. The wall which holds all of us needs repair and repainting. The painting of the exterior is a sign of newness and renewal. Behold I make all things new (Isaiah 43:19; Revelation 21:5)

Our centennial celebration committee has already received a quotation that it will cost \$100,000 for the repair. We are hoping to raise this in two years – 2026 and 2027. Our Diocesan Goal this

year is \$10,150 plus our parish 2026 goal of \$50,000 totalling \$60,150. Whatever we raise above and beyond the Diocesan Goal comes back to the parish for the repair we need to do.

This year, we will not have any fundraiser for insurance and the purchase of Breaking Bread Hymnal. We are channelling everything to Pilgrimage of Faith. From the Pilgrimage of Faith Fund, we will purchase Breaking Bread.

Donations can be made in memory of a loved one or on behalf of your family. You may wish to donate toward a particular item that is dear to your heart: paint to signify renewal, Cross and the woodwork as an expression of your desire that our young ones and everyone may come to know Jesus and that the Cross of Christ may bring tremendous blessings to our city.

Together, let us take care of our baby (our Church) as we honour the miners who through their hard work built this Church. Let us leave something for the future generation so that from heaven we can look down and see that the Church is still standing.

For donations, we will have a special place to commemorate our donors:

Platinum donors: \$10,000 and above

Gold donors: \$5,000 to \$9,999

Silver donors: \$3,000 to \$4,999

Bronze donors: \$1,000 to \$2,999

Angel donors: \$100 to \$999

My personal story on how your Pilgrimage of Faith donation helped me to become a priest in our diocese.

When I arrived in the diocese in 2012, the Bishop sent me to St. Joseph Seminary, Edmonton. I did not have money to pay my school fees. It was through your Pilgrimage of Faith Donation that the Bishop was able to pay for my school fees. You may not realize it – but your sacrificial giving helped me to become a priest in our diocese. THANK YOU for your help, for your kindness and generosity.

This year, we have another seminarian in the seminary. Part of the fund will be used to pay for his school fees. The Pilgrimage of faith fund is used for many other diocesan ministries such as;

1. Diocesan and Parish Youth Ministry: Helping our young ones to know who Jesus is and that they are loved by God. Each year, our youths are sent to Steubenville University for youth conference where they encounter thousands of other youths. Many of them come back and on our fire for God. Through your donation, you are helping to sustain faith in the hearts of our young people for today and for future generations.
2. Catholic Education (RCIA, Catechism, Marriage, Confirmation, Baptism)
3. Taking care of our retired priests
4. Seton House of Prayer
5. Office of Faith Formation
6. Marriage Tribunal
7. Social & Pastoral Programs (Rachel's Vineyard, Grief to Grace)
8. Catholic Mountain Star
9. Vocations
10. First Nations Ministry

May we give to Jesus through this campaign This year as we write our cheques, may we write them to Jesus of Nazareth. Dear Lord Jesus, this cheque is for you – for your purposes, for all that you want to accomplish in our parish and in our Diocese, so that through this campaign, we can put your love in our parish, homes, diocese and our city. Thank you for your generosity.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Obi