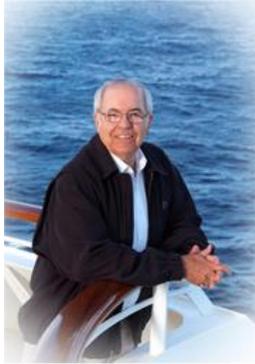


ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINISTRY TO TOURISM



Why do people go on tours? Whatever the reason, whether out of a desire for knowledge or adventure, or for healing from stress or sadness, many travelers find that a spiritual component exists in the experience of travel and tourism, for people do not travel alone. The poem Footprints in the Sand describes travel this way: 'Many times when it appears that only one person travelled the journey, it was God who carried the traveler'.

True travel pilgrims experience the wonderment of God in the beauty of creation. However, the presence of a spiritual guide will enable them to experience a certain awe accompanied with tranquility and peace, thus enabling them to encounter the Sacred more deeply. In the growing phenomenon of extensive travel and tourism, there is an urgent need for a "Ministry to Tourism" to help transform a "trip" into a "pilgrimage".

For a pilgrim, intentional travel can become a symbol of the meaning of life, expressing in a physical way a deep interior longing of the soul to find its true destination. In other words, the journey, whether by land, air or sea, reflects the journey through life where the physical destination suggests the eternal destination. Not unlike a good retreat, people can experience, in a good travel journey, a pivotal moment in their spiritual life.

Ministry to Tourism, having a pastoral or spiritual care component, has an outreach to those who travel - locally, nationally or internationally. It is at their service, assisting them to recognize the spiritual value of their travel experience.

It is in the spirit of such meaningful tourism and travel that this Ministry has been established. The intent and hope is that this service will assist travelers to experience more holistically the wonder and awe of travel. May it offer an education, provide some enjoyment and bring total enrichment to their body, mind and spirit as they reflect on the gift of travel, a gift graciously given by God. In short, this Ministry to Tourism aims to help people 'discover the Sacred in reflective travel'.

Ministry to Tourism Logo:



The ancient symbol of the fish signifies all believers in “Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Savior.” The circle represents the world. When the Christian serves in the community, the gifts of the Spirit are called forth in others, creating new life for today and tomorrow. When the Christian journeys into the circle of the world “by serving travelers today” people discover the Sacred thereby making present the Word, who is Jesus Christ.

THE FOUNDER

Reverend Father Ralph L. Kleiter was ordained a priest on the Vigil of Pentecost, June 1, 1963, by Bishop Francis J. Klein at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Saskatoon. His pastoral ministry began with his appointment as Assistant Pastor at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Saskatoon and in subsequent years he served as pastor in the city parishes of Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Francis Xavier, St. Anne and Holy Family, and in the rural parishes in of Beechy, Biggar, Eston, Kindersley, and Davidson. In all, he served in parish ministry for over 30 years.

Fr. Kleiter also served in many roles in the Diocese of Saskatoon, namely, as Chaplain at CFS Dundurn (1963-64), diocesan Spiritual Director to the Catholic Women’s League (1968-71), inaugural diocesan Director of Communications (1972-75), Chaplain at CFS Alsask (1983-88), and Assistant to the Bishop (1997-98). His faith journey was enriched in two sabbaticals: the first in Europe (1971-72) and the second in Rome and Berkeley, California (1991-92) where he studied at the Jesuit School of Applied Theology.

The Pontifical Council of the Holy See for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples encourages concrete pastoral or spiritual care for travelers. This is not to be limited to simply receiving tourists, but in helping them to become more educated and responsible in their travels. Having been involved in the tourism industry even before his ordination, Father Kleiter continues to pursue his interest in the pastoral implications of tourism within the Church. With the permission of Bishop James Weisgerber, then Bishop of the RC Diocese of Saskatoon, he established the Ministry to Tourism in 1999.

Father Kleiter has developed several tools that enable travelers to make their travel experiences more than simply a cruise or bus tour, more than an escape to the sun, and more than a retreat at sea. While continuing to have a keen interest in leisure-tourism, he strives, through The Ministry

to Tourism, to transform a travel experience into a genuine pilgrimage and thus facilitate within “reflective” travel, a true discovery of the Sacred.

