

The background features a light gray field with several faint, semi-circular patterns of small squares or dots. On the right side, there is a complex network of thin, light-colored lines connecting numerous circular nodes. These nodes are colored in a gradient from light orange at the top to deep red and purple at the bottom, creating a sense of depth and movement.

# Spiritual Pilgrimages

Donna Giver-Johnston

# Introductions-Definitions

# Pilgrim and Pilgrimage

Derived from the Latin *peregrinus* (from *per* meaning “through” and *ager*, meaning “field” or “land”)

A pilgrim is one who travels beyond a familiar or known territory on a journey to new places.

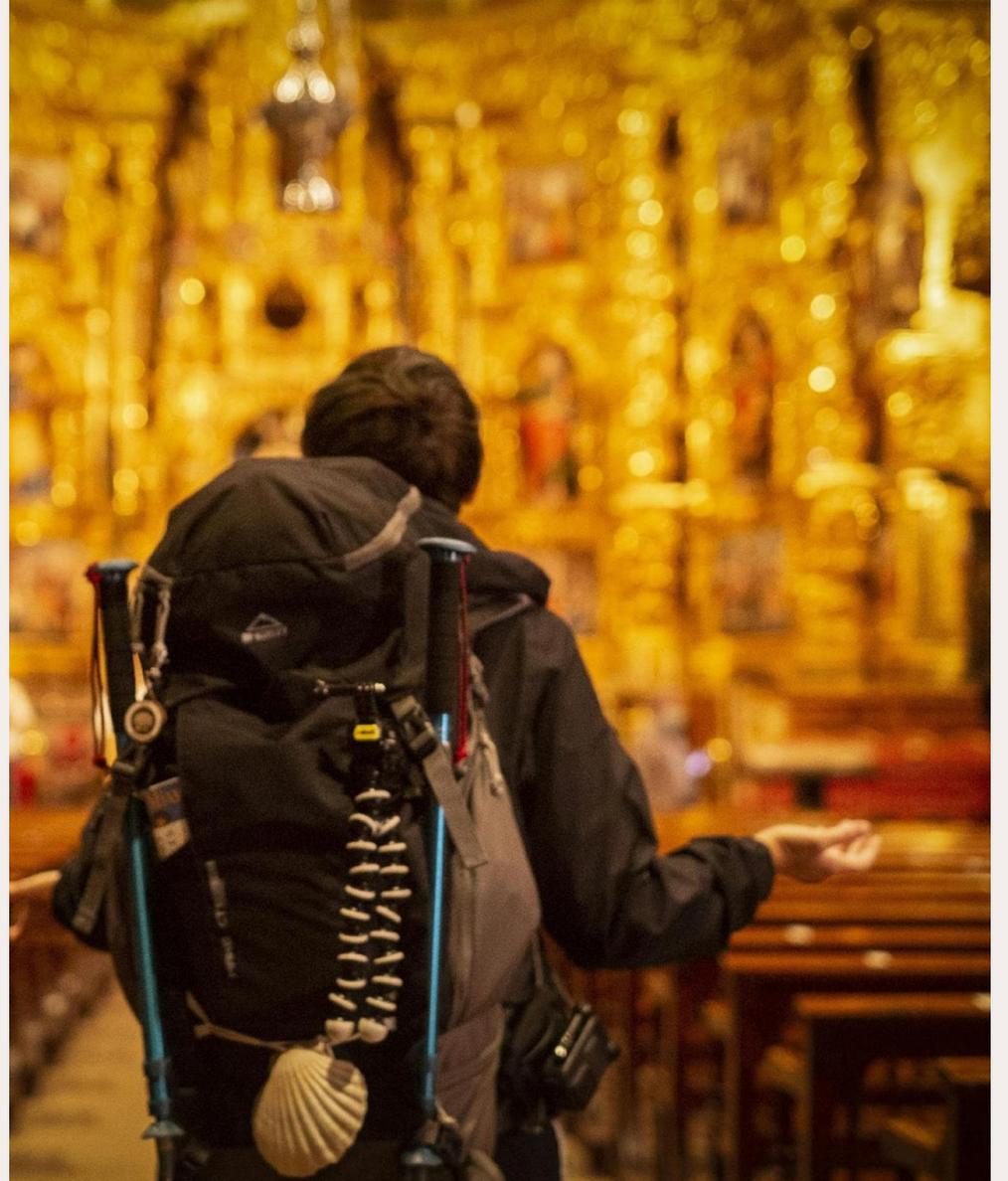
A pilgrimage is a physical journey to a place set apart, that involves reflection and greater spiritual awareness, as with the saints of old.



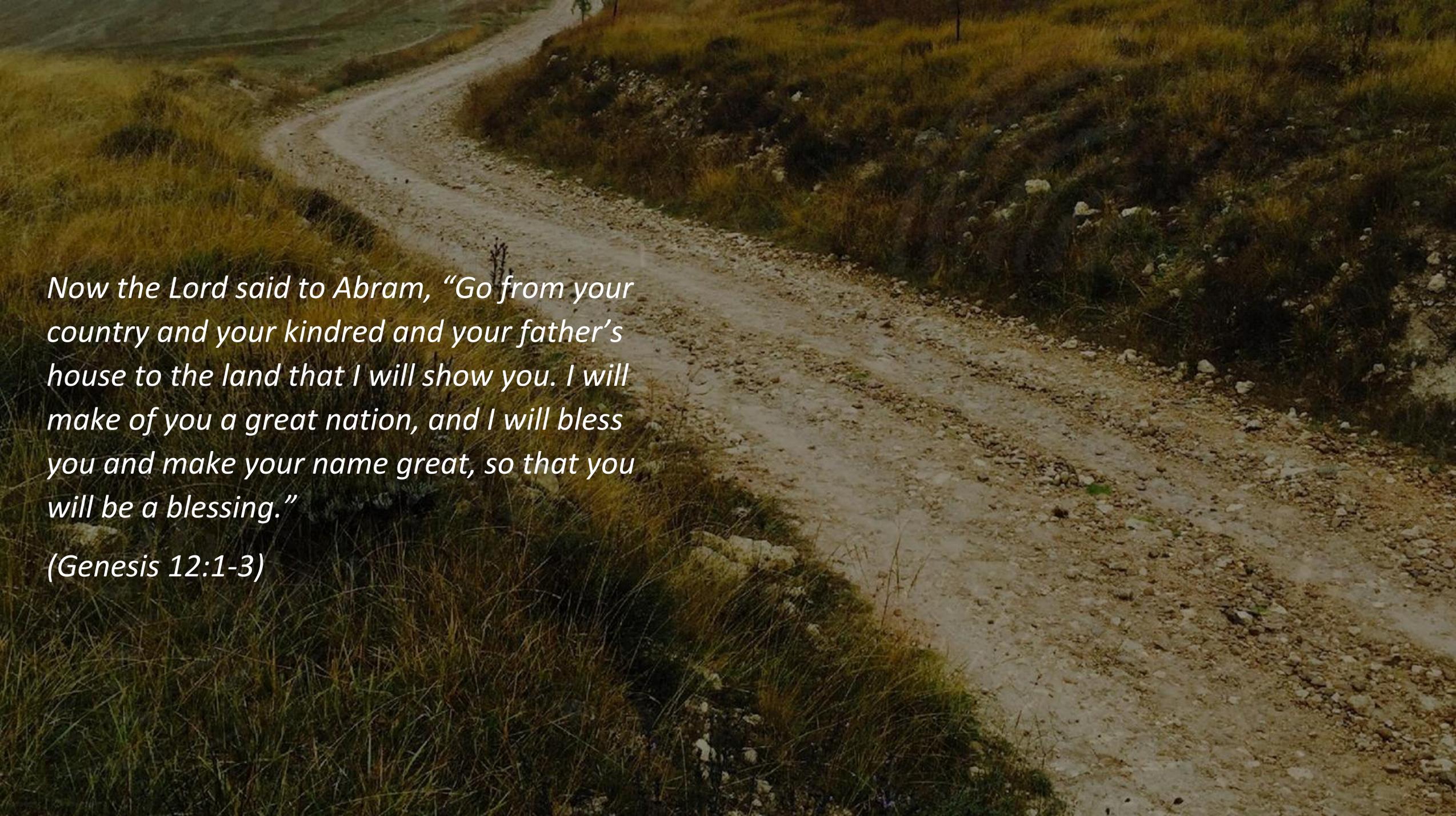


# Pilgrims

Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr wrote, “Pilgrims are persons in motion—passing through territories not their own—seeking something we might call completion or perhaps clarity, a goal to which only the spirit’s compass points the way.”



# Theology

A dirt road winds through a grassy, hilly landscape. The road is light-colored and appears to be made of gravel or sand. The surrounding vegetation is dry and yellowish-brown, suggesting a semi-arid or high-altitude environment. The hills are covered in tall grasses and some small shrubs. The overall scene is a natural, rugged landscape.

*Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”*

*(Genesis 12:1-3)*

**Mecca  
in Saudia Arabia**

**Birthplace of  
Muhammad**

**Annual Hajj  
pilgrimage  
for Muslims**



# Bodh Gaya in India

Buddhist pilgrimage  
to the sacred site of  
Buddha's  
enlightenment



# Ganges River in India

Millions of Hindus  
bathe daily in  
Mother Ganga (river regarded as a  
goddess),  
who is believed to wash away sins  
and purify the soul  
in a spiritual cleansing



# Hebrew People have long history of pilgrimage

Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134)

- Also called Pilgrim Songs
- Ascent refers to the Israelites annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the return to Jerusalem from the exile.



I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

The Lord will keep your going out  
and coming in, this time and  
forevermore.

(Psalm 121)



I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”  
Our feet are standing within your  
gates,

O Jerusalem. (Psalm 122)

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways. (Psalm 128)

# Saint Catherine's Monastery on Sinai Peninsula in Egypt

- Located at the foot of Mount Sinai (or Mount Horeb) where it is believed that Moses received the 10 commandments
- Monastery was built on the traditional site of the burning bush, where God first appeared to Moses. On this holy ground is a specific, unconsumed bramble bush (a type of raspberry) that grows in the monastery's courtyard, marking the spot where the divine event occurred, with a chapel built over its original location





Jewish pilgrims travel to Western (Wailing) Wall to pray

# Pilgrimage in Gospels



- Seeking: In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” (Matthew 2:1-2)
- Ritual: Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. (Luke 2:41-42)
- Healing: Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew *Beth-zatha*...in which lay many ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years...Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well. (John 5:2-9)

# Pilgrimage in Gospels

•Encountering Jesus: Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him...they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:13-35)



Ancient people  
made pilgrimage  
to ancestors'  
graves



# History

A photograph of a dimly lit, ancient stone corridor. The walls and columns are intricately carved with relief work, possibly depicting figures or patterns. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the stone surfaces and deep shadows in the recesses. The text "Holy Sites and Relics" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

# Holy Sites and Relics



For the beauty of the Earth  
For the glory of the skies  
for the love, which from our birth,  
over and around us lies.  
Christ, our Lord, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

**“Sunrise, sunset, mountains, sea, rivers, great cathedrals, fields of corn blowing in the breeze, have all been invoked in prayers and hymns as lifting the veil on God’s proximity.”**

**“Holy places carry with them the potential of transcendence, stepping out of time and out of character.**

**Pilgrimages are not just walking tourism. There is an interplay going on between the inner and the outer...seeking the spiritual through something material.”**

**Peter Stanford, *The Extra Mile: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pilgrimage***

# Pilgrimage v. walk

1. Pilgrimage requires a destination with meaning (a holy place or one that holds special memories)
2. Pilgrimage requires intention (seeking guidance, grieving, or giving thanks)
3. Pilgrimage typically requires days and days of steady walking, requiring stamina and endurance.

“With pilgrimage, you literally walk a physical path, have a clear goal—your destination—and a means of reaching it: walking. The simplicity may be the secret to finding inner-direction” (Dr. Guy Hayward, British Pilgrimage Trust)



# Geography



Anne Frank House, Amsterdam



**Labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, France**



**Black Madonna, Einsiedeln, Switzerland**

Hagia Sophia  
(Holy Wisdom)  
Istanbul,  
Turkey





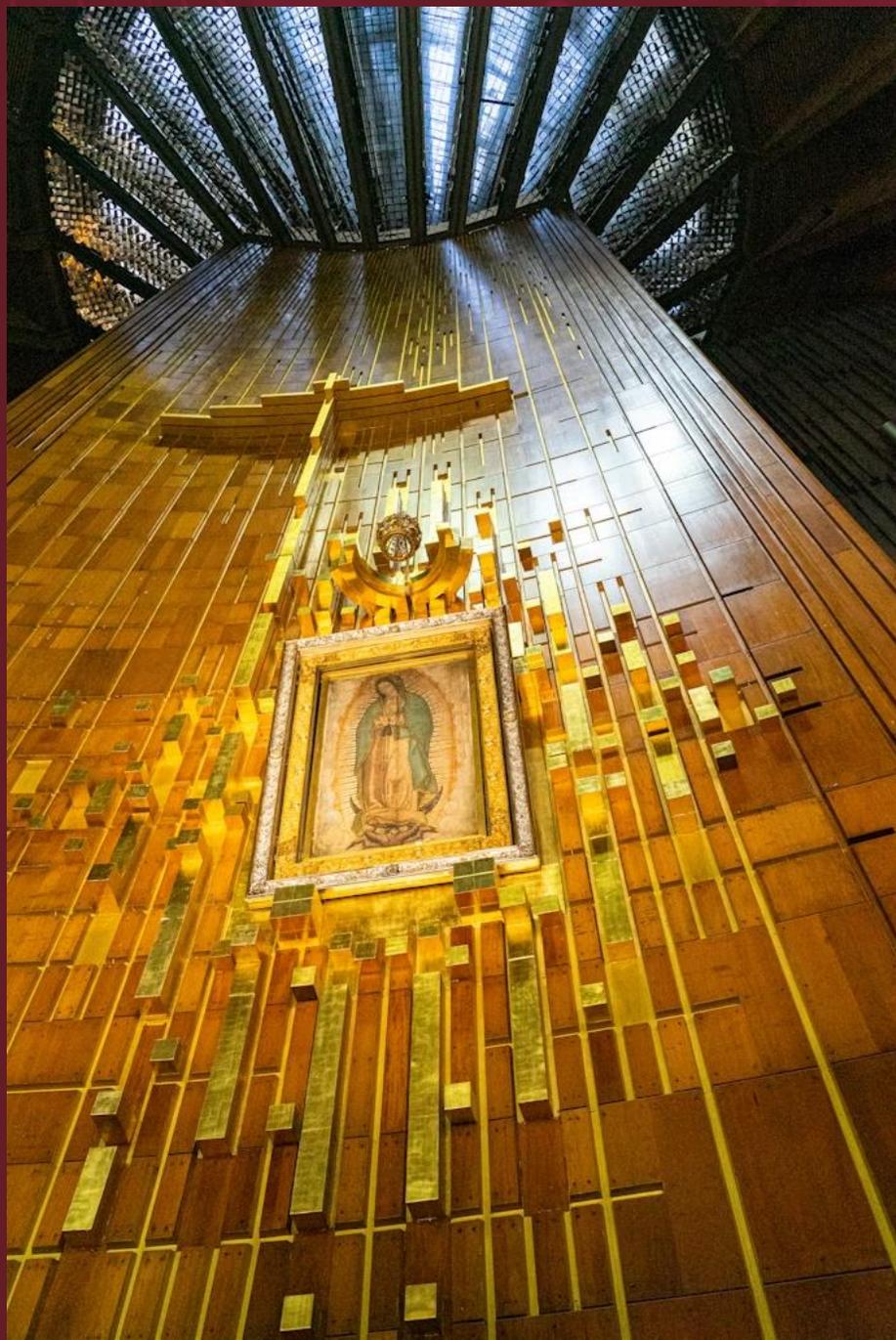
Grotto of Lourdes, France



Mount Fuji, Japan



Sri Pada, Sri Lanka



Our Lady of  
Guadalupe  
Mexico City,  
Mexico

Shwe Dagon  
Pagoda  
Rangoon, Myanmar





Stonehenge,  
England



Vatican City  
Saint Peter's  
Basilica  
Rome, Italy

