

PREPARATION GUIDE

FOOTSTEPS OF POMPALLIER
PILGRIMAGE 2026



Preparation Guide

Welcome to the Footsteps of Pompallier Pilgrimage 2026 Preparation Guide

This guide is designed to prepare you for a memorable 100km walking pilgrimage.

Over the next 15 weeks, you should have a plan to help you build the necessary physical endurance, mental resilience, and spiritual readiness for this unique journey.

Our goal is to support every pilgrim to feel confident, well-prepared, and fully equipped to embark on this spiritual adventure.

In this guide, you will find:



- 1. 15 Week Training Guide overview:** A weekly plan to gradually build your walking stamina and physical fitness. Note: if you can't complete an outdoor walk, consider adding a gym session, either treadmill or stepper to help build your base fitness.
- 2. Build strength:** 6 simple exercises you can do once a week, or more regularly if time permits (located below the training guide)
- 3. Equipment Checklist:** Find a list of essential items to bring under the 'what to bring' section in this guide.
- 4. Spiritual Preparation:** Read through the information at the end of this guide and reflect on how you can prepare spiritually.

We encourage you to embrace this preparation period as part of your pilgrimage experience. By using this guide as a starting point you can develop a training schedule that fits around you and your family's commitments.

We look forward to walking with you in the footsteps of Bishop Pompallier.

Physical Preparation



The Footsteps of Pompallier Pilgrimage commences in Opuia, moving through the hills of Mangamuka and onto the coastal road of the Hokianga Harbour. This walk, being conducted over four days, makes it suitable for those that have an average to good level of fitness. Like many pilgrimages, it is recommended that you take the time to prepare yourself physically, especially since there are steep hill sections at different stages over the last two days.

The Pilgrimage is 100 km in length. Pilgrims walk between 20 – 30 km per day, over the four days. Each day is divided into three walking sessions of approximately 2 – 3 hours in length, punctuated by short breaks for lunch and rest stops.

Due to the nature of NZ roads in the Far North and the lack of walkable verges and pathways, we will be walking mostly on the actual roads themselves. For this reason, you will need to stay within your chapters, as these are escorted by safety vehicles for most sections of the walk.

Many of the minor injuries that are experienced by Pilgrims relate to fatigue and stress in the feet and ankles. This can be avoided by following some of the below recommendations:

- Refer to the following training guide for suggested physical preparation.
- Wearing properly fitted walking shoes or boots, and ensuring your footwear is comfortable, supportive and properly broken in.
- Practicing thorough foot hygiene, especially at the end of each day.
- Wearing fresh, clean socks each morning and changing to a dry pair if feet are wet.
- Stretching and limbering up muscles before commencing each walking session (highly recommended).
- Carrying a small water bottle or hydration pack while walking to maintain adequate hydration levels.
- Wearing a hat, sunscreen, and clothing appropriate for walking in the prevailing weather conditions.

15 Week Training Guide

Week 1 begins on Monday 6th July 2026

15 WEEK TRAINING GUIDE

Building Phase Start slow, focus on consistency, and build a walking habit.

Week	Sessions	Hours P/W Est Km's	Terrain	Strength Sessions
1	3-4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 20-60 mins	2-4 hrs 8-16 Km's	Easy	1 per week
2	3-4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 30-90 mins	3-4 hrs 12-16 Km's	Easy	1 per week
3	3-4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 40-120 mins	4 hrs 16 Km's	Easy	1 per week
4	3-4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 40-160 mins	5 hrs 20 Km's	Easy	1 per week

Extending Phase Gradually increase your walking distance and build endurance.

Week	Sessions	Hours P/W Est Km's	Terrain	Strength Sessions
5	4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 45-160 mins	6 hrs 24 Km's	Easy-Moderate	1 per week
6	4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 45-180 mins	7 hrs 30 Km's	Easy-Moderate	1 per week
7	4 Sessions Easy to moderate pace 45-240 mins	8 hrs 36 Km's	Easy-Moderate	1 per week
8	4 Sessions Moderate pace 60-300 mins	9 hrs 40 Km's	Moderate	1 per week
9	4 Sessions Moderate pace 60-360 mins	10 hrs 50 Km's	Moderate	1 per week
10	4 Sessions Moderate pace 90-360 mins	12 hrs 60 Km's	Moderate	1 per week

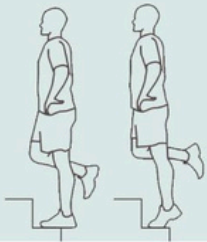
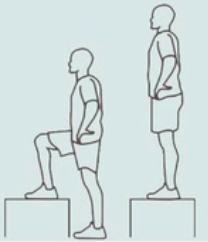


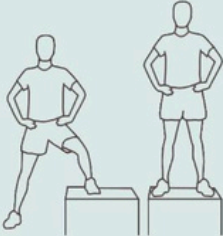
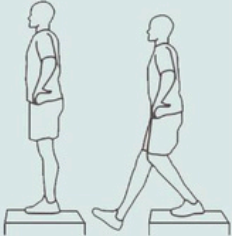
Peaking Phase Extend your endurance and prepare for longer distances.

Week	Sessions	Hours P/W Est Km's	Terrain	Strength Sessions
11	4 Sessions Moderate to fast pace 120-360 mins	14 hrs 70 Km's	Moderate-Difficult	1 per week
12	4 Sessions Moderate to fast pace 120-480 mins	16 hrs 80 Km's	Moderate-Difficult	1 per week

Taper Phase Begin to taper to allow your body to rest before the event.

Week	Sessions	Hours P/W Est Km's	Terrain	Strength Sessions
13	3-4 Sessions Moderate pace 60-240 mins	8 hrs 40 Km's	Moderate	1 per week
14	2-3 Sessions Moderate pace 60-120 mins	4 hrs 20 Km's	Easy-Moderate	1 per week
15	1-2 Sessions Easy pace 20-60 mins	1.5 hrs 8 Km's	Easy	1 per week

STRENGTH PROGRAM

EXERCISE	HOW TO	EXERCISE	HOW TO
SINGLE LEG CALF RAISES with weighted backpack <i>(similar to what you'll hike with)</i> 3 sets, 12 reps		STEP-UPS with weighted backpack <i>(similar to what you'll hike with)</i> 3 sets, 12 reps	
GLUTE BRIDGES 3 sets, 12 reps		PLANKS 3 sets, 1 minute	
SIDEWAYS STEP-UP 3 sets, 12 reps		STEP-DOWN HEEL TOUCHES <i>(no pack needed)</i>	

Packing Recommendations

WHAT TO BRING

Pilgrims must bring everything that is required for their journey. Trucks will be provided to transport luggage between the overnight stops. Therefore, any items you require throughout the day must be carried by you. Please ensure that you are not just dressed for walking, but also dressed appropriately for Mass and receiving the sacraments each day.

Below is a general guide on what to bring.

OVERNIGHT BAG

- Tent (night 1 & 2 are camp sites, night 3 is a marae where indoors is for women and children only.)
- Sleeping Gear (i.e. sleeping bag, sleeping mat, and pillow)
- Torch/headlamp
- Walking clothes for 4 days (spare socks and underwear) spare/dry comfortable footwear for evenings
- Solid (worn-in) walking shoes/boots
- Warm overnight clothes suitable for cold conditions
- Plate and/or bowl, cup, eating utensils
- Towel, toiletries

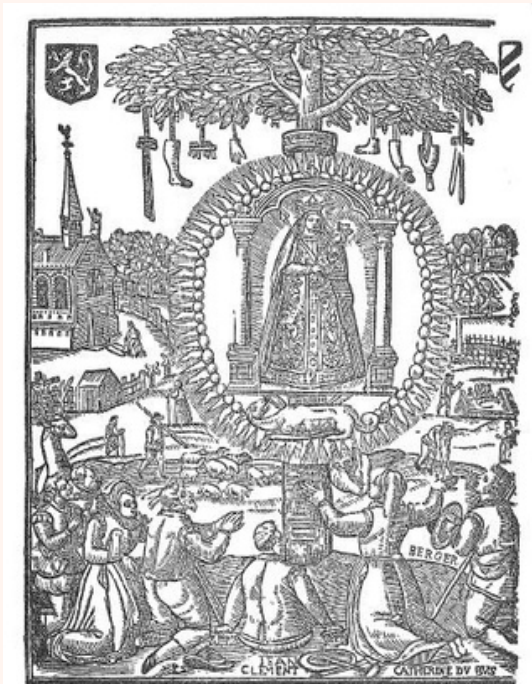
DAY PACK

- Water bottle (We provide 1.5 litre water refills for you at rest stops)
- Raincoat or light waterproof jacket
- Broad-brimmed hat
- Sunscreen
- Personal first-aid kit (blister packs, chafing cream, Panadol etc.)
- Snack food (breakfast lunch and dinner provided plus fruit at rest stops)

Spiritual Preparation

The act of making a pilgrimage to a holy site has been something Catholics have been doing since the beginning, when the very first Catholics would journey to visit the important sites around the Holy Land relating to the life, passion and death of Our Lord.

The following tips are from a website for the Notre Dame de Chartres Pilgrimage in France which, each year, has tens of thousands of participants from all over the world attending. Notre Dame de Chartres Cathedral dates back to the 4th century and has been a pilgrimage destination for many centuries.



Woodcut (from an early seventeenth century illustrated book) of an important pilgrimage site in the Hapsburg region called Scherpenheuvel where there were many miraculous healings attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary (originally a statue was placed in an oak tree that was shaped like a cross) The earliest written account was around the beginning of the 1300's.

Eventually a stone chapel was built and, later, the Basilica of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel which is still a place of pilgrimage today.

1. Think about why you are doing this. Clarify what goal you might have for the walk, but also consider (and pray about) what God may have in store for you through this trip.
2. Use your training walks to prayerfully prepare. Be open to graces that may come from these walks, regular introspection, and certainly the pilgrimage itself.
3. Be prepared to make sacrifices on the pilgrimage, from foregoing your daily shower, to what you eat. A pilgrimage is not a luxurious trip, so be prepared for opportunities to humble yourself.
4. Is there an intention you're going to be walking for? Is there a person in your life it will be dedicated to, or are you offering the walk in thanksgiving? Whether you have one overarching intention or a long list, many people offer up the arduous walk for specific intentions.
5. Ask friends and family if there are intentions they'd like to send with you on the journey.
6. Consider adding devotions or meditations as you walk, such as focusing on the components of the Lord's Prayer or the Creed, reflecting on the Via Dolorosa or the trials suffered by a particular saint, saying the Prayers to St. Bridget, conducting an examination of conscience, or any other prayer or devotion that you feel drawn to.