



**Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation**  
**Jubilee Year 2025**  
**Pilgrimage Guide for Braddock Bay**  
**Finger Lakes Catholic Creation Care Covenant**

During Jubilee Years, Catholics are called to examine our relationships with each other and our common home. We are to resolve conflicts, acknowledge and rectify harm caused, ask forgiveness, forgive debts, re-create equity, and embrace gratitude. Pilgrimage is an opportunity to undertake such a self-examination. The Finger Lakes Catholic Creation Care Covenant has curated a group of “Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation” as part of this Jubilee Year 2025.

Most of the places we are recommending for pilgrimage are on land historically and presently home to Haudenosaunee, the indigenous people who made their home in upstate New York long before the arrival of Europeans.

So we note here how well the heart of the practice of Jubilee aligns with the Haudenosaunee teaching of the *Good Mind* practiced since the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the Peacemaker had the leaders of the 5 original Tribes of the Haudenosaunee form the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and bury their arrows under the Tree of Peace  
<https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/confederacys-creation/>  
<https://www.ganondagan.org/good-mind>

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## Why we are offering this trail as a path for pilgrimage...

Braddock Bay has been transformed from a polluted environmental “hot spot” to a restored and thriving ecosystem. This is the result of multiple factors including the willingness of individuals and governmental agencies to:

- Recognize environmental harm
- Acknowledge the connection between human behavior and environmental impact
- Act to undo the harm, in a collaboration of multiple groups, scientists, engineers, legislators and governmental agencies, to achieve a common goal through advocacy and agency
- Adopt a vision the Common Good that embraces care for creation

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught.”

Baba Dioum, Senegal environmentalist

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Much of what led to choosing this as a pilgrimage path is hidden, invisible to the eye. So that you may see and understand more fully this pilgrimage choice, please look over the history of Braddock Bay Restoration on pages 6-7.

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Before you leave home for Braddock Bay, you might say this prayer:

### **A Prayer for Laudato Si’ Pilgrims of Hope in the Jubilee Year of 2025**

God in Heaven,

As we begin our journey today, we pray that You will accept the efforts we make on this pilgrimage. We offer it in praise of You and with love for all that You have created.

Be our companion along the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in weariness, our defense in danger, our shelter in heat and cold, our light in darkness, our comfort in discouragement.

Open our hearts to everything that we encounter, to see You in our human brothers and sisters and in every being which You have made, for all things speak of You. Help us to understand Your will and to follow it with courage, confidence, and joy.

We pray that, with your grace and guidance, we will share your Good News with every creature and become agents of reconciliation and healing for all of Creation. May our witness be a leaven of authentic hope, the harbinger of the new heavens and the new earth which You have in store for us. Help us to remember that this pilgrimage is just one step on our journey to you.

We pray in a special way for our new Pope Leo and for his intentions. Give him the strength and wisdom he needs to guide your pilgrim Church on earth.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## Guided Meditation

### Beginning

Before you start your walk, take time to slow down and notice....Sit on the bench or your lawn chair where you can look out and see the water.

Take in the sandy beach that spreads out before you to the waters edge. Take in the sky.

- Listen to the wind.
- Feel the air.
- What do you hear?
- What colors do you see?
- What scents ride on the air?

Call to mind what prompted you to come to this place today.  
What are you looking for, hoping for?

Can you weave now a prayer of gratitude and thanks from the threads of the colors, scents, and sounds you are noticing and, naming your hopes, release the prayer on the wind to find its way to God?

### As You Walk

You begin your walk heading west. Take your time.....Notice the plants, trees, and bird song here.

#### Pause and Ponder #1

Pick a pausing place along this first leg of the path.

Allow your senses to fully explore the plant and bird life around you. Take a moment to smell, breathe, taste, hear; see and feel the wind, the sun and shadows, the plant and animal life. Consider that God is in All Things and recognize that you too are a part of this complex tapestry that is His Creation. Notice any feelings that may be arising....

#### Turning and Pause and Ponder #2

You have come to the point where the trail changes direction and turns south.

If the lake level is low, you can walk on the sandbar or walk through the shallow water out to the breakwater/barrier beach. You may be able to find a rock on the barrier beach to sit on. But if the water is too high, just turn left and follow the path south.

You will likely have noticed that the footpath you have been walking is sometimes smooth and firm underfoot, other times a little rocky and uncertain under your feet, or even soft and giving if you walk out onto the breakwater. In places the air may feel too close, while in others there is a wonderful breeze.

If you could consider your life as an unfolding landscape, at this point in your life how might you describe your landscape, the air, the sky, the ground underfoot? What lies around you, how far can you see what lies ahead?

As you walk to the southernmost tip of this path....

The plant, animal, and human world is a web of interdependent relationships. In Laudato si Pope Francis urged us to understand that everything is connected, plant and animal life on earth, fish and creatures of the sea, birds of the air, and the entire fabric of human life. Referencing Genesis 2:16, he also asks "How shall we till and keep the garden of the world?"

Recall that Braddock Bay is now a thriving ecosystem because enough people believed that environmental harms are not inevitable or irreversible.

### **Reflect**

How do the choices I make in my own life affect the wider world of all creation? Do the choices I make recognize and respect that interconnectedness and the directive to till and keep the garden of the world?

Climate change is real, but climate catastrophe does not have to be inevitable. What can you do in your life, your household, your community to lighten the burdens on our planet and its people and improve life for all creation?

### **Far Point Pause and Ponder #3**

You have arrived at the far point of your walk.

As you stand here in this quiet spot, listen again, for the birds; for the wind as it moves through the trees and rustles the leaves; notice the colors of the early fall and the scents of the wetland and bay around you.

This is the Garden of Eden that was given to us to "till and keep".

Catholic social teaching has many facets but underlying them all is the idea of seeking The Common Good, doing the best we can for all people and all God's creation.

We are standing on ancestral home territory of the Seneca. They have their own version of The Common Good. But their version is explicit in including the relationship between people and the earth.

In the 12th century the tribes of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy shared an agreement about stewardship of the hunting grounds they held in common. It is referred to as "One Dish, One Spoon."

To preserve the bounty of their shared hunting grounds for their needs and the needs of generations to come, they were only to take as much as game they needed. No more and no less.

Pope Francis also reminded us of this: the actions of each of us, including how we use, or misuse the earth, the water, and the air around us, affect others, near or far from us in time and space. What we do now will affect generations to come.

Consider again your own choices.....

How might a belief in One Dish, One Spoon, influence your choices going forward?

Now turn and retrace your steps to where you began.....

Finding yourself back at the start of the trail....

### **Final Pause and Ponder**

Standing at the edge of the lake, there may be a breeze that greets you or the sound of children playing on the sand, or the rhythmic lapping of waves on the beach....

Consider these words of St. Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which He looks compassion on this world.  
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good.  
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours. — St. Teresa of Ávila

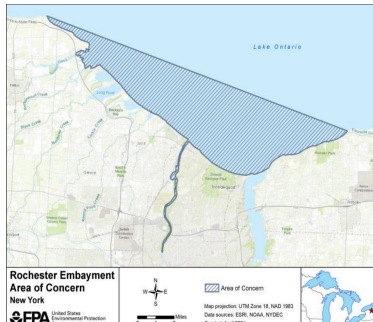
Now, can you weave a closing prayer of your own from the threads of this journey. You might....

- Give thanks for where you may have encountered God today, for what you have seen, felt, thought, or experienced
- Ask God for whatever help you need to act on this experience, to discover for yourself where and how to be Christ's eyes, hands and feet in the world. To become an "agent of reconciliation and healing for all of Creation."

## History of Braddock Bay Restoration (excerpted from resources 3 and 5)

In 1993 The Rochester Embayment was declared a pollution “hot spot” by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Embayment extends from the Lake Ontario shoreline in Parma in the west to Webster in the east, and includes the Genesee River up to the lower falls.

Threats to the embayment ecosystem health and integrity had been building for generations. Some were caused by the weather, like the erosion of the natural barrier beach at the mouth of the bay because of hurricanes and more forceful wave action. Some from the arrival and proliferation of invasive species. And some the result of human action: inadequate sewage treatment and its overflow into rivers and streams feeding the embayment; phosphorus-based fertilizer runoff into rivers and streams from both domestic and agricultural sources; and industrial pollutants dumped into waterways before the EPA began to outlaw such dumping.



When listed as a “hot spot” in 1993 the EPA [specified 14 problems](#) that needed to be corrected. Among them:

- Polluted drinking water, and [contamination of fish](#) and wildlife
- Degraded populations of plankton and bottom-feeding organisms
- Deformities and tumors in fish, birds and other animals
- Algae blooms, beach closures

Fish and wildlife habitat had been compromised by all of the above as well as:

- The loss of the barrier beach. Accelerated by the building of seawalls and rock rubble walls along the shoreline to prevent erosion and protect new shoreline homes and developments.
- At the same time the interior bay shorelines were being washed away by forceful wave action at the rate of nearly three acres a year.

While hawks and raptors continued to thrive in this troubled ecosystem, masses of invasive cattails prevented fish and muskrats from moving freely and reduced open water for ducks and other waterfowl. And the loss of the natural sand bar barrier across the mouth of Braddock Bay left animal habitats in the bay itself unprotected from pounding waves.

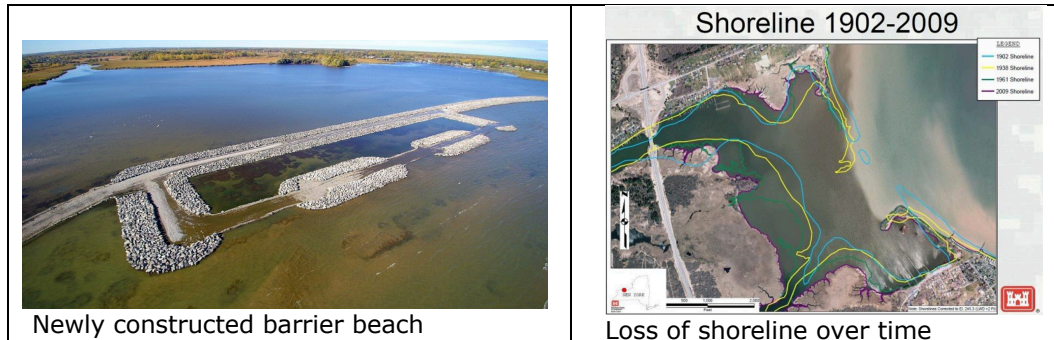
EPA regulations addressed the industrial pollutants in the 1980's. But it wasn't until 2016 that a systematic plan was made to restore the Bay ecosystem and habitat for wildlife. This funding for the plan was successfully advocated for by the two US Senators from New York. The plan was designed and implemented through a partnership between the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the EPA Great Lakes National Program Service.



Eight years later in August 2024, Braddock Bay was delisted as an environmental "hot spot." Wildlife recovery as a result of this restoration project included:

- **Wildlife Habitat Improvement:** Removal of invasive plants and the creation of water channels restored open water areas. These actions led to a 90% increase in the improving the diversity of wetland vegetation, providing healthy habitats for a variety of wild life.
- **Birds:** Shorebird species increased from 3 to 34, and 15 different waterfowl species were spotted on the restored open water areas that previously hosted none.
- **Fish:** Marsh meadows were restored and now serve as a crucial spawning habitat for Lake Ontario fish species like the northern pike.
- A thriving, complex ecosystem has been re-established supporting a growing diversity of plant and animal life in the bay.
- **Recovery of Migratory Birds:** Braddock Bay is a significant stop-over area for migratory birds, including songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl, who benefit from the restored habitat.

"In essence, Braddock Bay has transformed from a "pollution hotspot" into a thriving area teeming with life, [according to the EPA](#). The success of this restoration is a testament to the benefits of investing in ecological recovery and managing these areas to support wildlife."



## FAQs About This Trail

**Location:** Braddock Bay Marina Trail, NOT Braddock Bay Park, but further north at the Westport Marina on Braddock Bay, 105 E Manitou Rd, Rochester NY 14612

This is a walk that can be safely done alone, in pairs, or in a small group of not more than 5. That is big enough for conversation, but still small enough for silent reflection at the places where you may choose to "pause and ponder."

## Difficulty/Accessibility

- Most children 3-5yo's and normally active 70+ year old's should be able to do this and enjoy it.
- This is a 1 mile packed dirt, out and back, level path with Lake Ontario on one side and Braddock Bay on the other.

- You can push a 3 wheeled stroller on this trail; but, if you need a walker, cane or wheelchair, this is not a good fit for you.
- There is a sandy beach for child's play
- If you cannot do the walk but wish to visit the site and use the prayer/reflection guide, you can sit on the bench or your own lawn chair on the grass/beach at the edge of Lake Ontario

### Parking

- There are 66 public parking spaces. Please do not park in spaces marked for dock space holders.
- Some spots are just inside the entrance to the marina on the left. Some are at the far north end of the parking lot, closer to the start of the trail

A map and more description of the trail can be found here:

<https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/new-york/braddock-bay-marina-beach>

You can park in either of the 2 X marked areas. The actual trail starts at the second yellow X near the curve on the map. From that second yellow X and back, the walk is 1 mile.



### Resources

1. The Story of Creation Genesis 1:1--24.
2. Hymn "Yours Are the Hands"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7ymxW3rndk>
3. Ignatian Eco-Examen: Reconciling God, Creation, and Humanity  
<https://www.ecologicalexamen.org>
4. Pope Francis Laudato si, 2015  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)
5. Goals of Laudato Si can be viewed here:  
<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/>



6. J Kureethadam. The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Sí. Liturgical Press, 2020.
7. "The Letter," <https://theletterfilm.org>
8. The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from Secret World. P Wohlleben
9. "The Mysterious Life of Birds who Never Come Down." From the book Vesper Flights by H MacDonald . Essay is available at this link:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/magazine/vesper-flights.html>
10. The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World. RW Kimmerer, 2024
11. A Matter of Spirit: On Sacred Ground. Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, Summer 2025  
[https://issuu.com/ipjc/docs/a\\_matter\\_of\\_spirit\\_-\\_summer\\_2025\\_-\\_on\\_sacred\\_groun?fr=xKAE9\\_zMzMw](https://issuu.com/ipjc/docs/a_matter_of_spirit_-_summer_2025_-_on_sacred_groun?fr=xKAE9_zMzMw)

About Braddock Bay.....

12. Braddock Bay Raptor Research <https://www.bbrr.org/hawkwatching/>
13. This Great Lakes pollution hotspot dead zone is coming to life. What changed?  
Justin Murphy, D and C, August 2024  
<https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/local/2024/08/16/lake-ontario-pollution-zone-once-decimated-now-is-bursting-with-life/73836065007/>
14. Braddock Bay Restoration  
<https://ewn.ercd.dren.mil/built-projects/braddock-bay-restoration/>
15. EPA Removes New York's Rochester Embayment from List of Most Polluted Areas in the Great Lakes  
<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-removes-new-yorks-rochester-embayment-list-most-polluted-areas-great-lakes#:~:text=In%20the%20four%20years%20since%20its%20reconstruction%2C,tourism%2C%20boating%2C%20and%20recreation%20to%20the%20waterfront.&text=Thanks%20to%20these%20projects%2C%20275%20acres%20of,improve%20connectivity%20and%20biodiversity%20in%20the%20bay.>
16. Rochester Embayment AOC - Delisted  
<https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-aocs/rochester-embayment-aoc-delisted>