

# *Journey with Faith This Christmas*

*DeKalb to Lena ... 82 miles*  
*Elgin to Polo ... 72 miles*  
*Sycamore to Freeport ... 67 miles*  
*Rock Falls to Rockford ... 65 miles*  
*Nazareth to Bethlehem ... 70 miles*

The Rockford Diocese covers 11 counties in northwest Illinois, an area about the size of the state of Connecticut. From communities of Kane County along the Fox River, across the state to Jo Daviess County and the Mississippi River, a 130-mile road trip takes just over a couple hours.

Depending on the chosen route and whether speed or scenery is the ultimate criterion for road selection, travelers can see rivers, mountains (okay, ski hills like Chestnut Mountain near Galena), mid-size cities such as Elgin and Rockford, small cities such as Freeport or Dixon, and towns like Belvidere, and Stockton.

Buses, trucks, tractors, SUVs, and small cars crisscross interstates such as I-90, I-39 and I-88. Two lane routes provide access to and from vibrant markets served by agriculture and industry. Just when you think that's a lot of trips, the kids know that Santa does all this, and more, in one night.

As important as commercial and recreational travel are to the well-being of the diocese's diverse population, it is unlikely that what happens on these trips will make world history in the next few weeks. Contrast that with 2,000-plus years ago when an expectant family made the 70 mile trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Seventy miles that historians estimate

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## **Charitably Speaking**



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took between seven and 10 days. A distance that changed the world equates to traveling from DeKalb to Savanna.

And then, to begin the mission that brought the world from darkness to

light — a journey that today would allow a not-too-early riser in Woodstock to make a 10:15 a.m. Mass in Elizabeth on Christmas morning — a monumental, historical life- and soul-saving miracle occurred that the speed of today's world doesn't always, and perhaps can't always, allow.

For those who are going to forego a donkey or camel to reach family or friends this year, please consider how the Holy Family endured the dusty, precarious

travels for our salvation.

With Christmas presents in the back of the car, or pre-shipped by air or truck, or with a bag of gift cards, let's remember how Mary and Joseph, as members of the chosen nation of Israel, willingly made a trip to bring benefits beyond their journey and into our lives.

So as you put the Christmas music on during your travel for

family gatherings, appreciate that the miles covered on that first Christmas trip would today probably last as long as only one Christmas album. Joseph and Mary traveled only 70 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Let the distance from Sycamore to Rock Falls remind us of how far we still need to go on our 2,000-year journey of faith.

*Merry Christmas from your Catholic Charities.*