

Lourdes News

Lourdes News – No.2, March, 2016

In issuing his invitation to us to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis said, “We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness”.

This year the Oblate Pilgrimage to Lourdes will be an opportunity for us all to participate in a unique way in the Jubilee Year. There will be a clear focus on the theme of mercy throughout all our celebrations and gatherings. In particular there will be the opportunity to cross the threshold of the Door of Mercy, which is situated at Saint Michael’s gate. This door will be directly facing the Breton Calvary where we can contemplate the crucified Christ, who died for us and is the Door

of Mercy. At the same time we shall contemplate Mary, as she stood at the foot of the Cross.

Pope Francis reminds us “The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. ... May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.”

We look forward to welcoming you back to Lourdes in September. I also invite you to encourage others to share the journey with us this year and to discover the rich experience that is the Oblate Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Finally, if you have any suggestions or ideas for this newsletter or indeed for how we can continue to grow and develop the pilgrimage please let us know. May our Lady of Lourdes continue to guide and protect us in all that we do.

- Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI

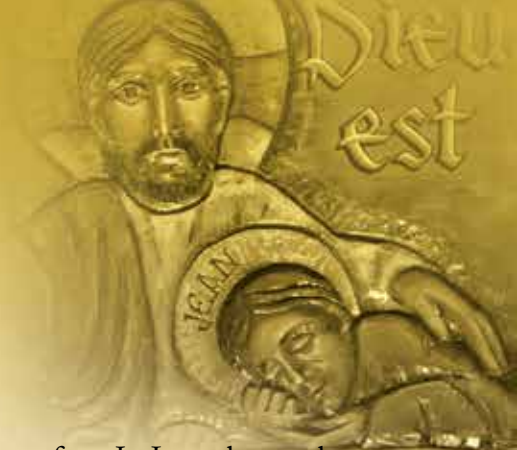


Prayer of the Jubilee

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. [...] Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and that your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

- Pope FRANCIS

“Merciful like the Father”



The Year of Mercy for the whole Church was launched on December 8th 2015 by Pope Francis and this is also the theme for pilgrims going to Lourdes this year.

Each of us go on pilgrimage to Lourdes for many different reasons, and we all bring with us illnesses of various kinds. Some are very visible, while others are unseen and known only to ourselves and God. We go to Lourdes in the hope that these hidden wounds and burdens will be healed and lightened, even by a fraction. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus meets a blind man by the side the road. He hears the man's heartfelt prayer, "Son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus not only feels compassion for him, he literally reaches and does something for him; he heals and forgives him. Like this man, we too are invited present ourselves confidently to Jesus, bringing with us all that is in us that needs his healing and merciful touch.

The invitation from Jesus to each of us is that we answer his call, when he says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." (Rev. 3.20). Jesus stands at the door, he knocks and waits for us to answer and open the door so that we can experience his healing and forgiving mercy. This is call from Jesus is for

all of us, not just some of us. In Lourdes, each of us have a place, each of us can come as we are without fear. In Lourdes, we will be welcomed home with open arms by Jesus as the Prodigal Son was by his father. Lourdes is that sacred place where the last are first, the lost are found and the least are the most important. The sick, in their many forms and guises are rightly called 'The Guests.'

In the Beatitudes, we read 'Blessed are the merciful, they will have mercy shown to them.' But perhaps the reverse is also true and even more challenging; Blessed are those who have mercy shown to them, they are to show mercy to others. Having experienced God's mercy, we are asked to share it with others. God is merciful to us and anointed as we are continually by God's healing compassion, are we not also called to be merciful and forgiving to those who at times hurt us.

As St. Eugene de Mazenod reminds us, "we are all ministers of God mercy."

- Michael Moore OMI

Holy Door In Lourdes

Traditionally, the beginning of the jubilee was marked by the opening of a Holy Door by the Pope in Rome. To make this Jubilee accessible to all Pope Francis has asked all the dioceses in the world to open their own Holy Door. The Lourdes holy door is installed at St. Michaels Gate near the Breton cross.

This door is always open and symbolises God waiting to welcome us with open arms into his mercy. When we pass through the door we are thus required to leave behind sin and turn again towards love and forgiveness. The holy door reminds us of our responsibility as we enter.

It is a decision which implies the freedom to choose, and at the same time the courage to abandon something, to leave something behind (cf. Mt 13, 44-46)



Passing through this door we profess that Jesus Christ is Lord thus strengthening our faith in Him to embrace the new life He has given us. This is what Pope John Paul II had announced to the world on the day of his election: "Open wide the doors to Christ".



Lourdes 2016

Hotels

We continue to offer our regular group of hotels: Solitude; Panorama, Padoue (€719) and Astoria (€675). There has been no increase in price for 2016 so all prices remain the same as they were in 2015. The UK price for the Panorama is £545 from London via Toulouse.

In order to provide a range of hotels at different prices we have added three new hotels to the list of hotels available to pilgrims traveling from Dublin this year. Two of the hotels are available at the reduced price of €635.

Hôtel St. George – This is a 3-star family hotel set on the banks of the River Gave. It offers panoramic views over the river from the restaurant. Guest rooms are equipped with satellite TV and Wi-Fi access. Some rooms have views of the mountains and the river. Each room has a private bathroom with a hairdryer. Local, seasonal produce is served in the restaurant at Hotel Saint Georges. Guests can enjoy a drink in the piano bar. The hotel has a 4.5 rating and a certificate of excellence from Tripadvisor. Package Price for 2016 is €635.

Hôtel Saint Louis De France – This 3- star hotel is located in central Lourdes along the banks of the River Gave. Free Wi-Fi is available in public areas. Each room is equipped with a bathroom and a telephone. There is also a lounge and bar where guests can enjoy a drink. Hotel Saint Louis De France is a 5/7 minute walk from the Basilica of St. Pius X, known as the Underground Basilica. Package Price for 2016 is €635.

Hôtel Eliseo – This stylish 4- star hotel is situated in the heart of Lourdes, just 100 yards from the Sanctuaries. Hotel Eliseo features a panoramic rooftop terrace with views of the Chateau-Fort and the Pyrennees. The spacious rooms are decorated in a contemporary style and come with a king size bed, a flat-screen TV and free WiFi access. Package Price for 2016 is €719.

New Airline

The Oblate Pilgrimage is part of the UIPL which helps organise and charter all our flights from Dublin to Lourdes. As a result of the problems that have been experienced with Air Med over recent years they have engaged a new airline, Albastar, for the 2016 season.



Assisted Pilgrims

We offer pilgrims who need assistance a special service to travel to Lourdes from Dublin and London. This includes full-time nursing care in the Accueil Notre Dame while taking part in the pilgrimage. The cost from Dublin is €580 and £460 from London.

For more information please contact:

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Barbara Hogan, Mission Office,
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February Meetings

Every year around the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11th, a team from the pilgrimage travels to Lourdes to make preparations for the pilgrimage in September. During these days we finalise arrangements with the Shrine for our pilgrimage programme. In addition to all the preparations we take time to remember all the people who have asked for our prayers and we light a candle on behalf of all who will travel with us.



Holy Cross Abbey Mass

A Mass will be celebrated in Holy Cross Abbey, Co. Tipperary at 1pm on Thursday 12th of May. This will be an opportunity for members of our Oblate Family associated with the Lourdes pilgrimage to come together. During this Mass we will also remember those Oblates who are buried in the grounds of the Abbey. After Mass there will be a chance to gather in the local golf club. Dinner will be available from the golf club and will cost: €16 for Dinner, dessert & Tea/Coffee or €12 for Dinner & Tea/Coffee. All are welcome.



Lourdes Website

We recently launched a new website for the pilgrimage. Our aim is to share the story of the pilgrimage and to provide regular updates about upcoming activities and events. You will also be able to view photographs from the 2015 and 2014 pilgrimages on the site. The address is

www.oblatelourdespilgrimage.com

You are also invited to visit our new Oblate website: www.oblates.ie

Guest Reunion

- *Áras Mhuire, Inchicore, Sat, 21 May at 1.00pm*

The Guest re-union is an excellent opportunity for the different parts of the pilgrimage to come together and meet our assisted pilgrims. This meeting provides us with an opportunity to chat over a cuppa about last September and to plan for the coming year. The re-union starts with Holy Mass followed by refreshments and concludes with a game of bingo and a sing song. The reunion is a day to share with others and allow them to share the day with you.

The day is organised by the Oblate Youth Service with the support of the local Oblate community, the Order of Malta, and many other volunteers associated with the pilgrimage.

If you would like more information about the guest reunion or assistance in attending the day please contact: Padraig Corcoran, Oblate Youth Service, St. Michael's Parish, Bulfin Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8. Phone: (01) 4541660 or Email: padraig.oblate.partners@gmail.com

Contacts

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Oblate Youth Service Pilgrimage

If you are aged 18 – 26 and would like to volunteer on the pilgrimage please contact:
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