

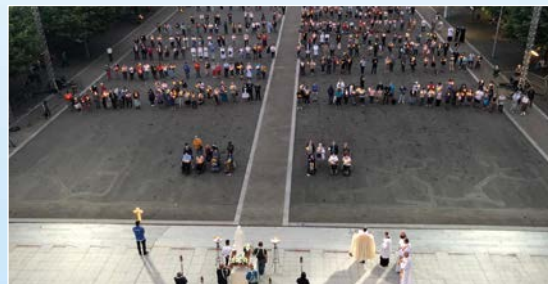
Lourdes News

Issue 9, September, 2021

The last year has been one when many of us have been apart and separate. It has been a time of great sadness and suffering as we lost so many people to the pandemic. It has also be a time of hope as we have witnessed the extraordinary generosity and courage of so many people. Over the recent months we have begun to slowly reconnect with the people around us. Our theme for this year's pilgrimage is "Lourdes: Bringing us together"

The importance of us facing the pandemic together united as one human family has been a constant theme for Pope Francis over the last year. During these days of pilgrimage we will draw on his words of inspiration. He reminds us: "The pandemic continues to cause deep wounds, exposing our vulnerability. On every continent there are many who have died, many are ill. Many people and many families are living a time of uncertainty because of socio-economic problems which especially affect the poorest. Thus, we must keep our gaze firmly fixed on Jesus in the midst of this pandemic, our eyes on Jesus; and with this faith embrace the hope of the Kingdom of God that Jesus Himself brings us... Within the Christian tradition, faith, hope and charity are gifts that heal us and that make us healers, gifts that open us to new horizons, even while we are navigating the difficult waters of our time."

The fraternity, generosity and hope that the shrine has been carrying for 162 years has never been so essential. In their statement they reminded us that, "At Lourdes, the poor, the frail, the sick and the handicapped have first place. The chaplains of the Shrine of Lourdes have always brought prayer for and with the world to the Grotto, and even more so during the global crisis we are experiencing. Hundreds of thousands of messages, cries for help, cries of suffering, but also testimonies of hope continue to reach Lourdes, hearts beating with prayer."



Supported by these prayers our pilgrimage this year will once again be online. We will come together from various parts of England, Ireland Scotland, Wales and the island of Jersey. This year there will be a number of new initiatives to allow people participate in a fuller way in the pilgrimage. Each day a candle will be lit at the Grotto for all our intentions. In doing so we remember that a single flame is all that is needed to keep the darkness away.

As we look forward to 2022 we pray that God may very soon bring our Oblate family back together and that we may once more travel to Lourdes in response to the invitation of Our Lady to come in procession.

Aware that Mary always points us toward her Son let us make our pilgrimage with our eyes fixed on the love of the Lord. Finally, we want to assure you of our continued prayers as we ask Our Lady of Lourdes to watch over us all during these challenging and difficult time.

- Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI
& Fr Vincent Mulligan OMI

Participating in Our Online Pilgrimage



Our Lourdes pilgrimage will once again take place online from 17-21 of September 2021...

This year, as we did last year, we will participate virtually in all our Pilgrimage events, most of which will be broadcast from the “Irish Lourdes” - the replica Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at the Oblate Church in Inchicore, Dublin.

There will also be contributions and interactive events with members of our Oblate pilgrimage family from Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and the island of Jersey, and we invite you to participate from your home wherever you are. We hope you will have a prayerful, enjoyable, and life-giving pilgrimage with us online this year.



Your Prayers and Intentions

If you have prayers or intentions you would like remembered during this year's pilgrimage please send them to us. You can do this by emailing lourdes@oblates.ie or by posting them to Barbara Hogan or Fr. Lorcan, Mission Office, House of Retreat, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

After the pilgrimage all petitions received will be brought to the Grotto in Lourdes

Have a Candle Lit During the Pilgrimage

Lighting a candle is something so many of us do when we visit Lourdes.

To keep that tradition alive if you would like to have a candle lit for your intentions during the pilgrimage please visit the Oblate Mission Shop.

A prayer card will be sent out to you or directly to the person you wish to have the candle lit for.

Mission Shop: <https://oblates.ie/mission-shop/>



A Reflection From Pope Francis



The Gospel which we will hear at the opening and closing of this year's pilgrimage begins with "When evening had come." For many of us the last year has been that evening time. With this in mind we would like to share both the text and some reflections on it by Pope Francis.

Scripture Reading (Mark 4:35-41)

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Reflecting on this Pope Francis said, "Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith"? Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we founder:

we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.

I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid"

Oblate Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage 2021

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| FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | |
|------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| 7:00pm | Opening Service | 8:30am | Morning Prayer |
| SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | | 10:00am | Mass from Grotto in Lourdes |
| 8:30am | Morning Prayer | Noon | Pilgrimage Candle |
| 10:00am | Opening Mass | 7:00pm | Way of the Cross |
| Noon | Lighting of the pilgrimage candle | TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 | |
| 7:00pm | Torchlight Procession & Rosary | 8:30am | Morning Prayer |
| SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | | 10:00am | Mass (with Anointing of the Sick) |
| 8:30am | Morning Prayer | Noon | Pilgrimage Candle |
| 10:00am | Mass | 7:00pm | Closing Ceremony |
| Noon | Pilgrimage Candle | <h2>2022 Pilgrimage</h2> <p>17th-22nd September</p> | |
| 7:00pm | Meditation including small group sharing *Registration required | | |

Uniting ourselves as a family of faith we ask you join in saying the following prayer each day:

Our Lady of Lourdes

We fly to you today as your beloved children.

We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and for all our families and loved ones, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing.

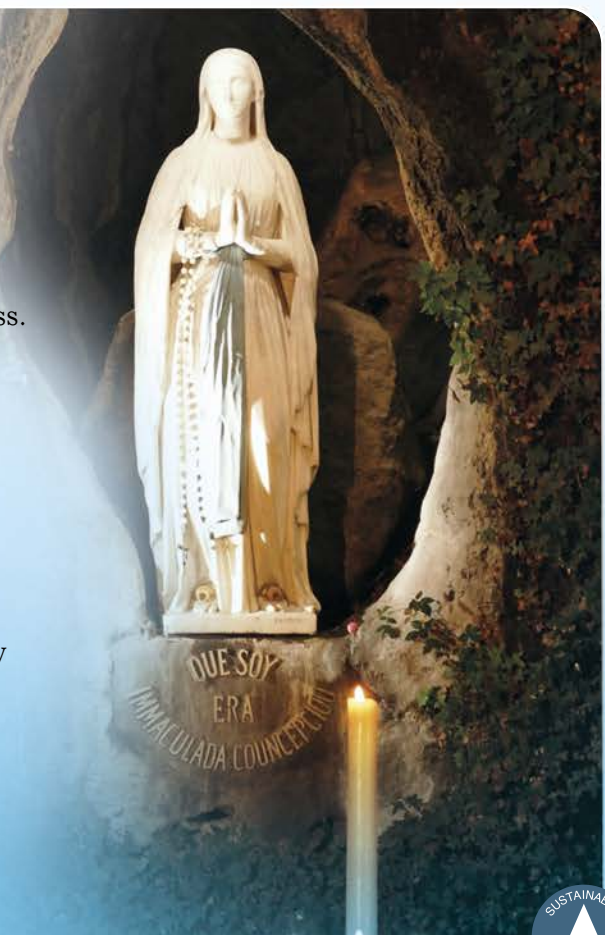
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this difficult time teach all of us to love one another and to be patient and kind.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus.

Amen



Produced by:

Mission Office, House of Retreat, Tyrconnell Rd, Inchicore, Dublin 8. email: lourdes@oblates.ie



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