

Diocese of Hallam

Virtual Pilgrimage Blog

Tuesday 30th June 2020

Today we reflect on the theme of Healing.

On Tuesday in Lourdes we would normally have another highlight of many people's pilgrimage...our Mass with Anointing of the Sick.

After the Torchlight last night, we aim to schedule this Mass around 10.00am/10.30am to give a gentle start.

Whilst we can't have Mass with Anointing of the Sick, we can have a **"Mass of Healing"** during our Virtual Pilgrimage. Bishop Emeritus John Rawsthorne celebrates this from his parish in Widnes. This will be broadcast at **10.00am**



After lunch on Tuesday we have traditionally structured the programme so that Hallam Youth have some time off - to spend together. It's not really a "day off" but it is important to ring fence some time for them to be just "be" together.

Last year we developed this a little more and built into the programme a visit as a whole pilgrimage to relax and socialise up at the Lac de Lourdes. This is a short coach journey away from Lourdes. Pilgrims, Helpers, and Youth all

sat back and chatted. Very deliberately there were no instructions on this - it wasn't "spend time with your pilgrim" afternoon. It was very much just an opportunity to spend time together and mix as people wished.



One of our pilgrims singing with Phil Hall accompanying him

We took some sound equipment with us, and Phil Hall, who helps lead the music group on the pilgrimage, entertained us with a wide range of songs, before people of all ages just got up to sing - sharing gifts and talents that people didn't necessarily know existed. It was a very memorable afternoon made all the more poignant given that we had planned to repeat it this year (weather permitting) but have not even been able to travel to Lourdes, never mind up to the Lac.



Our second broadcast today, at **3.00pm**, reflects on **"The Bonds we Form"**. The reason behind putting an afternoon at the Lac in the programme was to recognise that the friendships that develop in Lourdes are an integral part of the pilgrimage. It can be very busy in Lourdes - sometimes you meet someone on the journey out and don't encounter them until the flight back.

The visit to the Lac gave us this opportunity and was so popular that we had to ask the coach company to give us an extra hour before returning to the hotels !



Hallam Youth left the Lac a short time before the rest of the pilgrims because they had the usual Youth Liturgy booked at the Youth Village. This is a wonderful liturgy, led by the Youth Leaders. Bishop Ralph always joins the Youth at this (and indeed at most of their activities).



The Youth Village is next to the Cite Saint Pierre (City of the Poor) and the tradition is to walk back to the hotels - it's downhill all the way, and not far at all. Water sometimes features on the walk back - but in a different way to the Water Liturgy that we will have tomorrow !

After our evening meal we have our "Holy Hour with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament". This is normally held in St. Joseph's Chapel as it is more intimate, but last year we had a beautiful Holy Hour in St. Bernadette's Church where we sectioned it off to only use part of it.

People always think of Our Lady when we speak about going to Lourdes, but Mary leads us to her Son. As well as the daily celebration of the Eucharist at Mass each day, we have a Holy Hour, and take part in the Blessed Sacrament Procession. As it says in the Rosary Basilica mosaic "*Par Marie a Jesus*" - "Through Mary to Jesus".

Having taken time out in the afternoon to relax, it is lovely to come together in the evening in the presence of the Lord with our musicians leading us in hymns and songs of praise and adoration.



As part of our Virtual Pilgrimage we will have a **Holy Hour with Adoration** at **7.00pm**, led by Fr. Lee Marshall, from St. Vincent's Mission Hub.

Our Holy Hour is usually timed to finish just before the torchlight, so we often take a slow walk back to the hotels around the back of St Joseph's Chapel, listening to the last decade and the singing in the procession.

Hallam Youth would probably have had a Night at the Grotto - we will hear more about that on Thursday evening from Alistair Weir and James Tucker, two of the Hallam Youth Co-ordinators.



I was thinking recently about our Hotel Co-ordinators. By Tuesday they would have become very familiar faces to pilgrims and to many of the Youth.

We ask a lot of these volunteers - dealing with any issues that crop up with hotel rooms, pilgrims who need a wheelchair but hadn't anticipated that they would, etc.. Not many pilgrimages would have the same structure - a rep from the tour operator would handle a lot of these issues.

Thank you to all the hotel co-ordinators for everything you do on the pilgrimage.

One of these co-ordinators, Vera Frost, has been a volunteer Helper since before the pilgrimage started. This year would have been Vera's 40th consecutive

pilgrimage to Lourdes with us as a volunteer. Vera came as a helper on the 1981 pilgrimage with her late husband, Barrie, and has travelled every year since.

Our pilgrimage doesn't have a tradition of medals for years of service, or anything like that, but I would like to recognise publicly the huge debt that the pilgrimage owes to Vera. When we reflected on "Service" on Sunday, Barrie & Vera Frost immediately came into my mind and are two of the legends of our pilgrimage.



Thank you, Vera. I hope you're enjoying the Virtual Pilgrimage.

Alex Prior
Pilgrimage Director

Readings for our Mass today

First Reading:- **James 5: 3-16**

Psalm: **Sung: Eagles Wings**

Gospel:- **Mark 1: 40-45**

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in Holy Communion now, at least spiritually come to my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen