

My dear fellow Pilgrims,

There were three powerful moments during my visit to Lourdes. First, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, The Procession of the Sick and the Blessed Sacrament, and the Procession of Lights in the evening.

As I entered the confessional, the priest asked me if it was my first time at Lourdes; and I responded that it was my fourth, however, this time I was here to give thanks to our Lady for the vocation of the priesthood that the Lord has given me. The priest said that *it was not an accident that our Lady called me to Lourdes again... She has a purpose for me during this pilgrimage, and it was my mission to discern what that would be. I got out of the confessional, in time for the Eucharistic Procession which was a power reminder of the Lord's calling to "feed" and heal those who are sick whether physically and mentally. It is true what they say about Lourdes: that is is a place where the SICK takes on the VIP role. As I was praying during the Eucharistic Adoration, our Lady spoke to my heart, and requested that I took care of her children - especially the little ones, the youth and those her young ones who have lost their way. It was quite a tall order from her. But I will reflect and pray about it more.*

As I reflect, I realize that as a seminarian here in Europe, I had taken for granted so many graces that I received. I guess, with a more grateful and matured heart today, I am given these moments of grace to remind me that there is nothing of who I am now that the Lord has not given me.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let us continue the journey; and be soaked in thanksgiving for the many graces and blessings that the Lord is giving us on this pilgrimage.

Your Spiritual Guide during the Pilgrimage,
Fr. JC Merino



“What most attracts God’s grace is gratitude, because if we thank him for a gift, he is touched and hastens to give us ten more, and if we thank him again with the same enthusiasm, what an incalculable multiplication of graces! I have experienced this; try it yourself and you will see! My gratitude for everything he gives me is limitless, and I prove it to him in a thousand ways”

~ St. Therese of Lisieux ~



A Pilgrimage Prayer

by John M. Haffert

If some things do not happen
as they are scheduled, Lord,
let me remember
that I am a pilgrim not a tourist.
If I should get tired and inclined
to become short-tempered, Lord,
may I remember
that I am a pilgrim not a tourist.
If my meal in a foreign country may not be to my
particular liking, Lord, may I remember
that I am a pilgrim not a tourist.
If any delays should occur and I should become
anxious, Lord, may I remember,
that I am a pilgrim not a tourist.
If I should get a chance to help another person,
who always seems to be annoying me, Lord,
may I remember
that I am a pilgrim not a tourist.
But Lord, especially let me remember that what I find
objectionable in another is really what you oftentimes
find objectionable in me, and let me remember this
and forgive the other,
as you are continually forgiving me.

Amen.

