

My dear fellow Pilgrims,

I would like us to meditate on the following Psalm today, especially as we make our way to Lourdes: Psalm 130. Let us keep silent and reflect on this Psalm today in relation to what our Blessed Mother revealed to St. Bernadette:

Tell them... I am the Immaculate Conception.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;

you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;

you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully

and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,

when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

Were I to count them,

they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.

This are the symbols that we have to pay attention to as we visit Lourdes: water, rock, candle light (procession), and healing.

Water. Water is a symbol of LIFE. It is consequently the symbol of our entry to the Church - the Holy Baptism. Water is also crucial to human life; we drink water when we are thirsty to be refreshed and recharged. We use water for cleaning.

Rock. It is the symbol of our FAITH. Rock is where the Blessed Mother stood on when she appeared to St Bernadette. Our Lady calls each one of us to deeper conversion and firm faith in Her Son.

Candlelight. Another understanding of Baptism as the Sacrament of our entry into the Life of Jesus Christ, is that when we are baptized, we become illuminated with wisdom and knowledge (two of the gifts of the Holy Spirit). Illumination comes as a consequence of our closeness to the Blessed Mother and Christ. Light, is therefore, an important symbol that we would be reflecting on today.

Lastly, the miracles of HEALING. It is said that when a pilgrim goes to Lourdes, one asked for a special favor or healing; while when a pilgrim goes to Fatima, it is usually for thanksgiving for the blessings and graces received. The miracles of healing (body and spirit) is what the visit at Lourdes is known for among pilgrims. Personally, when I was a seminarian in Pamplona, Mama Mary made sure that I visited her every year. Every year, I would go and make my general examination of conscience to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation there. It is offered in so many languages! It is my hope that each will find in their heart to receive the Sacrament of Confession at Lourdes, to experience the true power of transformation and healing in Christ.

Your Spiritual Guide during the Pilgrimage, Fr. JC Merino



We have only this life to live by faith. It is true I am not always faithful, but I never lose courage. I leave myself in the Arms of Our Lord. We must abandon the future into the hands of God.

~ St. Therese of the Child Jesus, the Little Flower ~

