



MIF and Montfortian Pilgrimage to Lourdes

LOURDES, France – On April 27 to May 3, 2019, the 71st Montfortian Pilgrimage took place in Lourdes. During the opening Mass at the beginning of the pilgrimage on the 28th of April, the Director of the Montfortian Pilgrimage, Deacon Joël Rabin, asked all the pilgrims to reflect on the theme of the pilgrimage: "Blessed are you who are Poor". This pilgrimage led by Mgr. Hervé Gosselin, the Bishop of Angoulême, was also joined by the 24 participants of *Montfortian International Formation* (MIF).

On the eve of their departure to this journey, the participants had the opportunity to listen to a presentation of this Montfortian Pilgrimage: its history, the importance of the Montfortian Hospitality, its centers, its organizations as well as the activities during the pilgrimage. The purpose of this introduction was not only to prepare them spiritually to achieve a fruitful pilgrimage but also to present to them a form of collaboration in the field of deepening and spreading the Montfortian Spirituality involving the entire Montfortian family. Perhaps, once they get back to their respective countries, these participants will be able to reflect on this unique experience and eventually launch initiatives with the same objectives, in harmony with the local context that they do.

On the following day, 29th of April, during the mass in celebration of the Feast of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, Mgr. Hervé clearly emphasized in his homily that a poor person is one who is dependent to others and cannot live alone. Then, he exclaimed, "Ask for help, not only to others but also to God because He listens to the cry of the poor."

We all know that Father de Montfort composed the HYMN 20 under the title "TREASURES OF POVERTY". Montfort wrote in the first two verses: "Here is the precious pearl, here is the treasure so hidden, and the quality so generous, that I have sought for so long. But it is not easy to take hold of; whoever wishes to possess it must, to do so, give away and sell all he has, without any haggling. It is called voluntary poverty, or poverty of spirit, or the great saving counsel given to us

by Jesus Christ; it makes a wise man put aside his goods and any desire for possessions, so to follow in His footsteps, like a true Christian.”

Aside from the general activities involving all the pilgrims of the Montfortian Pilgrimage, MIF participants had also other special activities such as "In the Footsteps of Bernadette", "Via Crucis" and the walk to the Saint Peter's City. In addition to that, they also had a lot of personal time for confession, adoration, prayer at the grotto, and a healing time at the miraculous pool. It seemed that the MIF participants were very enthusiastic and enjoyed this Montfortian Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

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