A Guide to Organizing
Lourdes In A Day Pilgrimages

This Book is Dedicated to All of The Infirmed of Great Faith

Mark Sullivan, KM
Overview: The Lourdes in a Day Pilgrimage provides Areas an opportunity to care for the sick and the poor. For the Eastern CT Area, the first Lourdes in a Day was held in 2014 at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, MA. Lourdes in a Day serves all of the sick, specifically those not capable of the requirements of an international pilgrimage. The day is modeled after the Association’s Pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, each year.

Advertising: The advertising for Lourdes in a Day is generally across adjoining dioceses and Association Areas; attendance will grow over the years by both word of mouth by those familiar with the event and by communication at the diocesan level. The same approach can be used each year. For diocesan advertising, contact the office that handles communications. You should meet each year to provide materials to the communications office, including posters and tri-folds with the date, time, location, schedule, contact information, and photos. These items can be distributed to each church’s separate address or given to the priest in charge of a Deanery. Advertising might be placed on the diocese’ website for clergy, inviting them to concelebrate the Mass and/or to provide names of Malades. Lourdes in a Day is advertised about 5 weeks before the event. You may advertise in weekly bulletins and on diocesan radio and television stations. It is important to include contact information - your email and telephone - so those interested can contact you.

Registration: When people sign up, you collect their name, category (i.e. Malade, Clergy, Caregiver etc), food choice, and their contact information. Collect Malade’s wheelchair requirements to plan for space requirements in the church and to procure a wheelchair for those who will not bring their own. This information is used to create a list of attendees. Keeping the records on line allows for use throughout the planning process.

Costs: Costs are inevitable. Food is usually the largest expense. All costs should be understood in advance overall costs. Honorariums should be discussed and agreed to in advance for the celebrant, concelebrants, altar servers, choir, and musicians. Some may come from your church or from your Area. The use of the church and facilities will normally incur an expense; the leasing terms for the church and other adjacent rooms should be contractual and comprehensive to costs, use, and times of use. A one-day insurance policy is generally required; for Area events, the Association may be able to provide for this coverage; check with the New York office. A one-day policy may also be available through the church holding the event for a nominal fee or through an independent insurance carrier. The reservation and rental of the church are done months in advance. The Eastern CT experience has been about $20 to $25 for each attendee.

Considerations in Choosing a Date and Location: For best results, be sure that your date does not conflict with Association or nearby Area events. Areas within 50-100
miles should plan for their events at different times of the year – Spring and Fall offer optimal dates; nearby Areas that each plan such an event should coordinate the dates so they are properly spaced. **Lourdes in a Day** is typically held on a Saturday after funeral hours; the event must be completed prior to scheduled hours of reconciliation. It is important to get on the schedule as far in advance as possible to secure a location and invite the appropriate people.

Outdoor Shrines and Chapels are often available to lease; such venues may pose difficulty to those who are not ambulatory. If weather is inclement, adjacent accommodations must be available.

Whatever the venue, it must be accessible - buses and cars should be able to pull up to the location. If this is not possible, many extra personnel will be required to help Malades. The church should have handicapped access; wheelchair-bound and all other Malades must be able to navigate easily to all other areas of the church and/or connected bathrooms and parish centers. A one floor church with a connected parish center works best to ensure the location can accommodate all requirements.

Malades must always be seated in the front rows and brought to the front of the first pews for wheelchairs. It is crucial to pre-inspect the church’s “layout” to ensure that it and the nearby space to accommodate lunch and talks.

For planning, people have to handle the advertising, ordering food, identifying and securing the venue, inviting the clergy. The person in charge will need to secure the contracts and negotiate the date with the nearby Areas. On the day of the event, many volunteers will be required. Be sure to have enough people involved to share the work.

**Celebrant and other Clergy:** The Association has many chaplains; many of them have participated in the Lourdes pilgrimage. They are familiar with Bernadette and the Blessed Mother’s apparitions. One of them should provide a brief overview of Lourdes story before the Mass begins. This will put all of the participants in a proper mind and spirit before this day of grace and healing begins.

The Diocesan Ordinary should be notified well in advance of your event by formal invitation. They should be invited to preside over the event as the main Celebrant. Auxiliary bishops in the nearby areas should also be invited to participate.

The Celebrant or a Chaplain will have an additional role as speaker after Mass. He will speak for approximately thirty minutes each to the Malades and then to their caregivers. This part of the day is just as personal as the Mass for those in attendance.

All priests and deacons wishing to concelebrate outside their diocese must submit letters of good standing from their diocesan office. This is mandatory and must be done well in advance of the **Lourdes in a Day** event. One of the event coordinators should
ensure that the host Diocese has received the proper documents in a timely fashion. Failure to do so could result in chaplains not being able to concelebrate.

**On the Day of the Event:** The function of Knights, Dames and Auxiliary is to assist the Malades, Caregivers and Clergy during Mass and throughout the day. All members working the event should wear their Lourdes Service Uniforms or appropriate attire if they do not have one. A photographer is essential for this event.

The volunteers lead the Malades and Caregivers to the front rows and aisles of the Church. *There must be pews left empty between every other row for Malades in order that Clergy can move freely to personally administer holy water, oil, and the Eucharist.*

The order of seating in the Church from front to back should be the following:

- Malades, Caregivers and Medical Team
- Family of Malades
- Retired Priests, Nuns, and other religious
- Elder Knights and Dames (may wear robes and capes)
- Congregation
- Working Knights, Dames, and Auxiliary

The day should start about ninety (90) minutes before Mass. Volunteers outside the church should assist with parking and escorting participants in need. There should be a registration positioned in the vestibule, keeping track of arriving: Malades, Caregivers; Clergy; Knights, Dames, Auxiliary; Musicians and Choir; Medical Team.

**Lunch:** A standard offering is ham, turkey, tuna, or vegetarian boxed lunch with water and cookies. Capturing this information during the registration process assures that the proper mix of choices will be available without a significant amount of leftovers. When people check in, they should be reminded of their choice. Some attendees may need to bring their own food for health or allergy reasons. We keep a sign on the registration table that also identifies the Order of Malta, our Area, and the welcoming of donations. It has proven to be effective in prior years.

**Medical Team:** The doctors and nurses may be Knights or Dames or they may be other volunteers. They be seated one to each row with the Malades before the start of Mass. Some Malades may need one on one care with the Medical Team member for the day. The Medical Team is sometimes asked to assist with medications; there is the possibility that they have to help transport a Malade to a nearby hospital. Before the start of Mass, the celebrant or appropriate leader should advise the Malades that they should raise their hand for a Doctor or Nurse if needed. The following specialists to cover most requirements for the day: a geriatric specialist, cardiologist, internist, and endocrinologist.
Musicians and Singers: A basic ensemble for Lourdes in a Day could include a pianist, a guitar, a flute and vocalists. The day’s music director should coordinate with the celebrant about the musical choices and with the facilities person about the sound system requirements. The following is the normal order of music for the Lourdes in a Day Mass:

Prelude (optional)
The Processional Hymn
The Gloria (if not spoken)
The Responsorial Psalm
The Gospel Acclamation
Ave Maria (at anointing of the sick)
Offertory
Mass Parts (Holy, Holy, Holy; memorial acclamation; amen; Lamb of God)
Communion Hymn
Recessional Hymn
Postlude (optional)

Order of the Day:

Reconciliation: The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered when people first arrive. The available clergy station themselves at confessionals near Malades and in other areas of the Church that offer privacy and proximity to the arrivals.

Washing: After a Malade receives Reconciliation, he/she experiences the Washing portion of the day before mass. Knights, Dames and volunteers circulate around the church and wash the faces and hands of our Malades where they are seated. If available, Lourdes water is used. Mary said to Bernadette; “Go... and wash yourself there. Pray to God for the sinners.” This prepares all those who come for the start of the Mass.

Mass: The Mass begins with a procession. Depending on the layout of the venue, Malades may process first, holding candles with Lourdes windshields (if available). The normal order for the procession would be led by the crucifer, followed in turn by the altar servers, the Order of Malta flag bearer (a Knight or Dame), Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, the Lector, the Deacon, the Concelebrants and lastly, the Celebrant of the Mass. The Anointing of the Sick with Holy Chrism takes place after the homily. The rest of the Mass remains the same.

Lunch: The lunchroom should be decorated, if possible, with pictures from Lourdes, perhaps including pictures of former Malades in Lourdes. Larger collages are on tripods in the entrance to the dining areas and at the front of the church upon entering. Knights, Dames and Volunteers serve everybody at each table by delivering
food and drink, cleaning up, and assisting with any other needs. Water and Granola Bars should be available throughout the day for all.

**Lectures:** The talks to the Malades and their caregivers immediately follow lunch, generally in the same room. A microphone and podium are required. After the talks, the people return to the Church.

**Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Blessing of the Sick and Benediction:** The Lourdes in a Day culminates in the Church. The monstrance is exposed for Adoration and for a blessing for those present.

**Lourdes Water:** As the Malades depart, if it is available, they are given vials of Lourdes water as they leave the church through the Vestibule. (The vials are available at the Association’s website in the Members Only section under CT Merchandise). Two 5 liter containers are generally enough for each Lourdes in a Day pilgrimage for up to 200 Malades.

Good Luck with your Lourdes in a Day Pilgrimage

God Bless to all.
Sincerely,
Mark Sullivan KM
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Sample schedule:

Lourdes in a Day

“I want the people to come here
    In procession”

9:30 Penance
    “Penance, penance, penance”
Reconciliation
    “Go...and wash yourself there”
    “Pray to God for the sinners”
Rosary
10:30 Washing
11:00 Mass
    Anointing
12:00 Lunch
    Talk with Malades
    and Caregivers
    “...Come...In procession”
2:00 Adoration at the Exposition
    of the Blessed Sacrament
    Blessing of the Sick
    Benediction

Celebrant- Bishop Peter A.
    Rosazza
Concelebrant- Fr Robert Dunn
Chairman- Mark Sullivan, KM

Words of Our Lady spoken to Bernadette
Sample Save the Date
Tri-fold to advertise LIAD, outside and inside
Sample Seating Chart:

*empty pews are for the Celebrants to walk along as they perform the Blessing and bring Communion to the Malades
for more information, please contact
Mark Sullivan
(860) 523-1405 or
sllvnchrth@yahoo.com

Samples of 8 1/2 x 11 color posters made to advertise LIAD on Church bulletin boards

photography by Michelle Babyak