

Order of Malta, American Association



37<sup>th</sup> Annual Lourdes Pilgrimage 2025

Handbook For All Pilgrims

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Your first pilgrimage to Lourdes with the Order of Malta can be overwhelming; as such, this guide has been developed to help you become familiar with the pilgrimage and some of the terminology we use. If you are a returning pilgrim, it should be a helpful refresher.

## **MISSION OF THE LOURDES PILGRIMAGE**

The Order of Malta was founded in the 11th century in Jerusalem with the mission of caring for sick pilgrims as a way to grow spiritually. For members of the Order, the Pilgrimage is a return to the source of their vocation.

The annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes for the Order is both a source and a summit for its members. To fulfill the promise to be faithful to the noble purpose of the Order, to participate in its services, to give special care for the poor, the needy and sick, Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, and Chaplains of the Order of Malta from all over the world convene each Spring to bring and care for the sick and handicapped on this Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lourdes.

## **MALADES**

Malade is the French word for 'sick' and the term used to refer to those members of our Pilgrimage that are being hosted by the Order and typically have a serious illness, disability, or malady. They and their Caregivers, usually a spouse, parent, or other family member, are our guests and we must endeavor to make this journey as comfortable and meaningful as possible for them.

Your Malade is your prime responsibility from the time you meet them at JFK Airport until the following week when you depart for home from JFK Airport, and at all times in-between. Although you will not be with them every waking moment of the day, you will be spending a large part of your time with them. Do your best to ensure that you know where they are at all times. Preserving their dignity is paramount. Try to get to know them and their needs as quickly and discreetly as possible but avoid asking them questions about their medical conditions or their disabilities. If they do share this detail, be sure to keep it confidential.

A couple of weeks before the Pilgrimage, you will be informed of your team assignment and the name of your Malade. Once you have received this information, please call and introduce yourself. Ideally, it would be great if you could arrange to meet with him or her before the trip as it would be very comforting for them to see a familiar face at the airport. If this is not possible geographically, then phone calls and, perhaps, a nice note would help them feel welcomed. You may also want to send a picture of yourself.

If your Malade is a child, find out what kinds of things the child likes. A bag of "prizes" for the child is always helpful to bring. Stickers, pocket games, cards, etc. are always good to keep them entertained on the plane or on the way to a service. It's also good to have something to occupy the child during mass. For example, one year a 5-year-old boy loved birds. Each time he was restless in Mass, he was given some sort of bird toy. You can ask the parent for suggestions about what would be appropriate for their child in particular.

You can be assured that after sharing in a journey as powerful as Lourdes, you and your Malade will quickly develop a bond and friendship that will endure long after the trip is over. Often, we tend to make promises to phone or write to our Malades after the Pilgrimage. While these commitments are always made with the best of intentions, life can and will get busy again after the Pilgrimage. Please be careful when making such promises as they can result in disappointment to the Malades if you cannot keep them.

## **TEAMS**

This year, approximately 54 Malades and their Caregivers will join the Knights, Dames, Clergy, Auxiliary, and Volunteers on our Pilgrimage. Due to the large size of the group, in excess of 370, we are divided into 'Teams' named by color. Each team, led by 'Team Captains', is further broken down into 'Pods' formed around each Malade and varying in size depending on the needs of the Malade. Generally, there will be 4-6 people per Pod, consisting of the Malade and Caregiver and 2-4 Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, or Volunteers. Each team will have several doctors and nurses assigned to it as well as a chaplain.

Each Pod will have a 'Host' who is principally responsible for liaising with the Malade and Caregiver before and during the Pilgrimage to make them feel welcome, address their needs while in Lourdes, and answer any questions they may have.

## **THE BLACK BOOK/SCHEDULE CHANGES**

At check-in, all pilgrims will receive their 'Black Book' which should be carried with you at all times throughout the Pilgrimage. This small book contains our daily schedule, a listing of all the teams and their members, a map of the Domain (the Grotto and surrounding area), the hymns and prayers we will use during the Pilgrimage, as well as the names and addresses of all pilgrims.

Although our schedule for the week is planned long before we arrive in Lourdes, some adjustments will be required during the Pilgrimage. Any such changes to what is printed in the Black Book will be noted on the televisions in your hotel room and in the lobby of each hotel on screens near the front doors or elevators. Although we will try to use the announcements at the end of each service or function to provide updates on the schedule, please check these screens often as they will have the most timely updates.

## **THE MOBILE APP**

The Schedule of Events, Directory, Prayers & Hymns, and other important information regarding the 2024 Lourdes Pilgrimage will be available on our Pilgrimage mobile app. If you do not already have the app installed on your device, search "Order of Malta American Assoc" in the Android Google Play Store or the iOS App Store and download it. Please note that your app store's user ID and password may be required to download the app. If you do not know your Android login (Google Account), select "Forgot Email" or "Forgot Password" on the sign in page if it pops up when you download the app. If you do not know your Apple ID (iCloud Account), open the Settings app and tap on "iCloud", tap on the email address, and select "Forgot Apple ID or Password?". If you already have the app installed on your device, you do not have to do anything else. Due to the personal information available in this section, a password is required. It will be provided once the section is available. More information will be provided by email once this section is available.

## **PACKING FOR THE PILGRIMAGE**

The weather in Lourdes varies from cold, damp, and rainy to warm and sunny – sometimes all on the same day! Please keep this in mind when choosing what to pack. Waterproof gloves and long underwear are a good investment, as are sunblock and sunglasses. Reliable, comfortable, and waterproof shoes for walking in Lourdes are essential. If purchasing new shoes, please make sure these are broken in before traveling to Lourdes.

Malades and Caregivers should bring comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the weather. There is no need for formal or business clothing.

With relative exception, the need for casual clothing will be minimal for Knights, Dames, Candidates, Auxiliary, Affiliates, Medical Team, Student Nurses, and Volunteers, as everyone wears their uniforms (see next section) throughout the week. As hard as it may seem to believe, uniforms are worn for evening socializing – you will actually

be out of place in street clothes! That said, street clothes may be worn for the plane rides, Day of Rest and closing dinner.

We encourage everyone to pack lightly! While the hotel rooms are comfortable, they are not spacious. The less you bring the more room you will have.

Towels are provided by the hotels but hospitality toiletries are usually light. Bring whatever you may need. In the event you forget any essentials items, these can be purchased in Lourdes.

If you are bringing any electrical appliances (hair dryers, shavers, curling irons, laptops) you'll need to ensure they will operate on European current and have the necessary electrical / socket converters. Although hairdryers and converters may be borrowed from hotels, they are usually high in demand and short in supply – it is best to bring these along if either are needed.

Please ensure to place any items that you will need for the flight or immediately upon arrival in your carry-on luggage. If you have essential medications or liquids that must be carried with you, please speak with a member of the uniformed airport team so that they may assist you in obtaining permission to carry these. A few guidelines regarding carry-on's:

- Carry on Restrictions: Travelers are allowed to transport only small amounts of liquids, gels, lotions, aerosols, or similar items on their person or in their carry-on luggage. This includes items such as hairspray, toothpaste, and shampoo. Bottles are to be travel sizes of 3 ounces or less. These bottles must be carried in a one-quart zip-top bag. Beverages may be purchased once inside the secured area of the airport.
- Medically Required Liquids: There is an exemption for liquids in carry-on bags for persons with medical issues to exceed 3 ounces. Medically required liquids are not limited to 3 ounces as long as it is a reasonable quantity for the flight. It is also not necessary to place medically required liquids in a zip-top bag. Additionally, liquids or gels (including juice) for diabetic passengers to address their medical condition will be allowed. Passengers must tell the TSA Officer that they have medically necessary liquids at the beginning of the screening checkpoint process. It is recommended the medicine be labeled to facilitate the security process. The name on the prescription must match the passenger's name.
- Essential Non-Prescription Medicine: Essential non-prescription medicines allowed now include contact eye saline solutions and eye care products such as eye drops and contact lens solution.
- Duty Free Items: Duty Free items may be transported in the cabin of the aircraft if they are delivered to the passenger immediately before boarding or onboard the aircraft.

## **UNIFORMS FOR KNIGHTS, DAMES, AUXILIARY, ASSOCIATES, MEDICAL, STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS**

During the Pilgrimage all Knights, Dames, Auxiliary and Volunteers of the Order of Malta wear 'service uniforms'. These uniforms are important for several reasons, not the least of which is they serve as reminders that the Order once had a military mission and is a sovereign state.

The uniforms also serve less tangible purposes. The similarities amongst the uniforms of the various Associations show how we are part of one global Order, one community with the Grand Master as our leader and religious superior. The slight differences in uniforms and appearance show the individuality of the various communities, or Associations, throughout the world.

In a very real sense, the uniforms elicit reassurance among the Malades, 'our lords the sick', whom we serve in Lourdes. Surely, the uniforms signal to the Malades that those who are serving them are organized and disciplined, that they are

in good hands. Also, the uniforms make clear the sheer enormity of the prayer group behind our Malades during our week in Lourdes and for eternity.

Therefore, our uniforms are important and should be taken seriously. The Sovereign Council based in Rome established guidelines to this effect in 2012 and expects all Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, Associates and Volunteers to adhere to these during the Pilgrimage. These standards are not ‘suggestions’ or ‘guidelines’, but rather they are ‘expectations’. Please help us to adhere to the standards and to the definition of uniform; personal interpretations or deviations from the guidelines are strongly discouraged.

The standards, found on the following pages, should be observed at all times. Any time you leave the hotel, you are expected to be in full uniform. For women, this means that you must wear your cape and veil. For men, this means that you must be wearing your beret unless you are in a church or in the Grotto.

By now you should have received the detailed uniform guidelines and purchased any needed items. Please take the uniforms seriously, do not improvise, and follow the lead of your Team Captains and our Lourdes “veterans.”

One side benefit of taking the uniforms seriously is that you will look the better for it!

### **MEN’S SERVICE UNIFORM**

All Knights, Year of Formation Candidates, Auxiliary, Associates, Student Nurses, Medical Team, and Volunteers are to wear the work uniform throughout the Pilgrimage.

<b>When</b>	<b>Knights</b>	<b>YOF Candidates, Medical Team, Student Nurses, Auxiliary, Associates &amp; Volunteers</b>	<b>Malades &amp; Caregivers</b>
Ordinary days, evenings, and at the candlelight procession	Work Uniform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name tag</li> <li>• Service ribbon</li> <li>• Black beret with patch</li> <li>• Black trousers (no cargo trousers)</li> <li>• Black shirt with patch</li> <li>• Black tie</li> <li>• White dress shirt (worn under black shirt)</li> <li>• Black belt</li> <li>• Black comfortable water-proof shoes</li> <li>• Black socks</li> </ul>	Work Uniform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name tag</li> <li>• Black beret with patch</li> <li>• Black trousers (no cargo trousers)</li> <li>• Black shirt with patch</li> <li>• Black tie</li> <li>• White dress shirt (worn under black shirt)</li> <li>• Black Belt</li> <li>• Black comfortable water-proof shoes</li> <li>• Black Socks</li> </ul>	Warm and comfortable clothes. Bring layers for warmth or to remove on warm days.
Sunday International Mass & Eucharistic Procession	Malta robe with large Malta decoration. ** Robes are not to be worn in the street.	Same as above.	Same as above. Same as above – no jeans or shorts please.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

- **Black Beret with Order of Malta emblem** - Please see pictures on page 10. The Malta emblem should be aligned with your heart.
- **Black Trousers** - These should be un-pleated with no cuffs. Cargo trousers are prohibited.
- **White Dress Shirt** - The shirt is to be worn underneath the black work shirt. It is suggested to have at least one for each day as laundry facilities are not available.
- **Black Tie** - The tie should be solid black with no pattern, stripes, or other designs. The wearing of Order of Malta ties purchased from the Auxiliary or other associations is prohibited.
- **Black Belt** - The belt should be solid black leather with no pattern, stripes, or other designs. Cloth or patterned Order of Malta belts purchased from the Auxiliary or other associations is prohibited.
- **Black Shoes** - Two pairs of comfortable, broken-in, and waterproof shoes are required. Sneakers are prohibited.
- **Foul Weather Gear** - Long underwear, warm clothing, and rain gear is optional but may be very handy. If utilized, fleeces, coats, scarves, gloves, etc. should be black and not have logo's that aren't associated with the Order of Malta.
- **Jewelry** - A simple watch and ring are acceptable. The wearing of excessive pins received on prior pilgrimages or purchased from Malta groups is prohibited. Members of the medical team should wear their medical pin at all times.
- **Nametag** - Nametags will be provided by the American Association and must be worn at all times (except when in church robe). See pictures on page 11 for proper placement on the black shirt.
- **Decorations & Ribbons** - The service bar received with your medal at Investiture and any other Order of Malta awarded ribbons may be worn in Lourdes. Ribbons awarded for military service or from other organizations are prohibited. There is an order of precedence for the ribbons in the case where there is more than one (see page 9).

Ribbons are placed about half an inch above the left pocket on the men's black shirt. (Dames are currently not provided with ribbons.) The ribbons are centered above the name tag. This Order of Malta ribbon (black with medallion in center; issued with decoration at Investiture) is always of first precedence and always appears in the upper left-hand corner of any group of ribbons.

Other service ribbons are placed in slots of lower precedence. You may notice that some Knights have a ribbon that commemorates their volunteer service for Katrina disaster relief. Another ribbon commemorates the 150 Anniversary of Lourdes. Yet another commemorates the 900 Anniversary of the Order itself.

The large decoration is worn only with church robe for the International Mass and Eucharistic Procession. Ribbons, nametags, pins, and medals are ALL worn on the LEFT side of the uniform.

The Red Pilgrimage Service Medal (silver medallion and red ribbon) is worn below the nametag. If you are a first-time pilgrim, you will receive this in Lourdes.

Members of the medical team are issued the Medical Pin. This pin is large, white and blue with a cross in the middle and is worn above the nametag. The pin is provided by the International Medical Association of Lourdes. Medical professionals on their first pilgrimage should contact the Pilgrimage medical director to obtain a medical pin upon their arrival in Lourdes.



Some members of the Order have been awarded the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes medal, which is blue with white vertical stripes and is worn alongside the red Lourdes service medal. The cross is intentionally upside down on the ribbon. This medal is awarded to those who have contributed at least one week of service to Lourdes per year working in the Domain aside from our Pilgrimage for at least five years and have committed to continue this service for as long as they are able. This medal is worn by members of “Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes”.

## WOMENS SERVICE UNIFORM

All Dames, Year of Formation Candidates, Auxiliary, Associates, Student Nurses, Medical Team, and Volunteers are to wear the work uniform throughout the Pilgrimage.

When	Dames	YOF Candidates, Medical Team, Student Nurses, Auxiliary, Associates & Volunteers	Malades & Caregivers
Ordinary days, evenings, and at the candlelight procession	Work Uniform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malta cape</li> <li>• Small Malta cross</li> <li>• White veil with shield</li> <li>• White dress or skirt (no trousers)</li> <li>• White blouse</li> <li>• Red cardigan sweater</li> <li>• Nude stockings (optional)</li> <li>• Black shoes with black soles (no sneakers)</li> </ul>	Work Uniform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malta cape **</li> <li>• Black raincoat (used in the event a cape is available)</li> <li>• White veil with shield</li> <li>• White dress or skirt (no trousers)</li> <li>• White blouse</li> <li>• Red cardigan sweater</li> <li>• Nude stockings (optional)</li> <li>• Black shoes with black soles (no sneakers)</li> </ul>	Warm and comfortable clothes. Bring layers for warmth or to remove on warm days. Trousers are acceptable.
Sunday International Mass & Eucharistic Procession	Same as above with large Malta decoration	Same as above.	Same as above – no jeans or shorts please.

\*\* ‘Loaner’ capes are available for YOF, Auxiliary, Medical Tea, Student Nurses and Volunteers. They will be placed in your hotel room. Instructions on returning them before departing Lourdes will be provided during the Pilgrimage.

### Additional Guidelines:

- **Cape** - For Dames, the cape received during the Investiture is worn for the Pilgrimage. A limited number of capes is available for YOF, Auxiliary, Associates, Medical Team, Student Nurses and Volunteers; these will be distributed in Lourdes. Please bring a solid, long black raincoat in the event that a cape is unavailable. During the International Mass and Eucharistic Procession, the cape, worn as the Lourdes work uniform by women, becomes the Dames' Church Robe.
- **Dress/Skirt and Blouse** - The dress/skirt should be plain white knee length. The shirt should be plain white and not have ruffles, eyelet, or horizontal stripes. Turtlenecks, polo shirts, and t-shirts are prohibited. Due to limited laundry service, we suggest bringing several white skirts and blouses.
- **Shoes** - Shoes must be black leather with black soles. Sneakers are prohibited. Given the extent of walking and that some walkways may be uneven, high heels are discouraged.

- **Stockings** - Stockings are optional. If you decide to wear stockings, they should be 'nude' in color; black or white are prohibited.
- **Red Cardigan Sweater** - Cardigan sweaters should button up the front. A red fleece or vest with minimal commercial logos may be worn over the sweater under the cape in cold weather.
- **Jewelry** - A simple watch, earrings, and rings are acceptable. The wearing of excessive pins received on prior pilgrimages or purchased from Malta groups is prohibited. Members of the medical team should wear their medical pin at all times.
- **Nametag** - Nametags will be provided by the American Association and must be worn at all times (except when in church robe). Nametags are worn on the left side of the cape. See pictures on page 9 for proper placement.
- **Decorations & Ribbons** - The large decoration is worn only for the International Mass and Eucharistic. When worn, this is placed on the left-hand side of the cape. No nametags, ribbons or medals are to be worn on the cape during these events only.

Service ribbons are not worn on capes.

The Red Pilgrimage Service Medal (silver medallion and red ribbon) is worn below the nametag. If you are a first-time pilgrim, you will receive this in Lourdes.

Members of the medical team are issued the Medical Pin. This pin is large, white and blue with a cross in the middle and is worn above the nametag. The pin is provided by the International Medical Association of Lourdes. Medical professionals on their first pilgrimage should contact the Pilgrimage Medical Director to obtain a medical pin upon their arrival in Lourdes.

Some members of the Order have been awarded the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes medal, which is blue with white vertical stripes and is worn alongside the red Lourdes service medal. The cross is intentionally upside down on the ribbon. This medal is awarded to those who have contributed at least one week of service to Lourdes per year working in the Domain aside from our Pilgrimage for at least five years and have committed to continue this service for as long as they are able. This medal is worn by members of "Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes".

## UNIFORM PHOTOS



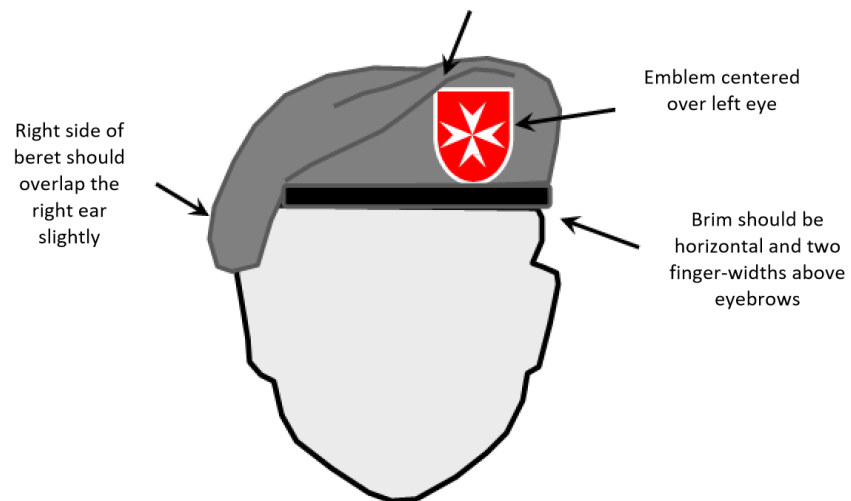
### The Proper Wearing Of Berets:

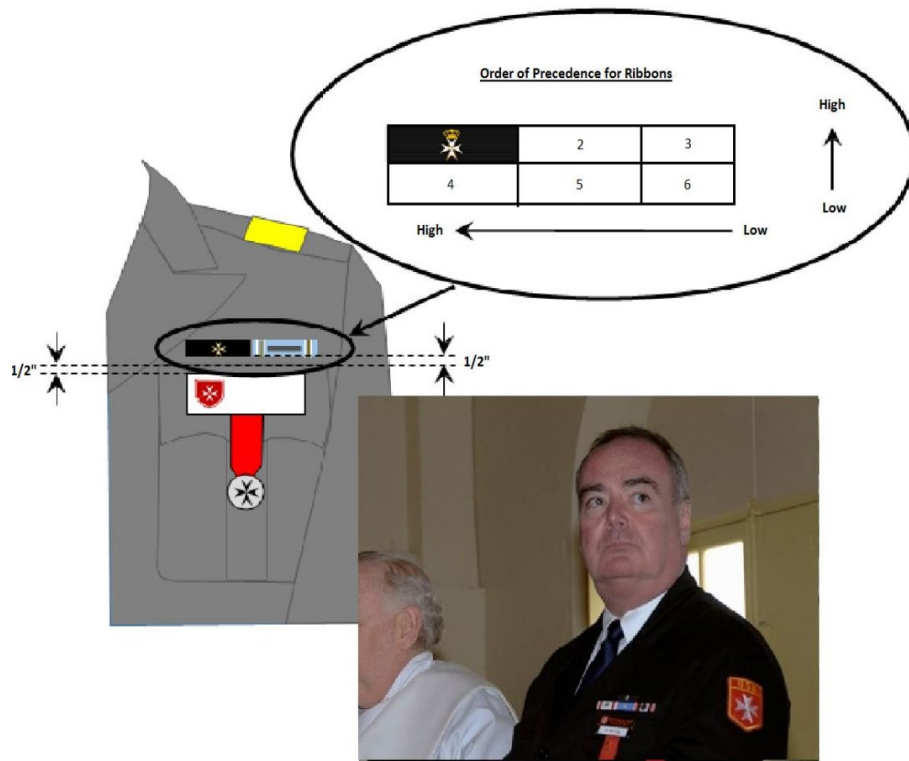
1. The Emblem on the beret should be centered over the left eye.
2. The brim of the beret should be horizontal and two finger-widths above both eyebrows.
3. The right side of the beret should overlap the right ear slightly.
4. The crease on top should extend forward, in front of the stiff flashing on which the Emblem is mounted.
5. The adjustment strings in back should be tied off and cut once a good fit is established.

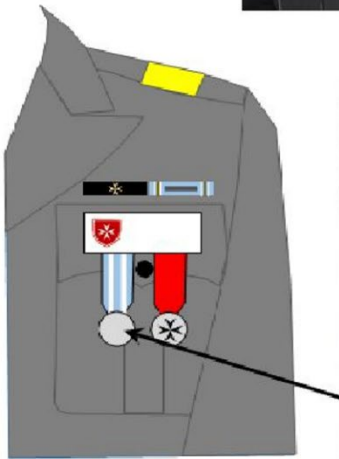
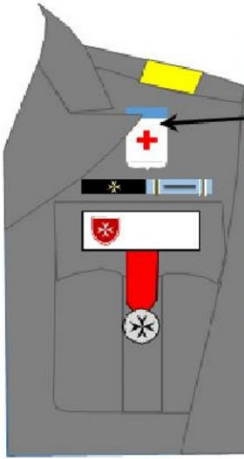


When not in use, the beret should be tucked under the **LEFT** epaulet. The beret should be worn at all times **EXCEPT** when indoors or in the Grotto.

Crease on top should extend forward, in front of stiff flashing on which the Emblem is mounted







## UNIFORM FAQ'S

- **Am I required to wear a work uniform?**

The answer is “yes” for Knights, Dames, candidates in formation, and members of the auxiliary and medical teams.

- **When must I wear the uniform?**

All week, except for travel days and dinner on the last evening. If you are an Affiliates you may be required to wear the uniform in the airports.

- **Are commemorative pins allowed on the uniform?**

Yes, but only if they are approximately the size of a normal lapel pin. Please be discreet and limit the number of pins. Less is more. Also, women have the option to wear the pins on their sweater inside their cape and are encouraged to do so. Unfortunately, the men have no such option for downplaying the pins.

- **Are women allowed to wear name tags, service ribbons, and Lourdes medals on their capes?**

Yes, except when the cape is functioning as a Dame's formal Church Robe. Service ribbons are not worn by women.

- **When do women wear their capes?**

Throughout the week whenever the work uniforms are worn. However, during the Eucharistic Procession and the Pontifical Mass, the cape becomes the formal Church Robe for Dames.

- **When do women wear their sweater and veil?**

Anytime they are not in their hotel.

- **Are there laundry facilities available at the hotel?**

No. Please pack accordingly.

- **Are black baseball caps or cowboy hats with the Order of Malta Emblem acceptable?**

No.

- **Is any other type of headgear for men other than the beret acceptable?**

No.

- **Is it acceptable to wear the beret during Mass?**

No. This guideline includes the Grotto Mass.

- **What should I do with my beret when I take it off?**

It should be tucked under the left epaulet.

- **What is the difference between a medal and a ribbon?**

Ribbons signify that one is a member of the Order of Malta or commemorate some service to the Order. They are rectangular and are about 1.375 inches long by about 0.375 inches wide. They are worn above the nametag. Medals are what you would normally consider a medal to be – a circular, imprinted piece of metal at the end of a one-inch-wide ribbon that is several inches long. They are worn below the nametag.

- **What medals should be worn on the uniform?**

Just the red Lourdes service medal. The blue Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes medal also is acceptable (for the relatively few people who have it). No other medals are worn.

- **What are those “stars” on the red Lourdes service medal?**

Those “stars” actually are small Malta crosses that indicate the number of times the wearer has attended the Order of Malta's Lourdes Pilgrimage. A small silver cross represents one pilgrimage, whereas a gold cross represents five.

- **Is it acceptable to wear insignia or ribbons from other Catholic Orders or fraternal organizations (e.g., Holy Sepulchre, St. Gregory, Knights of Columbus)?**

No.

## **TRAVEL TO LOURDES**

### **FLIGHT DETAILS**

- Departure Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025
- Airline: Norse Airlines
- Flight Details: NO5304
- Departure Gate: Terminal 7 at JFK awaiting gate #.
- Departure Time: 10pm PM (*approximately*). As we are a charter flight, the Air Traffic Controllers will sometimes require us to depart earlier than planned, hence the need for the entire Pilgrimage to be ready well before 9 PM.

### **CURBSIDE GREETING**

Order of Malta signs will be posted at the airport and uniformed members of the Order will be available at curbside to welcome pilgrims and assist them with the unloading of their luggage and belongings. They will also provide instructions on where to check-in for the flight.

### **TRAVEL DRESS CODE**

Team Captains, the Core Team, and some Affiliates will be wearing American Association work uniforms at the airport and on the airplane. This will make them readily identifiable in case you have questions. All other pilgrims should dress comfortably in casual clothing for the plane ride. Please wear your nametag at the airport, on the plane, and throughout the Pilgrimage.

### **ARRIVAL OF MALADES AT AIRPORT**

The American Association Executive Office and each Team Captain will contact Malades and Caregivers to determine how and when they will arrive at JFK. It is the responsibility of the Hosts to either escort their Malade to the Airport or to meet them in front of the terminal and accompany them through the check-in procedure and boarding process. For those Malades and Caregivers arriving at JFK via a connecting flight, the Airport Team will contact you to coordinate the logistics or traveling between terminals.

### **AIRPORT CHECK-IN PROCEDURES**

To be updated once Gate is established.

### **LUGGAGE TAGS**

All pilgrims will receive two (2) sets of luggage tags at the Association's Registration Desk which will be color-coded according to the hotel where they will be staying. One set will be used for the flight to Lourdes, and the other for the flight home. Blue luggage tags are for Hotel Alba; pink luggage tags are for Hotel Méditerranée. First set of luggage tags will be distributed at JFK and the return will be given to you at check out at the hotel.

### **JFK AIRPLANE BOARDING**

We expect boarding to begin at approximately 8:30 PM. Again, this time may be adjusted by Air Traffic Control so please listen to the airport announcements for updates.

Once we are given the clearance to begin boarding, all Malades and Caregivers will be first to board the plane. Those using wheelchairs or requiring assistance will board first, followed by those that are ambulatory. Members of the Airport Team will be on hand to assist the Malades and Caregivers with boarding. Knights, Dames, and Associates should not board with their Malades and Caregivers unless otherwise directed. Once all Malades and Caregivers have

boarded, the remainder of the pilgrims will be invited to queue for boarding. As with commercial flights, boarding will begin from the rear of the plane. Please be patient as boarding will take time!

Our American Association Wheelchair Captains will supervise the loading of wheelchairs at JFK. They will be responsible for tagging the chairs, parts, and accessories with the name of the Malade and making sure they are safely stowed in the airplane hold and returned to the Malade upon arrival in the terminal at the airport in Lourdes.

Once on board please store any carry-on items in the overhead bins or under the seat in front of you and be seated as quickly as possible. This will speed up boarding and our departure. Seats are specifically assigned to all pilgrims to accommodate the medical needs of the Malades - please do not change seats without speaking to a uniformed member of the Core Team. The last row or two of the cabin are purposefully left empty for the use of the medical team throughout the flight. Please do not sit or lie down in this row without the permission of the medical director.

## **IN FLIGHT**

Immediately following take off, there will be an opening prayer for the Pilgrimage and some brief announcements. Shortly thereafter the cabin crew will serve drinks and dinner. Please refrain from moving about the cabin while the crew is serving and cleaning up after dinner.

As flying can be dehydrating, all pilgrims are encouraged to drink water during the flight and avoid excessive consumption of alcohol. Pilgrims are also encouraged to try and get some sleep during the flight.

Shortly before landing, the cabin crew will serve a light breakfast and the organizing team will make some brief announcements related to landing. Please listen carefully to the announcements.

## **ARRIVAL IN LOURDES ARRIVAL**

### **ARRIVAL DETAILS**

- Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2025
- Time: 11:00 AM (approximately – Arrival time will depend on the time we take off)

## **EXITING THE AIRPLANE**

Once we have landed and are at the gate, all Auxiliary and those in uniform will be asked to exit the plane first so that they can assist with luggage and arrival inside the terminal. After they have left the plane, ambulatory pilgrims not needing assistance will be invited to exit and proceed through Customs and Immigration to the luggage claim area. Please note that passports must be presented to the agents but landing cards are not necessary.

Once all ambulatory pilgrims have left the plane, members of the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes will work with the Wheelchair Captains and Airport Team to help those remaining to exit the plane.

Before leaving the plane, please look around the cabin and make sure to bring all carry-on items with you.

## **AIRPORT RESTROOMS**

Restrooms are located inside the baggage claim area which you will enter after you clear Customs and Immigration.

## **LUGGAGE COLLECTION & DELIVERY TO HOTELS**

American Association Auxiliary and Airport team members will assist all pilgrims to collect their luggage from the carousel and place it on the truck which will carry it to the hotels for delivery to rooms. More details on how this process will work will be provided during the announcements on the plane.



Once the luggage arrives at the hotel, it will take some time for the hotel staff to unload and deliver it to your hotel rooms. The process is smooth and goes quickly, so please be patient. A reminder – please **keep anything you will need immediately upon arrival in your possession (e.g., medications).**

## **TRANSPORTATION TO LOURDES**

After you have passed through customs and the baggage claim area, please proceed outside the terminal to the buses which will be waiting to transport you to the hotel. For those Malades in wheelchairs, the Wheelchair Captains and Auxiliary will assist Malades and Caregivers in boarding the Wheelchair Lift Bus. This bus will be on the left side as you exit the Terminal building.

During the bus ride into Lourdes and the hotels, Team Captains will welcome pilgrims and provide additional information about hotel check-in and our first day schedule. If you have any questions, the Captains will answer them for you.

## **ARRIVAL AT YOUR HOTEL**

Reception tables will be set up in the lobbies at the Hotel Méditerranée and Hotel Alba to distribute room keys. Passports will not be collected this year. There are now safes in each room to store your passports. A light lunch will be available in the hotel dining room. Lunch is not mandatory.

## **DAY OF REST**

During our last few pilgrimages, it became clear that the long flight and immediate start of the pilgrimage was too taxing for some of the Malades and Caregivers. As such, the Lourdes Committee decided to pilot the addition of an extra day “Day of Rest” at the beginning of the pilgrimage. This is intended to provide all pilgrims with an opportunity to acclimate to the time change and approach the start of services on Thursday refreshed. As such, besides meals and the evening reception, no services or activities are scheduled for the day we arrive in Lourdes. All pilgrims, especially malades and caregivers, are encouraged to use this opportunity to rest! As needed, Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, Chaplains, and Volunteers may use this time to dial into work calls.

## **THURSDAY, MAY 1st**

### **TEAM ORIENTATION MEETING**

Orientation meetings with your team will be held on Thursday at 1:30 PM immediately preceding our line-up for the procession to the Opening Mass. These sessions will serve as an opportunity for the Malades and Caregivers to be introduced to each other, as well as to their pods, chaplains, doctors, nurses, and auxiliary. The Captains will explain why we are in Lourdes, the Color Code of the team, the importance of the processions and attending all of the events, and of being punctual. The Captains will explain topics covering the baths, Stations of the Cross, confessions, ATMs, meals, the nightly Reception before dinner, and a plethora of other information. These are important meetings, and **all are expected to attend** unless otherwise discussed with the Team Captains. Please be sure to change into your uniform before the team meetings as we will be departing for the Opening Mass immediately after the team meetings.

## **WHILE IN LOURDES**

### **MEDICAL**

Anthony Gagliardi, MD, KM is the Medical Director of the Pilgrimage and head of the Medical Team. He has assigned doctors and nurses to your team, and they are familiar with the medical conditions that have been reported on Pilgrimage applications. If there are any questions about medications, medical conditions, or a need for a doctor, emergency or otherwise, arises please let your Host or Team Captain know and they will alert the medical staff. If during the Pilgrimage you are feeling unwell and are not planning to attend a service or function on the schedule, please inform your Team Captains and the Team Doctor.

## **STAY HYDRATED - DRINKING WATER**

The weather changes frequently in Lourdes and some days it can be rather warm. We will provide you with sufficient water if we are going to be outdoors or away from the hotel for a lengthy period of time. We will always have fresh bottled water available. Please do not refill bottles or drink from containers if you cannot trace the origin of the container. This includes water offered by other Associations from gasoline style canisters - please politely decline such offers. The water in the hotel is safe to drink, as is the water from the spigots in the Grotto.

## **SUPPLIES FOR MALADES & CAREGIVERS**

Blankets, umbrellas, and other supplies will be provided on the first day in Lourdes to each Malade. We ask that the Malade and Caregiver bring these with them to each service or function and take them back to their room afterwards. Please do not leave these in the voitures. Also, please let us know if you require additional blankets or supplies.

## **ATTENDANCE**

We expect that everyone will attend all functions, including all meals. If it is necessary to skip an event, a member of your group will stay with you. The Host and Team Captains should be notified if you are going to be absent from a procession, service, or event. Each team will account for their team members before all events and processions.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

When we process, we do so as an Association. It is very important that you be on time for assembly so that we can process to events as a group and not delay the entire Pilgrimage.

## **MEALS**

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be served at the Hôtel Alba or Hôtel Méditerranée in the main dining rooms. Check the black book or television screens each day to determine the times when meals will be served and the location for your team (the location may change from day to day). The team assignments for locations are also included on your schedules. Breakfast is in the hotel you are staying in.

The seating at meals is intentionally random. Over the course of the week, please attempt to sit with different people at each meal. Members of the Order should always make sure their Malades have dinner companions. If you see a Malade and Caregiver eating alone please sit with them! Use the meals as a time to answer any questions. Note: for some meals, you will be eating with your team in a different hotel from the one in which you are staying.

All pilgrims are expected to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the hotels. Going to local restaurants is discouraged; any plans to do so must be approved by the Team Captain so that the medical and dietary needs of the Malades may be considered.

## **EXCURSIONS**

As the Pilgrimage may be someone's first trip to Europe, there is a natural curiosity about what lies beyond the town of Lourdes. Team Captains are often approached with requests to rent cars and take Malades / Caregivers on day trips. This is prohibited given the unique and specialized care the Malades often require. Additionally, an excursion will likely cause the Malade to miss one of the carefully planned services or events on our schedule. Under no circumstances should a Malade or Caregivers venture outside of Lourdes without the explicit consent of the Team Captain and Medical Director.

## **ELEVATORS**

If you are ambulatory, please try to keep the elevators clear for use by the Malades and Caregivers by taking the stairs for short trips as much as possible, especially during meals.

## **VOITURES**

Voitures are the carts that are used to transport Malades to and from services and activities. Riding in the voiture is an important component of the Pilgrimage, facilitates easy transport during our processions, and can be quite enjoyable. They are well constructed to provide comfort and minimize the effort to pull/push. A few rules of thumb:

- It is best to have someone pulling from the front and someone pushing from the back simultaneously. The person pulling is referred to as the ‘charioteer’.
- Malades should be seated at all times when in the voitures.
- There is a right and wrong way to position the front wheel of the voiture and instructions will be provided during the Team Meetings. If you are unsure of how to position the wheel please ask someone as incorrect positioning can cause the voiture to become unstable.
- In most cases, voitures may be brought into the chapels or venues we will be using for events. Members of the ‘Advance Team’ will provide direction as needed.
- When not in use, the voitures should be neatly parked and locked into each other; again, if you’re unsure of the right way to park/lock, please ask someone. If we are at a venue where voitures must remain outside, please remember that personal items and blankets should not be left unattended but taken inside. This is both for security and because a sudden rain shower will soak everything left outside.
- Before heading out to a service or activity, ensure that the voiture is ‘stocked’ with whatever supplies you may need for your Malade (cushions, water, cups, rain gear, etc.)
- Some Malades may desire to use their wheelchair and not the voiture. While exceptions must be made for those with specially built wheelchairs, Malades should be encouraged to use the voitures as much as possible. The terrain in Lourdes is hilly and transport in the voitures is easier and safer.
- Upon returning to the hotel, it is the charioteer’s responsibility to ensure the voiture is emptied of any of the Malades belongings or supplies (e.g. cushions, umbrellas, etc.) and is brought to the parking lot behind the hotels. Although convenient, leaving voitures on the street or in the alley between the hotels creates a hazard for the local traffic.

If it becomes apparent during the Pilgrimage that the Charioteer is unable to pull the voiture, please speak with the Team Captain so that a substitute may be found.

## **TRAFFIC**

Be aware of the motor vehicle traffic which will intensify during the course of our stay. Uniformed members of the American or other Associations will serve as crossing guards and will be responsible for stopping the traffic at the intersections. At times, they will also stop our procession to allow traffic to pass. It is important that your team follow the directions of the crossing guards.

## **SAFETY**

Pilgrims, particularly when in a procession to and from the Domain, have a tendency to become distracted; they become engaged in conversation and tend to just “follow the leader” without looking. Remember, many people you will encounter will not understand English and may be Malades themselves. We believe it is always better to stop and let others proceed, rather than place our Malades and ourselves in an uncomfortable situation. Going down hills and in crowds such as those in the Grotto requires extra caution.

## GROUP AND TEAM PHOTOGRAPHS

A Group photograph will be taken in front of the Rosary Basilica in the Domain, near the Grotto following the Grotto Mass. It is an excellent souvenir. Check for the time – it will be listed on the daily schedule. The photo is available for purchase at a store near the hotel. **All our Malades will receive one as a gift.** Also, team photographs will be taken immediately after the group photograph. If a college, or a town or city, or some other group would like a photograph taken, it may be arranged as well.

## SOCIALIZING

In the evenings, it has been customary for some of the Knights, Dames, and Auxiliary to relax after a long day over a drink. Usually, this socializing is conducted in the lobby of the hotel or the Jean d'Arc Pub, just opposite the hotel on the other side of the River Gave. This is a great opportunity to meet members of the Order of Malta from other countries and share stories about your experience in Lourdes. When enjoying this camaraderie please remember that you'll need to be up early the next morning and be ready to care for your Malade. The needs of your Malade are always your first priority.

## CLOSING DINNER

By tradition, dinner on the last night of the Pilgrimage takes on a more festive atmosphere. Although the format is slightly adjusted each year, it is customary for a few Malades or Caregivers to be given an opportunity to tell the assembled pilgrims what the experience has meant to them. You can be assured that their reflections will be emotional and inspiring. Throughout the Pilgrimage, please keep this in mind; if you believe the Malade or Caregiver you are looking after may be interested in speaking please let your team captain know.

Also, to prepare for this event and allow sufficient space for all pilgrims to be in the dining room together, the Auxiliary 'break down' the dining room by moving all of the chairs and tables to the side of the room and set it up theatre style. Following the festivities, the Auxiliary put the room back together again so that it is ready for breakfast the next morning. Additional instructions on this will be provided during the Pilgrimage.

## OUTSIDE TELEPHONE CALLS

To call the USA from the hotel, the access codes will be posted in the Hotels.

## HOTEL INFORMATION

<u>Hôtel Alba</u> 27, av du Paradis 65100 Lourdes France Tel: 011 33 562 42 70 70	<u>Hôtel Méditerranée</u> 23, av du Paradis 65100 Lourdes France Tel: 011 33 562 94 72 15
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## ATM MACHINES

ATM's in Lourdes accept US bankcards. Credit Agricole is found by exiting the hotel, turning right and continuing up the road and hill until you see the Credit Agricole Bank on the right-hand side of the street across from the Poor Claire's' convent. Please note that ATMs do run out of cash and are not always reliable. Please be wary of safety when using the ATM machines and refrain from using these when alone.

## CELL PHONE AND WHATSAPP

Inform your cell phone provider that you will be traveling abroad and purchase a plan.

**WHATSAPP** - <https://www.whatsapp.com> is a great service to use to make calls and share photos of the day with family and friends back home.

## **SPIRITUAL INFORMATION**

### **LOURDES LIVESTREAMED**

<https://www.lourdes-france.org/en/tv-lourdes/> is a site with a web cam in the Grotto that may be viewed on the internet.

### **HOW TO BENEFIT THE MOST FROM THE PILGRIMAGE**

Our Pilgrimage serves to effect change in our lives. We are here to be changed; we want to go home different from when we arrived. There are three kinds of activities to help us change – formal (those planned in advance and listed on the schedule), informal (those we generally do on our own, with our individual pod unit, e.g. ad hoc grotto visits, confessions, baths, additional candlelight processions), and conversation with other members of the Pilgrimage. It is truly amazing how much we learn about ourselves as well as how much we can give to others by simply speaking with them. Over this week, there will be many opportunities, both long and short, for these conversations – the span of topics will amaze you. We will see and hear our Lord in this special place and will come away feeling much better about who we are, where we are, and where we are going.

### **MORNING PRAYERS**

All are invited to meet for Morning Prayers just before breakfast in the Bartres Room at the Hôtel Alba. The times will be noted in the Black Book and on the televised schedule in your hotel room and in the lobby of each hotel.

### **THE DOMAIN**

The Domain is the spiritual, emotional, and physical center of Lourdes. Many of our activities will take place there. Always maintain silence as a form of respect when you are in the Domain, especially in the area around the Grotto.

### **PROCESSION**

Mary told Bernadette “Have people come here in procession”. The act of procession, therefore, is part of the spiritual exercise of the Pilgrimage. To form our procession, we will line up by team in the parking lot in front of the Alba and Méditerranée Hotels. Once inside the Domain, we should proceed reverently without unnecessary conversation. For those who desire, this is a time for quiet recitation of the Rosary. Please remind the pilgrims that silence is always observed in the area around the Grotto. Please be careful when crossing the street to get from the hotel to the parking lot. This is an active roadway and can be quite busy with buses and cars at times.

### **THE CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION**

We recall the words of the Blessed Mother to St. Bernadette “Go tell the Priests to build a chapel and have the people come in procession.” In keeping with Our Lady’s request that we ‘process’ and ‘pray the rosary’, there is a candlelight procession each evening at dusk in the Domain. The American Association will process as a group on either Friday or Sunday evening depending on weather conditions; please listen to the announcements and watch the television screens for information detailing which night we will process as a group.

As the candlelight procession is held each evening, Malades and Caregivers may desire to go more than once. Signup sheets for the additional evening processions will be posted in the Hotel Méditerranée lobby. Those participating will congregate after dinner in the area in front of the Hotel Méditerranée for the procession to the Domain. An ample supply of candles for the Association procession will be available in the Hotel Méditerranée lobby. While your Malades may not always feel able to attend the Candlelight Procession after a long day, Captains should encourage them to do so, at least once, in order to experience this remarkable religious practice.

## **MASSES AND SERVICES**

The services and liturgies in Lourdes are deeply moving and inspirational. They may be unlike any service you have attended before. The special needs of the Malades often necessitates that the medical team and some of the auxiliary move about during mass. If you are asked to sit with your Malade during mass or it becomes necessary to walk around during any of the services, please be respectful of the Altar and the service. On warm days it is often necessary for the Auxiliary to distribute water during the services; unless it is an emergency, this should be limited to the periods immediately following the homily and communion. Movement during the consecration is highly discouraged.

## **DRINKING WATER**

The distribution of water has presented challenges on previous pilgrimages. While the water from the Grotto is pure and holy, the containers in which it is sometimes stored are not so. Please ensure that any water distributed to Malades and others is sourced from the bottles provided by the American Association only. All should be discouraged from drinking water that is distributed from large containers or jugs that are used by other pilgrims.

## **LOURDES WATER AND THE BATHS**

People come to Lourdes for water, to drink from the fountains, but also to take it back home with them. This process began just after 25th February 1858, the day on which the Virgin Mary told Saint Bernadette where to dig to find the spring. It is at this spring, which flows on the left side at the base of the Grotto, where Our Lady invites us to come “to drink and wash ourselves”. There are three places where we can respond to this invitation:

1. **The Baths** -Due to the current health situation, it is no longer possible to bathe completely, however members of the hospitalite and volunteers are available to welcome you to the Baths and accompany you to perform the “Water Gesture” which involves saying a prayer to the Blessed Mother and splashing water from the grotto onto your hands and face. You can take part individually, as a couple, with family or friends. More details on the Baths will be provided before the pilgrimage departure.

On Friday, the American Association has reserved places at the Baths for our Malades, accompanied by either a Caregiver or a Host. The Baths fulfill our Blessed Mother’s request to Bernadette, “Go drink and wash in the spring water”. The times for the Baths are on the schedule. Hosts, Malades, and Caregivers should line up to process to the Baths at the appointed time. Hosts should notify Captains on Friday morning whether their Malade and Caregiver will be going to the Baths. Please note that the Friday reservations are specifically for Malades and Caregivers. Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, and volunteers should refrain from entering the baths at this time. A second reservation for all other pilgrims has been arranged for Monday afternoon.

2. **The Fountains** - You can take the personal step of drinking and washing your face with the Spring water that flows from the eighteen Fountains located next to the Grotto. The number eighteen represents the number of apparitions.
3. **The Taps** - Located at the bridge next to the arches, these taps have sufficient pressure to allow you to fill any containers that you might want to take back for yourself or your loved ones.

## **NIGHTLY GROTTO MASS**

Each night at 11:00 p.m., a Mass is offered in the Grotto and anyone may attend. It is said in a different language each evening. If interested, please discuss with your Host or Team Captain. Malades and Caregivers should let their Captains know if they wish to attend so they can make arrangements for someone to accompany them.

## **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

There will be an organized opportunity to make the Stations of the Cross and we strongly urge you to do this. There will be a session for adults and a separate one for children. The upper stations require that you are able to walk up steep, uneven terrain – while a moving experience, they are quite a climb and, as such, no wheelchairs or voitures are

allowed. This rule is strictly enforced for the safety of both the Malade and the Caregivers. There is also a set of stations on flat ground, directly over the river, opposite the Grotto. Children's Stations are nearby as well.

## **PRAYING THE ROSARY**

There will be times when we are waiting in line for periods of time. It is a special time to say the Rosary either on your own or in small groups. It is a good idea to carry your Rosary with you – it makes waiting seem like a wonderful opportunity!

## **CONFESSIONS**

An opportunity for confessions will be available during the Friday morning of recollection. Confessions can also be heard by any of the priests on the Pilgrimage. A separate area has been set up at each of our hotels with times and places posted on the schedule. Please check the black book or television screens. There is also a building within the Domain called the 'Salon de Reconciliation' where confessions are heard in many languages throughout the day. It is location #31 on the map in your black book.

## **REFLECTIONS**

During the Pilgrimage, the Malades, Caregivers, and members of the Order, Auxiliary, and Volunteers will participate in many spiritual and social activities at what often seems like a whirlwind pace. Time for reflection is necessary so that the experience of pilgrimage can be understood from the perspective of one's own spirituality. Towards that end, the schedule includes time on Saturday and Monday to explore this very personal element of our spirituality. These sessions will be led by a chaplain or other member of the Pilgrimage team who have been prepared to do so. No preparation is needed for these reflection sessions - it is a time for sharing or for just listening. Details of where you're reflection session will be held will be in the black book; signs will be placed in the hotels to guide you to the rooms. Reflections are mandatory for Malades and Caregivers and pod members should encourage them to attend. If for some reason a Malade or Caregiver are hesitant, please alert the Team Captain so that they may speak with them and allay any concerns they may have.

## **MALADES-IN-SPIRIT & CAREGIVERS-IN-SPIRIT PROGRAM**

The Malades-In-Spirit and Caregivers-In-Spirit Program allows us to pray for, communicate with, and remember those Malades and Caregivers who are unable to be with us on the Pilgrimage. Each team is assigned Malades-In-Spirits and Caregivers-In-Spirit. These names will be listed in the Black Book. All pilgrims are requested and encouraged to remember them throughout the Pilgrimage. Postcards will be sent to them from Lourdes.

## **PRAYER PARTNERS**

During the Team Meetings in Lourdes, each pilgrim will receive a small card with the name of another pilgrim for whom you are asked to pray throughout the pilgrimage. Please remember your 'prayer partner' and if possible, towards the end of the pilgrimage, let them know that you were praying for them. The plane ride home is a great opportunity to do this!

## **DEPARTURE FROM LOURDES- TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025**

### **DEPARTURE DETAILS**

- Departure Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025
- Airline: Norse Airlines
- Flight Details: NO5303
- Departure Time: 12:30 PM (*approximately*). As we are a charter flight, the Air Traffic Controllers will sometimes require us to depart earlier than planned, hence the need for the entire Pilgrimage to be ready well before scheduled departure time.

The estimated time of departure from Lourdes is 12:30pm: Note that it is rare that the flight departs exactly on schedule, although it has frequently been within an hour or so of our planned departure time. Please keep that in mind when booking any connecting flights from JFK airport to your final destination. The estimated arrival time to JFK is 2:30 PM. Please make your connecting flight arrangements from JFK no earlier than 6:00 PM ET.

### **BRINGING WATER HOME**

It is customary for pilgrims to bring water from the Grotto home. The rules and regulations regarding the carrying of liquids onto the plane apply to Lourdes water. Any water being brought home must be packed in luggage so that it may be placed in the hold. No Lourdes Water will be allowed into the cabin.

### **INCIDENTAL CHARGES**

On Monday afternoon please stop at the desks and pay for any incidental charges that may have been charged to your room.

Luggage will need to be placed in the hallway outside your hotel room on Monday evening before you go to bed. This allows the luggage to be collected during the night and transported to the airport where you will collect it before checking in for the flight home.

As with the trip to Lourdes, please make sure to place any items you will need for the plane ride home, including medications, into your carry-on's.

### **TRANSPORTATION TO THE AIRPORT**

Details on the times for breakfast and the boarding of the buses to the airport will be provided when you collect your passport on Monday afternoon.