



Rt Rev Ralph Heskett CSsR

Bishop's House
75 Norfolk Road
Sheffield
S2 2SZ

Tel: 0114 2787988

email: bishopohallam@btinternet.com

9th December 2024

Dear Fathers, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jubilee Year Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 2025

I write this on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (transferred to the 9th December this year from 8th December as it is a Sunday). In doing so, I am conscious that as we progress through this season of Advent, we grow ever closer to the start of the Jubilee Year that we have been preparing for. The Holy Father will officially open the Jubilee Year on 24th December 2024.

The Holy Father invites us to become "Pilgrims of Hope". The diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, which is being launched today for travel in 2025, is an opportunity for us to reflect on this, to pray, to serve one another, and to share a pilgrimage experience away from our daily lives. The disciples encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Going on pilgrimage presents us with an opportunity to experience that same encounter that the disciples had.

I would, therefore, like to invite as many of you as are able to, to join me on our diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes from **Friday 27th June to Thursday 3rd July 2025**. In this Jubilee Year my hope is that we will have at least one pilgrim from every parish in the diocese, as we join in prayer.

I also have a further suggestion that I would ask parishes to consider. Throughout the centuries, going on pilgrimage has been a tangible way that we can engage with a Jubilee Year. Pilgrimage has never been easy but travel is certainly much simpler and quicker now! One challenge that has remained, however, is the cost. Whilst the fare for our pilgrimage is one of the lowest in the country, it is a substantial amount of money and that is a barrier to many people. The fare reflects the cost of chartering an aircraft directly to Lourdes, to enable pilgrims with health challenges and mobility issues to travel more easily. It would be good to find a way to overcome this challenge for at least one adult in each parish, in the Jubilee Year.

In order to encourage all parishes to be represented in Lourdes, I would ask each parish to consider fundraising to send one **adult** pilgrim (i.e. not under 18, since the Hallam Youth numbers are already very strong) to travel from your parish, who would not otherwise be able to afford to do so. The cost is £899 but the deposit to secure a place is £250, with the balance due by Easter.

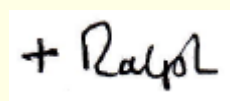
The individual would not need to be identified publicly, as matters of finance are always delicate, and each parish priest could identify one person for an approach, and the arrangements made. In return, the one request from the parish could be that the individual prays for the parish, and parishioners, whilst in Lourdes.

It does not matter whether the person who travels is an Assisted Pilgrim, a volunteer Helper, doctor or nurse – although all of those are options. They could simply be a pilgrim who desires to travel on pilgrimage in this Jubilee Year. The important part is that the parish enables someone to join the pilgrimage who would not otherwise be able to do so, due to the costs involved.

It would be a wonderful act of solidarity if parishes can support this initiative, and parishes are simply aware that at least one person is travelling to Lourdes this year from their parish.

Booking forms for the pilgrimage are available to download from the website www.hallam-lourdes.com and any queries can be addressed to lourdesoffice@hallam-diocese.com.

Yours sincerely in Christ, the Redeemer

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name 'Ralph' in a cursive script.