

Pilgrimage to Lourdes



Every summer, a group of Worth pupils goes to Lourdes with the Order of Malta Volunteers to help other pilgrims who have disabilities. One helper wrote an account of her trip for the school newsletter:

“The aim of the pilgrimage is to offer people suffering from illnesses, learning and physical disabilities or from social exclusion the opportunity of a spiritual retreat where they can relax and socialize with both people in similar situations and willing helpers.

“Lourdes itself is a deeply peaceful and prayerful place to be. Every evening we experienced Midnight Prayers which brought all the helpers together, it was the perfect opportunity for prayer and reflection. It gave us all a moment of peace every evening in an extremely busy day to truly think through what we were doing and why.

“Alongside the Hospital Pilgrims, we had the chance to experience daily mass and both the Blessed Sacrament and Marian Torchlight procession. The processions were both humbling and uplifting to take part in.

“Getting to know all of the Hospital Pilgrims was truly inspiring. We were put in a position where, for many of the hospital pilgrims who cannot do anything by

themselves, we were entirely responsible. This meant aspects such as physically feeding and washing them. I was especially struck by their patience and ability to trust so readily. I found lots of their stories remarkable and I was so humbled by the way they get on with life after certain traumatic experiences.

“I feel the experience has helped me learn a lot about myself. I felt challenged, and from the very first day pushed beyond my comfort zone. However I think we all realised that most importantly it was about the Hospital Pilgrims and helping them as best as we could- to make them comfortable and relaxed even if at first we did not feel it.

“The thing of most value to me however has been the ability to see past a wheelchair. I think that initially I attempted to just help them, but it is more than that- it has been about getting to know them. What I perhaps found most surprising was that I become friends with them in exactly the same way as I have with the helpers.”

