

In the Footsteps of the Saints

12 days / 10 nights

"The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love" (Saint Thérèse also known as "The Little Flower of Jesus"). Far more than just experiencing new lands or seeing new sights, as we pay our deep devotion at the sites of miracles centered on the Blessed Virgin Mary in our Pilgrimage through Portugal, Spain and France, we will reflect, come closer to God, and gratefully consider the sacrifices and dedication of those who have gone before. As we behold holy shrines and timeless works of art regarded as the most awe-inspiring and important of the world – we will renew our commitment to the roots of our Catholic faith. The masses and meditations we celebrate along the way will draw us together as a community. They will remind us of our blessings and the call to stewardship as followers of Jesus Christ.

Day 1: Departure from the USA

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord (Romans 14: 6).

Our pilgrimage begins with an overnight flight to Lisbon, Portugal.

Day 2: Arrival

Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5).

Welcome to “Europe”, a word thought to mean “wide gazing”! We’ll greet the new day with eyes wide open in Europe’s westernmost capital city, Lisbon, Portugal. After a brief tour of this beautiful city rich in art, architecture and spirit, and home to many saints, we will visit St. Anthony’s Church. St. Anthony was strongly attracted to the simple good lifestyle of the Franciscan friars. When St. Anthony died, it is said that the children cried in the streets and that all the bells of the churches rang of their own accord, rung by angels come to earth to honor the death of this saint. St. Anthony is known in Portugal as a marriage saint, because legend has him as a conciliator of couples. The invocation of his name might also be associated with locating lost objects. We’ll enjoy dinner and another overnight stay in Lisbon.

Day 3: Santarem & Fatima

May Portugal never forget the heavenly message of Fátima, which, before anybody else she was blessed to hear. To keep Fátima in your heart and to translate Fatima into deeds, is the best guarantee for ever more graces (Pope Pius XII).

After breakfast we’ll travel some 45 miles north of Lisbon to Portugal’s third largest city, Santarem, site of many notable churches including the Church of the Holy Miracle (*Igreja do Santissimo Milagre*) which contains a 13th century Eucharistic miracle on continuous display since 1269. The host is enshrined in its miraculous crystal pyx in a silver monstrance and placed on display atop a tabernacle. Four paintings and 16th-century glazed tiles depict the miracle. We then continue on to Fatima, home of one of most well-known Marian shrines in the world, the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima (*Nossa Senhora do Rosário da Fátima*). Each year as many as four million people visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima because they are drawn by the reports of three local shepherd children who in 1917 saw the Virgin Mary. On the 13th of each month from May to October 1917, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to Lúcia dos Santos (age 10) and her cousins Jacinta (age 7) and Francisco Marto (age 9) in a pasture called the Cova da Iria near Fatima. We will enjoy dinner and an overnight stay in Fatima.



Day 4: Shrine of Fatima

Yes, I shall take Jacinta and Francisco soon, but you will remain a little longer, since Jesus wishes you to make me known and loved on earth. He wishes also for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart (Mary's words to Lucia when Lucia asked the Virgin to take her and her cousins to heaven soon (as per Lucia's account)).

We'll begin the day by celebrating Mass, after which we'll visit the Tombs of Francisco and Jacinta as well as other sites related to the miraculous appearances of Mary to the children. According to Lúcia's account, Mary exhorted the children to say the Rosary every day and reiterated many times that devotion to the Rosary was the key to personal and world peace. We will have time in Fatima for our own devotions and prayers at the Hungarian Stations of the Cross, consisting of fourteen small chapels along walkways leading to a marble monument of Christ on the cross. Towards evening, we will be treated to a wonderful dinner and show (show of the ancient kings and queens) at Ourem Castle originally built between the 12th and 13th centuries and situated at the top of the hill overlooking the city. The Castle of Ourém is also known as the "Castle of the Queen of the World" because the light that transported Our Lady to her apparitions at Fatima in 1917 was seen to form directly above the castle mount. The shrine of Fatima has played an important role in recent times. On May 13, 1967, Pope Paul VI prayed at the shrine with Sister Lucia, and Pope John Paul II credited Our Lady of Fátima with saving his life during the assassination attempt in 1981. He came to Fatima as a pilgrim on May 12, 1987, to express his gratitude, and the following day, he officially consecrated the human race to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin, as Pius XII had done before him. We will have much to prayerfully consider as we enjoy dinner and our last overnight in Fatima.



Day 5: Alba de Tormes & Teresa of Avila

The angel appeared to me to be thrusting the spear of fire into my heart and piercing my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and left me all on fire with a great love of God (St. Teresa of Avila).

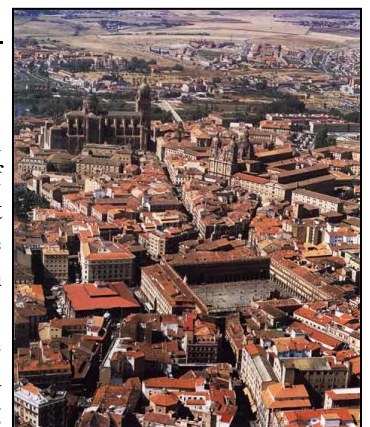
Today we travel to Salamanca in western Spain, by way of Alba de Tormes, burial place of St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). St. Teresa died on October 4, 1582 from an illness on a journey from Burgos to Alba de Tormes. Many miracles have been associated with St. Teresa since her death including the "odor of sanctity." The night she died, her monastic cell back in Ávila was said to have filled with a pleasant fragrance and her coffin emitted the same heavenly fragrance when her body was exhumed 330 years later. We will have leisure time before dinner and our overnight in Salamanca, nicknamed *La Ciudad Dorada* ("The Golden City") because of its Renaissance sandstone buildings and the golden glow of the Villamayor Stone, a type of sandstone coming from a quarry close by. Dinner and an overnight stay in Salamanca.



Day 6: Salamanca, Avila & Burgos

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Psalms 116:15).

We awaken in Salamanca, the Golden City, known both for its monumental sights and its great University. Founded in 1218, it is the oldest university in Spain and the fifth oldest in the western world. The university is, together with tourism, the economic engine of Salamanca. The beautiful Tormes river lies next to Salamanca and is crossed by a 500-foot long bridge with more than two dozen arches, fifteen of which are of Roman origin and the rest from the 1500s. We celebrate Mass in the famous old Romanesque Cathedral built in the 12th century, whose vault of the apse was frescoed by the early Renaissance painter, Nicolas Florentino. In the treasury is the bronze crucifix that was carried into battle before El Cid. The afternoon finds us heading for Avila, birth place of St. Teresa of Avila and known for its medieval city walls constructed of brown granite in 1090 and containing



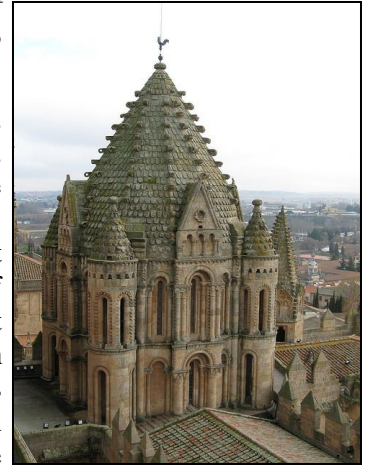
eighty-eight towers and nine gateways that are still in excellent repair. A large part of the city now lies beyond their perimeter. We will visit the church where St. Teresa had frequent visions and ecstatic experiences. We will also see the Convent of St. Teresa, one of the main destinations for Catholic pilgrims to this city. The 17th-century convent was built after the canonization of St. Teresa over the house where she was born, and contains her relics, along with those of her friend St. John of the Cross, in a small museum. Finally, we make our way to Burgos where we enjoy dinner and an overnight stay.



Day 7: St. Ignatius of Loyola

That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself... For we must undoubtingly believe, that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Orthodox Church His Spouse, by which Spirit we are governed and directed to Salvation, is the same (Saint Ignatius of Loyola).

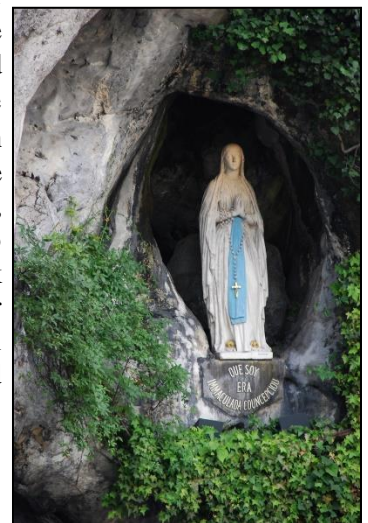
En route to Lourdes, France, we'll stop in Loyola, the birthplace of St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. St Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish knight from a Basque noble family, emerged as a religious leader during the Counter Reformation. Loyola's devotion to the Church was characterized by unquestioning obedience to everything said by her hierarchy. He was much influenced by Ludolph of Saxony's *De Vita Christi* where it is proposed that the reader place himself at the scene of each Gospel story. This is known as a method of prayer called Simple Contemplation and is the basis of the method that St Ignatius set out in his Spiritual Exercises. In Loyola we'll visit the home of St. Ignatius and the 17th Century Basilica dedicated to him. After lunch we travel to the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains to picturesque Lourdes, site of the largest Catholic pilgrimage destination in France because it was here that St Bernadette to whom Our Lady appeared in 1858 near the Grotto of Massabielle, was born. We'll have time to settle into our hotel and do a little exploring before dinner and a special candlelight service.



Day 8: The Shrine of Lourdes

I am the Immaculate Conception (Que soi era immaculada concepcion) (Mary to Bernadette).

When Bernadette Soubirous was 14-years of age and out gathering firewood with her sister and a friend at the grotto of Massabielle outside Lourdes, she had an experience that completely changed her life and the town of Lourdes where she had lived. It was on this day in 1858 that Bernadette claimed she had the first of 18 visions of what she termed "a small young lady" (*ua petita damisela*) standing in a niche in the rock. The contents of Bernadette's reported visions were simple and mostly focused on the need for prayer and penance. We begin this morning with Mass after which we will walk in the footsteps of Bernadette as we visit the Grotto of Massabielle, the site of St. Bernadette's visions of the Virgin Mary (The Blessed Virgin is said to have pointed out a previously undiscovered spring in the grotto and instructed Bernadette to drink from it. The spring water from the grotto is believed to possess healing properties, and the Roman Catholic Church occasionally officially recognizes miraculous healings.), the home in which St. Bernadette and her family lived at the time the girl saw visions of the Virgin Mary, the parish church, and other holy shrines and sites related to these miraculous visions. We are welcome to participate in the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessing of the Sick (depending on seasonal schedules) in the late afternoon, and will return to the Sanctuary for the Rosary and Torchlight Procession (beginning at about 8:30 p.m. depending on seasonal schedules) after dinner. After the day's rich events, we return to our hotel for a second night's stay in Lourdes.



Day 9: Zaragoza

Know this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience (James 1:3).

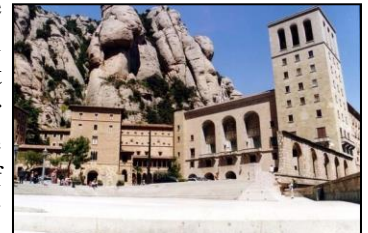
We'll arise early to leave for Zaragoza (also called Saragossa), the capital city of the Zaragoza province and linked to the beginnings of Christianity in Spain. As we make our way through the area, we'll see a variety of landscapes, ranging from desert (*Los Monegros*) to thick forest, meadows and mountains. When we reach the city, we will visit the Basilica-Cathedral of Our Lady of the Pillar whose history stems from the dawn of Christianity in Spain attributing to the blessed virgin Mary appearing to St. James the apostle who brought Christianity to the country. This is the only known apparition of Mary to have occurred before her Assumption. Many of the kings of Spain as well as foreign rulers and saints including St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Ignatius of Loyola have paid their devotion before the statue of Mary at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar. The event marking this apparition is called "Las Fiestas del Pilar", celebrated on October 12th and coinciding in 1492 with the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus. "El Pilar" is celebrated for nine days with speeches, fireworks, bands, dances, procession of *gigantes y cabezudos* (carnival figures made of papier mache), concerts, exhibitions, and the famous "vaquillas" bulls and the bull festival. Another important feature of the celebration is the Ofrenda de Flores (Flower offering) to the virgin on the 12th, when an enormous cloak is made of the flowers. We'll enjoy dinner and an overnight stay in this memorable city.



Day 10: Montserrat

For it is in giving that we receive (Portion of prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi).

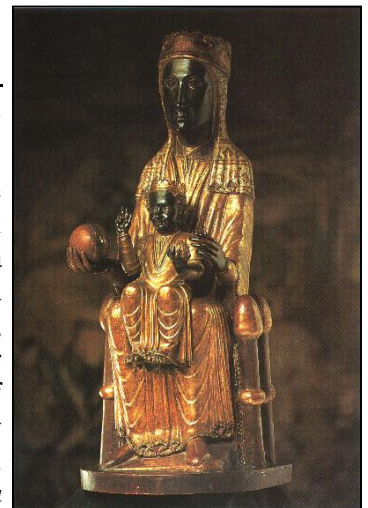
Montserrat, on a rugged mountain not far from Barcelona, is one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in Spain. It is here we journey today to the Monastery of Montserrat, located near the top of the 4,000-foot mountain and home to about 80 monks. The monks welcome visitors and invite them to participate in their daily celebrations of Mass and recitations of the Liturgy of the Hours. We'll visit the Basilica, next to the monastery, which houses the revered *La Moreneta*, or Black Virgin, a small Romanesque statue made of wood, with the child Jesus on her lap. Her dark color is due to changes in the varnish with the passage of time. The basilica also hosts one of the oldest and most renowned boys' choirs in Europe dating from the 13th century. At 1:00 p.m. you might hear them singing "Salve Regina" and the "Virolai" (hymn of Montserrat) in the basilica. The beauty of the landscape adds to our spiritual experience and brings a sweet confirmation of faith. Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Ignatius of Loyola were drawn here as were many pilgrims of all classes and conditions over the course of a thousand years. We continue this afternoon to Barcelona, Spain's second largest city, where we will have leisure time to explore and enjoy dinner and an overnight stay.



Day 11: Barcelona

Those who look for the laws of Nature as a support for their works collaborate with the creator ("God's Architect": Antoni Plàcid Guillem Gaudí i Cornet).

It is fitting that in 1999, Barcelona won the RIBA Royal Gold Medal for architecture (the first and, as of 2009, only time that the winner has been a city and not an individual architect) for we begin the day with a visit to the cutting-edge Art Nouveau Sagrada Familia Church, designed by Antoni Gaudi. Gaudí was a devout Catholic in later years and devoted his life to Catholicism and his *Sagrada Familia*. He designed it to have 18 towers, 12 for the 12 apostles, 4 for the 4 evangelists, one for Mary and one for Jesus. Gaudí never finished the church and was constantly recreating his blueprints, the only existing copy of which was destroyed by in 1938 during the Spanish Civil War. This has made it very difficult for his workers to complete the church in the fashion Gaudí most likely would have wished. It is for this that Gaudí is known to many as "God's Architect". *La Sagrada*



Família is now being completed (as of 2007, completion is planned for 2026), but differences between his work and the new additions can be seen. We will also visit the *Barri Gotic* ("Gothic Quarter") in the centre of the old city of Barcelona where many of the buildings date from medieval times and are World Heritage Sites. We will see the Gothic Saint Eulalia Cathedral and its IV Century Roman Wall, and drive by the Columbus Statue on the well-known Ramblas Blvd. to Catalunya Square to the "Enxample" where we will admire the architecture styles of Catalan's most famous architects, Batlló, Milà and Gaudí. We celebrate Mass at the Basilica of Santa Maria del Mar, a beautiful 14th century church dedicated to Our Lady, after which we will make our way to the Tibidabo Hill where a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with his extended arms overlooks Barcelona below. The afternoon affords us some leisure time to further explore before we gather for our last dinner and overnight stay in Barcelona.



Day 12: Barcelona to the USA

We will let the power of the holy shrines, priceless relics, and spiritual marvels of Portugal and Spain settle over us, then like other pilgrims of other times, go back to our lives with renewed faith and readiness.

We leave our hotel and head for the Barcelona airport to return to the U.S.

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