Pilgrimage to Southern France


with Father Eric Andersen
September 12-22, 2019

$4,150 * per person (ground and air from Portland**) or $2,550 * per person (ground only)

*Included in Price:
- Lodging in first-class hotels including 3 nts in Lourdes, 1 nt in Carcassonne
- 3 nts in St Maximin la Sainte Baume, 1 nt in Marseille, 1 nt in Nice (2 pax per room)
- Flight from Portland* (including taxes/surcharges)
  - Continental breakfast, plus dinner daily
  - Chartered motor coach (as per itinerary)
- Daily Mass (in either Tridentine Latin or ordinary form), plus optional daily morning/ evening/ night Prayer and rosary
- Guide with spiritual reflections and prayer

NOT Included: one meal per day, drinks, tips/gratuity (estimate $10/day), or optional travel insurance.

*Note that price is determined based on a minimum of 25 participants
**Contact us about originating in an airport other than Portland.
Day of pilgrimage at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, doorway to the Pyrenees Mountains. Known throughout the world, it was here where the Virgin Mary appeared to an uneducated shepherdess calling herself the Immaculate Conception. Today the grotto where the apparitions took place is a sanctuary for all the pilgrims who flock here, many on pilgrimages for the sick. Each person can take some water from Lourdes for himself or for a friend. Walk in the footsteps of Bernadette and visit the places where she lived: the Boly mill where she grew up and the cachot where her family had to move to. The sanctuary also offers the possibility to deepen one’s relationship with the Virgin Mary. The welcoming of the sick is particularly well organized and physical healings continue to happen. The museum of the miraculously healed and the examining office, in the confines of the sanctuary, are there to attest to the authenticity. Possibility to participate in a time of prayer at the grotto of the apparitions, walk the way of the cross, go to the baths, see a movie about the story of Saint Bernadette, go to confession and participate in the candle-light procession (from April to October). Everything began with a young girl, Bernadette, who was born in 1844. In spite of a very difficult life, she received a special grace. After her father, a miller, was ruined, Bernadette lived in a former prison room with her parents, her sister and her three brothers. One day she said “it is because I was the poorest and the most ignorant that the Holy Virgin chose me”. It was on February 11, 1858, and for several times after that, that the Virgin appeared to her and revealed messages to her. The young girl, on the Virgin’s indications, found a spring from which the water allowed healings. She later entered into religious life in Nevers. Lourdes is today the third most visited pilgrimage site in the world and the second most visited town in France after Paris. Dinner and night in Lourdes.

Day of retreat in Lourdes. Dinner and overnight in Lourdes.

Transfer to Fanjeaux for meeting with Community of the Lamb (in French Communauté de l’Agneau) is the name of a young Roman Catholic religious community. Transfer to Carcassonne. Discover the fortified city of Carcassonne, exceptionally well-preserved and of a rare beauty. Its visit will give you an idea of what it would have been like to live in the Middle Ages. Situated in the south of France, not far of the Mediterranean Sea and the Pyrenees mountains, Carcassonne is known worldwide and is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. A nice walk will take you through small paved streets, from the chateau to the ramparts (view from the outside), passing by the basilica of Saint-Nazaire and the ancient houses. This rocky peak has been inhabited since the 4th century BCE and the town has been protected by ramparts since the 3rd century. First a Gallic city and then a Roman one, it became in the 13th century the impregnable fortress that it is today. This master-piece of military architecture is both remarkable and well-preserved. The town is particularly beautiful in the annual fireworks during which the talented pyro technicians of France offer this sound and light show. Dinner and night in Carcassonne.

Transfer to Avignon. Visit of the famous papal palace, listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. Avignon became the seat of the papacy between 1309 and 1423 with the popes in Avignon before they returned to Rome. The construction of the palace began in 1335. It is the largest gothic construction of the middle ages. Two popes were responsible for directing the construction and they gave the palace its aspect of a Christian fortress: ramparts, keep, moats, a magnificent chapel... Six conclaves were held here and ended in the election of: Benedict XII, Clement VI, Innocent VI, Urban V, Gregory XI and Benedict XIII. The Papacy returned to Rome for political reasons and following the improvement of the relations between Catholics and Orthodox. Today, the papal palace is open to all. It is also known for its famous festival d'Avignon, one of the most important international festivals of contemporary entertainment. Transfer to Tarascon to visit tomb/shrine of St Martha (24 km/15 miles). Transfer to Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (124 km/77 miles). In the heart of Provence, 50 kms away from Marseille, we invite to stop for a spiritual time in the sanctuary of the Sainte-Baume dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, contemporary of Christ. The Dominican monks have been the guardians of this sanctuary since 1295. Pilgrims can share in their divine offices, meet with them, and discover Saint Mary Magdalene as well as to pray at the grotto. At the Sainte Baume one can admire the beauty of creation marvelously preserved and receive the heritage of a living tradition that has marked for centuries European and Provençal culture. The Gospel seems concrete here and close to us, thanks to the testimony of the sinner who became a disciple and apostle. According to Christian tradition, Mary Magdalene, Marie Salomé and Saint Lazare fled Palestine on boat to escape roman persecutions. They made land in France in the Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer where they each went their own way. This is the first evangelization of Gaul (the ancient name of France). As of the first centuries, Christians, penitents, saints, kings and popes came to the grotto of the Sainte Baume on pilgrimage to be near Saint Mary Magdalene. Tradition says that she lived here for 30 years, offering her life for the conversion of sinners. Dinner and night in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume.
September 18: SAINT-MAXIMIN-LA-SAINTE-BAUME / LE THORONET / CANNES / ILE DE LERINS / CANNES
Transfer to Le Thoronet (34 miles). Midway between Marseille and Nice, discover the very beautiful abbey of Thoronet nestled in the green hills of the back country of Provence. Its very simplistic architecture and its light make it one of the most remarkable example of Cistercian architecture in France. As a result, the site is listed as a national historical monument. No monks live in the abbey ever since 1971 and the French Revolution. The abbey has however gained back a spiritual dimension thanks to monsignor Rey, bishop of Fréjus-Toulon. Following his directions, a mass with Gregorian chants is now celebrated there every Sunday. Next door to the abbey, you can also discover the monastery of the Torrent de Vie. There, the young community of contemplative and eremitic sisters of the monastic family of Bethlehem and of the Assumption of the Virgin welcomes you. Boat ride Cannes / Ile de Lérins. Discovery of the Benedictine abbey of Lérins on the island of Saint Honorat just in front of Cannes on the azure coast. It's in this magnificent landscape that the brothers invite you to share in the silence that favors the climate of prayer and contemplation. Their relationship with the world is illustrated by the Abbey's position on the island of Saint-Honorat, near the coast but separated by the sea: to be "in the world" without being "of the world". The brothers live by the rule of Saint Benedict which combines prayer and work. The abbey is particularly known for its production of good wines and liqueurs. In the 5th century, Saint Honorat was drawn by the monastic ideal and founded the community on the island of Lérina which today has taken the name of the saint. This monastery would rapidly become one of the greatest centers of western monastic tradition in its early years and was responsible for many foundations. The abbey helped Saint Maxim to grow spiritually as well as other bishops in France (the saint founder too, who went on to become bishop of Arles). The bishops of this Abbey participated in the conversion to Christianity of Provence and several well-known saints spent time at the Abbey of Lérins learning about monastic life. Saint Patrick spent time here before going to evangelize Ireland. Transfer to Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (70 miles). Dinner and overnight in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume.

September 19: SAINT-MAXIMIN-LA-SAINTE-BAUME / CASSIS / COTIGNAC
Transfer to Cassis (42 miles). Discover the calanques of Cassis situated near Marseille. They extend along over 20 kms of the Mediterranean coast. The word "calanque" designates in the local dialect a valley cut by a river that is then flooded by the sea. In Cassis, the rugged landscape of the calanques is of staggering beauty. In these enchanting surroundings one can drink a glass of white wine by the port, discover the coastline by boat or walk the path that goes through Cassis. Here is a fabulous stop to marvel before the beauty of the creation! Optional: Possibility to discover the coast by boat. Transfer to Cotignac (62 miles). Visit of the sanctuary Notre-Dame de Grâces in Cotignac, between Cannes and Marseille. A typical village of the Provence region, Cotignac is marked by the apparitions of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus as well as by that of Saint Joseph. These apparitions make this small village the only one in the world where the entire Holy Family has appeared! Pilgrims today can visit the sanctuary, speak and pray with the community of Saint Jean, a dynamic renewal community of apostolic brothers and sisters. The sanctuary was born at the time of the apparition of the Virgin on August 10, 1519. As he had done each day, Jean de la Baume, shepherd in the region, began his day with prayer. On this day the Virgin told him to build a church at this precise spot so that pilgrims might come in procession to receive the grace and gifts that she wanted to grant them. Over the years the chapel became a sanctuary. It is in the 17th century that the most important miracle happened for the French. It was after years of sterility that the royal couple, Anne of Austria and Louis XIII, went on pilgrimage to Cotignac and thanks to their faith, Louis XIV was born. To give thanks and praise King Louis XIII consecrated France to the Virgin Mary. King Louis XIV came in 1660 to thank the Virgin Mary for his life. Transfer to Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (24 miles). Potential meetings with Father Florian Racine, priest of the basilica of Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte- Baume or Father Alexis Wiehe, priest of the cathedral of Toulon or Father Didier Hascouët, prison chaplain. Dinner and overnight in Saint-Maximin

September 20: SAINT-MAXIMIN-LA-SAINTE-BAUME / MARSEILLE
Transfer to Marseille (45 miles). Panoramic tour. Visit the basilica Notre-Dame de la Garde which rises high above Marseille and watches over the city. Also known as the "Good Mother", it is dear to the hearts of all the people of Marseille. Overlooking the port, it offers a splendid view of the Mediterranean. You can also discover the brand new museum of the basilica with its rich collection of ex-votos and liturgical objects that testify of the enormous attachment to Notre-Dame de la Garde throughout history and how culture and architecture are part of prayer. In 1214, a first small chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. As the years went by, the gifts of sailors allowed the chapel to be enlarged. Today's basilica was built in 1853 and has many beautiful ex-votos of sailors, those who returned safely from naval battles and ship wrecks. This devotion to Mary is neither due to an apparition nor to a miracle but to the trusting devotion of missionaries and Marseille sailors toward the Virgin Mary. In the 19th century, when missionaries left for Asia or Africa with no hope of return, the statue of the Virgin and her Child of the basilica is the last image that they had of their country.
Dinner and overnight in Marseille.

September 21: MARSEILLE / NICE / MONACO / NICE