

Familiar with Lourdes? Can you help us to establish a new pilgrimage in 2012?

As you know, the list of the Latin Mass Society's official pilgrimages is ever growing. We've completed several this year (some of which you'll read about in our new 'Diocesan Digest' section opposite) and, at the time of going to press, there were another five either to take place imminently or already scheduled to take place during 2012. The Rosary month of October, for instance, was expected to witness three such one-day events (all of which we'll report on in our next issue): first our pilgrimage to Aylesford Priory, Kent, kindly led by Fr Tim Finigan; then a trip to Oxford in honour of its Catholic Martyrs; and finally a gathering at the Shrine of Our Lady of Willesden, London. We've also got planned our annual national pilgrimage in March to York in honour of St Margaret Clitherow (see pg xx) and, no sooner have pilgrims' feet been soothed after the 55-mile walking trek from Ely to Walsingham (see pg xx), than we've already planned next year's event (24th - 26th August, 2012 - see <http://www.lms.org.uk/news-and-events/pilgrimages> for details or telephone us on 020-7404 7284).

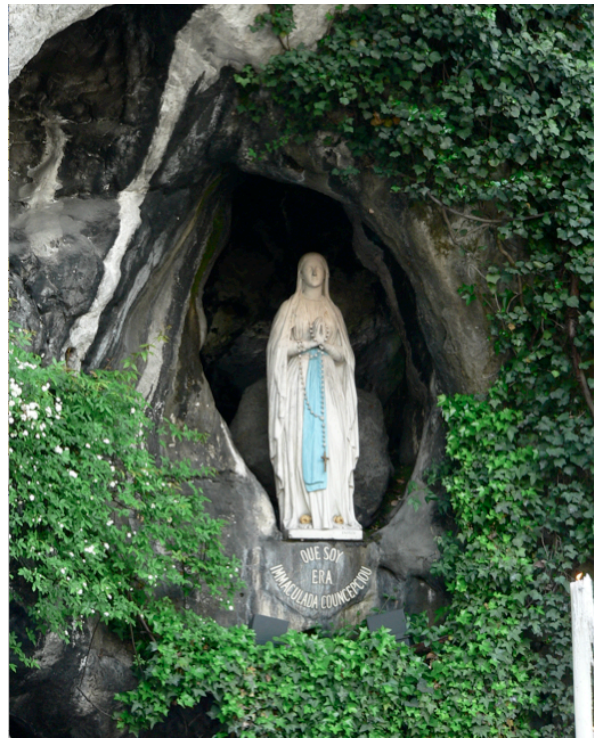
Yes, it's a busy and ever expanding rolling-annual-schedule and really is part and parcel of what the Latin Mass Society is all about. But there's one glaring omission from our annual pilgrimage schedule (well there are a few - but let's not run before we can walk) which is conspicuous by its absence. Lourdes.

There are, of course, reasons. And we have indeed undertaken the occasional LMS pilgrimage to the Grotto. For several reasons, though, it's never become a regular calendar feature. Some reasons have been logistical, some financial and many, simply because of the way our cause has progressed these last 46 years. For we've rather played safe. Open air witness walks through historic UK Catholic cities have been easy to arrange, as have the Masses and other devotions at holy centres where we knew we'd not encounter any, shall we say, charitably, "organisational difficulties".

That's all changed now. Since 2007, we have witnessed the release of Summorum Pontificum (SP) - freeing-up what we knew should never have been restricted anyway - and, just for good measure, last April, the release of the great clarification document (for those who needed it) called Universae Ecclesiae (UE). So, we've concluded - not unreasonably - that all things SP and UE not only apply locally and nationally in our own churches and cathedrals (Mass of Ages will soon be concentrating specifically on the subject of Extraordinary Form provision - or not - in our various mother churches) but also internationally.

That, of course, includes Lourdes (it also includes other major shrines like Fatima - but, like we say, a step at a time). Hence our New Year Resolution - if you will - to establish an official annual, or at least bi-ennial to begin with, Latin Mass Society pilgrimage to Lourdes. Hopefully in 2012.

We're not pretending it won't be a logistical challenge. But with the backing of SP and UE - and the support of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei governing all such traditional activities, we know that's the only



'difficulty' we should face.

And if we can't cope with a few planning headaches then we're not worthy at the Grotto.

We're going for it, then. This is only the first flag-up - more news will come on-stream as it happens (on the website and via Mass of Ages and hopefully a few friendly blogs).

As a first base, we want to sound out any members, or members' friends or family (who may wish to become members! see our form on the back page) who are Lourdes-veterans. We know that for a first pilgrimage we would require plenty of those "who know" to be in the vanguard with us and for us. Is that you? Someone you know?

As our chairman, Dr Joseph Shaw, said: "While we have gradually established the principle that Summorum Pontificum applies at Lourdes, we have not yet, however, obeyed Our Lady's request to 'bring the sick here on pilgrimage'.

"Taking the sick to Lourdes, to be bathed in the waters of the spring Our Lady created for the purpose, is the point of Lourdes, more than of any other shrine. To do this will, however, require a great deal of organisation. "So we're appealing for the help of any members or supporters who are familiar with Lourdes, and pilgrimages there with the sick. We need a team of experienced Lourdes-hands to form a working group to look into every aspect of organising a pilgrimage, to get the project off the ground."

Right, can you help? We just want names and numbers for now. Please let us know by either ringing us: 020-7404 7284 or emailing info@lms.org.uk. Our Lady of Lourdes - pray for us.