

2012

Week 20 - Drawn to Pilgrimage

From all time and in all cultures and religions, there is a 'famine of the heart', a searching for the transcendent, a quest for God. Our human condition is always unfinished. Deep in our souls is a yearning for completion. God has implanted in our hearts a longing for intimacy and belonging. St Augustine said, 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and we are forever restless until we rest in Thee'.

And that is why people are forever on pilgrimage, drawn by a desire for the mystery of God. From the very beginning, people carry lighted candles and other symbols of infinite hope, like we did at the Torchlight and Blessed Sacrament processions in Lourdes; they bathe in water with naked bodies like we did at the Baths or blessed ourselves from the green river of liquid, holy history; they touch the rocks of mother earth like we did at the cave; they take off their shoes when they are on holy ground like we did for those who anointed our tired feet.

Lourdes is the world in microcosm, the church in miniature. All of life is here. It is open to all who are searching for meaning, for healing and for wholeness. It asks no spiritual passport. If your wounded heart is open, it will be healed. Beyond historical facts and proofs, beyond denominational distinctions and conditions, one can hear at Lourdes the voice of a passionate God saying, 'Because I love you so much, I only want to heal you.'

(Passion for the Possible pp 176, 177)