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# *Salford Diocesan Pilgrimage to* **Lourdes 2022**



*“Go and tell the priests to build a chapel here and that people should come in procession”*

June, 2022

Dear Pilgrim,

*“Go and tell the priests to build a chapel here and that people should come in procession.”*

A pilgrimage does not begin when we reach our destination. It starts instead from the moment we set out in our mind to make the journey. For many of us, our pilgrimage this year will have started a long time ago with many trials caused by the challenges of the pandemic. Thank you for your determination to ‘come in procession’ to Lourdes this year to be with members of and pray for our family of the whole diocese of Salford.

As we approach our departure it is important to share important practical information to keep us all safe and assist with travelling together.

Unfortunately, we were forced to cancel the last two pilgrimages to Lourdes due to the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our return this July brings its own challenges. We have a duty and a moral responsibility to follow strict guidelines in place. This will enable us to keep all pilgrims as safe as possible and to reduce any risk, while allowing us to take as many pilgrims as we can.

We must follow UK and French local and national government guidelines applicable at the time of travel and any restrictions that may come into place while we’re away. The Pilgrimage Co-ordination Team have also put into place comprehensive arrangements to enable this year’s Diocesan Pilgrimage to go ahead.

By taking sensible and proportionate measures, we believe we are safe to return to Lourdes. We travel in thanksgiving together in prayer on behalf of everyone in our diocesan family, especially those who would wish to but who cannot travel this year.

## **Pre-departure Mass**

In keeping with the traditions of the pilgrimage, there will be a pre-departure Mass for all those joining the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. This Mass will take place in the Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist, Salford, on Sunday, 24th July at 5.30pm, after which

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*Pilgrimage Office:* Lourdes Pilgrimage Office, Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford Street, Salford M3 6DP

Tel: 0161 817 2209

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Email: [lourdes.pilgrimage@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:lourdes.pilgrimage@dioceseofsalford.org.uk) Website: [www.salfordlourdes.co.uk](http://www.salfordlourdes.co.uk)

refreshments will be served. The Mass will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend but I warmly invite you to attend this Mass in preparation of our journey together.

**Important information about your travel**

Along with your ticket information by Joe Walsh Tours, please find enclosed some further important information from the Co-ordination Team. **We ask that you read this carefully, especially the information on Covid pass requirements to France.**

I hope you will find our pilgrimage a blessed and enjoyable experience.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Michael Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal flourish at the bottom.

Fr. Michael Jones  
Pilgrimage Director

## COVID-19 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please ensure that you have read and understood the following important information. This is based on the latest revised travel information for France (taken from the UK Government Travel Advice on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. For paper copies of this letter please visit <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/entry-requirements> or for electronic copies use the hyperlinks below)

### All travellers

All travellers should familiarise themselves with the entry rules for France before travel.

### If you're fully vaccinated

From 31 March 2022, fully vaccinated (see 'Proof of vaccination status' below) travellers from the UK aged 12 and over must provide proof of vaccination.

Further information can be found on the [French Government's website](#) (in French) and the [French Embassy in the UK's website](#) (in English).

You may also be asked to complete the [EU-PLF form](#) before boarding or upon arrival in France.

### Proof of vaccination status

France will accept the UK's proof of [COVID-19 recovery and vaccination record](#) at the border. The French Government recognises any vaccination certificates that conform to EU norms. This means your **final dose must have been administered at least 7 days prior to travel for Oxford/AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna or 28 days after a second dose of Johnson & Johnson.**

For details on how to demonstrate your COVID-19 status in domestic settings in France, see the [Coronavirus page](#). Your NHS appointment card from vaccination centres is not designed to be used as proof of vaccination and should not be used to demonstrate your vaccine status.

For travellers aged 18 and over, France will recognise you as 'vaccinated' for entry purposes if you completed your initial vaccine course within the last 9 months. If more than 9 months have elapsed since your initial course, and you have not since received a booster, you will be considered unvaccinated and must follow the rules detailed below. Travellers under 18 years old do not require a booster for entry to France.

### **Further information**

If your vaccine certificate shows a different name to your passport (e.g. marital / birth name), please also carry any supporting documentation (e.g. marriage certificate) when travelling.

If using an electronic vaccine certificate, please note that WiFi may not be available in the departure areas. Please download the electronic certificate or print a copy.

Check our COVID-19 advice on things to consider, and be prepared to stay overseas longer than [planned](#).

### **If you're not fully vaccinated**

From 31 March 2022, travellers from the UK aged 12 years and over who are not fully vaccinated need to provide:

- A negative PCR test result taken within 72 hours or an antigen test result taken within 48 hours pre-departure.

Further information can be found on the [French government's website](#) (in French) and the [French Embassy in the UK's website](#) (in English).

You may also be asked to complete the [EU-PLF form](#) before boarding or upon arrival in France.

You should not use the NHS testing service to get a test in order to facilitate your travel to another country. You should arrange to take a [private test from a private coronavirus testing provider](#). Test results must be certified by an approved private test provider to be accepted.

### **Children and young people**

The [French Ministry of the Interior website](#) states that all children under 12 are exempt from all COVID-19 travel restrictions.

For travellers aged 12 to 18, please see the sections above for vaccinated and unvaccinated travellers. In addition, depending on vaccination status and that of any accompanying adult, you may be required to provide other documentation. You should consult the full details on the [French Embassy in the UK's website](#).

## **Check your passport and travel documents before you travel**

### **Passport validity**

Your passport must be:

- Issued less than 10 years before the date you enter the country (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

You must check your passport meets these requirements before you travel. If your passport was issued before 1 October 2018, extra months may have been added to its expiry date.

### **Visas**

British passport holders can travel to countries in the Schengen area, which France is part of, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period without a visa. This applies if you travel as a tourist, to visit family or friends, to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events, or for short-term studies or training.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **Medical support to pilgrims (except Accueil pilgrims)**

Every pilgrim should properly consider their own health, safety and welfare before their pilgrimage to Lourdes. If you are receiving regular medication or treatment at home, you may be required to disclose this in advance to the travel agent or your travel insurer. If this is appropriate, you should have taken steps by now to do this in advance of the pilgrimage. If, before the pilgrimage, you develop medical problems that you are concerned about, you must visit your GP prior to travelling. They have your full medical history and proper facilities to diagnose and treat any complaints.

The limited number of volunteer doctors and restrictions imposed to control the risk of Covid-19 mean there is no availability for doctors or nurses to offer support to pilgrims during the pilgrimage in the event that their medical condition changes.

- Should you require medical assistance from a doctor while we are in Lourdes, please contact your hotel who will be able to call an ambulance or refer you to the urgent care centre in Lourdes.

## **DEPARTING FROM MANCHESER AIRPORT– TERMINAL TWO**

Further significant redevelopment of the airport has occurred since the pilgrimage last travelled from Terminal Two of Manchester Airport. To see the latest information and watch a video showing the changes visit:

<https://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/at-the-airport/terminal-2/>

### **Being dropped off**

Drop-off areas are located directly outside the terminal building at departures level. You can be dropped off outside but can only be there long enough to unload luggage.

You can choose to be dropped off directly outside the terminal. The charge for this is £5 for five minutes and £6 for 10 minutes and is payable at the exit barrier. An overstay charge of £25.00 will apply after 10 minutes.

You can use the free drop off area, located in JetParks 1, but will need to take a short shuttle bus ride to the terminals. The bus operates 24/7.

See a map of the free drop off area - <https://live-webadmin-media.s3.amazonaws.com/media/3728/manchester-airport-forecourts-free-drop-off-map.jpg>

See a map of drop off areas outside the terminals - <https://live-webadmin-media.s3.amazonaws.com/media/3727/manchester-airport-forecourts-map.jpg>

### **Drop off for Blue Badge holders**

If you hold a valid blue badge you will be able to access the forecourt areas, free of charge, for drop-off only.

For more information visit: <https://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/parking/pick-up-and-drop-off-info/blue-badge-holders/>

### **Terminal 2 drop off directions**

Terminal 2 upper forecourt is conveniently located next to the main check-in hall. To access the upper forecourt, exit the M56 at Junction 5 and keep left up the slip road, following the signs for Terminal 2. At the first roundabout, at the top of the slip road, take the 2nd exit, signposted for Terminal 2. At the second roundabout (Flag Island) take the third exit, signposted for T2 'Drop Off'. Take the ramp up to the forecourt, which is conveniently located next to the main check-in hall. There is a dedicated drop-off point on the forecourt located in Zone 2.

For up-to-date information, please visit Manchester Airport's website: <https://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/parking/pick-up-and-drop-off/>

Due to the limited number of volunteers this year, we strongly urge that if you have challenges with mobility that you arrange to be accompanied into the Terminal building with your luggage to check-in. Alternatively, please contact the Pilgrimage Office to discuss your needs.

### **Check-in times**

There is much media coverage at present about delays in security checks at Manchester Airport. As this is a charter aircraft, you are requested to follow the following directions regarding check-in.

Medical, Nursing and General Pilgrimage Volunteers **only** are asked to check-in 3 hours before departure. This is to allow them to be available to assist pilgrims. Volunteers should wear their respective coloured t-shirts to identify them in the airport.

Accueil pilgrims should not arrive to check-in until 2½ hours before departure.

All other pilgrims should not arrive to check-in until 2 hours before departure.

We strongly advise that you adhere to these recommended times for check-in as we hope to minimise disruption to other travellers and make this process as smooth as possible for our pilgrimage.

### **Information for diocesan pilgrims who need a wheelchair**

The pilgrimage co-ordinators try very hard to make provisions for all those travelling to Lourdes with the diocese so they have the opportunity to be involved in all our activities. If you are staying in a hotel you may wish to borrow a wheelchair to help you get around and may be in need of a volunteer helper to assist getting to the services. If you do, you should have notified the pilgrimage office. If you have not done so already, please email: [lourdes.pilgrimage@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:lourdes.pilgrimage@dioceseofsalford.org.uk) or leave a message on the answering service 0161-817 2209.

If you are travelling to Lourdes with your own wheelchair, please make sure that each part of this is properly labelled clearly with your name and hotel in Lourdes. It is possible that handling agents may disassemble your chair to load this onto the aircraft.

If you are travelling without your wheelchair, but need additional support at the airport either in Manchester or in Lourdes you must let the pilgrimage office know as soon as possible, especially if you cannot climb the steps to board the coach for transfer to your hotel.

**Question: I have requested a wheelchair for use at the airport or am travelling with my own wheelchair?**

*All pilgrims who require a wheelchair at the airport or who plan to travel with their own chair and have informed Joe Walsh Tours should report to Terminal 2 where further information will be given. Owing to occasional changes in airport procedures, guidance will be given on the day of departure.*

**Question: If I have booked a wheelchair, when will I receive it?**

*If you require the loan of a wheelchair at the airport, this will be available on the day of your departure/return from the terminal building. Whenever possible, the pilgrimage will meet every request for assistance, subject to the volunteer resources of the pilgrimage and the loan of wheelchairs by others.*

*Our volunteers hope to deliver wheelchairs to the reception area of your hotel by Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> July although this may not be until earlier on Saturday morning. Each wheelchair will be clearly identified with your name and the hotel name and is for your use during the whole of the pilgrimage.*

**Question: What is the first service I will be able to attend if I require wheelchair assistance?**

*Due to the scheduled arrival times the first Mass on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July will be the first celebration during the pilgrimage.*

*For all other services, if you do not have someone to help you or to push your wheelchair, we may be able to provide you with a volunteer to provide assistance though volunteer numbers are limited.*

*Where you have requested this in advance and where we can meet the demand, a volunteer will meet you in the reception of your hotel 45 minutes before each Mass or service. The volunteer will support you travel to the Mass or service and, afterwards, back to your hotel. On some occasions, it may be possible to provide a volunteer to accompany you shopping in Lourdes or a visit within close proximity to the sanctuary. However, times for this will be clearly identified and notified to you in advance. If, for whatever reason, you decide you do not wish to attend a Mass or service, we would be grateful if you could advise the Hotel Leader for your hotel of this as soon as possible as volunteers may be required elsewhere.*

*Please note that, due to the commitments of our volunteer helpers, we are unable to guarantee assistance for those hotel pilgrims who wish to participate in the following pilgrimage activities:*

- *Marian Torchlight Procession, except on the evening(s) when the whole pilgrimage is taking part.*
- *Tour of Lourdes*

- *Volunteer assistance will not be available for the accompanied late-night visit to the Grotto*

*However, should you wish to join in any of these activities, please discuss this on an individual basis with the nominated senior volunteer allocated to your hotel.*

**Question: When and how do I return my wheelchair at the end of the pilgrimage?**

*Your wheelchair will be collected from your hotel on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> August. If you need to keep the wheelchair until the last moments of the Pilgrimage, please speak with the Hotel Leader who will be pleased to assist.*

**Question: What if there is a problem with my wheelchair in Lourdes?**

*Should you have any difficulties with your wheelchair in Lourdes, please contact your hotel leader.*

**Travel information**

Travel information and departure times are enclosed with this letter. If your information appears incorrect, you should contact Joe Walsh Tours directly.

**Drop-in information session**

Pilgrimage volunteers will be available at the Cathedral Centre, Ford Street, Salford on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July from 4.00 p.m. to answer any last-minute questions you may have during an informal drop-in session.

**Pilgrimage Programme**

The full programme will be listed within the pilgrimage handbook as in previous years. Handbooks will be distributed upon check-in at the airport.

**CONSIDERING AND MANAGING THE RISK OF COVID-19**

With regret it has not been possible to accept pilgrims who are extremely vulnerable to the risk of Covid-19. This is due to increased risk of spreading infection and the ability to provide care in the event of infection.

**LOURDES** - at the current time, there is no significant reported outbreak or high level of infection / hospital admissions for any visiting pilgrims.

- A Health Charter has been introduced by the Sanctuary. These strict guidelines, including cleaning protocols must be strictly adhered to.
- Regular cleaning of touchpoints (door handles, elevator buttons etc).
- Hand sanitiser is freely available in multiple areas.

- Masks are compulsory in all indoor areas and within the Sanctuary, even outside areas.

## **COVID INFECTION ON PILGRIMAGE**

Everyone travelling must be aware of the processes that follows a positive Covid-19 test while in France.

Current guidelines may change by the time of the pilgrimage but things to consider include:

- For everyone who develops symptoms of Covid-19 a lateral flow test must be completed (the tour operator will assist in accessing this).

If a lateral flow test is negative no further action is required.

If a lateral flow test is positive:

- Isolation is compulsory until the results of a PCR test are available – this will normally be in your own hotel room. Any roommates will be separated from you. For those in close contact with you lateral flow test is recommended.

If a PCR is positive:

- Isolation in hotel room for 7 days is compulsory.
- Meals will be served in your room.
- Those attending must wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Those who have been in close contact with you may also need to isolate, (roommates will be tested) should they also test positive.
- There may be a need for a family member to fly out to Lourdes to accompany a pilgrim who is unwell and needs assistance but not enough that warrants a hospital admission. This will be handled by the tour operator, who will assist with arrangements and involving the insurer. This family member must be identified prior to travel.
- If members of the volunteer team become unwell there will be an effect on the remainder whose workload will increase.
- There will be a delayed return to the UK for anyone who tests positive.
- In the event of hospitalisation of any Accueil pilgrims, support from the Medical and Nursing team in Lourdes will be transferred to the local health services, with assistance from the tour operator and continuity of care could therefore be affected. Regrettably the Medical and Nursing team will not be able to visit you in hospital to avoid potential transmission of the virus.