



MARIAN SHRINES OF WESTERN EUROPE

A 12-Day Pilgrimage
with Fr. Therasian Xavier, SSPX

APRIL 15-26, 2024



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Emergency Contact Numbers.....	3
Flight Schedule	4
Airport check-in.....	4
Luggage Restrictions	4
Meeting Point in Lisbon.....	5
Hotel Information.....	6
Practical Information.....	7
Dress Code	7
Pilgrimage Participants	7
Daily Mass	7
Meals.....	7
Weather	7
Hotel Amenities.....	8
Electricity & Travel Adaptors.....	8
Punctuality	8
Walking/Assistance	9
Tour escort and local guides	9
Currency.....	9
Exchanging money and making purchases.....	9
Tipping.....	10
Mass Stipends	10
Calling home	10
Travel insurance	10
Travel Tips	11
What We Suggest You Pack	11
Good To Know.....	12
Itinerary.....	14
Terms & Conditions.....	25
Pilgrimage Sites Information	26

Welcome to your Marian Shrines of Western Europe Pilgrimage!

This information booklet is designed to help you better prepare for your pilgrimage. **We ask you to read it before departure**, as it includes important information and documentation.

If you have any questions, please email us at info@reginapilgrimages.com. Thank you for choosing Regina Pilgrimages; enjoy your trip!

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Tesi Rocha will be the group coordinator and will meet the group in Lisbon. You will be receiving her cell phone number via email.

Your Tour Escort will be Joao Filipe Parracho, and his cell number is (+351) 918 991 053. He will also be meeting the group at the Lisbon airport.

If you cannot get through to your tour escort, please call our representatives in Europe at any time (+34) 911981234 or (+33) 182885412 and reference group **GUS-315**. Or you may call Ben Moats from Regina Pilgrimages at (816) 210-2108.

Emergency Numbers in France, Spain, Portugal

Ambulance	112	112	112
Fire	112	112	112
Police	112	112	112

Travel Insurance:

Travel insurance is not included in the trip price. To find out more about travel insurance, please visit <https://www.reginapilgrimages.com/travel-insurance>.

Passengers who purchased travel insurance through AIG Travel Guard:

Should you need emergency assistance while traveling, you can reach an emergency assistance counselor 24/7 by calling toll free (855) 203-5962 within the U.S. or internationally by calling collect 1-715-345-0505. You will need to provide your policy number.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

with American Airlines (AA)

Date	Flight	From	To	Departure	Arrival
April 15 Monday	AA 258	Philadelphia (PHL)	Lisbon (LIS)	9:25PM	9:05AM April 16
April 26 Friday	AA 743	Barcelona (BCN)	Philadelphia (PHL)	10:40AM	1:15PM

Please note:

For passengers traveling with the air package, the air confirmation numbers are **CKZDJV and DXNCTU**.

All air tickets are electronic. Check-in and seat selection are available online for a fee. Seat assignments are free at the airline counter at the time of check-in before departure.

If you are flying into Philadelphia to connect with the group's transatlantic flight, you will need to pick up any checked luggage and re-check it.

** For information on luggage restrictions, please refer to that section.

Airport check-in

It is important that you arrive at the airport at least three hours before departure time for your transatlantic flight and two hours before departure time for your domestic flight(s).

Luggage Restrictions

Please keep in mind that the portorage of only **one suitcase per person** is included at the hotels. During the trip, passengers are responsible for transporting their carry-on(s) to and from the motor-coach.

American Airlines allows one free checked bag per passenger on international flights. **It should not weigh more than 50 lbs. (23 kg)** and the total of the three dimensions (L+W+H) should not exceed 62 inches.

American Airlines allows one carry-on bag not exceeding 22 x 14 x 9 inches (including handles and wheels).

If you are flying with several airlines, please note that baggage regulations may vary during your journey. For the most current information and restrictions, please visit each airline's website.

During the pilgrimage, your suitcase will be stowed under the motor-coach during travel.

MEETING POINT IN LISBON

For pilgrims traveling with the group air reservation, the meeting point is in Philadelphia (PHL) airport, at the appropriate gate for AA flight 258 to Lisbon.

All group members will meet at 9:05am at the international arrivals hall of Lisbon airport on Tuesday, April 16 immediately outside the customs area. There you will find your Tour Escort with a sign that reads: *SSPX Marian Shrines of Western Europe, Fr. Therasian Xavier*. If you arrive on April 16, you will need to pick up your luggage and go through customs before reaching the arrivals hall. The group will board the motor-coach and head to Santarem directly from the airport.

Passengers traveling on international flights different from the group's: If a passenger's outbound flight is delayed or cancelled, they will be responsible for an independent transfer to the group's hotel in Fatima.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Accommodations will be provided in the following hotels or similar.

Nights	Hotel / City	Hotel Contact Information
April 16 & 17	Hotel Santa Maria Fatima	R. de Santo António 79, 2495-430 Fátima, Portugal Phone: (+351) 249 530 110 https://www.hotelstmaria.com/en/
April 18 & 19	Hotel Gran Corona Sol Salamanca	Victor García de la Concha s/n, 37007 Salamanca, Spain Phone: (+34) 923 281 616 https://www.gran-hotelcoronasol.es/en/
April 20	Hotel Abba Burgos Burgos	C. de Fernán González, 72 09003 Burgos, Spain Phone: (+34) 947 00 11 00 https://www.abbahoteles.com/en/destinations/abba-burgos-hotel/hotel.html
April 21 & 22	Hotel Padoue Lourdes	1, rue Reine Astrid 65100 Lourdes, France Phone: (+33) 5 62 53 07 00 https://www.hotelpadoue.fr/en/hotel-in-lourdes-france
April 23	NH Gran Hotel Zaragoza	Joaquin Costa 5 500001 Zaragoza, Spain Phone: (+34) 97 6221901 https://www.nh-hotels.com/en/hotel/nh-collection-gran-hotel-de-zaragoza
April 24 & 25	Hotel Abad Cisneros Montserrat	Monasterio de Montserrat s/n, Montserrat 08199, Spain Phone: (+34) 9387 7770 https://www.montserratvisita.com/en/organize-the-visit/where-to-sleep/hotel-abat-cisneros-

NOTE: The country calling code for Portugal is +351; for Spain +34; and for France +33.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Dress Code

All pilgrims are asked to follow the usual Catholic norms of modesty in dress and behavior, in a way befitting a son or daughter of God and a temple of the Holy Ghost, while also being sensitive to the nature of the mixed company on the pilgrimage.

LADIES: no sleeveless or low-cut blouses/shirts; skirts or dresses should be worn at all times and should fall below the knee when standing or sitting.

MEN: no cutoffs, sleeveless shirts, or short shorts; please keep a dignified haircut.

The chaplain and/or one of the pilgrimage leaders will address an individual in person if we see them not following the dress code, so please do your best to avoid this by following the above guidelines. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Pilgrimage Participants

Regina Pilgrimages are designed for faithful of the Society of St. Pius X. Regina Pilgrimages reserves the right to accept or reject any person as a pilgrimage participant and to expel from the pilgrimage any participant whose conduct is deemed incompatible with the group's interest.

Daily Mass

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be celebrated daily by a priest of the Society of St. Pius X. Attendance is not obligatory.

Meals

All breakfasts, all dinners but one, and three lunches are included on this trip. For the non-included lunches, the group will stop for lunch where there will be various choices for purchasing food. The prices will vary from a simple sandwich meal for approximately 12 Euros to a sit-down lunch of 15-20 Euros per person. Independent dinner will cost approximately 25-30 Euros per person.

Weather

Expect high temperatures to be in the low 60's and lower temperatures to be in the low 40's. These are average temperatures for this time of year. For

temperature changes, a hat and a wind/rain coat are always handy; do not forget to bring them with you.

Hotel Amenities

Laundry. Some of the hotels will have laundry service available. However, to request this service, we must be spending at least two nights at that hotel. Make sure you know and agree to the fees.

Hair dryers. All hotels on this trip offer hair dryers in the guest rooms, except at the last hotel in Montserrat where they are available upon request. *Important: Make sure you pack an adaptor (see next section).*

Wi-Fi. All hotels on this trip offer free Wi-Fi. To access it, you may need to ask for the username and password at the reception desk.

Electricity & Travel Adaptors

Europe's electrical system is different from ours in two ways: the voltage of the current and the shape of the plug.

American appliances run on 110 volts, while European appliances are 220 volts. Many gadgets are "dual voltage," which means they work on both American and European current. If you see a range of voltages printed on the item or its plug (such as "110–220"), you're OK in Europe. Some appliances have a voltage switch marked 110 (US) and 220 (Europe) — switch it to 220 as you pack.

So if you are planning to bring an electric shaver, flat iron or curling iron, be sure that they convert to 220V electric current.

If your device is dual voltage, such as iPhones, then you will only need an adaptor. If it's not, then you will need a converter.

A small adaptor allows American-style plugs (two flat prongs) to fit into British or Irish outlets (which take three rectangular prongs) or continental European outlets (which take two round prongs). Adaptors are inexpensive — bring a handful, and don't forget them at the hotels!

Punctuality

Please keep in mind that you are part of a group and that the group is on a strict time schedule in order to cover all the sites on the itinerary. This is why it is most important to be punctual at all times. This shows consideration towards the tour escort and the other group members.

Walking/Assistance

Please keep in mind that since this is a pilgrimage, there will be quite a bit of walking, including climbing stairs. If you need assistance in walking or climbing, please have your travel companion assist you, since there will be no paid help available. You may want to consider bringing a light, folding stool.

Tour escort and local guides

Benefit from the services of the professional tour escort and the local guides. Besides giving you the insight of the visited places, they can help you to find a good restaurant, shopping stores and give you other tips.

Currency

The currency used in Spain, Portugal and France is the Euro. At the time of printing, 1 Euro is US \$1.09.

Exchanging money and making purchases

Take some cash with you, but **our advice is to make your purchases with a credit or debit card wherever possible** so that you do not carry too much cash.

You may exchange money at the Lisbon airport. Money can be exchanged at ATM machines or currency exchange businesses. (Banks in Europe do not usually exchange dollars for the local currency. Some hotels will exchange dollars for you; however, their rates may be unfavorable.) For better exchange rates, **we recommend that you use ATM machines to withdraw money in the local currency.** ATMs are quite common and there will be opportunities throughout the trip to exchange your money should you need to.

If you would like to obtain Euros before traveling, please contact your bank and ask how you can obtain them. Also, at the airport before departing for your international flight, you may find a currency exchange business where you can exchange dollars for euros.

Make sure that you contact your credit card supplier before you leave to let them know you will be making transactions from another country. Ask them about additional charges on foreign purchases and cash from ATM machines. You will be surprised to know that each credit card company charges different fees.

It is important that prior to your trip, your credit card supplier provides you with a PIN number to withdraw money from the ATM machines. **Without the PIN number you will not be able to take money out of ATM machines.**

IMPORTANT: When making a purchase at an establishment, it is best to request that the charge be made in the local currency. Otherwise, if the establishment charges you in US dollars, they may use a higher exchange rate that will be to your disadvantage.

Please know that some establishments may only accept cash for small purchases; and, although it is rare, some smaller establishments may only accept cash.

Tipping

Gratuities to the tour escort, local guides, and driver are not included in the pilgrimage price. Gratuities recommended for the tour escort are of 6 Euros per day per person; for the driver 4 Euros per day per person; and for the local guides 1-2 Euros per person. We suggest tipping the tour escort and driver individually the last day of travel. Tipping is at your discretion and according to the quality of the services rendered. Courtesy envelopes to use for tipping have been included in your box of final travel documents.

Mass Stipends

Mass stipends are not included in the pilgrimage price. For the Holy Masses, it is customary to give a stipend usually of 1 Euro per person in each chapel where the Holy Sacrifice is offered.

We also advise you to give our SSPX priest a stipend in thanksgiving for the Masses he celebrated during the pilgrimage. A courtesy envelope to use for a Mass stipend has been included in your box of final travel documents.

Calling home

Having a cell phone with you during your trip is essential for you to be reached, contact the tour guide, view trip documents, or to use in case of an emergency. Please contact your cell phone service provider and ask how you can use your phone in Europe.

Travel insurance

Trip cancellation and interruption insurance is not included in the pilgrimage price. Travel insurance can protect your investment in case of trip cancellation/interruption, and can help you cover expenses while you travel in case of trip delay, baggage delay/loss, accident, sickness, etc. To purchase, visit www.reginapilgrimages.com/travel-insurance.

TRAVEL TIPS

As your pilgrimage fast approaches, we would like to give you some travel tips so that you can make the most of your trip!

What We Suggest You Pack

1. **Take comfortable shoes.** Make sure they have thick enough soles for walking on rough terrain.
2. **Include in your carry-on for the plane an extra set of clothes.** Should the worst happen and your bag is delayed, you will have a change of clothes until your bag catches up with you. If you must take daily medication, bring a two-day supply with you in the carry-on.
3. **Take versatile pieces.** Team wardrobe pieces in many combinations to get the most out of your clothes.
4. **Plan to wear each item several times during the trip.** Choose clothing that is easy to care for – wrinkle resistant, hand washable, and quick drying. Take a compact laundry kit along to wash as you go.
5. **Pack for comfort.** Choose clothing made of stretchy fabrics, expandable waistbands, and non-binding collars and cuffs. Make sure these fabrics resist wrinkles to avoid the folded-in-suitcase look.
6. **Take two sets of all prescription medicines** that you must take and pack them in different locations in case one bag is delayed. Also, bring a copy of your written prescriptions, including those for eyeglasses and contacts.
7. Take with you a **small umbrella** or raincoat.
8. Take an inflatable **neck pillow** so that you can sleep comfortably on the plane and on the motor-coach.
9. If you are planning to bring an electric shaver, flat iron or curling iron, be sure that they convert to 220V electric current. (All the hotels for this trip offer a hairdryer in each room.)
10. Purchase and bring an **adaptor**, as the outlets in Europe are not the same as the ones in the US.
11. You may also want to take a washcloth, as some hotels may not offer them.
12. Packing a small pair of **binoculars** can help enjoy a beautiful view or better admire details.
13. Bring a **missal, rosary**, and for the ladies, a **chapel veil**.

Good To Know

1. **Never leave your hand luggage unattended** or out of sight in public areas, including airports, hotel lobbies or dining rooms. Please, at all times, be as vigilant as you would be in any major city, especially in crowded places.
2. **Acceptable ID for check-in.** A valid passport with expiration date at least 6 months after traveling dates is required for all participants. As of March 2024, US citizens do not require a tourist visa for the visited countries. Other nationalities, please contact the proper embassy or consulate.
3. **We strongly recommend that you make photocopies of your passport, credit cards, and wallet contents** and leave these copies at home in case anything is lost.
4. **We also recommend that you attach a sticker to your passport** stating who to contact in case it is found. You may want to put the information for your emergency contact person in the United States, since you will be traveling.
5. **No money, important documents, medicines or jewelry should be left in your suitcase;** please leave valuable jewelry at home. We recommend use of a money belt or neck wallet, worn inside your clothes (on departure from your hotel room, remember to double check that you have this with you, and that you have collected items left in hotel safes).
6. **Liquids in carry-ons.** Please check www.tsa.gov and the airline's website for the most current information.
7. **No sharp objects should be kept in your hand luggage during flights.** All items such as scissors, nail clippers, nail files, razor blades, pocketknives, etc. should be packed in the luggage you will be checking in; otherwise, they are likely to be confiscated. Please visit www.tsa.gov for current airport screening tips.
8. **At churches,** large backpacks may not be allowed – use the smaller kind that can be carried under the arm.

Regina Pilgrimages presents:

MARIAN SHRINES OF WESTERN EUROPE

A 12-Day Pilgrimage

WITH FR. THERASIAN XAVIER

APRIL 15-26, 2024



RELIGIOUS HIGHLIGHTS

Santarem: Eucharistic miracle

Fatima: Basilica with relics of shepherd children, apparition sites, the shepherds' family homes

Salamanca: Old and New Cathedrals, Our Lady de la Vega

Avila & Alba de Tormes: St. Teresa of Avila

Burgos: Cathedral with the tomb of El Cid and his wife

Loyola: House of St. Ignatius

Lourdes: sites related to St. Bernadette and the apparitions of Our Lady

Zaragoza: Our Lady of the Pillar, St. Dominguito de Val, St. Pedro de Arbues

Manresa: Cave where St. Ignatius wrote his Spiritual Exercises

Montserrat: Our Lady of Montserrat, where St. Ignatius put down his sword

ITINERARY

Day 1. Monday, April 15: Transatlantic flight to Lisbon

Day 2. Tuesday, April 16: Lisbon – Santarem

Upon arrival into Lisbon, travel north to visit the site of the Eucharistic Miracle of Santarem. Continue on to Fatima to visit the Chapel of Apparitions and the Basilica of Fatima that houses the tombs of Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia. Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner and overnight in Fatima. (WD)

Memoirs

Day 3. Wednesday, April 17: Fatima

Make the Way of the Cross on the path from Cova de Iria to Aljustrel, following the way that the little shepherds used to take. After arriving, visit Aljustrel, the shepherds’ town. Return to Fatima for some leisure time. Dinner and overnight in Fatima. (BB, D)

Memoirs

Day 4. Thursday, April 18: Fatima – Salamanca

Early this morning, travel to Salamanca, Spain. Have a walking tour of downtown Salamanca with visits to the new and old Cathedrals, the Shrine of the Virgen de la Vega, patroness of Salamanca, and the Episcopal Palace. Dinner and overnight in Salamanca. (BB, D)

Memoirs

Day 5. Friday, April 19: Salamanca – Excursion to Avila and Alba de Tormes
Journey towards Avila and marvel at its preserved medieval wall. Visit the church and museum of St. Teresa, built in the house where she was born. In the afternoon, visit La Encarnacion Monastery where St. Teresa lived for more than 20 years. Continue to Alba de Tormes to visit the museum/convent of the Carmelite Mothers where St. Teresa's remains are kept. Return to Salamanca for independent dinner and overnight. (BB, L)

Memoirs

Day 8. Monday, April 22: Lourdes

Morning at leisure for baths and personal devotions at the Grotto in Lourdes. In the afternoon, take a walking tour of the places related to St. Bernadette. Visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes and pray at the Stations of the Cross. Dinner and overnight in Lourdes. (BB, D)

Memoirs

Day 10. Wednesday, April 24: Zaragoza – Montserrat

Make a morning visit to Zaragoza’s Cathedral, one of the most beautiful churches in Spain with magnificent side chapels. Render homage to St. Dominguito de Val and St. Pedro Arbues buried in their side chapels. In the afternoon, travel to the Shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat. Dinner and overnight at Montserrat Abbey. (BB, D)

Memoirs

Day 11. Thursday, April 25: Montserrat – Afternoon excursion to Manresa

Travel to Manresa to visit the cave where St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote his Spiritual Exercises. Return to Montserrat for a guided sightseeing tour of Montserrat Abbey. Afterwards, take time on your own to explore the shrine. Farewell dinner and overnight in Montserrat. (BB, L, FD)

Memoirs

Day 12. Friday, April 26: Homebound Flight

Early transfer to Barcelona airport for your flight back home. (Boxed Breakfast)

Memoirs

Buffet Breakfast (BB), Lunch (L), Dinner (D), Welcome Dinner (WD), Farewell Dinner (FD)

***Please note:** Each day’s sightseeing gives priority to the Mass schedule. Therefore, the order of visits may change. In case of unforeseen events, this itinerary is subject to change.*

*If you need further information, we will be glad to assist you.
Please contact Regina Pilgrimages at
info@reginapilgrimages.com.*

*We wish you a wonderful trip
full of precious memories and blessings!*

TERMS & CONDITIONS

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE

Regina Pilgrimages' itineraries depend mainly on the opening times of the visited shrines and on the celebration of Holy Mass. Therefore, in order to cover the activities of the day, breakfast will be scheduled early and dinner will be late in the evening, as is the custom in Europe. Pilgrimage itineraries are prepared in advance and are subject to change.

GROUP TRAVEL

This is a group pilgrimage – not an individual trip – with its goal being the benefit of the group as a whole. All planned activities are for the entire group; therefore, passengers are expected, but not required, to participate in these activities. One may choose not to participate in parts of the sightseeing; however, there is no refund for missed sightseeing.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Participants will take full responsibility for being fully able to participate in the daily scheduled activities of the group, noting that pilgrimages organized by Regina Pilgrimages require physical fitness in order to keep up with the group pace. There is daily walking, sometimes up or down slopes, and at times sidewalks and terrain may be uneven. Each participant is responsible for keeping up with the group pace. Regina Pilgrimages is not responsible for any medical condition that occurs prior, during or after the trip. We recommend preparing oneself by walking before the trip. One may choose not to participate in parts of the sightseeing; however, there is no refund for missed sightseeing. *For their safety, passengers 80 years of age and older as well as anyone in need of walking assistance are required to be accompanied by a travel companion who can assist.*

RESPONSIBILITY & LIABILITY

Regina Pilgrimages acts only as an agent for the various independent suppliers that provide hotel accommodations, transportation, sightseeing, activities, or other services connected with this pilgrimage. Such services are subject to the terms and conditions of those suppliers. Regina Pilgrimages and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability whatsoever for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or any other incident which may be caused by the negligence, defect, default of any company or person in performing these services. Responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, mental disorders, weather, pandemics, strikes, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, local laws or other such causes.

TRAVEL ADVISORIES

From time to time the State Department (www.state.gov) and other government agencies and departments issue travel advisories or warnings for one or more of the destinations that participants may be visiting on their pilgrimage. We encourage participants to contact these agencies directly to obtain the most current information. Regina Pilgrimages cannot change the cancellation terms or conditions based on the issuance of any such warning or advisory or the occurrence of any terror, health or other incident in one or more of the places this pilgrimage is scheduled to visit. All cancellation penalties must remain in full force and effect as outlined in this trip's Terms and Conditions.

For Regina Pilgrimages' general Terms & Conditions, please refer to <https://www.reginapilgrimages.com/terms-conditions-general>.

PILGRIMAGE SITES INFORMATION

SANTAREM

The story of the miracle centers on an early 13th-century woman with an unfaithful husband. Desperate to regain his faithfulness and save her marriage, she consulted a sorceress. The sorceress said she would cure the husband's infidelity for the price of a consecrated host. After much deliberation, the woman decided to commit the sacrilege.

The next time she attended Mass at the 12th-century Church of St. Stephen, she took the consecrated host from her mouth, wrapped it in a veil and headed quickly for the door. But before she had taken more than a few steps, the host began to bleed. It bled so much that concerned parishioners thought she had cut her hand and attempted to help, but she ran to her house.

Back at home, she placed the bloody host in a trunk in her bedroom. Her husband did not come home until late, as usual. In the darkness of the room, a great miracle occurred. From the trunk brilliant rays of light shined through, awakening the couple. The woman no longer contained herself and confessed the great sin to her husband. Both repented and spent the rest of the night kneeling in adoration and reparation before the miraculous host. The next morning, the couple told the parish priest what had happened. The priest placed the miraculous host in a wax container and returned the host to the Church of St. Stephen in a solemn procession, accompanied by many priests and lay people. The host continued to bleed for three days. Finally, it was decided to place the holy host (still bleeding) in a reliquary made of beeswax.

The next time the priest opened the tabernacle that contained the miraculous host, another miracle occurred! The wax container was found broken into pieces, and the host was enclosed in a crystal pyx. **This pyx was placed in a silver monstrance, where it can be seen today.**

After an investigation, the Catholic Church approved the recognition of the miracle. The Church of St. Stephen was renamed the Church of the Holy Miracle, and it is one of Portugal's most visited pilgrimage sites.

Through the centuries, the host has bled repeatedly and several images have been seen in the host, images of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Among the many

witnesses, is St. Francis Xavier, the missionary apostle of India who visited the Church of the Holy Miracle before setting off for missionary work.

Since the occurrence of the miracle until today, every year, on the second Sunday of April, the Eucharistic Miracle is taken in procession from the house where the couple lived and the miracle occurred, the Via delle Stucie, to the Church of the Miracle. The house has been a chapel since 1684.

The Eucharistic Miracle of Santarem is considered the most important after the Miracle of Lanciano (Italy). Studies and canonical investigations have been made during the years, the most important ones being in 1340 and 1612, which proved without doubt the authenticity and antiquity of the Eucharistic Miracle.

Only once did the Eucharistic Miracle of Santarem leave the city, when Napoleon's troops invaded Portugal in 1810. Threatened by the French and fearing profanation, the Eucharist was taken to Lisbon, to the Church of Pacao. The people of Santarem protested that time had passed and the Eucharistic Miracle was not returned to them. The Eucharistic Miracle was returned in secret, to prevent resistance from the capitalians, who were not informed of the Eucharistic Miracle returning to Santarem on December 2, 1811.

The Holy Blood still remains liquefied, 750 years after the miracle occurred. The old, original group (Real Brotherhood of the Sacred Miracle) in charge of safekeeping the Holy Miracle still exists today.

St. Isabel of Portugal, like most of Portugal's Kings of that time, visited the Eucharistic Miracle. Her first visit was during her trip to Coimbra coinciding with the feast of St. Irene. The second visit was to request before the Holy Miracle peace between her husband, King Dionysius and her son, the future Alfonso VI, who were in discord. She requested the Holy Host be taken in procession in the streets. She herself accompanied the procession, deposing of her royal vestments, her crown and jewels. She covered herself with ashes, walked barefoot, with a rope around her neck. This act of penance from the Queen was very pleasing to the Lord, granting her the grace of peace and reconciliation between her husband and son.

St. Francis Xavier visited most of the sanctuaries of Portugal. He also visited the Church of the Holy Miracle before being sent to missions in India by the King of Portugal. St. Francis Xavier's image is venerated in the Church of the Miracle. Queen Isabel of Aragon also visited Santarem in 1295 and 1322.

Adoration Prayer

I adore You, O Jesus, God of Love, truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I adore You Who has come to Your Own but were not received by them. I adore You, Whom the majority of mankind rejected and despised. I adore You, Whom the impious incessantly offend by their sacrileges and blasphemies. I adore You, Who are grieved by the coldness and indifference of a vast number of Christians. I adore You, O Infinite Goodness, Who has wrought so many miracles, in order to reveal Your love to us. I adore You, with all the angels and saints, and with those chosen souls that are now already the blessed of Your Father and are all aglow with burning love for You. I adore You with all Your friends, O Jesus! With them I prostrate myself at the foot of the Altar, to offer You my most profound homage, to receive Your Divine Inspiration, and to implore Your grace. Oh, how good it is for me to be here with You! How sweet to hear the Voice of my Beloved! O Victim of Divine Love! A piercing cry breaks forth from Your Heart here on the Altar, as it once did on Calvary; it is the cry of Love; "I thirst," You call to Your children, "I thirst for Your love! Come all, whom I love as My Father has loved Me; come and quench the thirst that consumes Me!

Lord Jesus, behold I come. My heart is small, but it is all Yours. You are a prisoner in our Tabernacles, You the Lord of Lords! And love it is, that holds You here as such! You leave the Tabernacle only to come to us, to unite Yourself with the faithful soul and allow Your Divine Love to reign within. O King of Love! Come, live and reign in me. I want no other law but the law of Your Love! No, no, I henceforth desire to know nothing, neither of this world nor of what is in it, nor of myself; Your Love alone shall rule in me eternally.

O Jesus, grant me this grace! Break all my fetters, strip me of all that is not of Yourself, in order that Your Love may be my life here below, and my happiness and delight in eternity, Amen.

FATIMA

On the 13th of each month from May to October 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children – Lucia dos Santos (age 10) and her cousins Jacinta (age 7) and Francisco Marto (age 9) – in the fields outside the village of Aljustrel near Fatima, Portugal. The children later said that her coming had been preceded by an "Angel of peace" who appeared in 1916. Lucia described her vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary as "more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun."

According to Lucia's account, Our Lady exhorted the children to do penance to save sinners. They wore tight cords around their waists to cause pain, abstained from drinking water on hot days, and other works of penance. Most importantly, she asked them to say the Rosary every day. She reiterated many times that devotion to the Rosary was the key to personal and world peace. Many young Portuguese men, including relatives of the visionaries, were then fighting in World War I.

Lucia later reported that during the second apparition on June 13, the Blessed Virgin Mary predicted the deaths of two of the children. When Lucia asked the Virgin to take them to heaven soon, Our Lady replied, "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."

Francisco and Jacinta Marto

Francisco and Jacinta both fell victim to the Influenza Epidemic of 1919. Francisco declined hospital treatment and died peacefully at home, while Jacinta was taken from one hospital to another in an attempt to save her life which she insisted was futile. She developed purulent pleurisy and endured an operation in which two of her ribs were removed. Because of the condition of her heart, she could not be anesthetized and suffered terrible pain, which she said would help to convert many sinners. On February 20, 1920 Jacinta asked the hospital chaplain who heard her confession to bring her Holy Communion and give her the Anointing of the Sick because she was going to die "this very night". He told her that her condition was not that serious, and that he would return the next day. A few hours later Jacinta entered into eternity. She had died, as she had often said she would, alone. Jacinta's and Francisco's bodies were exhumed in 1935 and again in 1951. Francisco and Jacinta were declared "venerable" by Pope John Paul II in a public ceremony at Fatima on May 13, 1989 and Pope John Paul returned on May 13, 2000 to declare them "Blessed." Jacinta is the youngest non-martyred child ever to be beatified.

Sister Lucia

Sr. Lucia moved to Oporto in 1921, and at 14 was admitted as a boarder in the school of the Sisters of Dorothy in Vilar, at the city outskirts. On October 24, 1925 she entered as a postulant in the Institute of the Sisters of St. Dorothy.

Sr. Lucia saw the Blessed Virgin Mary again in 1925 at the Dorothean convent at Pontevedra, Spain, and was asked to convey the message of the First Saturday Devotions. Sr. Lucia was transferred to a convent in Tuy, Spain, in 1928. In 1929, Sr. Lucia reported that Our Lady returned and repeated her

request for the Consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. Sr. Lucia reportedly saw the Blessed Virgin Mary in private visions off and on throughout her life. Most significant was the apparition in Rianxo, Spain in 1931, in which Our Lord taught Sr. Lucia two prayers and delivered a message to give to the hierarchy of the Church.

In 1947 after receiving special papal permission, Sr. Lucia left the Dorothean order and joined the Carmelite order in a convent in Coimbra, Portugal, where she resided until her death on February 13, 2005 at the age of 97.

Prayer taught to the Little Shepherds of Fatima by the Angel of Peace

*Most Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
I adore Thee profoundly and I offer Thee
the most precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ,
present in all the tabernacles of the world,
in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges,
and indifferences by which He is offended.
And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart
and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I beg Thee for the conversion of poor sinners. Amen.*

The Message of Fatima: penance, prayer and devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

1. PENANCE

In the Gospels, the word penance means a conversion of one's life, a turning away from sin, and returning to God. As Our Lady insisted at Fatima: *"Men must amend their lives, and ask pardon for their sins. . . . They must no longer offend Our Lord, Who is already so much offended."* The Fatima message is a call for men to give up sinful practices which grieve God and draw down His chastisements on the world, and to make reparation for them. Commenting on Our Lady's request for penance, Sr. Lucia wrote: *"The part of the last apparition which has remained most deeply imprinted on my heart is the prayer of our heavenly Mother begging us not to offend any more Almighty God, Who is already so much offended."*

Jacinta, too, shortly before her death remarked: *"If men only knew what eternity is, how they would make all possible efforts to amend their lives . . . mortification and sacrifice give great pleasure to Our Divine Lord."*

In August of 1917, Our Lady told the children, *“pray much and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because there is no one to make sacrifices for them.”* As to the kinds of sacrifices Our Lady was asking, she revealed to Sr. Lucia on one occasion: *“The good Lord is allowing Himself to be appeased . . . but He Himself complains most bitterly and sorrowfully about the small number of souls in His grace who are willing to renounce whatever the observance of His laws requires of them.”*

“Many persons,” Sr. Lucia explained, *“feeling that the word penance implies great austerities, and not feeling that they have the strength for great sacrifices, become discouraged and continue a life of lukewarmness and sin.”* Then she said Our Lord explained to her: *“The sacrifice required of every person is the fulfillment of his duties in life and the observance of My law. This is the penance that I now seek and require.”*

In this materialistic culture in which we live, almost heroic virtue is required to be faithful to the duties of the Christian life. Yet, over and above those sacrifices *“required of every person,”* the children of Fatima practiced many little acts of mortification and renunciation on their own will. It is hoped that many devotees of Our Lady will not be content with the minimum required and will not pass up opportunities of voluntary mortification, placing in the hands of Our Lady the fruits of the little trials, frustrations and irritations of each day accepted with patience and resignation.

It was in this same spirit that the Angel spoke to the children in 1916: *“Offer up everything in your power as a sacrifice to the Lord in reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners . . . More than all else, accept and bear with resignation the sufferings that God may send you.”*

2. PRAYER

Besides a call to penance, Fatima is in a special way a call for the Rosary. So central is the Rosary to the Fatima message that Our Lady chose to identify herself as *“The Lady of the Rosary.”* In each of the six apparitions she asked for the daily Rosary, and especially as an instrument of world peace. As she revealed in the third apparition: *“You must recite the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war for only she can obtain this.”* In this Our Lady renewed her request for the prayer she gave to the Church centuries before, a prayer that has proven a powerful weapon against the enemies of Christianity as history testifies.

When asked about the importance of the Rosary, Sr. Lucia responded: *“My impression is that the Rosary is of greatest value not only according to the words of Our Lady at Fatima, but according to the effects of the Rosary one sees throughout history. My impression is that Our Lady wanted to give ordinary people, who might not know how to pray, this simple method of getting closer to God.”*

It is so pleasing to Our Lady, because it brings us to review again and again the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the mysteries of our redemption. After repeatedly asking for the daily Rosary, and identifying herself as *“The Lady of the Rosary,”* the Blessed Mother terminated the final apparition by showing the children three separate tableaux symbolizing the entire message of the Rosary. The first was a vision of the Holy family - representing the joyful mysteries; the second a vision of Our Lady of Sorrows - representing the sorrowful mysteries; and the third a vision of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - representing the glorious mysteries.

3. DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

In 1916, a year before the apparitions of Our Lady, the Angel of Peace appeared to the children to prepare them for things to come. *“The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy for you,”* he said. *“Offer unceasingly to the Most High prayer and sacrifices.”*

In the second apparition the following year (June 13) Our Lady let the children know that *“Jesus wishes to establish throughout the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”* Several times in the June and July apparitions Our Lady spoke of this devotion and soon there began to burn in their hearts a deep love for the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Shortly before Jacinta went to the hospital where she was to die, she said to Lucia: *“In a short time now I am going to heaven. You are to stay here and say that God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. . . . Tell everybody that God grants graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and that they must ask them from her. Tell them that the Heart of Jesus wishes that by His side should be venerated the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask peace through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; God has placed it in her hands. Oh that I could put into the heart of everybody the flame that I feel burning within my breast and which makes me love so much the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary.”*

June 13, 1917

Lucia asked Our Lady if she would take them to heaven. Our Lady answered: *“Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. You, however, are to stay here a*

longer time. Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish the devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by me before His throne."

When Lucia asked if she were going to be left alone, Our Lady responded: *"No, my daughter. Does this cause you to suffer a great deal? I will never leave you; my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."*

As the Blessed Mother uttered these words she extended her hands and in the rays of light that shone from them, the children saw themselves as if submerged in the Divine presence. Jacinta and Francisco were on the side of the light that was ascending to Heaven, while Lucia was in the light that seemed diffused over all the earth. In the palm of her right hand was a Heart pierced with thorns; and the children understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so offended by the sins of mankind and pleading for reparation.

July 13, 1917. Vision of Hell.

"Sacrifice yourselves for sinners; and say often when you make some sacrifice, 'My Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'"

After showing the children a vision of hell, Our Lady said to them: *"You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish throughout the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do as I shall ask many souls will be saved, and there will be peace.... But if people do not cease offending God... another and more terrible war will begin. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign that God gives that the chastisement of the world for its many transgressions is at hand through war, famine, persecution of the Church and of the Holy Father."*

*"To prevent this, I shall come to ask the **consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and Communions of reparation on the first Saturdays.** If my requests are heard, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, fomenting wars and persecution of the Church. The good will suffer martyrdom; the Holy Father will suffer much; different nations will be annihilated. But in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, which will be converted, and sometime of peace will be granted to humanity."*

Apparition of December 10, 1925

The visits of Our Lady to Lucia did not end with those in 1917. In fact it was only through later apparitions that Lucia received permission to make known some of the messages revealed in 1917.

While Lucia was in her room at the convent of the Sisters of St. Dorothy, Our Lady and the Child Jesus appeared to her. Resting her right hand on Lucia's shoulder, the Blessed Mother held in her other hand a Heart surrounded by sharp thorns. The Divine Child was the first to speak to Lucia: *"Have pity on the Heart of your most Holy Mother. It is covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to remove them with an act of reparation."*

Then Our Lady made known her request for **Communions of reparation**: *"My daughter, look at my Heart encircled with the thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you at least try to console me and announce in my name that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, on the **first Saturday of five consecutive months**, go to Confession and receive Holy Communion, recite the Rosary and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to me."*

Prayer to Our Lady of Fatima

O Most Holy Virgin Mary, Queen of the most holy Rosary, you were pleased to appear to the children of Fatima and reveal a glorious message. We implore you; inspire in our hearts a fervent love for the recitation of the Rosary. By meditating on the mysteries of the redemption that are recalled therein may we obtain the graces and virtues that we ask, through the merits of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

SALAMANCA

Salamanca has two cathedrals. The old, celebrated for its massive strength, was founded in 1100 near the River Gate (Puerta del Rio). At the end of the 13th century it was not yet finished, and its main entrance, called Del Perdon (of the Pardon), was covered over in 1680 with new Doric and Composite pilasters. Of its three naves the principal one terminates in the main chapel where the painting of the "Last Judgment" by Nicolas Florentino can be seen. In the early days, only royalty was permitted to be buried in this main chapel; here lie

Mafalda, daughter of Alfonso VIII, Fernando Alfonso, natural son of Alfonso IX of Leon, Bishop Sancho of Castile, and his successor, Juan de Vivero. The cloister of the old cathedral was Romanesque, but in 1780 Jeronimo Quiñones rebuilt it in Renaissance style. The most remarkable of its four chapels, is that of St. Bartholomew, founded by Diego de Anaya, Bishop of Salamanca until 1480, and then Archbishop of Seville, and founder of the famous Colegio de San Bartolome. There are also the chapels of Talavera, in which Rodrigo Arias Maldonado de Talavera is buried, and that of St. Barbara, founded in 1384 by Bishop Juan Lucero.

In the Old and New Cathedral, one can pray before the miraculous image of Our Lady of La Vega, as well as the relics of Sts. John of Sahagun, patron saint of Salamanca, and St. Thomas of Villanueva.

Our Lady of La Vega. Every year on September 8th, the golden-hued city of Salamanca celebrates its most important week-long event in honor of the city's patron saint since 1618: "La Virgen de la Vega" (The Virgin of the Valley). Why is this event important? Because aside from Salamanca's having a farming and agricultural background, traditional lore has La Virgen de la Vega assisting the salmantinos in defending the city from the invading enemy troops during the Spanish War of Succession of 1706. The Romanesque statue of La Virgen de la Vega, which is on permanent display in the old cathedral, is brought out on September 8th for a high-spirited parade throughout the downtown streets of the city. Closely followed by local and visiting inhabitants from around the province who are dressed in the traditional Salamanca costume known as "el traje charro", the parade comes to an end in Plaza Anaya by the cathedral.

The new cathedral was founded by the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella who in 1491 sought to build one in Seville, but the idea was not carried into effect until 1508, when King Ferdinand was at Salamanca. This new edifice was erected side by side with the old, leaving the latter intact. Its architects, Anton Egas and Alfonso Rodriguez, had built churches in Toledo and Seville; Juan Gil de Hontañon was master of works. The building was begun in 1560, and it was completed on August 10, 1733. The tower, set on fire by lightning in 1705, was rebuilt by the celebrated Jose Churriguera, who made it a monument of the style (Churrigueresque) to which he gave his name. In the chapel at the center of the rod screen are remains of Bishop Jeronimo, transferred from the old basilica in 1744, and the venerated "Christ of the Battles" of El Cid, the Champion of the Reconquest. In two large silver vessels within the high altar, the relics of St. John of Sahagun and St. Thomas of Villanueva are preserved. The organ, which is of plateresque style, was constructed in 1568.

St. John of Sahagun. Confessor, Augustinian (1430-1479)

St. John, one of the greatest preachers Spain has ever known, was born at San Fagondez, and from his early youth gave signs of his future sanctity. He was the fruit of the ardent prayers of his parents after sixteen years of sterility; God blessed them afterwards with several children. He was entrusted to the Benedictines of the monastery of San Fagondez for his education. He distributed to the poor virtually all the wealth accruing to him from several benefices, while he himself lived in great poverty; but soon he renounced all of these and obtained from his bishop permission to study theology in Salamanca. As a young priest he was already regarded as a saint, so ardent was his devotion at Holy Mass. He entered the Order of St. Augustine soon after he had bestowed on a poor man half of his clothing, and the following night experienced so great an increase in the love of God, that he referred to this as his conversion.

He was a model religious, and soon was entrusted with important offices in his Order — master of novices, *definitor* for the province, and prior of the convent of the city of Salamanca. He commanded well because he knew so well how to obey. When he observed in himself a slight defect in his obedience, he repaired it with extraordinary penances. Often while offering the adorable Sacrifice with tender piety, he enjoyed the sight of Our Lord in glory, and held sweet colloquies with Him. The ineffable bliss of these moments caused him to spend much more time than the other priests in celebrating Holy Mass; and everyone was complaining. It was only when his Superior forbade him to delay in this way that he was obliged to acknowledge the favors he enjoyed.

The power of his personal holiness was seen in his preaching, which produced a complete reformation of morals in Salamanca. He had a special gift for reconciling differences, and was able to put an end to the quarrels and feuds among noblemen, at that period very common and fatal. The boldness shown by St. John in reproving vice endangered his life. A powerful nobleman, having been corrected by the saint for oppressing his vassals, sent two assassins to slay him; but the remarkable holiness of the saint's aspect, result of the peace constantly reigning in his soul, struck such awe into their minds that they could not execute their purpose, and humbly begged his forgiveness. The nobleman himself, falling sick, was brought to repentance, and recovered his health by the prayers of the saint whom he had endeavored to murder.

St. John was also very zealous in denouncing the vices of impurity, and it was in defense of holy purity that he met his death. A lady of noble birth but evil life, whose companion in sin he had converted, contrived to administer a fatal poison to the saint. After several months of terrible suffering, borne with

unvarying patience, St. John went to his reward on June 11, 1479. This painful death and the cause for which he suffered it, have caused several of his historians and panegyrists to say that he won a martyr's crown. A great many striking miracles followed at his tomb and elsewhere, even by the simple invocation of his name. He was canonized in 1690 by Pope Alexander VIII. His feast day is June 12.

St. Thomas of Villanueva, O.S.A. (born Tomas Garcia Martinez, Ciudad Real, 1488 - died Valencia, September 8, 1555), was a preacher, ascetic, writer and Spanish friar of the Order of St. Augustine. He is known as St. Thomas the Almsgiver, Father of the Poor, and Model of Bishops.

St. Thomas grew up and was educated in Villanueva de los Infantes, in the province of Ciudad Real, Spain, where his parents owned a prosperous estate; therefore the name Thomas of Villanueva. In spite of this, as a young boy he often went about naked because he had given his clothing to the poor. Part of the original house still stands, with a coat of arms in the corner, beside a family chapel.

He studied at the University of Alcala, earned a licentiate in theology, and became a professor there at the age of twenty-six. He declined the chair of philosophy at the University of Salamanca and instead entered the Augustinian Canons in Salamanca in 1516. Ordained in 1520, he served as prior of several houses in Salamanca, Burgos, and Valladolid, as provincial of Andalusia and Castile, and then court chaplain to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519-1556). During his time, as provincial of Castile, he dispatched the first Augustinian missionaries to the New World. They subsequently helped evangelize the area of modern Mexico. He was offered but declined the see of Granada, but accepted appointment as Archbishop of Valencia in 1544. As the See had been vacant for nearly a century, St. Thomas devoted much effort to restoring the spiritual and material life of the archdiocese. He was also deeply committed to the needs of the poor. He held the post of grand almoner of the poor, founded colleges for the children of new converts and the poor, organized priests for service among the Moors, and was renowned for his personal saintliness and austerities. While he did not attend the sessions of the Council of Trent, he was an ardent promoter of the Tridentine reforms throughout Spain. He died in 1555 of angina at the age of 67. His feast day is September 22.

Prayer to St. Thomas of Villanova

Most glorious St. Thomas, pattern of Christian perfection and perfect model of priestly zeal, by that glory which as a reward of thy merits, has been granted

thee in Heaven, turn thine eyes of mercy upon us and come to our assistance before the throne of the Most High. While living on earth thou didst have as thy chief characteristic the very charity of Christ. Armed with this thou didst spend thine entire life in giving aid to the wretched, counsel to the doubtful, and consolation to the afflicted; thou didst draw back to the paths of virtue those who had gone astray, thus bringing to Jesus Christ the souls redeemed by His Precious Blood. Now that thou art so powerful in heaven, continue thy task of giving help to all and be our watchful protector, so that, through thine intercession, being delivered from all temporal misfortunes and confirmed in our faith and in love, we may be victors in our struggle with the powers of evil and may merit with thee to praise and bless our Lord through all eternity.

Amen.

CARMELITE MONASTERY & CHURCH – ALBA DE TORMES

This monastery was founded on January 25, 1571 by St. Teresa of Avila. She spent the last fifteen days of her life in a small cell of the ground floor of the monastery where she experienced solemn encounters with God before dying on October 4, 1582. Here are kept two of St. Teresa’s most renowned relics: her left arm and her incorrupt heart.

Soon after her death in Alba de Tormes, the body of Sister Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582) was moved to Avila, but in 1586 Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590) ordered her remains to be returned to Alba de Tormes.

This monastery is particularly marked by the memory of St. Teresa’s presence. When St. Teresa arrived to the convent of Alba de Tormes around six in the afternoon on September 20, 1582, she was critically ill and stayed in a cell on the bottom floor. On Saturday, September 29, she was moved upon her own request to another cell on the top floor of the church, behind the grill that is seen under the choir, in the top center of the frontal wall. From this cell, she heard Mass on Sunday, the 30th, and, conscious of her critical condition, she made her confession on Tuesday morning, October 2. That same morning, by order of the doctors, she was returned to the cell on the bottom floor. In this cell, she received the viaticum and Extreme Unction on October 3. In the same cell, St. Teresa of Avila passed with a cross in her hands, while the monastery solemnly struck 9:00 p.m. on October 4, 1582. She died the same day of the reform of the calendar of the Pope Gregory XIII, so that the 4th became October 15th, the day on which at ten in the morning, the funeral was held in the recently completed church. After her death, in one of the pockets of her habit, the following poem was found:

*Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you.
All things pass away; God never changes;
Patience can obtain anything, he who has God within,
does not lack anything; God alone suffices.*

CONVENT OF ST. TERESA – AVILA

Avila contains two sites of importance to Catholic pilgrims seeking to honor St. Teresa: the Monastery of the Incarnation and the Convent of St. Teresa, located on the Plaza de la Santa. This 17th-century convent was built over St. Teresa's birth site.

In the "Sala de Reliquias" are the relics of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. The exhibit of St. Teresa's relics includes a finger from her right hand, the sole of one of her sandals, and a cord she used to flagellate herself. Also on the site is a small garden where St. Teresa played as a young girl.

St. Teresa's incorrupt heart and arm are enshrined and displayed at the Carmelite convent in the nearby town of Alba de Tormes.

MONASTERY OF THE INCARNATION – AVILA

The Monastery of the Incarnation (Monasterio de la Encarnación) is where St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) lived, wrote, and had many of her mystical experiences.

St. Teresa entered this Carmelite convent on November 2, 1535. At the time it was one of the most populous and wealthy in the city and many of the monastic rules had been relaxed.

St. Teresa lived in La Encarnación for over 20 years. It was here that she received the advice of St. Francis Borgia, St. John of the Cross and St. Peter of Alcantara, began to reform the Carmelite order, and had some of her mystical experiences.

St. Teresa left the convent in 1562 to found her first monastery and returned in 1571 as prioress. She left the Convent for the final time three years later.

The courtyard of the convent is paved with a visual representation of the Interior Castle, written by St. Teresa in 1577. This work compares the

contemplative soul to a castle with seven successive interior courts, or chambers, analogous to the seven heavens.

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Teresa Sanchez de Cepeda Davila y Ahumada was born at Avila, Old Castile, on March 28, 1515; she died at Alba de Tormes on October 4, 1582.

The third child of Don Alonso Sanchez de Cepeda by his second wife, Doña Beatriz Davila y Ahumada, who died when the saint was in her fourteenth year, St. Teresa was brought up by her saintly father, a lover of serious books, and a tender and pious mother. After her mother's death and the marriage of her eldest sister, St. Teresa was sent for her education to the Augustinian nuns at Avila, but owing to illness she left at the end of eighteen months, and for some years remained with her father and occasionally with other relatives, notably an uncle who made her acquainted with the Letters of St. Jerome, which determined her to adopt the religious life. Unable to obtain her father's consent she left his house unknown to him in November of 1535, to enter the Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation at Avila, which then counted 140 nuns. The wrench from her family caused her a pain which she ever afterwards compared to that of death. However, her father at once yielded and St. Teresa took the habit.

After her profession in the following year she became seriously ill, and underwent a prolonged cure and such unskillful medical treatment that she was reduced to a most pitiful state, and even after partial recovery through the intercession of St. Joseph, her health remained permanently impaired. During these years of suffering she began the practice of mental prayer, but fearing that her conversations with some world-minded relatives, frequent visitors at the convent, rendered her unworthy of the graces God bestowed on her in prayer, discontinued it, until she came under the influence, first of the Dominicans, and afterwards of the Jesuits.

Meanwhile God had begun to visit her with "intellectual visions and locutions", that is manifestations in which the exterior senses were in no way affected, the things seen and the words heard being directly impressed upon her mind, and giving her wonderful strength in trials, reprimanding her for unfaithfulness, and consoling her in trouble. Unable to reconcile such graces with her shortcomings, which her delicate conscience represented as grievous faults, she had recourse not only to the most spiritual confessors she could find, but also to some saintly laymen, who, never suspecting that the account she gave

them of her sins was greatly exaggerated, believed these manifestations to be the work of the evil spirit. The more she endeavored to resist them the more powerfully did God work in her soul. The whole city of Avila was troubled by the reports of the visions of this nun. It was reserved to St. Francis Borgia and St. Peter of Alcantara, and afterwards to a number of Dominicans (particularly Pedro Ibañez and Domingo Bañez), Jesuits, and other religious and secular priests, to discern the work of God and to guide her on a safe road.

The account of her spiritual life contained in the "Life written by herself" (completed in 1565, an earlier version being lost), in the "Relations", and in the "Interior Castle", forms one of the most remarkable spiritual biographies with which only the "Confessions of St. Augustine" can bear comparison. To this period belong also such extraordinary manifestations as the piercing or transverberation of her heart, the spiritual espousals, and the mystical marriage. A vision of the place destined for her in hell in case she should have been unfaithful to grace, determined her to seek a more perfect life.

After many troubles and much opposition, St. Teresa founded the convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Primitive Rule of St. Joseph at Avila (August 24, 1562), and after six months obtained permission to take up her residence there. Four years later she received the visit of the General of the Carmelites, John-Baptist Rubeo (Rossi), who not only approved of what she had done but granted leave for the foundation of other convents of friars as well as nuns. In rapid succession, she established her nuns at Medina del Campo (1567), Malagon and Valladolid (1568), Toledo and Pastrana (1569), Salamanca (1570), Alba de Tormes (1571), Segovia (1574), Veas and Seville (1575), and Caravaca (1576). In the "Book of Foundations" she tells the story of these convents, nearly all of which were established in spite of violent opposition but with manifest assistance from above. Everywhere she found souls generous enough to embrace the austerities of the primitive rule of Carmel. Having made the acquaintance of Antonio de Heredia, prior of Medina, and St. John of the Cross, she established her reform among the friars (November 28, 1568), the first convents being those of Duruelo (1568), Pastrana (1569), Mancera, and Alcalá de Henares (1570).

A new epoch began with the entrance into religion of Jerome Gratian, in as much as this remarkable man was almost immediately entrusted by the nuncio with the authority of visitor Apostolic of the Carmelite friars and nuns of the old observance in Andalusia, and as such considered himself entitled to overrule the various restrictions insisted upon by the general and the general chapter. On the death of the nuncio and the arrival of his successor, a fearful storm burst over St. Teresa and her work, lasting four years and threatening to

annihilate the nascent reform. The incidents of this persecution are best described in her letters. The storm at length passed, and the province of Discalced Carmelites, with the support of Philip II, was approved and canonically established on June 22, 1580.

St. Teresa, old and broken in health, made further foundations at Villanueva de la Jara and Palencia (1580), Soria (1581), Granada (through her assistant the Venerable Anne of Jesus), and at Burgos (1582). She left this latter place at the end of July, and, stopping at Palencia, Valladolid, and Medina del Campo, reached Alba de Torres in September, suffering intensely. Soon she took to her bed and passed away on October 4, 1582, the following day, owing to the reform of the calendar, being reckoned as October 15.

After some years her body was transferred to Avila, but later on to Alba de Tormes. **Her incorrupt heart, showing the marks of the Transverberation, and her right arm are exposed there for veneration of the faithful.**

St. Teresa has been highly revered in the Catholic Church ever since. In 1622, she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV at the same time as St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier. In 1817, St. Teresa was declared the patron saint of Spain. In 1970, Pope Paul VI gave St. Teresa the honorific title "Doctor of the Church." She was the first woman in history to receive that title. Her feastday is October 15.

Prayer to St. Teresa of Avila

O wonderful daughter of Spain, you taught us to walk the way of Christian perfection which is the Way of the Cross. You inspired innumerable men and women by your writings as well as your conduct, deserving the title of Doctor of the Church. Ever faithful to St. Peter's successors, inspire fidelity to religious vows on the part of those who have taken them and make them ever true to their vocation. Amen.

BURGOS CATHEDRAL

Although it is predominantly Gothic, the cathedral also displays other artistic styles, given that it was built over a period lasting from 1221 to 1795. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and is famous for its vast size and unique architecture.

Its main façade is the Puerta del Perdón, with a starred rose window and a gallery of statues of the Castile monarchs. On either side are its 84-meter towers, crowned by magnificent 15th-century spires with open stonework traceries. Its most beautiful group of sculptures, however, is to be found on the Puerta del Sarmental façade, with the image of God the Creator surrounded by the apostles and evangelists.

Inside, special mention should be made of the dome of the main nave, topped with a beautiful Mudejar vault. **Beneath it lie the remains of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, known as “El Cid Campeador,” and his wife, Doña Jimena.** Close by is the beautiful Escalera Dorada (golden staircase) by Diego de Siloé, built in the 16th century and inspired in the Italian Renaissance. In the side-naves of the cathedral there are 19 chapels, with the Constable and Santa Tecla chapels particularly standing out.

There are also valuable works of art to be enjoyed: a unique collection that includes altarpieces, paintings, choir stalls, tombs and sculptures, amongst other objects.

SHRINE OF LOYOLA

A huge shrine has been built around the Tower-House in which San Ignacio de Loyola was born in 1491 and converted to God in 1521. This Tower-House is Loyola’s heart, the ancestral home of the Oñaz and Loyola family, popularly known today as “the Holy House”.

What stands out most from the outside in the old Tower-House is its neat division into two super-imposed parts:

1- The lower half of solid stone, with hardly a gap, a real fortress built at the end of the 14th century by St. Ignatius’ great-great-grandfather Beltrán Ibáñez de Loyola.

2- The upper half of bricks, with numerous windows and four ornamental sentry-boxes at the four angles, adorned with festoons of mozarabic lacework: a palace rather than a military tower. It is a reconstruction done in 1460 by St. Ignatius’ grandfather Juan Pérez de Loyola when he returned from his exile ordered by the King of Castile.

In the center of the Shrine of Loyola there rises an imposing basilica dominated by a dome and preceded by a large portico, an exuberant example of Spanish Baroque. The circular basilica is flanked by two large wings with the combined

length of almost 500 feet. These two wings and the central body at the back make the complex resemble a gigantic eagle of stone.

Inside the portico there are the statues of St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis Borgia, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and St. Stanislaus Kostka. In the interior of the basilica, one is surprised at once by the Baroque exuberance of its Churrigueresque ornamentation, all in carved marble, with an abundance of gildings. The church has an inside diameter of 108 feet. The entire flooring is of gray and rose-colored marble slabs forming a splendid concentric mosaic.

St. Ignatius was born to the Spanish nobility in 1491. He was the youngest of twelve children. He was a Page in the Spanish court of King Ferdinand and Isabella. He received a Military education and he entered the army in 1517, serving in several campaigns. He was wounded in the leg by a cannonball at the siege of Pamplona on May 20, 1521, an injury that left him partially crippled for life. During his recuperation the only books he had access to were a collection of biographies of the saints, and the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph the Carthusian. These books, and the time spent in contemplation, changed him.

On his recovery he took a vow of chastity, hung his sword before the altar of the Virgin of Montserrat, and donned a pilgrim's robes. He lived in a cave from 1522 to 1523, contemplating the way to live a Christian life. He went to Rome and the Holy Land in 1523, where he worked to convert Muslims. In 1528, he began studying theology in Barcelona and Alcala in Spain, and Paris, France receiving his degree on March 14, 1534. His meditations, prayers, visions and insights led to forming the *Constitutions* of the *Society of Jesus* on August 15, 1534; it received papal approval in 1541.

His six key companions, all of whom he met as students at the University were St. Francis Xavier, Alfonso Salmeron, Diego Laynez, and Nicholas Bobadilla, all Spanish; Blessed Peter Faber, a Frenchman; and Simon Rodriguez of Portugal. "On the morning of the 15th of August, 1534, in the crypt of the Church of Our Lady of the Martyrs, at Montmartre, St. Ignatius and his six companions, of whom only one was a priest, met and took upon themselves the solemn vows of their lifelong work."

St. Ignatius was a true mystic. He centered his spiritual life on the essential foundations of Christianity—the Trinity, Christ, the Eucharist. His spirituality is expressed in the Jesuit motto, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*—"for the greater glory of God." In his concept, obedience was to be the prominent virtue, to assure the effectiveness and mobility of his men. All activity was to be guided by a true love of the Church and unconditional obedience to the Holy Father, for which

reason all professed members took a fourth vow to go wherever the pope should send them for the salvation of souls.

He traveled Europe and the Holy Lands, and then he settled in Rome to direct the Jesuits. His health suffered in later years, and he was nearly blind at death. In the summer of 1556, the saint was attacked by Roman fever. His doctors did not foresee any serious consequences, but the saint did. On July 30, 1556, he asked for the last sacraments and the papal blessing, but he was told that no immediate danger threatened. The next morning at daybreak, the infirmarian found him lying in peaceful prayer, so peaceful that he did not at once perceive that the saint was actually dying. When his condition was realized, the last blessing was given, but the end came before the holy oils could be fetched. He was beatified by Paul V on July 27, 1609, and canonized by Gregory XV on May 22, 1622. **His body lies under the altar in the Church of Il Gesu in Rome.** Though he died in the sixteenth year from the foundation of the Society, it already numbered about 1,000 religious, with 100 religious houses, arranged in 10 provinces. He is the patron saint of soldiers, retreats, and the Society of Jesus. His feast day is July 31.

Prayer for Generosity (by St. Ignatius of Loyola)

*Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve You as You deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do Your will.*

LOURDES

St. Bernadette Soubirous and the Apparitions of Our Lady

At the time of the apparitions, St. Bernadette was fourteen years old and barely literate, and had to look after her younger brothers while her mother went out cleaning. On February 11, 1858, while St. Bernadette was out collecting wood with her sister Toinette and her friend Jeanne, they came to a place where the millstream joined the shallow river by a grotto at Massabielle. The other girls waded through the water, crying because it made their feet so cold. As St. Bernadette, a sickly, asthmatic girl, held back, she heard what she described as a roar. Later she reported: "I raised my head and looked towards the grotto. I saw a Lady dressed in white, wearing a white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow

rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her Rosary: the beads of her Rosary were white.”

The vision was praying the Rosary. St. Bernadette took out her beads and did the same. The Lady beckoned but, when the girl dared not approach, she vanished. Toinette and Jeanne saw nothing and at first St. Bernadette did not tell them what she had seen but they got the story out of her and told her parents. The Soubirous family would not allow her to visit the grotto again, but the girl told her priest, Father Pomian about the vision and he discussed it with the parish priest of Lourdes, Father Peyramale.

On February 14, a Sunday, Madame Soubirous relented. St. Bernadette took a bottle of holy water to the grotto and knelt down to say her Rosary. The Lady appeared again. St. Bernadette said, “I started throwing holy water at her and told her that if she came from God to stay, and if not to go.” The vision smiled and bowed her head and as St. Bernadette was frightened, Our Lady disappeared. On the 18th, St. Bernadette returned once more, this time with two adults, Madame Millat and Antoinette Peyret, “who advised me to take paper and ink and to ask her, if she had anything to say to me, to be so good as to write it down.” The Lady appeared, said that what she had to say need not be written down, and asked St. Bernadette if she would come each day for a fortnight. St. Bernadette said that the Lady spoke in the Lourdes dialect, “sweet and gentle,” and not in French. On this third visit the Lady said, “I do not promise to make you happy in this world, but in the next.”

According to St. Bernadette, between February 19 and March 4, “The vision appeared every day except one Monday and one Friday. She told me several times that I should tell the priests that a chapel should be built there and ... I should pray for the conversion of sinners. She gave me three secrets which she forbade me to tell anyone.”

On February 25, a spring emerged from the cave and the waters were discovered to be of a miraculous nature, capable of healing the sick and lame, as well as spiritual healings and conversions. Our Lady told St. Bernadette to drink from the spring – a little muddy water that appeared from beneath the rock. St. Bernadette said, “I threw it away three times because it was so dirty, but the fourth time I was able to drink it ... The spring has produced 27,000 gallons of water each week since emerging during St. Bernadette’s visions.

The Public Prosecutor, Dutour, tried to rig St. Bernadette’s account, but again local men hammered on his door and, trembling, he let the girl and her mother go. Later St. Bernadette said, “There was something in me that enabled me to

rise above everything. I was tackled from all sides, but nothing mattered and I was not afraid." Many authorities tried to shut down the spring and delay the construction of the chapel, but the influence and fame of the visions reached Empress Eugenie of France, wife of Napoleon III, and construction went forward. Crowds gathered, free of harassment from the anticlerical and antireligious officials.

I Am the Immaculate Conception

At five o'clock on the morning of March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernadette felt compelled to go again to the grotto. The Lady was already there. "With her two arms hanging down, she raised her eyes and looked up at the sky, and it was then that she told me, joining her hands together now at the height of her breast, that she was the Immaculate Conception. Those were the last words she ever said to me." Four years before these events, Pope Pius IX had proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. For centuries this doctrine - that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been conceived and born without the taint of Original Sin - had been a pious belief among Catholics; but the proclamation of 1854 had made it an infallible dogma of the Catholic Church.

The Visions Authenticated

Lourdes quickly became a popular shrine and visitors tried to shower St. Bernadette with money, to steal a relic from her or to cut off a piece of her hood or her dress as a souvenir. She complained of the adulation and said it tired her. Hundreds of letters were addressed to her; she prayed for their senders and asked them to pray for her in turn.

In 1862, a series of interrogations by bishops began. They were impressed by "her simplicity, candor and modesty, the wisdom of her answers, her calm imagination and common sense above her age". To skeptics St. Bernadette replied, "I have been told to tell you about it. I have not been told to make you believe it."

In 1862, the Bishop of Tarbes authenticated the visions and the hard-pressed St. Bernadette applied to join the St. Bernard Sisters at Anglet, but was turned down because they did not want to be over-run by pilgrims and tourists. Four things told against her vocation: poverty, fame, poor education and lifelong bad health. In March 1862, St. Bernadette became very ill and she was given the Last Rites. She recovered to nurse old people in the hospice at Lourdes.

Entering the Religious Life

In April 1866, she succeeded in becoming a postulant with the Sisters of Notre Dame at Nevers. On her first day, she was ordered to recount her visions to the whole community and then never speak of them again. "I have come here to hide," she declared. She carried with her three small stones of which she said, "These are my companions whom I love." On them, she had written the words 'Lourdes', 'The Grotto' and 'Nevers Mother House'. In July, she received the habit and became known as Sister Marie-Bernard, but in October she was so ill that she was again given the Last Rites. Once more, she defied death, and was later put in charge of the hospital.

In June of 1873, she was given the Last Rites for the third time. Yet again she recovered and this time was appointed Assistant Sacristan, in charge of keeping the chapel clean and in order. But from April of 1875, she was a complete invalid, and on April 16, 1879, she died at three in the afternoon - the same hour as Christ's death on the Cross.

The Sufferings of St. Bernadette

What, apart from this bare chronology, can we know about St. Bernadette Soubirous? One thing is certain: she strove with all her might to fulfill the vocation announced to her by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Massabielle, to do penance, to pray and suffer for sinners. And she did suffer. The Mother Superior at Nevers testified, "It took her an hour to find a bearable position, during which her face changed and she became as if dead. Even when asleep, the faintest movement of her leg made her cry out." In fact, she had tuberculosis of the bone in the right knee. St. Bernadette did not "enjoy" suffering, though she spoke of it as "my job". And she once said, "I pray to St. Bernard, but I do not imitate him. St. Bernard liked suffering, but I avoid it if I can."

Apart from her physical pain, she bore much personal grief. Her mother died early, at forty-one. Her sister Toinette's first child, also named Bernadette, died in February of 1871, to be followed by her father a month later. In fact, all five of Toinette's babies died and St. Bernadette wrote to her: "I like to imagine that dear little group praying in Heaven for us poor exiles on this miserable earth."

St. Bernadette suffered, too, from the interrogations of religious historians who tried to make her offer elaborate theological explanations for her visions. But she replied, "It is best for people to speak and write very simply. It is more moving to read the Passion than to have it explained."

In the last stages of her final illness, she requested to be left only with the crucifix sent to her by Pope Pius IX. When she became too weak to hold it, she had it fastened to her breast. After her death, she was first beatified in 1925 and then canonized as St. Bernadette in 1933. Her feast day is April 16.

Prayer of St. Bernadette Soubirous

O my God, I beg You, by Your loneliness, not that You may spare me affliction but that You may not abandon me in it. When I encounter affliction, teach me to see You as my sole comforter. Let affliction strengthen my faith, fortify my hope, and purify my love. Grant me the grace to see Your hand in my affliction, and to desire no other comforter but You. Amen.

LA SEO – ZARAGOZA’S CATHEDRAL

When Zaragoza was ruled by the Romans this was the site of the Roman forum. While archeological digs have failed to find solid evidence, during the time of the Visigoths the historic record reports a Christian church was located on this spot. In the 8th century, the Moors built a mosque here. With the fall of Zaragoza to Alfonso I in 1118 AD, the Muslims were given a year to vacate the city.

For a time, the Christians of Zaragoza used the mosque as a church; however, in 1140 AD, the mosque was demolished and a new Romanesque cathedral was constructed in its place.

It is here, in the Cathedral La Seo that the Kings of Aragon were crowned in an elaborate ceremony from 1204 up until the 15th century. The very last King to be crowned in this church was Charles I.

Of the diverse styles that make up La Seo Cathedral, the most important elements are:

- **Romanesque:** in the exterior and the lower part of the apse. The Roman interior of the apse still remains, but is now covered by the Gothic altarpiece. In the sacristy are the “olifante” by Gaston IV of Bearn, built in ivory in the 11th century, and the relic-busts of St. Valerius of Zaragoza (patron saint of Zaragoza), St. Vincent of Zaragoza, and St. Lawrence.
- **Gothic:** mixed with Mudejar, especially in the upper part of the exterior of the apse. The three central naves with their arches and tracery. Magnificent altarpiece largely of painted alabaster made by Pere Johan and Hans de

Suabia. Choir stalls. Museum of flamenco tapestries from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, one of the three largest such collections in the world.

- **Baroque:** Tower and gate.

As one can see, the cathedral is a mixture of styles, from the Romanesque apse (12th century) to the Baroque tower and Neo-Classical main door (18th century), passing through Mudejar and Gothic. **In the chapel of St. Dominguito del Val are preserved the relics of this saint, a boy of seven who was crucified by the Jews in 1250. In 1485, the first inquisitor-general, St. Peter Arbues, fell a martyr in this cathedral, slain by some Jews who were led by Juan de la Abadia. His remains are housed herein.**

San Dominguito del Val

According to tradition, Dominguito was born in Zaragoza and was admitted as a cathedral altar boy and chorister because of his great piety and purity, and for his beautiful voice. Each day he would walk to the church to attend Holy Mass, to learn chants and to study in the parish school. One day on his way to church, he was kidnapped by Jews. They then mockingly acted out the tribunal that condemned Jesus Christ, with Dominguito representing Our Lord. They asked the seven-year-old boy if he wanted to carry on being a follower of Christ and he exclaimed that, yes, he would prefer to die rather than betray his Faith. So they sentenced him to death and crucified him (c. 1250). St. Dominguito del Val is the patron saint of altar boys, acolytes, and choirboys. His feast day is August 31.

St. Peter Arbues

He was born in Aragon, Spain, and became a master of Canon Law at the University of Bologna before becoming an Augustinian canon at Zaragoza in 1478. In 1484 he received appointment as Inquisitor of Aragon and soon earned the enmity of the *Marranos*, Jews who after having received baptism had relapsed openly or secretly into Judaism. St. Peter Arbues was attacked by a group of Marranos in the cathedral of Zaragoza on September 15, 1485 and died from his wounds two days later. He was canonized in 1867 by Pius IX and his feast day is September 17.

The Cathedral also houses relics of St. Braulio, bishop of Zaragoza, and of St. Valerius of Zaragoza. St. Valerius (d. 315 AD) is the city's patron saint; he was bishop of Zaragoza from 290 until his death. St. Vincent of Zaragoza was a disciple, companion, as well as his deacon, and both suffered imprisonment under the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

St. Vincent of Zaragoza was born in Huesca, near Zaragoza, Spain, sometime during the latter part of the 3rd century. It is believed his father was Eutricius (Euthicius), and his mother was Enola, a native of Osca.

St. Vincent spent most of his life in the city of Zaragoza, Spain, where he was educated and instructed in the Catholic religion. He was ordained to the diaconate by St. Valerius, Bishop of Zaragoza, and commissioned to do the preaching in the diocese.

Because St. Valerius suffered from a speech impediment, St. Vincent acted as his spokesman. When the Roman Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians in Spain, St. Vincent answered in the bishop's name and both were brought before Dacian, the Roman governor. He spoke eloquently for both his bishop and the Church, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and condemning paganism.

By order of the Governor Dacian, he and his bishop were dragged in chains to Valencia and kept in prison for a long time. Then St. Valerius was exiled, but St. Vincent was subjected to many cruel torments. He was stretched upon a rack, torn with metal hooks, and laid upon a frame of sharp iron bars heated from beneath by fire; lard and salt were rubbed into his wounds; and amid all this he kept his eyes raised to heaven, and remained unmoved. When even this cruelty failed to break his will, he was again imprisoned and thrown into a solitary dungeon, the floor of which was strewn with broken crockery that added to the agony of his already lacerated body.

St. Vincent declared that God sent the angels of heaven to comfort him. His cell, he said, was illuminated with a heavenly light, and might have been filled with roses, so sweet was its fragrance. He sang hymns as he suffered, so that even the jailer was astounded. As he looked into the cell of the tormented saint and saw him upon his broken knees, suffering agony yet singing the praises to God, he was overcome by wonder, and confessed in that hour his conversion.

On hearing this, the Roman governor was infuriated, but finding all his efforts to unnerve his victim were useless, gave orders for the torture to stop – perhaps to win St. Vincent by clemency or to prevent him from becoming a martyr. For a time, St. Vincent had some relief. The faithful were permitted to gaze upon his broken body, probably in the hope that they would abandon their faith. Instead, they came in troops, kissed the open sores, and carried away as relics cloths dipped in his blood. The gentle hands of Christian women tended his wounds. But he did not survive long and died of his injuries in prison on January 22 in 304.

When he died, the anger of the authorities was renewed. His body was thrown in a bog as prey to the wild birds and beasts, but it was strangely preserved it is said by the protection of a raven. When any wild beast or bird tried to attack the mortal remains of the saint, the raven drove them away. Thwarted, Dacian had St. Vincent's body sewn into a bag, tied to a stone, and cast into the sea. But in the night it was washed ashore, and again loving hands gave it reverent care and secret burial.

After peace was restored to the Church, a chapel was built over the remains outside the walls of Valencia. His feast day has been celebrated on January 22 since the persecutions ended in 312. He was the protomartyr of Spain. The fame of St. Vincent spread very rapidly and far, as St. Augustine testifies, in a sermon, that his devotion extended to every part of the Roman Empire and everywhere the name of Jesus was known.

St. Braulio of Zaragoza (590-651). At the college founded in Seville by St. Isidore, one of the more promising of the alumni was a boy of noble birth called Braulio, who grew up to be so eminent a scholar that St. Isidore regarded him as a friend and disciple rather than a pupil, and used to send him his own writings to correct and revise. St. Braulio prepared for the priesthood and was ordained, and when in 631 the see of Zaragoza became vacant at the death of his brother Bishop John, the neighboring prelates assembled to elect a successor and their choice fell upon St. Braulio. As a pastor, St. Braulio labored zealously to teach and encourage his people, and at the same time to extirpate the Arian heresy which continued to flourish even after the conversion of King Reccared. He kept in close touch with St. Isidore, whom he assisted in his task of restoring Church order and regularizing ecclesiastical discipline: a small portion of the correspondence between the two saints has survived. He took part in the Fourth Council of Toledo, which was presided over by his friend and master St. Isidore, and also in the fifth and sixth. The last-named assembly charged him to write an answer to Pope Honorius I, who had accused the Spanish bishops of negligence in the fulfilment of their duties. His defense was dignified and convincing. The good bishop's duties did not prevent his constant ministrations in his cathedral and in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, where he spent many hours of the day and night in prayer. He abhorred luxuries of all kinds: his garments were rough and plain, his food simple, and his life austere. An eloquent preacher and a keen controversialist, he could carry conviction by his telling arguments and absolute sincerity. His liberality to the poor was only matched by his tender care of all his flock. The close of his life was saddened by failing eyesight – a heavy trial for anyone, but especially to a scholar. Knowing he was close to death, he spent the last day of his life in the recitation of psalms. His feast day is March 26.

BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR – ZARAGOZA

Zaragoza's fortuitous location on the fertile banks of the Rio Ebro ensured its ascendancy, now Spain's fifth largest city and the capital of Aragon. The most impressive building in the city is the Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Pilar, with its huge church sporting 11 brightly tiled cupolas. Inside, the magnificent altar dwarfs the miraculous ancient wooden statue, only 15 inches tall. The church is **built upon the place where St. James the Apostle and his disciples shared a beautiful vision of Our Lady, who at the time was living in Jerusalem.** This blessed Virgin has been visited by St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Ignatius of Loyola. Her long, skirt-like manta is changed every day and devout pilgrims pass behind the chapel to kiss an exposed section of the pillar "worn out due to millions of kisses."

St. James the Greater was one of the twelve Apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ and a son of Zebedee. He and his brother St. John were called by Our Lord while mending their nets on the Sea of Galilee. They received from Christ the name "Boanerges," meaning "sons of thunder," for their impetuosity. The gospel relates that St. James was present for the miracle of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:51), the Transfiguration (Mark 9:1), and later with Our Lord during His Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33).

The Acts of the Apostles relate that the Apostles dispersed to different regions to take the Good News to all nations. Sister Maria de Jesus de Agreda (1602-1665) was a Franciscan religious who received revelations from Our Lord. It was revealed to her that St. James the Greater went to Spain to evangelize. He went first to Galicia, where he established a Christian community and later to the Roman city of Cesar Augusto, today known as Zaragoza. It is believed that on January 2nd, in the year 40 AD, St. James and his disciples were resting on the shore side of the Ebro River when they began to hear sweet voices singing. They saw the sky fill up with light and many angels coming near them. The angels were carrying a throne on which the Queen of Heaven and Earth was sitting. This was extraordinary, for Our Lady was living at that time in Jerusalem, making her appearance to them in Spain a bilocation. The Blessed Virgin told St. James to build a shrine where God would be honored and glorified, and gave him a pillar with her image to be placed in the shrine. The Blessed Virgin also told St. James that the shrine would remain until the end of times and that she would bless all the prayers offered devoutly in this place.

At the end of the apparition, Our Lady said to St. James that when the shrine was finished, he should return to Palestine where he would die. St. James fulfilled the desires of the Blessed Virgin Mary and constructed the first

Christian church in the entire world. St. James returned to Palestine, where he was decapitated by order of Herod on the 25th of March. According to tradition, the accuser of St. James, who led him to judgment, was so moved by St. James' confession before death that he converted and was willingly beheaded with the Apostle. His disciples recovered his body and translated it to Galicia without anyone's knowledge in a miraculous boat guided by God.

Prayer to Our Lady of the Pillar

O Virgin Mother of the Pillar, deigning to appear to thy beloved disciple, St. James, promising him the victory over paganism, and blessing so abundantly his labors for the spread of the True Catholic Faith, secure for us also, who are the children of that same Faith, the victory over our many foes and the paganism that threaten souls in our day.

Through the intercession of thine Apostle, St. James, the "Son of Thunder", may we help establish everywhere the true devotion to thy Immaculate Heart that Our Lord wills for the conversion of all sinners. Amen.

OUR LADY OF MONTSERRAT

According to Catholic tradition, **the statue of the Black Virgin of Montserrat was carved by St. Luke around 50 AD and then was brought to Spain.** It was later hidden from the Moors in a cave (Santa Cova, the Holy Grotto), where it was rediscovered in 880 AD.

According to tradition, which was first recorded in the 13th century, the statue was discovered by shepherds. They saw a bright light and heard heavenly music that eventually led them to the grotto and the statue.

The Bishop of Manresa, present at the discovery, suggested that it be moved to Manresa, but the small statue was discovered to be so heavy it could not be lifted. Thus the Virgin had indicated her will to stay on Montserrat to be venerated there.

By the 9th century, there were four chapels on Montserrat, of which only one remains – St. Aciscolo's, which is in the monastery's garden. In the 11th century, the abbot-bishop Oliba founded a monastery on the mountain of Montserrat, next to one of the chapels. The statue of the Virgin, known in Spanish as La Moreneta, is a small statue made of wood. It depicts a seated Black Virgin with the Child Jesus on her lap. Her dark color is due to changes in

the varnish with the passage of time. The Madonna statue soon earned widespread fame as numerous miracles were associated with the intercession of the Black Virgin of Montserrat.

Many of the first missionary churches in Mexico, Chile, and Peru were dedicated to Our Lady of Montserrat and many saints and popes have visited the shrine over the centuries. St. Ignatius of Loyola made a pilgrimage to Montserrat after being injured in war and it was soon after that he wrote his famous *Spiritual Exercises*. **At this shrine, St. Ignatius set down his armor and sword, and conducted an all-night vigil before Our Lady to signal the renunciation of his old soldierly life.**

Due to the great numbers of pilgrims that flocked to Montserrat throughout the Middle Ages, the monastery was enlarged from its original humble size. In 1592, the grand basilica of Montserrat was consecrated.

In the late 18th century, almost the entire sanctuary was destroyed during the Napoleonic invasion. But due to the widespread devotion to the shrine, it was soon restored.

In 1881, Montserrat's Black Madonna was crowned in accordance with Canon Law and proclaimed patron saint of Catalonia by Pope Leo XIII.

Prayer to Our Lady

Remember, O most Blessed Mother, what ineffable power thy divine Son hath given thee over His own adorable Heart. Full of trust in thy merits, we come before thee and beg thy protection. O heavenly Treasurer of the Heart of Jesus, that Heart which is the inexhaustible source of all graces, which thou mayest open to us at thy good pleasure, in order that from it may flow forth upon mankind the riches of love and mercy, light and salvation, that are contained therein; grant unto us, we beseech thee, the favors which we seek...

We can never, never be refused by thee, and since thou art our Mother, graciously hear our prayers and grant our request. Amen.

MANRESA

After leaving Montserrat, it was the intention of St. Ignatius to go to the Holy Land "to save souls." But the port of Barcelona from which he would have had to sail was plague-ridden, and he was not permitted to enter the city. He

stayed instead for the next ten months at the small town of Manresa, about ten miles from Montserrat.

According to tradition, at a nearby cave St. Ignatius kept a record of his spiritual experiences for the sake of helping others and these notes grew into what is known today as *The Spiritual Exercises*, which outline the Church's classic means of orienting one's soul toward God and eternal salvation. The object of this book is to learn how to conquer yourself; to free yourself from evil passions; to reform the disorder, great or little of your past life; to regulate it to the Divine will. To attain this goal, many obstacles must be overcome.

The *Spiritual Exercises* begin with what St. Ignatius calls his Principle and Foundation which firstly states that "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul."

A Baroque church was built next to the Cave in 1759, and it is an example of Jesuit architecture.

Suscipe Prayer by St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.

