Pilgrimage of the Heart

The seeds for “Pilgrimage of the Heart” were sown on pilgrimage in Medjugorge.

May Our Lady draw you ever closer to her Son.

With every good wish and blessing.

Alison.
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Pilgrimage of the Heart

In “Pilgrimage of the Heart” we join in spirit with Our Lady and St “Padre” Pio as we journey and share in some special moments in Mary’s life with Jesus.

Our reflections are based on words spoken by Our Lady to the visionaries during her apparitions and on extracts from St "Padre" Pio’s letters and homilies.

We begin by reflecting on the great Sacrifice and Prayer offered by Jesus Himself – The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

May all who share in “Pilgrimage of the Heart” receive an abundance of Graces and Blessings.

Alison Riggott and Patrick Lynch
Pilgrimage of the Heart

Reflections on the Mass Our Lady

I wish that the Holy Mass would be the day's gift to you.

Attend it, wish it to begin.

Jesus gives Himself to you in the Mass.

Therefore look forward to that moment, for then you are cleansed.

Renew your faith by attending Holy Mass

Reflections on the Mass

St Padre Pio

Keep your mind focused on the Mystery unfolding before your eyes.

In your minds eye transport yourself to Calvary and meditate on the Victim who offers Himself to Divine Justice, paying the price of your redemption. The earth could exist more easily without the sun than without the Mass.

The Mass is the greatest prayer to God. That is why you must be perfect and humble at Mass and should prepare yourself beforehand. Follow the Mass well. If we only knew how God regards this Sacrifice, we would risk our lives to be present at a single Mass.
Reflections on The Rosary Our Lady

After the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, there is nothing in the Church that I love as much as the Rosary.

I beseech all families to pray the Rosary. Let the Rosary in your hand make you think of Jesus.

Put on the armour of battle. With the Rosary in your hand defeat the evil one.

I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary. The soul which recommends itself to me

Reflections on The Rosary St Padre Pio

...love the Blessed Mother and always make Her loved - always say the Rosary.

Hold on tightly to the Rosary.

Be very grateful to the Madonna because it was she who gave us Jesus.

Love Our Lady and make Her loved always. Recite the Rosary and recite it as often as possible.

Pray, pray to the Lord with me, because the whole world needs prayer. And every day, when your heart especially feels the loneliness of life, pray.
Annunciation - The Invitation

"The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived by the Holy Spirit"

Imagine the young girl Mary praying for the coming of the Messiah and finding her room filled with a bright light as the angel Gabriel stood before her. She was told she was the favoured one - out of all time Mary was chosen to be the mother of the Christ - and she said

"YES"

Her "Yes" enabled The Word to become Flesh and live amongst us.
Annunciation - The Invitation

Mary's "Yes" was also a statement of willing submission to God's promise and will for her, she willingly accepted God's promise and will for her life including all the inconveniences and risks attached to it.

These inconveniences included the possibility that Joseph would divorce her, that her reputation would be destroyed, that even if Joseph believed her, their wedding plans, and dreams etc., would have to be put on hold.

Given all this potential personal loss, Mary willingly submits in faith to God's Word and Plan.

May we also be graced to say in our lives, as Mary did in hers "Let it be done according to your Word…"

“and the Word was made flesh and lived among us”

Mary's YES changed life for the whole human race for evermore.

May we also say Yes to Jesus and show the same care and concern for others, especially family members, that Mary showed when she heard about her cousin Elizabeth.
"Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country in Judea,…

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:39)

We expect the evil one to try to distract us while praying and meditating during our Pilgrimage of the Heart

Likewise, it would be easy to avoid giving Heart Time to God, to give in to distractions at home.

So let us set some time aside and see this as a time of Grace when we ask Mary to sit with us as she once sat with her mother's cousin Elizabeth.
Visitation  The Journey

We are honoured that Mary comes to visit us in our own home.
Ask her to be with you now and hear God's Word of love.
As we spend time in the presence of Mary the Holy Spirit will fill us too as He filled Elizabeth, with fruits of:

1. Love - causes us to act out of love for God
2. Joy - keeps us aware of God's unending goodness
3. Peace - comes from joy, keeping us calm
4. Patience - allows us to endure trials and tribulations.
5. Kindness - goodness in words and actions
6. Goodness - inclines us to want to do good to all
7. Faithfulness - makes us upright in dealing with others
8. Gentleness --allows us to restrain our anger.
9. Self-control -- helps us to control our passions

Through the power of the Holy Spirit let us join in prayer with Elizabeth and Mary - Mary teach us to pray.
Pilgrimage of the Heart

Reflections on Prayer

Our Lady

Pray without ceasing. That way I can give you the joy the Lord has given me.

Do not just pray with your lips, but pray with the heart.

May your prayer be a joyful encounter with the Lord.

Prayer is then best weapon we possess. It is the key that opens the heart to God.

Find solace in prayer. I, your Mother, will take care of the rest.

By means of prayer you will find joy and peace.

St Padre Pio

Pray, pray to the Lord with me.

And every day, when your heart especially feels the loneliness of life, pray.

Let us glance at the Divine Master who prayed in the Garden and we will discover the true ladder which unites the earth to heaven.

We will discover that humility, contrition and prayer make the distance between man and God disappear, and act in such a way that God descends to man, and man ascends to God, so that they end up understanding, loving and possessing each other.
There is a little door in my heart.

I open it and invite God in. I close the door and we talk.

(9 year old boy)
The Flight into Egypt - Facing our Fears

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up', he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt' (Matthew 2:13)

When Mary was first told she was to bear a child, she chose to visit her mother's cousin, Elizabeth, who was also expecting a child. When we are faced with a fear or anxiety it is natural to want to share the news with another, to ease the burden. Sometimes we have no-one to turn to, or we may not want to burden family with our fears.

When Mary fled into Egypt with Joseph and her son, she could not turn to her mother or Elizabeth, but she was filled with Fortitude, a gift of the Holy Spirit. Only the strength of the Holy Spirit can help us persevere in times of difficulty.
Pilgrimage of the Heart

The Flight into Egypt - Facing our Fears

We can confide in Mary, our mother, with our fears and anxieties knowing she will understand. She has promised to pray with us to her Son. We ask Mary to look deep into our hearts and see what it is we fear most, and to take it to her Son Our Lady tells us through a visionary that if something instils us with fear it is not from God;

"love drives out fear"

When we are afraid we turn to Jesus and hear Him say "Do not be afraid"
and feel our spirit refill in a flood of love and peace.

St Paul tells us not to fret or worry about anything … but to pray about everything.

A simple prayer from the heart is better than a long litany of empty words.

No matter how alone we may feel, we always have our Guardian Angel in whom we can confide our thoughts and sorrows.
Our invisible companion is always there to listen and console,

Praying for us constantly in the presence of God.
Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day,
be at my side
to light and guard, to rule and guide.

Amen
Pilgrimage of the Heart

Queen of the Angels
Our Lady

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zachariah the father of John the Baptist, and predicted to him the future birth of the Forerunner.

Gabriel announced to Mary the future birth of the Messiah.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds in the night, and declared to them that the Saviour of the world was born at Bethlehem.

St. Joseph was warned by an angel to retire into Egypt, with the Mary and the infant Jesus, for fear that Jesus should fall into the hands of Herod.

Reflections on Angels
St Padre Pio

Send me your Guardian Angel, you will receive my help.

Know that this good Angel prays for you: offers to God all the good works you accomplish, your holy and pure desires.

Invoke often your Guardian Angel.

Remember that God is within us when we are in a state of grace and outside of us when we are in a state of sin; but His angel never abandons us…

He is our most sincere and faithful friend even when we sadden him with our bad behaviour.
"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him"

Scripture tells us very little about Jesus' formative years but we know that He lived with His mother for about 30 years and He learnt carpentry skills from Joseph.

Imagine Mary teaching Jesus how to walk, holding both his hands with her back bent over him. We can ask Her to do the same for us, to take us by the hand and teach us how to live the life God wants us to live. And so we step out on this Pilgrimage of the Heart as a little child learning to walk.
Jesus said we must be as little children to enter the kingdom of Heaven. And so in humility we start each new pilgrimage with the spirit of a child.

I remember a time when we were praying for a priest who humbly said "I feel as if all I have done under my own steam in the past has been worth nothing. I feel like a little child learning to walk!"

On the wall behind us was a statue of Mary and the child Jesus.

We prayed that he would surrender to the arms of Mary teaching him to walk the spiritual path prepared for him.

And yet every step is planned, the time before we learn to walk is also crucial, a time of preparation, of weaning, of building up our immunity, a time when we are being 'seven times refined'.

Jesus tells us:

"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"

and

"let the little children come to Me, to such as these belong the Kingdom of Heaven."

17
Jordan

Mary must have heard about her relative John baptising people in the river Jordan. I wonder if Mary had seen him since he was born, when she went to stay with her mother’s cousin, Elizabeth in the hill country, after the angel visited her with the invitation to bear the Messiah. She must have known this child, John, would grow up to play an important and mighty role and so she wouldn’t be surprised if Jesus told her He was going to the river.
She must have held her breath waiting for his return. And yet He didn’t return.
He stayed in the desert for 40 days in preparation for His ministry, then began to choose His disciples.

I wonder if Mary saw her son again before the family wedding at Cana. Did she send word for Him to meet her there?

It’s hard for a mother when her children move away and begin their adult lives. We feel such a mixture of emotions, missing them yet wanting them to live the lives they choose. But we can’t hold on to them, love means letting go ….and letting God…..
There was a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee and Mary the Mother of Jesus was there (John 2:1)

Imagine the servants' dismay when they realise they are running out of wine…. Mary knows her son can help and tells Him

"They have no more wine".

Despite Jesus' protest she tells the servants to

"Do whatever He tells you"

Jesus made all water sacred when He, the Anointed One, was baptised in the river and now He tells the servants to fill the six stone jars with water The water turned into wine and He thus revealed His glory

Water becomes Wine. This Wine the fruit of the grape becomes the Blood of Jesus.

At His last meal with His disciples Jesus took the wine and blessed it and said

"This is My blood poured out for you"

Jesus, the Fruit of Mary's womb consecrates the grape, the Fruit of the vine, and it becomes the Blood of Jesus poured into the earth at Calvary for the forgiveness of sins.
When we meditate on the passion of Jesus it is most powerful if we walk behind Him with His mother, Mary.

How helpless she feels as she watches Him being scourged, crowned with thorns, and falling under the weight of a heavy cross, knowing that He suffers for sinners and saints alike.

And Jesus does not want His mother to see Him in His agony, yet He needs her so much.

When Mary meets her Son, they look at each other and understand that this has to be done - to make all things new.

They give each other strength with a look of love.
Reflections
On the Cross
Our Lady

"Let it be done to me"

Mary pondered all these things in her heart.

Reflections
On the Cross
Padre Pio

We must never separate the Cross from Jesus; otherwise it would become a weight which in our weakness we could not carry it.

One day when we are able to see the full midday light, we will know what value and what treasures our earthly sufferings have been that have made us gain our everlasting Homeland.
After witnessing the death of Her Son, Mary held Him in Her arms before He was placed in the tomb. Then we imagine she was supported back to the place she was staying with the other women in Jerusalem. Probably back to the upper room where Jesus had presided at the Passover meal the previous night. Even though she is the mother of God the depth of her anguish and pain was still as great as it would have been for any other mother. How did she get through that first night? The disciples, with the exception of John, had fled. Did Mary understand Jesus' words that 'on the third day He would rise again?' Her heart was truly pierced as Simeon had promised long ago.

Yet she was the Mother to welcome the disciples as they returned to the upper room, to forgive their cowardice. She was the Mother to forgive those responsible for Her son's crucifixion, remembering His words

"Father forgive them, they do not know what they do".

Imagine her absolute Joy when He rose again.

Pope John Paul II suggests that Jesus first appeared to Mary, and then to them all.
In the Upper Room

Then, as He ascended to His Father she knew her role on earth was accomplished. Her "YES" over 30 years ago, had enabled God's will to be done through her. After the Ascension she would remind them of His words "to stay in the upper room until the Father sent the Holy Spirit", for she knew the power of the Holy Spirit because she had experienced it when Angel Gabriel visited her to tell her she was to bear the Messiah.

Look at the Pieta and place yourself in the arms of Mary, your Mother.
Now place all those you need to forgive in Her arms too, and be reconciled.

And with Mary and the disciples we remember words of the prayer Jesus taught

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"
Pilgrimage of the Heart

Reflections on Confession

Our Lady

Do not go to confession through habit, to remain the same after that. No, it is not good.

Confession should give an impulse to your faith.

It should stimulate you and bring you closer to Jesus.

Make your peace with God and among yourselves.

For that, it is necessary to believe, to pray, to fast, and to go to confession.

Pray, pray!

Repent, Repent, Repent.
(Our Lady of Lourdes)

Reflections on Confession

St Padre Pio

In our thoughts and in confession, we must not dwell on sins that were previously confessed.

When disturbed by passions and misfortunes, may the sweet hope of His inexhaustible mercy sustain us.

Let us have no doubts about the solemn pardon pronounced over our errors.

Let us place a tombstone over them, just as the Lord has done.

Remember that our soul is the temple of God.
Pilgrimage of the Heart

Return of the Prodigal Son
Mary travelled with John as the disciples obeyed Jesus' instruction to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News. We don't know where they journeyed but legend tells us that Mary lived for a while in Ephesus.

"Dear woman, here is your son"....and to the disciple "here is your mother" (John 19: 26-27)

These are the words that Jesus spoke to Mary and John as they stood at the foot of the Cross. We are invited to share in this love, and to accept Mary into the home of our heart as our Mother.

Imagine Mary in Her home in Ephesus, welcoming all who come to visit Her, giving counsel and advice, retelling the visit of Angel Gabriel, sharing Her memories of Jesus as a boy growing up, reminding everyone of His teaching -how She felt when She had to watch Him dying on the cross, how she felt when the disciples doubted Her and Her Son, how grateful She felt for the friendship and support shown by the women at the foot of the cross in Her hour of greatest need.
She would tell of the expectant wait in the upper room and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and the women gathered there.

Just as she would have encouraged them from her own understanding and experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, she encourages you now and prays for you.

As Mary and her Son forgave all who needed forgiveness, we, through their intercession, ask for the grace to forgive ourselves and all who we feel need our forgiveness.

If we feel we just can't forgive then let us pray for the grace, strength and courage to want to do so.

We can then look forward, unencumbered by the past, in great freedom, hope and expectation.

We must rise up and value every instant of time that passes and is in our power. We must not waste a single moment.

(Padre Pio)
Closing Prayer

Lord support us all the day long
‘til shadows lengthen and evening falls
and the busy day is hushed
and the fever of life is over
and our work is done.

Then in Your mercy
may You give us a safe lodging,
holy rest and peace at last.

Amen.