

# What did the Pilgrimage mean to me?

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It is difficult to describe what this pilgrimage meant to me. What most impressed me during this pilgrimage was to know the Roots of our Congregation in Germany, where everything began. I lived and experienced many different emotions. First, I deeply thank the Congregation, the General and Provincial Councils, and my Community for all the help. My feelings of eternal gratitude go all the Sisters who accompanied us in Rome and in Germany. Thanks for entrusting to me this beautiful work. I felt privileged twice with this great present.

To walk on pilgrimage with a group and travel a little distance each day, was and is, certainly a unique experience that God's goodness gave me as a present in this stage of my life. I tried to be open to listen, to feel and

to live, and with the profound desire to go deeper into the roots of our past, to go through the Historic and Sacred spaces. This made me savor the journey and see with my own eyes another reality. To contemplate and revere the given life, appreciating the sacredness of each moment and so involve myself more with the Divine which permeates all my vocational history.

Pilgrim – not because I had all the answers I was looking for -, but because I put myself opened to the Spirit. If I have questions, I am not alone, but I am in search of God who has the answers for all my longings and yearnings as a Sister of Notre Dame.

For me to be a pilgrim with the group in many places is not and was not only to search for the past as past, but to live the plenitude of life. The Churches of Rome are very calm spaces, strangely empty most of the time, but full of beauty and life. They speak to us a different language of the world, which is around them. They don't want to be seen as if they were Museums. They want yes, to invite us to enter, silence and appreciate their beauty. To sit with tranquility or to kneel and listen with attention, to the voice of God and to enter in profound contact with all our being. This contact with the mysterious gift of God, that is me.

Assisi was also a place that spoke to me a lot of simplicity and poverty, which marks today the people who visit this place. The beauty of the place, its Churches, streets, the natural beauty and its past make me believe that there was something greater for which so many people gave their life to God in all its meanings, the God who walks and attracts so many who are in search for a greater meaning in their life.

It is also to experience the share of life and of richness and feel also the walking of our International Congregation in the Motherhouse, with all its richness of cultures and people. The untiring work of our Sisters from the diverse Provinces, in the Motherhouse, bringing their richness and their values in the diversity of cultures to put them into service of the Congregation and the Kingdom. Sharing the life, the gifts and qualities and all the work, which is realized there by the Sisters unites us more as a Congregation. To share the life and mission, pray and celebrate Eucharist with the Motherhouse Sisters and with the Sisters of Germany, Holland and Italy were very striking and significant moments, not always understood completely because of the different language, but are of great value.

To see the roots and the origin of our Congregation motivated me to search for more harmony with the Sisters and the Congregation through reading and going deeper into our Congregational History.

Something else that impressed me more, was very meaningful, and got me moved was to celebrate the Eucharist at the tomb of Saint Julie, in Namur. Unite myself in prayer with all the Sisters of Notre Dame and bringing present the thousands of Sisters that because of Saint Julie became the bearers of the goodness of God in all the world was a special grace. All of us are graced today because we continue to broadcast God's

goodness in the world. In the pilgrimage you have rich experiences. I can only say, thanks Lord, for your immeasurable love and goodness.

To discover that I am travelling inside me is to discover that God speaks to me through the path. He attracts me in deeper dimensions, giving me new eyes to notice the beauty of His creation; new ears to listen to His appeals and a new tongue to speak, to live a new peace and a new enchantment for life. To observe the faces of so many people, in all the places, makes us see a different world and welcome in a new way the most profound yearnings.

To know and to revere the heart of the Church and the roots of the Congregation is to leave yourself again to be touched by the love of God who drives us. Going to sacred places and historical spaces is to contact my personal and Congregational history; it is to feel part of this great plan of God.

To pilgrim is an intimate experience, profoundly sacred and difficult to describe, but full of the goodness and love of God. This pilgrimage was to me a great expression of faith, of serene and fraternal living with the Sisters, of new lights, of welcoming the different and deeper yearnings of my being as a Sister of Notre Dame. A time of renewal, a time of gratitude and praise and experience of life in the Congregation and in the Church.

Thank you for the rich opportunity and for the great experience of life. Thank you!