

Thursday Mass

Tronçon Annette Stobart

P. Frédéric Trautmann

Welcome

I would like to say a warm and friendly welcome to all the sisters who come from so many different countries and from the other foreign associations of our European federation.

Welcome to the sisters from Germany & Romania that are here with us but also from Austria, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland and Portugal that are walking on the other tronçons.

Maybe you are a little bit afraid of speaking foreign languages. Don't be afraid: it's easy! Last summer we had an international road in Romania and we didn't have any difficulties. We are all at the same level: the most important is your warm heart and your open hands. And if you want, you could speak with your fingers.

Homily

Cunegonde has just joined the Fire Notre-Dame de Bonne-Espérance and has registered for the national gathering in Paray-le-Monial. Well, she was a little (a lot) motivated by her Fire leader and the more her parents told her not to go, the more she wanted to come with her best friend. And then Gontran, the beloved of her heart, is going to Vézelay... so no excuse then.

D-Day comes and then it's a disaster: getting up at dawn to take the bus, tiredness, work to catch up on on the way back, a multitude, what do I say, a multitude of things to do, each one more important than the last: "I'd be so much better at home," she says to herself, "if only I'd said: 'I can't, I've got a pony to take care of!!'"

Dear guide sisters, probably none of you came with lead feet... But maybe a few of you did, a little... And you wonder how it's going to play out. Nothing could be more normal: to leave our homes, to leave our ordinary routine, to take the road that the Lord gives us to walk in the company of our sisters, and even if everything is well prepared (on your side and on the side of the organizers) there is still an element of the unknown. It is this part of the unknown that we are invited to go through: in the encounter with others, in the encounter with our Lord Jesus and even in the encounter with ourselves, to discover that we are capable of choosing the essential and of going to the summits (this is the theme of the year for those who have recognized it!).

The peaks are not very high on the powdery roads of this region, but the choice that leads us here opens the doors to the human and divine adventure that Scouting allows us to live to the fullest: in any case, it is an adventure! The theme of the gathering says it in its own way: Make your heart free!

How much my heart (and my head!) can keep me prisoner: the mental load is sometimes so heavy, worries invade me, many problems with no apparent solution... Closed paths, cul-de-sacs and dead ends.

To live the gathering of All Saints' Day, in Paray, near the heart of Jesus is to ask him for his sweet light to guide our steps towards him, as Saint John Henry Newman expressed it so well (prayer *below ad libitum* according to the circumstances):

Lead me, sweet light,
into the darkness that surrounds me,

Lead me up!

The night is thick and I'm far from home: lead me up!

Direct my steps; I don't ask to see
The Distant Horizon – one step is enough for me.

I have not always been so, I have not always begged you
to lead me higher.

I wanted to choose myself and see my way, but now
Lead me up!

With Jesus, life always finds its way, no matter what happens, because nothing can separate us from him.

Amen!