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11th June, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Invitation to Virtual Pilgrimage to Lourdes

I would like to invite you to “a first” for the Hallam Diocese.

At the end of this month our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes would normally take place travelling with around 400-450 people. It is a large pilgrimage for a small diocese. The pilgrimage is a blessed time for all who take part – the opportunities for personal prayer, shared worship and the company of fellow pilgrims. The diocese is blessed, too, as pilgrims return and share their stories.

As you know, this year, we are unable to travel to Lourdes, so instead, I am inviting you to join in a Virtual Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Now, what will our Virtual Pilgrimage look like? Well, we are aiming to follow the programme already planned for Lourdes. There will be some live events and some pre-recorded. These will be made available through a dedicated website which will give the link to each event. The website address is **www.hallam-lourdes.com**.

The services from each day will be available to watch afterwards, but wouldn't it be wonderful for us to join in the events as programmed so that at different times during the week we are united in prayer across the diocese?

Last month was the 40th anniversary of the formation of our Diocese of Hallam. I had hoped that we might celebrate the occasion in a fitting manner, but, in the end, it wasn't possible. Hopefully, we will be able to mark the occasion when we get somewhere near the “New Normal”. Meanwhile it is providential, perhaps, that I will celebrate the Opening Mass of the pilgrimage on the Feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, the Patron of our Diocese, Saturday 27th June.

I hope that you will join in whenever you can from **Saturday 27th June to Friday 3rd July** and encourage other to share the experience with you. My invitation to take part is to the whole diocese and not just those booked to travel to Lourdes this year. I look forward to sharing these days of virtual pilgrimage with you soon.

Meanwhile, keep safe. Keep close to the Lord. Keep in touch.

Yours in Christ the Redeemer

+Ralph

Bishop of Hallam