

EVENTS

Pilgrimages

Each year there are normally at least two opportunities to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes in the south of France as part of a Service community: with the HCPT (Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust) children's pilgrimage at Easter; and with the IMP (International Military Pilgrimage) in May, either supporting a veterans HCPT group for a week long pilgrimage, or as part of the IMP Naval Contingent for a shorter 4-day pilgrimage.

Very occasionally additional pilgrimages may be organised to other sites such as Rome, Fatima, the Holy Land, or Walsingham.

HCPT - Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust

HCPT is a UK-based Catholic charity offering pilgrimage holidays to the shrine of Lourdes in South West France for disabled and disadvantaged people from around the UK and further afield.

Within the wider context of this national organisation, groups from each of the Armed Forces exist, which focus on children and veterans with special needs from our Armed Forces communities. Groups are made up of serving helpers, supported by some retired and dependant personnel, as well as specialist service health care professionals and normally a Service Chaplain. The pilgrimage week has a family atmosphere with a 1-to-1 participant / helper ratio and is based on a spine of faith activities with a great number of opportunities for fun.

The children's pilgrimage takes place at Easter and within the Armed Forces region, the Royal Navy runs two groups:

⚓ Group 150 - predominantly from the Plymouth/West Country area

⚓ Group 186 - predominantly from the Portsmouth area

Joint Service Hosanna House Group (JSHHG)



Also part of the Armed Forces Region is HCPT Group 507 (JSHHG). Founded in 1995, JSHHG gives the opportunity of a respite care pilgrimage to Lourdes for ex-Service personnel or any of their special needs adult dependants. Hosanna House is a specially adapted care home for Hosanna House groups nationwide. The pilgrimage is timed to coincide with the International Military Pilgrimage in May.

Nominations for serving helpers, children and veterans who would benefit from undertaking the pilgrimage are always welcome. More information, including contact details, is available on the Armed Forces Groups' pages on the Trust's website: <https://www.hcpt.org.uk/>



Pilgrimage details for the Armed Forces are also promulgated in an annual DIN.

International Military Pilgrimage (IMP)



Colour, music, flags, prayer, laughter, respect, pride, humility, sense of God - these are all things which the International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) brings out. Servicemen and -women from 30 countries gather together, probably 20,000 people in all, for what must be one of the most remarkable weekends Lourdes ever sees. The British contingent is generally about 300-strong, and travels by plane from the UK or train from Germany.

The programme includes events which are international, anglophone or just British. The opening and closing ceremonies, Mass at the grotto, Stations of the Cross, Candlelight procession, and a Reconciliation Service are the large events, but the smaller unit groups in the pilgrimage will also take themselves off for time together - walking around Lourdes, going for a beer or an ice cream, or visiting the grotto late at night.

Flights and full-board accommodation, as well as transfers to and from Lourdes airport and the pilgrimage hotel, are all covered in the overall pilgrimage cost, which is heavily subsidised for serving personnel by Service Catholic charities.

See the website Events page for details of the next pilgrimage, which are also detailed in an annual DIN and RNTM.

Annual Naval Mass

⚓ *Second Sunday in July (Sea Sunday) - St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth*

⚓ *Third Sunday in July - St Mary and St Boniface Cathedral, Plymouth*



The Annual Naval Mass is held in St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth, and in St Mary & St Boniface Cathedral, Plymouth. It is a chance for Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel and their families to mark their common ties as Catholics, sailors and marines. Mass has a distinctly naval flavour, and all the local Catholic Chaplains will concelebrate. Trainees from the local Establishments also take part.

Serving personnel are encouraged to wear RN 1B uniform / RM Blues or Full Lovats.

Veterans of all Services are invited to wear their medals. After the Service there is a chance to socialise at the RN Catholic Chaplaincy Reception.

Remembrance Weekend

Every year on Remembrance Sunday a Solemn Requiem Mass for the Fallen is held in Westminster Cathedral. Armed Forces personnel attend in uniform with medals and veterans are also encouraged to attend wearing their medals. The front section of the Cathedral closest to the altar is reserved that day for Armed Forces personnel, veterans and accompanying family members.

After the Mass, refreshments are served in the Cathedral Hall, where all are made to feel most welcome.



It has become the custom over the years for a small Navy group of those who have displayed an interest in their faith to spend the whole weekend in London staying overnight at the Redemptorist Fathers' monastery in Clapham. The programme includes: a guided tour of Westminster Abbey and the Martyrs' Museum at Tyburn Convent; visits to the Field of Remembrance outside the Abbey, and the Cenotaph; and an introduction to two London clubs which are specifically for the use of Armed Forces serving and veteran personnel: the Victory Services Club and the Union Jack Club. If you are interested in participating in this event then please contact the Royal Navy Roman Catholic Pastoral Assistant

(Email: ian.crabtree277@mod.gov.uk).