

September 26, 2014



SPIRITUALITY - The Union of Friars Minor of Europe (UFME) every two years organizes a meeting of the Franciscan Youth of Europe in a significant place for the Christian faith and Franciscan spirituality. This year the Marian shrine of Lourdes was chosen, a place known throughout the world.

So, at the end of August 25-29, about 300 young people, accompanied by some friars from their regions, experienced an encounter full of discoveries on the shrine of Lourdes, the Grotto of the Apparitions. They witnessed the number of patients present as well as other pilgrims from around the world, the liturgical ceremonies (the International Eucharist on Wednesdays, the Eucharistic procession in the afternoon, the torchlight procession in the evening, etc). We found ourselves, both Friars and young people in a confidential part of the new basilica of St. Bernadette, beyond the Gave, for prayer and other various of group meetings. Some witnesses, including our brother Archbishop of Strasbourg, Mgr. Grallet Jean-Pierre, OFM, presented their experience of faith in the face of today's challenges. We visited several places of Bernadette's life and the history of the apparitions. In addition, it was expected to visit the Cité Saint-Pierre, a beautiful venue for the reception of poor pilgrims, near the town of Lourdes, already in the mountain. The Minister General, Br. Michael Perry, OFM, reached the meeting Thursday morning. In the afternoon, the Minister gave a lecture to young people on the theme of water

(an important symbol at Lourdes with its fountain, pools, Gave), and answered their questions.

On Friday 29, the last day of the meeting, in the Holy Grotto where the Immaculate appeared to little Bernadette, Brother Michael presided at the concluding Mass of the meeting for the whole group. The next meeting is scheduled in three years. The venue is yet to be determined.

Source: ofm.org, September 19, 2014