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## Marian Pilgrimage and Shrines

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## MARIAN PILGRIMAGE AT THE MILLENNIUM: RENEWAL OR TOURISM

Norbert Brockman, S.M.\*

### Introduction

The Millennium Jubilee Holy Year returned pilgrimage to popular awareness, garnering front-page articles as well as more traditional pieces on the religion pages. When three million visitors thronged Rome during the opening weeks, *USA Today* darkly described "a humiliating transportation debacle."<sup>1</sup> Quite beyond the Holy Year, however, with its special theme days, beatifications, and canonizations, religious travel to holy sites is enjoying a significant rebirth.<sup>2</sup>

The numbers are amazing. Of the 6,150 pilgrimage shrines operative in Europe today, 830 draw 10,000 or more pilgrims each year and 139 of these are shrines of international importance, attracting over 100,000 a year. Nineteen shrines receive between one and four million pilgrims. Lourdes will host over six million in the Holy Year 2000. The studies on which these figures are based attempt to separate out the religious-motivated visitors from the tourists, and include only the former in their counts.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beda Romano, "Rough Start for Rome as Jubilee Pilgrims Pour In," *USA Today*, 14 January 2000: 1D.

<sup>2</sup>Marlise Simons, "Pilgrims crowding Europe's Catholic Shrines," *New York Times*, 12 October 1993: A1 (hereafter: "Pilgrims crowding").

<sup>3</sup>Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 26-29 (hereafter: *Christian Pilgrimage*).

Lourdes is experiencing a 20% increase each decade. Even local shrines are benefitting: Maastricht's Shrine of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, has seen its candle sales rise to 10,000 a week!<sup>4</sup> And, of course, Rome exceeded its Holy Year target of 20 million religious visitors.

Students of Marian devotion are well aware of the proliferation of Marian shrines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It seemed as if a new form of pilgrimage site emerged, and that the medieval pattern, in which saints' shrines dominated, had passed into literary nostalgia. The Great Pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago continued, but they seemed to be overshadowed by the throngs going to Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Perhaps more significant, the new Marian shrines seemed to have reshaped the older pilgrimages that remained. The cult of relics, so important in medieval shrines, has little resonance in the Marian shrines, which are apparition-centered. The Marian shrines dispense with stations, those stopping-points along the Way that build up to the final goal. And, above all, the new shrines seem to do away altogether with the need to make an arduous passage of purification—the Way itself.

In *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Europe*, Mary Lee and Sidney Nolan distinguish several types of contemporary pilgrimage sites. Shrines can be places that are the goal of a pilgrim journey, where most activities are religious, such as Walsingham, Medjugorje or St. Patrick's Purgatory. A second group are places that are also tourist attractions, such as St. Peter's in Rome. Third are places known for periodic events, such as Oberammergau's Passions plays or Sevilla's Holy Week. Fourth are shrines combining tourism, pilgrimage and historic significance, such as Santiago de Compostela.<sup>5</sup> When we look more deeply into the recent phenomena, we see that saints' shrines have not been eclipsed, as witness such places as Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Lisieux, Mont-Royal and Blessed Padre Pio's San Giovanni Rotondo. It is also clear that pre-Napoleonic Marian shrines had no characteristics distinguishing them from saints'

<sup>4</sup>Simons, "Pilgrims crowding," A1.

<sup>5</sup>Nolan and Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage*, 14-19.

shrines, other than the absence of relics. All were the end-point of a Way, either a specific one with stations (e.g., Walsingham) or as a series of pilgrim marches (Altötting, the Spanish and Mexican Guadalupe, Czestochowa).

What distinguishes all recent shrines, however, whether Marian or not, are the possibilities offered by modern transportation. So much that is characteristic of modern shrines—physical transport, organization, activities, even souvenirs—are the result of the industrial revolution. The Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers issued a pastoral letter in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000, with the intention of providing a theological and spiritual reflection on the phenomenon of religious travel.<sup>6</sup> In it they observed that “contemporary society . . . is characterized by intense mobility.” The constant theme of the document is the Christian life as a “pilgrimage of hope,” a way to the celestial Jerusalem and a process of conversion.<sup>7</sup> (One is reminded of Antoine de St-Exupéry’s “eternal nomad progressing toward God.”)

Beginning by setting pilgrimage in a Biblical context, the pastoral letter recalls Adam’s pilgrimage, a path of conversion and return; the Abrahamic pilgrimage from Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:1–6); the Exodus, the exemplary model of the history of salvation; and Christ’s pilgrimage—a wandering marked by evangelization, signs (transfiguration, miracles) and the ascent through Calvary to the Resurrection and Ascension.<sup>8</sup> “The divinization of the human person is the great aim of the long journey of the spirit that places the believer in the very heart of God.”<sup>9</sup> The true pilgrimage, then, passes through physical reality to a spiritual one. The challenging question, then, is whether modern transport, by eliminating the Way and its attendant penance, has trivialized a major aspect of pilgrimage.

<sup>6</sup>Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, “The Pilgrimage in the Great Jubilee,” *Origins* 28/4 (11 June 1998): 49–61 (hereafter “The Pilgrimage”).

<sup>7</sup>“The Pilgrimage,” no. 2.

<sup>8</sup>“The Pilgrimage,” nos. 4–10.

<sup>9</sup>“The Pilgrimage,” no. 13.

### **Medieval Pilgrimage**

In medieval Europe, every district had its own local pilgrimage shrine. There were also national pilgrimages, such as Canterbury in England, and shrines that drew people from across the Continent, such as Nidarøs in Norway or Walsingham in England. Besides these, however, were three Great Pilgrimages, each of which took months to make. Most people never made these journeys, but the annual numbers were very large, and these places still draw millions of the faithful each year.

### **Rome**

The pilgrimage to Rome began shortly after the legalization of Christianity in 313 A.D. The pilgrims sought out the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul, places well known in the Christian community and well marked. In time, the pilgrimage expanded to seven churches, and making the rounds of these is part of today's Roman pilgrimage. Five of the churches are those presided over by the pope: St. John Lateran, St. Peter's, St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls, St. Mary Major and St. Lawrence. The others are Holy Cross and St. Sebastian, where it is believed Peter and Paul were first buried. The round is fifteen miles.

Very early, the Church of Rome honored the memory of martyrs. Their bodies were given honored burial in the Roman catacombs. In 410 A.D., after the barbarians sacked Rome, the pope began transferring the bones of martyrs outside the city so they would not be profaned. On one occasion in 609, 28 wagon-loads of relics were moved, and in 807, 2,300 saints' remains were sent to one church alone. Making the rounds of the relic chapels in Rome became a standard part of Roman pilgrimages, and pilgrims began taking relics home for their own churches. They became so sought after, that the Crusaders sacked Orthodox cathedrals to bring back precious relics. It was only a small step from this to trading in relics and the eventual manufacture of false ones.

Popular relics could make or break a shrine in the Middle Ages, and so kidnapping was not uncommon. The charming story of the relics of Sainte-Foy in Conques, France, is a case in point. The languishing Abbey of Conques sent a monk to Agen,

where he entered the monastery there. After ten years, he became keeper of the shrine and, one night, broke into the reliquary and carried off the bones of Sainte-Foy. The monks of Agen followed in hot pursuit, and their failure to catch the monkish thief was taken as a miraculous sign that the saint approved her new home! In another instance, when Venetian traders wanted to steal the relics of St. Mark from the Muslim rulers of Egypt, they included them in cases of pork, which the disgusted Muslim custom officers refused to inspect.

Abbot Suger, who built the abbey church of St-Denis near Paris, described the fanaticism of the medieval crowds:

As they fought their way toward the holy relics to kiss them, they were so densely packed that none could so much as stir a foot. Some were trodden underfoot and had to be lifted above the heads of the crowd and passed to the back of the church. In the cloister, wounded pilgrims lay gasping their last breath. As for the monks who were in charge of the reliquaries, they were often obliged to escape with the relics through the windows.

Gifts of money, cattle, and properties were donated to the sites containing relics. The Crown of Thorns, arguably the greatest relic of all (since the Holy Cross had been broken up into thousands of splinters), was so valuable that King St. Louis IX was able to pawn it for enough to finance a crusade and the invasion of North Africa.

### *Jerusalem*

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was difficult because of its distance from the majority of Christians. Until modern times, one either took a long and difficult sea journey or traveled over land which, at best, was a perilous route beset with robbers.

The pilgrimage began after 325 A.D., when Constantine's queen-mother, Helene, came seeking the True Cross and the implements of the Passion, which she claimed were revealed by signs and wonders. Soon, the grand basilicas built over the sites associated with Jesus began to attract visitors. Helena, at a church council, arranged to have Jerusalem elevated to highest rank among bishoprics. When St. Jerome settled there, around 400, to translate the Bible into Latin, his wealthy

friends and patrons came to visit from Rome, with vast retinues of servants, soldiers and camp followers. A constant stream of pilgrims came from Egypt and Syria, but, as those Christian communities dwindled after the Muslim invasions, the majority shifted to Europeans.

Bethlehem and Calvary were desecrated by pagan shrines built purposefully on top of them, which had the benefit of marking them for later generations. By the fourth century, Constantine had built three large basilicas: the Holy Sepulchre, Bethlehem and Mount Olivet. When the Turks were accused of waylaying pilgrims in the twelfth century, the accusation was taken so seriously that it became a major excuse for the Crusades.

### *The Way of St. James*

As Dante put it: "Those who go to Rome are called Romans, those who go to Jerusalem are called palmers, but only those who go to Santiago are called pilgrims." The greatest of the medieval pilgrimages was the Way of St. James, *el Camino de Santiago*. It began with the legend that the body of the Apostle St. James the Elder was miraculously transported from Palestine to Spain, where it was enshrined. During the barbarian invasions, the body was hidden and the place forgotten, until it was revealed by a miraculous star in the ninth century. A chapel was built on the site, the "field of the star" (Compostela). During the Battle of Clavijo, a major victory over the occupying Moors, James appeared on a white charger and led the Christians against the infidels. Thus Santiago became *Santiago Matamoros*, James the Moor-slayer, and the *Reconquista*—the liberation of Spain from Islamic occupation—had its patron saint.

The cult of St. James spread, and by the twelfth century, when most of Spain was again Christian, Compostela ranked with Rome and Jerusalem. The monks of Cluny cared for the Way of St. James and built monasteries and pilgrim hostels along it. The Knights of Santiago were founded to provide protection along the pilgrim route, and in many towns local hermits served the poor among the pilgrims and gave them shelter. The Church in northern Spain was for centuries organized around the pilgrimage.

Pilgrims from England usually sailed to Aquitaine and joined at Bordeaux the pilgrims on route from Paris. A second route began at Vézelay, another at Le Puy, where Swiss and Germans joined, and the last, from Arles, where the Italians joined. People came from as far away as Scandinavia. The Way is 600 miles long within Spain; most of it is a footpath, still untouched by cars and often wandering through fields. Monasteries were founded to care for travelers, like Roncesvalles on the French border, where the monks washed the feet of pilgrims, fed and housed them. The medieval dormitory is still there and still used. The Knights of Santiago provided security patrols to the 500,000 to 2,000,000 pilgrims each year during the Middle Ages.

People went for many reasons: many, to fulfill a vow or seek forgiveness for sins and, a few came under compulsion. Medieval courts could sentence a criminal to make the pilgrimage and require that he present evidence of its fulfillment. (Because pilgrimage on foot is a test and can bring insight, a Belgian penal institution still sends on pilgrimage juvenile delinquents whom it wants to see embrace change in their lives. German social workers sometimes accompany their parolees on pilgrimage.<sup>10</sup>)

Pilgrims wore a special costume: a cloak, a broad-brimmed hat and a walking staff with an attached water gourd. Every medieval pilgrimage had its symbol, and Santiago's was a scallop shell, worn proudly by those who made the long journey. The wealthy, of course, could ride, but most people walked, an average of three months or more, across mountain passes and in danger from bandits and wolf packs.

Imagine the pilgrim scene as it would have been in the twelfth century at any shrine on the Camino de Santiago. The footsore pilgrims traveled by day, since night belonged to the robber gangs who preyed upon them. Even then, in fear of attacks from wolves, bears or bandits, they would arrive at the station or pilgrim hostel with a sense of great relief. Some, of course, died along the way of exhaustion or were dragged off into the woods when they lagged behind and were never seen

<sup>10</sup>*Financial Times* (UK), 14 October 1995.



again. As the exhausted pilgrims arrived, they stumbled into the church after "reading" the tympanum and absorbing its teaching. They then walked three times around the shrine along the ambulatory, the circular aisle around the inside of the church. These had slanting floors so the mud and filth tracked in could be washed down. Each pilgrim stopped before the statue of the saint and prayed. Some would have brought family jewels for the journey, and retired to a corner to take one from among those carefully sewn into their cloak. It was presented to the saint with a prayer, for a safe journey, for healing, for forgiveness of sins. They presented their gifts carefully, since pilgrim groups were notorious for having thieves and murderers in their number.

Weakened by travel and perhaps suffering from physical ailments, pilgrims sometimes arrived in a pitiful condition. They might be carried or accompanied by relatives, and at each station they would be lined up on pallets of straw. The abbot or chaplain would bring relics through the crowd to bless the sick, exactly as the clergy today come through the lines of invalids at Lourdes, blessing them with the Holy Sacrament. The effect of the daily groups walking around the ambulatory, the litters of the sick, the animals, the criminals sentenced to pilgrimage hovering outside the church until allowed in—all contributed to an atmosphere of fetid squalor. After a bowl of soup, a crust of bread, and some sleep on a stone floor, the medieval pilgrim was up at dawn for Mass and on the Way again. The comfort and antiseptic nature of contemporary religious tourism stands in stark contrast to the medieval experience.

All along the route in medieval times were pilgrim hostels; a few are now expensive paradors or national hotels. Most have hardly changed: simple, open dormitories, sometimes serving soup and bread at the end of a long day's walk. In recent years, the Spanish government has refurbished stopping places along the Way and allowed them to be used free by pilgrims. There are 5,800 such sleeping places, with a stay limited to a single night.

Today, the pilgrim receives a passport, or *compostela*, at the starting point. Along the route, entries are stamped at *refugios* to certify progress. These rude hostels are free, and have been

cleaned and refurbished to foster religious travel in the depressed north. In the Middle Ages, the passport proved that one fulfilled the requirements, especially if the pilgrimage was a sentence for a crime. Needless to say, a flourishing traffic in false passports existed. A pilgrim can still obtain a passport which is stamped at his stopping points and finally certified at an office in the basilica. The minimum requirement is 100km on foot or 200km by horse or bicycle. Of the three million religious tourists each year, about 70,000 meet the requirements.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Pilgrim Stations***

Because pilgrimages required lengthy journeys, way-stations grew up to provide for pilgrims. These developed into mini-pilgrimage sites of their own. The Cluniac monks, who dominated the route to Santiago, established a network of preparatory shrines, taking over Vézelay and Moissac. Benedictine Conques and the hermit-built Santo Domingo de la Calzada still draw visitors. Among the beautiful carvings in the cloister of the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos is one of Jesus, with cockleshell and pilgrim staff, leading a group of saintly pilgrims. It is possibly an evocation of the Emmaus event. The Marian station in Pontevedra, just beyond Santiago, presents Mary in similar guise, garbed in full pilgrim habit with staff and cockleshell. To my knowledge, Pontevedra constitutes the only post-shrine station anywhere.

Even regional shrines had their stations. The way to Nidarø in Norway was marked by hostels built at places St. Olav had visited. The stations on the way to St. Winifride's Well in Wales, still an active pilgrimage place, were supposedly determined by the places where her severed head had bounced after her martyrdom! Even that best-known pilgrimage, to Canterbury, included the shrines of St. William the Baker, martyred by bandits while on pilgrimage, and the Hundred Mennes' Hostel in Winchester, that greeted and fed French pilgrims. One can still stop there and receive a "pilgrim's dole"—a slice of bread and a horn

<sup>11</sup>Simons, "Pilgrims crowding," A6.

of beer—by applying at the porter's postern. Well-known among stations is the Slipper Chapel at Walsingham, the last stop on the Way, where pilgrims have left their footwear before walking the Holy Mile barefoot. Today it is the Catholic shrine.

Stations, taken from the model of the stationary churches of Rome, were a practical necessity for long medieval journeys. They were stopping points with some religious significance. From earliest times, *statio* referred to a day of fast,<sup>12</sup> and, from the third century, statinal churches were part of the Roman observance of Lent. From these customs, the way-stations of pilgrimages became a symbol of the sacrifices and meager rations involved in the journey. The pilgrimage was always a time of extended penance.

Are stations absent from the new shrines and from religious tourism? In some cases, related stops, such as Nevers on the trip to Lourdes, are combined in a sort of "Marian theme tour" that includes Fatima, Garabandal, Lourdes, Nevers and Paris. We also have what can be termed "stop-over sites," places that allow for a break in a series of flights. Rue de Bac, with its chapel of the Miraculous Medal, is a common one. Similarly, in an otherwise unremarkable church on an ordinary street in Prague, devotion to the Infant Jesus has been rejuvenated by pilgrims as they stop to change planes en route to Medjugorje. The difference is that the stations along medieval routes advanced toward the final goal and were part of the Way, while today's stations are associated with the destination.

Many shrines have a series of stations in or around the place itself, after the fashion of medieval ambulatory chapels. They exist to focus and intensify the experience. At Fatima, they include the holm oak chapel, Ajustrel, Valinhos, and the sites of the apparitions of the Angel of Peace. Today, we would add the shrine-tombs of Blesseds Jacinta and Francisco. Medjugorje has a regular series of stations: St. James Church, Apparition Hill and the Mount of the Cross. During the Counter-Reformation, shrines consisting entirely of stations, were developed as a

<sup>12</sup>Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (10 vols.; Niort: L. Favre, 1886), 7:585.

form of instruction for the people. These center on the mystery of the Cross. Such station-shrines include Bom Jesus outside Braga, Portugal; Kalawaria Zebrzydowska near Krakow, Poland; and Vallaro near Milano, Italy.

As John Paul II said on his pastoral pilgrimage to Vienna, the stations form a web of shrines that "promotes mutual understanding among . . . different peoples and nations."<sup>13</sup> This raises the question of how well the religious tour can accomplish the evangelical role of pilgrimage. For pilgrimage is not to be among the like-minded, but among the broken and seekers. *Pilgrimage in the Great Jubilee* reminds us that pilgrimages are "moments of living together with people of different ages and formation."<sup>14</sup> It is to be "the signal for a nation far off" (Isa. 5:26). To new expressions of the restlessness of the human soul, religious tourism can speak prophetically that not all travel is escape. Both religious tourists and pilgrims are called away from egocentric pining for the flesh-pots of Egypt (Exod. 16:3) to sacred places where the spirit is made manifest. The modern pilgrimage site that best exemplifies this, in my experience, is not a shrine, but Taizé, with its gatherings of believers and unbelievers of every stripe and conviction, often at the end of a long road, both spiritually and physically.

The test of the value of either pilgrimage or religious tourism is the encounter with grace. *Pilgrimage in the Great Jubilee* insists that solidarity with the weak and oppressed, especially migrants and refugees, is a fruit of pilgrimage. "No one should feel foreign to the injustice that is often at its roots, to the personal and collective drama, but also to the hopes that bloom for a different future and a prospect of dialogue and a peaceful multi-racial coexistence. The Christian . . . must become the Good Samaritan on the road. . . ."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>John Paul II, "Itineraria apostolica" [10 September 1983], *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 76 (1984): 141.

<sup>14</sup>"The Pilgrimage," no. 39.

<sup>15</sup>"The Pilgrimage," no. 25.

### Religious Tourism

The advent of the railroad in the nineteenth century changed all this, at precisely the point where international pilgrimages were at their lowest. Now, pilgrimages could be accomplished in a few days of travel and by modes open to many more people, but the sense of being "on the way" was lost. The important thing became the place, not the pilgrimage. This first had impact in France, where Lourdes became a major shrine, partly because it was served by rail. Across the country, in tiny Ars, the holy man who pastored the parish would, in an earlier time, have only been recognized as another local saint. When French railroads sent special carriages to his village on days of penance, St. John Vianney heard confessions day and night and gained an international reputation.

Jet travel further revolutionized religious tourism after World War II, making shrines such as Fatima in Portugal or the more recent Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina places of world attention. Today's religious tours often visit a string of shrines in a single trip, creating a *faux* set of stations.

Travel agencies organize and advertize religious tours, made up of visits to sites important to a specific religious tradition. Although Catholics are most active in this regard, there are Protestant agencies that have regular tours of sites associated with Luther or Wesley, or Anglican shrines and churches. Catholic tours focus on popular shrines, such as Fatima, Lourdes or Medjugorje, or the alleged Eucharistic miracles.

Group tours are organized by an agency, often working with a sponsoring church and a local organizer—often the pastor—who recruits the participants. The usual arrangement gives the organizer a free trip for each fifteen or so persons paid in full. These programs can be tailored to the interests of the congregation and are often advertized widely. This leads to a mix of vacation elements. One leader of my acquaintance arranged a contemplative pilgrimage in the path of St. Teresa of Avila. After receiving a prospectus from an agent in Spain, she puzzled over afternoons set aside for *el Corte Inglés*, until I explained it was Spain's largest chain of department stores. Spanish tourism could not imagine a trip without daily shopping!

Modern transport, media and mass-market advertisement have transformed pilgrimage into religious tourism. People now come from across the oceans, mostly from the rising middle class, for whom a trip to Europe is a once-in-a-lifetime event. With organized affinity tours, they go with friends and people from their local church. No longer does the trip include the encounter with a range of characters with different motivations and values, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* reveals to its readers. The point now is to have been there and prayed there. The goal of the pilgrimage could be spiritual insight, healing, or education. There might be a trip to take part in a special event such as the Holy Year. The end point is the reason for the trip, and the trip is not seen as proximate preparation for the holy place. Having a prayer service in a jumbo jet rocketing to Europe is not the same thing.

If that be the case, reasonable comfort along the way becomes a practical matter, and one need not fast or be penitential. When the trip allows more time for being there, rather than getting there, the Christian traveler can become more acquainted with the places visited. The days spent walking the route of holy places in Rome can now be replaced by the one-day bus tour with a stop at St. Peter's and St. John Lateran. At worst, such trips produce a "been there, done that" attitude for those who collect visits to shrines. At best, it exposes the visitor to a variety of experiences of faith and leaves lasting memories.

One has only to see devout Lutherans as they climb the hill to the Wartburg Castle where Luther translated the New Testament, or watch Catholics coming to Lourdes for the first time, to know that religious tourism can have spiritual benefits. The challenge to the religious leaders of such tours is the preparation of the pilgrims, so that something akin to the purification of the Way readies them for the encounter at the shrine.

### **Protestant Pilgrimage**

Traditional Protestantism rejected pilgrimages as exaggerated works of religion, smacking of self-justification. Although Anglicanism and Lutheranism never abandoned pilgrimages totally, making "the Way" was always on the margins of Protes-

tant piety. Luther's objections to pilgrimage stemmed from his rejection of the invocation of the saints and their relics and of the doctrine on indulgences. Similarly, Calvin opposed the cult of the saints and their images, but did not directly condemn pilgrimages.<sup>16</sup>

However, the arrival of the jet plane brought Protestants into religious tourism, especially since Israel, the primary focus for their religious tours, thus became accessible to large numbers. Religious tours, however, changed the attitude, because they focus on deepening the religious identity of travelers and introducing them to their common history. Even evangelicals reverently visit the home of William Wilberforce or places where John Wesley or John Bunyan preached. The religious experience thus arrives out of a Christian historical tour. Some gatherings commemorate the fidelity of the ancestor in faith, as the French Calvinist pilgrimage to the Desert, the mountainous retreat used by the Protestants during the persecutions of Cardinal Richelieu.

Regardless of this historical focus, some true pilgrimages remain in the Protestant tradition. The Anglo-Catholic revival of Walsingham may seem part of a larger Catholic piety, especially when one witnesses the harassing crowds of evangelicals who hoot and heckle the Anglican processions, focusing the extremes of their bile on Anglican nuns. But what is one to make of Miercurea Ciuc, the center for the devoutly Protestant Székely in Romania? The Székely pilgrimage has been held every Pentecost since 1567. It is one of the largest Protestant pilgrimages in Europe, and is celebrated with religious services, songfests and traditional costumes. It memorialized the defeat of Hungarian troops sent to forcibly return the Székely to Catholicism. After barricading themselves in a former friary, they emerged to drive off their enemies. In the church is a seven-foot statue of the Virgin, the Székely's most important religious emblem.

The final goal, the shrine itself, must be the "tent of meeting,"<sup>17</sup> bringing forth all the pent-up jubilation that has built

<sup>16</sup>David Osborne, *Pilgrimage* (Cambridge [UK]: Grove Books, 1996), 11.

<sup>17</sup>"The Pilgrimage," no. 32.

during the Way. As the Santiago pilgrims reached the last high point before the city, the first to see the cathedral towers cried out, "mon joie," and was accorded the name *le Roi* (king of the group).

The Way is a conversion experience, and this is perhaps another contrast with religious tourism, where the traveler seeks affirmation of a faith not questioned. The ex-voto that Erasmus of Rotterdam left for Our Lady of Walsingham in 1511 speaks to this:

I, poor bard, rich in goodwill but poor in all besides,  
 Bring you my verse—I have nothing else to bring—  
     and beg, in return for this worthless gift,  
 That greatest reward—a heart that fears God  
 Free forever from sin's foul tyranny.

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