



Congregation of the
Blessed Sacrament

Adveniat Regnum Tuum Eucharisticum!

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Walking on the footsteps of Fr. Eymard

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La Mure d'Isere – On the morning of August 2, the feast of our Founder, 17 hikers, accompanied by a support and logistics team of six, began their pilgrimage on foot from the town of La Mure to the Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette (1800 meters altitude).

The underlying theme of the pilgrimage, "Walking on the Footsteps of Fr. Eymard: In Search of the Living Water with the Samaritan Woman," guided the hikers in discovering the richness of the fourth chapter of the Gospel of St. John through the eyes of Fr. Eymard and other spiritual masters. Beautiful prayers, moments of solitude, sharing of experiences and reflections dotted the 30 km stretch of sun-drenched wheat fields, treacherous trails, and stunning views of the mountain and the woods, as the group walked for two days, from the birthplace of Fr. Eymard to this Marian shrine close to his heart.

These hikers of all ages (the oldest is 81 years old, and, as it seems, the most indefatigable of the group) and from all walks of life were guided through the twists and turns, rise and fall of the hike by Daniel, a certified mountaineer and a member of La Salette MPP (*Marcher, Prier, Partager*) and are gathered into the spirit of prayer by Fr. Manuel Barbiero and Fr. Vergel Dalangin.

The walk is filled with memorable highlights, notably the send-off prayer at the Chapel of St. Peter Julian Eymard, the Vigil prayer and the blessing of water at the Church of La Salle en Beaumont, the lasagna-and-soup dinner prepared by the logistics team, the open-air Eucharist at *Col de l'Holme* and the arrival at the Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, where they were warmly welcomed by the shrine rector, Fr. Manuel Bonfin.

This walk offered the pilgrims a chance to immerse themselves deeply into the image of Christ as the source of the living water, the water that will slake the thirst of humanity. From the scarce supply that they carry in their drinking flasks to the endless torrents of streams and rivers they crossed, from the scorching heat of summer sun to the gentle downpour of rain, each instance of that two-day hike is an invitation to drink deep from the spiritual wells of St. John the Evangelist and St. Peter Julian Eymard as each one reflected on his or her own individual search for God, the unquenchable fountain of life and his and her own joyful response to His generous invitation, "All you who are thirsty, come to the water!" (*Isaiah 55: 1*)

