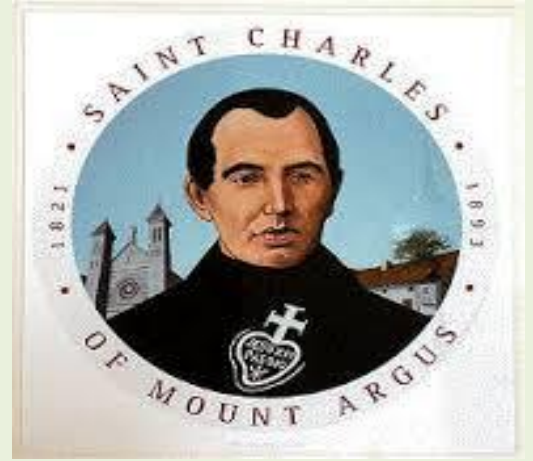

PILGRIM PATH TO THE TOMB OF ST. CHARLES OF MOUNT ARGUS



INTRODUCTION - Being a Pilgrim

The Pilgrim Path is a symbol of the journey of life and also of the journey of faith. For Christians, life is a journey in which we seek to follow Christ. Often in the Gospel people come to Jesus and say that they want to follow him. They do this because they have seen something in him that attracts them. Jesus reminds them that his way is at times a difficult and demanding way, but it is also a way that leads to happiness and peace, as we read in one of the Psalms: *You will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in your presence* (Psalm 16: 11).



In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that those who wish to make the journey with him will need to learn to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him (Mark 8: 34). But we know that we never carry that cross alone. When we walk with Jesus on the way to life, he is always at our side. As part of the community of the Church, we are also accompanied by our brothers and sisters in the faith, both those living in this world and those who have gone before us on the next stage of the journey. The saints are among our companions on the way of

Jesus Christ. They show us by their lives how the power of the Cross can bring joy to a suffering world and they teach us never to be afraid of following the loving invitation of God who, in and through Jesus Christ his Son, offers us his love and his life.

1. **THE ENTRANCE GATE:** *The Journey of Life*

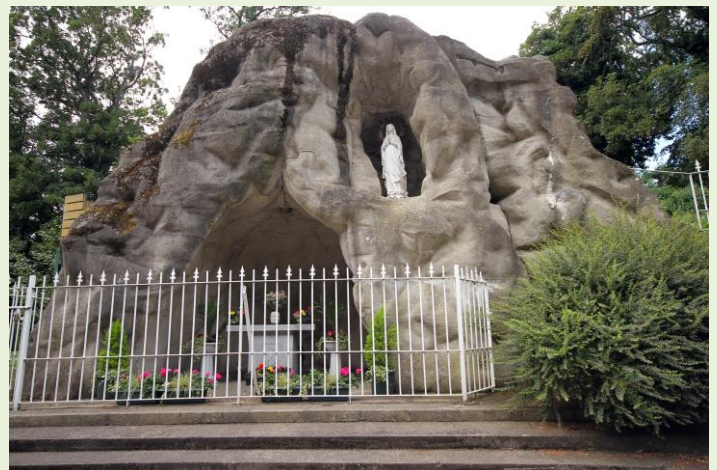


Jesus said “*I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full*” (John 10: 9–10).

As you enter through the Gate of Mount Argus, think of the words of Jesus who says: *I am the gate*. As you begin the Pilgrim Path, do so in union with Jesus who will walk by your side. Remember how Saint Charles left his native land, his home and family to follow Christ. Think now of what holds you back from following Christ. What do you want to leave outside as you go through the Gate and begin the Pilgrim Path? Ask for the grace to leave behind you anything that would hinder you from journeying with Jesus in your daily life.

2. **THE LOURDES GROTTO:** *Mary leads us to Jesus*

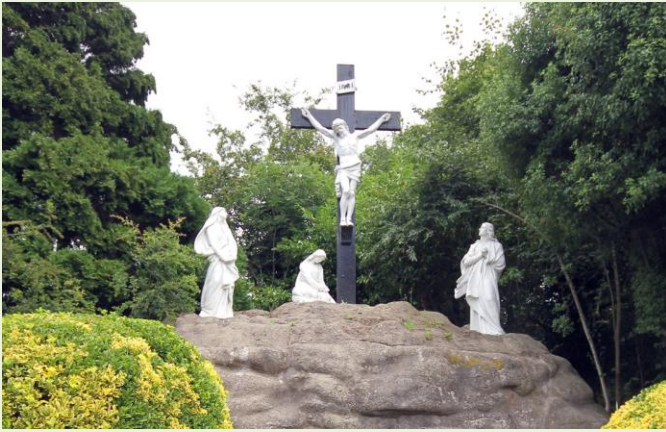
The first Lourdes Grotto at Mount Argus was set up by the Passionist students in the old church, near the present cemetery entrance. Here each day Saint Charles would bless the sick and the suffering and tell them: *Have faith; pray to Mary*. He knew that Mary always leads us to Jesus; he recommended True Devotion to Mary as



taught by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort, by which we consecrate ourselves through Mary to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom. As you pause before the image of Mary in the Grotto, pray that your own heart may become a cave where Christ can dwell. Ask Mary to teach you how to love Jesus her Son: *Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

3. **THE CALVARY**

The Love that flows from the Cross



When he became a Passionist, Saint Charles took a vow to promote devotion to the Passion of Christ, as all Passionist priests, brothers and sisters do. Through this vow he promised to keep alive in his own heart and in the hearts of others the memory of the love of God revealed to us by Jesus on the Cross. In his letters, he

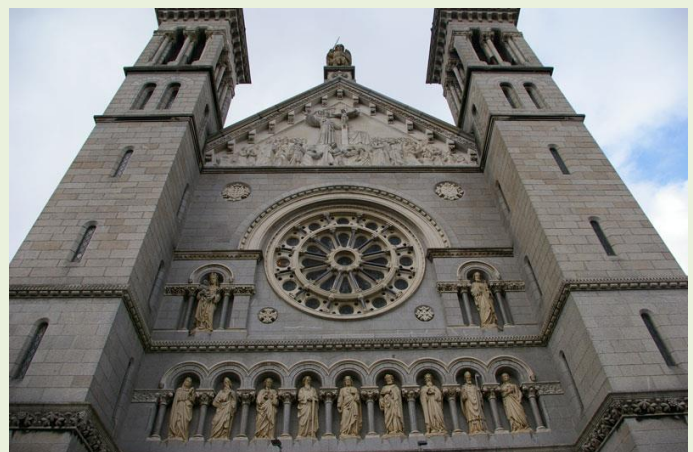
taught people to bring their sufferings to the foot of the Cross where they would receive strength from the suffering Christ. When his sister was ill, he wrote to her, praying that she would *bear her illness with resignation, because this is God's will, and with devotion, since this will be to her advantage*. He advised her *not to lose heart in her sufferings but to think of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

In the Gospel, Jesus says: ***When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself (John 12: 32)***. As you look at the image of Jesus on the Cross, bring before him your own pain and suffering, and the needs of those for whom you have promised to pray. Reflect on these words of Saint Charles and resolve to try to put them into practice: ***The Cross patiently borne for the love of God helps greatly for our eternal salvation Strive to think every day, for a few minutes, on the bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ May Jesus and Mary always reign in our hearts.***

4. **ENTERING THE CHURCH**

You are the Temple of God

Just above the entrance to the Church, you will see three carvings which represent moments in the life of Saint Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists, to whom this Church is dedicated and with whose relic Saint Charles used to bless the people. They show Saint Paul of the Cross



being saved by Our Lady from drowning, Our Lady giving the Passionist habit to Saint Paul, and Saint Paul receiving approval for the Passionist Rule from the Pope.

When you have entered the Church, find a quiet place where you can sit comfortably. There is an inscription above the entrance to the Church which says: *I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house and the place where thy glory dwelleth* (Psalm 25 [26] 8). This verse from the Psalms reminds us that we are in the presence of God in a special way when we pray in Church. Allow yourself to be still in his presence; open your heart to his love as you sit quietly in this holy place.

Here are some words from a letter of Saint Paul of the Cross which remind us that God lives in our hearts: *Accustom yourself to making your meditation in the interior church of your soul. It is of faith that our soul is the temple of the living God; it is of faith that God dwells within us. Therefore enter within yourself, there adore the Most High in spirit and in truth, there speak to him of your pains, of his love for us, having given you so many graces. That great God who for love of us made himself human and wished to suffer so much for us, you have closer than your skin of your flesh, closer than you are to yourself. Therefore, my blessed child, speak to him heart to heart* (Saint Paul of the Cross, Letter to Teresa Palozzi, 19 June 1756).

5. THE ALTAR OF SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

God's Mercy reaches out to us



On your left hand side as you enter the Church is the Altar of Saint Mary Magdalene. It was at this altar that Saint Charles celebrated Mass most mornings. The three carvings on the altar remind us of three incidents recorded in the Gospels. The statue in the centre shows Mary Magdalene holding the Cross of Jesus in a loving embrace, reminding us that she remained at the foot of the Cross with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and John,

the beloved disciple (John 19: 25). The left hand panel shows Jesus at the house of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary; Mary anoints Jesus with costly oil, while Judas, standing

to the left of Jesus, criticises what she is doing (John 12: 1–8). The right hand panel shows the woman who came to Jesus when he was dining at the house of Simon the Pharisee; she expresses her desire to leave her sinful past behind by washing the feet of Jesus (Luke 7: 36–50). This text from Saint Luke’s Gospel speaks to us about the forgiveness of God. Why not sit for a moment and read about the mercy of God who reaches out to us through Jesus his Son?

One of the Pharisees invited him to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee’s house and took his place at table, a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.



When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is that is touching him and what a bad name she has’. Then Jesus took him up and said, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you’. ‘Speak, Master’ was the reply. ‘There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he pardoned them both. Which of them will love him more?’ ‘The one who was pardoned more, I suppose’ answered Simon. Jesus said, ‘You are right’.

Then he turned to the woman. ‘Simon’, he said ‘you see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love! It is the man who is forgiven little who shows little love.’ Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven’. Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this man, that he even forgives sins?’ But he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace’. (Luke 7: 36–50).

Take a quiet moment to examine your life in the light of this Gospel reading. If there is anything in your life which needs God's forgiveness, tell him about it and say that you are sorry. If confessions are available, you might think of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of your pilgrimage.

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen.

6. ***THE SANCTUARY & THE TABERNACLE***

The Eucharist gives Strength and Life

Walk now to the front of the Church and find a place where you can kneel or sit facing the main Altar. The area where the Altar is located is called the Sanctuary. Within the Sanctuary, behind the Altar, is the Tabernacle where the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is reserved. Saint Charles used to spend many hours each day praying before Jesus in



the Eucharist. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus gives us his Body and Blood to strengthen us and to transform our lives. As you pray before the Tabernacle, thank him for so great a gift. If you are able to be present at Mass today, that will be the true highlight of your pilgrimage. If you are not able to be present at Mass, you can make what is called a

‘Spiritual Communion’, inviting Jesus to come into your heart and opening your heart to his love:

I believe that you, O Jesus, are in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. I love you and desire you. Come into my heart. I embrace you. Oh, never leave me. May the burning and most sweet power of your love, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech you, absorb my mind that I may die through love of your love, who were graciously pleased to die through love of my love (Saint Francis of Assisi).



7. *THE TOMB OF SAINT CHARLES OF MOUNT ARGUS*

Praying for Healing and Hope



To the right of the Sanctuary is the Tomb of Saint Charles. Here you can place your burdens in the hands of Saint Charles, praying for healing and hope. You might also want to light a candle at the tomb or leave a written petition in which you express your prayer intentions. A blessing with the Relic of Saint Charles is given every morning and on most afternoons. If you are not able to be present for the blessing, you can venerate the relic of Saint Charles which is fixed to the wall at the right of the Tomb.

During his lifetime, Saint Charles was always ready to respond to the needs of the sick and those in any kind of distress or suffering. Speak to him now of your own needs and the needs of those you love, knowing that he will listen and will intercede for you before Jesus our Saviour.

Eternal Father, you called Saint Charles of Mount Argus to bring good news to the poor and to heal the broken hearted; you opened his eyes to see the presence of Christ Crucified in those who suffer. Through his intercession may we come to know your compassionate love for us, by experiencing the blessing of your healing power, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Thanksgiving and Mission

You have come now to the end of the Pilgrim Path. Take a moment to reflect on your pilgrimage and to thank God for today. As you return home, what grace do you want to bring with you? What is God asking of you as your share in Christ's mission? As you leave the Church, bless yourself with the Holy Water and pray for the grace you need to serve Christ in your daily life.



The Passionist Sign

On a Summer evening in Castellazzo, while on his way home after Mass, St Paul of the Cross tells us *"While walking I was recollecting a prayer, when I turned the corner to go home, I was raised up by God to the height of recollection to the point of forgetting everything else and sensed an interior sweetness: it was at this moment that I saw myself, in spirit, vested in black from head to toe, with a white cross on my breast and under the cross, the Most Holy name of Jesus in white letters."*

The special insignia of every Passionist is the "Sign", the heart-shaped emblem you see above. It catches, in an image, the meaning of Passionist life. In the middle of the emblem are the words, "Jesu Xpi Passio". Written in Greek and Latin, the languages of the early Church, these words mean: "the Passion of Jesus Christ". The three nails at the bottom and the cross at the top remind us symbolically of His suffering and death.