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THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION **ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2010** **INFORMATION SHEET FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS**

Please find enclosed a copy of the Catholic Association's (CA) information sheet and application form and a medical form for volunteer helpers with the 2010 CA pilgrimage, which is taking place from 20- 27 August 2010. We are sending these to you as you are someone who is often a volunteer helper on the CA pilgrimage who tends not to travel or book accommodation via Tangney Tours.

If you are still debating how to travel, please do consider travelling on the main pilgrimage flights as we need as much experienced help as possible on the outbound and return journeys and not just in Lourdes itself. Please remember that our duty of care towards the APs and the pilgrimage itself starts from the moment the APs arrive at the airport and that the entire concept of pilgrimage includes the journey as well. We need experienced help on the journey and you can make a huge contribution here. We are sensitive to the fact that the reason many people travel independently is down to cost: please do speak to us if that is the case, as the trustees have indicated that they will be able to help some experienced helpers out financially.

Forms

1) Volunteer helper form

If you intend to volunteer as a helper on the CA pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2010, please complete the enclosed application form and return it to **Anna** as soon as possible. You will not be able to participate as a volunteer helper with the pilgrimage in 2010 unless you have registered with us **by 21 June 2010 at the latest**, attaching to your application form a cheque for the **CA levy** in the sum of **£25 made payable to "The Catholic Association"**. Please see the paragraph below for more details on what exactly the levy is and why you need to pay it.

Please include as much information about your intended travel plans as possible on the application form. We are always short of volunteer helpers at the very beginning and the very end of the week and, as an experienced helper, we should appreciate it if you would consider arriving in Lourdes before the main pilgrimage flights and/or consider staying late on the final Friday to help out.

2) Medical form

Please complete and return the medical form **direct** to the Chief Doctor, **Dr Adam Farmer**, at **14 The Garthlands, Scholar's Gate, Stafford, ST17 9ZP**. Everyone on the CA pilgrimage, including those who consider themselves to be in a good state of health, must complete one of these and return it to Adam **by 21 June 2010 at the latest**. Please remember too to indicate on the application form if your duties will need to be adjusted for health reasons and we will do our utmost to accommodate your needs where possible.

CA Levy

The levy is included within booking fees for those who travel or book accommodation via Tangney Tours, but it has to be collected separately from independent travellers. Payment of the levy is **compulsory** and all members of the pilgrimage must pay it. **We cannot register you as a volunteer helper unless you have paid your levy.**

Of the £25 levy, part goes towards the administrative costs of the CA and includes the costs of the badge and the Pilgrimage Handbook. A large element is also passed on by the CA direct to your Diocese to support their administrative costs, which is why it is important both to pay the levy and to specify which diocese you are with. Unfortunately, because the levy is compulsory in nature, the CA is not allowed to reclaim Gift Aid tax relief on any part of the levy you pay.

Once we have received your levy cheque with your application form, we pass it on to the Treasurer of the CA and will ensure that you receive your badge and Pilgrimage Handbook in Lourdes.

If you are booking semi-independently e.g. Tangney Tours have arranged your accommodation but you have made your own travel arrangements or vice versa, you will need to check if Tangney Tours have included the sum of the levy in your fare or hotel bill etc. Please let us know if this applies to you. We will be cross-checking!

Preparation day

We will be running only one **preparation day** this year in London for both new and experienced helpers on **Saturday 26 June 2010 in the parish hall of English Martyrs Church, 142 Rodney Road, Walworth, London, SE17 1RA**. Please put this date in your diary.

The day will start with a morning discussion session for experienced helpers to review last year and collect ideas for this year, as well as to refresh our thinking about working patterns, team structures, leadership and moving and handling practice.

In the afternoon we will ask some of you to stay on to welcome the new helpers and together explain what Lourdes is, how we work and what to expect. We will also have an opportunity to explore with them how to work with Assisted Pilgrims and how to use wheelchairs. In the evening, as last year, we will have a chance to meet each other properly and catch up over some refreshments.

With our best wishes,

Rupert and Anna