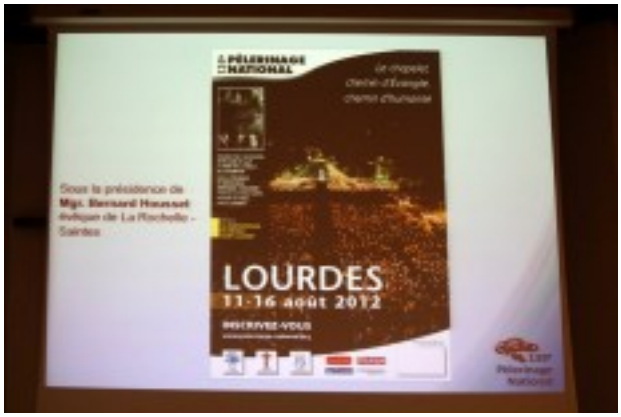


In order to prepare for the annual Assumptionist pilgrimage to Lourdes, known simply in French as "Le National," a meeting was held in Lourdes from January 20 to 22 under the supervision of the new director, Fr. Fabien Lejeusne, A.A.

In his word of welcome, he recalled the basic reason for the participation of each one present, "We put on anew the servant's garment." This year's pilgrimage will include for the first time an organization known as the "réseau Saint-Laurent," a network in France that brings together groups of Christians dedicated to working in the Church with and for persons experiencing poverty and exclusion. Made up of groups coming from all over France, this network organizes a festival during the August pilgrimage which affords a variety of prayer experiences to the sick, both those handicapped and those not. «The poor are the treasures of the Church," underlined one of the network's leaders. In order to enter into the heart of the spiritual preparation for the pilgrimage, Fr. Lejeusne gave an enlightening presentation on the rosary, the pastoral theme for 2012, drawing inspiration from the apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II on the rosary.



His presentation afforded participants an opportunity to hear once again the meaning of the different mysteries of the rosary: joyous, sorrowful, glorious, and luminous. « If you had to remember one sentence from all the mysteries, this is it: 'Do whatever he tells you'; shape your lives around the words of the Lord," Fr. Lejeusne insisted. For his part, the rector of the Shrines

of Lourdes, Fr. Horacio Brito, with his usual humor, gave a talk "With Bernadette, pray the rosary," a theme which will close a trilogy launched in 2009 by the Shrines of Lourdes. Thus, after "Make the Sign of the Cross with Bernadette" in 2010, then "Pray the Our Father" in 2011, pilgrims are invited this year the meditate on the mysteries of the rosaries. Throughout the weekend, members from the 23 regional committees also worked in small groups on a variety of themes and found time to relax and engage in conversation with each other.

Ms. Sabine Harreau