



The Saint Symphorien Institute presents:
"A Little Way" Through France
Fall Break Pilgrimage with St. Thérèse
October 16-24, 2026

Trip highlights include:

Chartres: Experience the grand cathedral that has been celebrating God's glory for the past 800 years with stunning stained-glass and other treasures.

Alençon: Tour the birthplace of Saint Thérèse, visit the church where her parents were married and she was baptized. A visit to the famous Alençon lace museum will complete the day in this charming town.

Lisieux: Spend a day in this city made famous by Thérèse, see the Carmel where she spent her short adult life, as well as her final resting place. We will also tour Les Buissonnets, her childhood home.

Pontmain: Learn the amazing story of the Marian apparition in this small town in January of 1871 during the Franco-Prussian war, then visit the beautiful basilica built near the apparition site.

Rouen: Visit the Rouen Cathedral, an exceptional journey through the Gothic period and a true testament to 700 years of architectural evolution, the result of the labor of several generations of craftsmen. We will also visit the Joan of Arc museum which offers a digital journey into the heart of history.

Paris: Visit the Basilicas of Notre Dame des Victoires and Sacré Coeur and learn about Saint Thérèse's connection to these beautiful churches.

Our home base during this relaxing pilgrimage will be a hidden gem in the French countryside; **Notre Dame de Monligeon**, a basilica dedicated to praying for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Daily Mass as well as opportunities for Adoration, Confession, and Vespers will make this a truly blessed week way to spend fall break.

Cost of \$1500 includes: Ground transportation, accommodations, meals, and any entrance fees.

Deposit of \$150 holds your spot and is refundable until July 1.

Three payments of \$450 due July 1, August 1, and September 1.

Airfare not included, but costs about \$1500 (direct, round trip Dulles-Paris)

Ready to sign-up? Questions? Contact Dina Zelden
dina@saint-symphorien.com / 504-952-5121

Reflecting on her 1887 pilgrimage to Rome through Paris, St. Thérèse wrote,
"I contemplated all the marvels of art and religion.
And my soul grew through contact with holy things."

What is the Saint Symphorien Institute and what makes our trip different?

The Saint Symphorien Institute was founded in 2023. Our mission is to introduce Catholics to the rich and beautiful heritage of France, Eldest Daughter of the Church, in order to deepen their love of the Faith and embolden them to reclaim the Culture for Christ.

We accomplish this through hosting lectures, curating pilgrimages, and publishing books.

Our trips are limited in size for a more intimate, personal experience. Our accommodations are modest and the food is local and simple. This helps make the pilgrimage affordable. It also fosters a spirit of prayer, reflection, and spiritual growth. While at the Sanctuary of Monligeon, we eat in a dining hall, family-style, with groups of French pilgrims, laughing and talking (with lots of gesturing!), which gives a chance to actually connect with our fellow Catholics. We do not travel with a priest. This is an intentional decision. We believe it allows pilgrims an opportunity to pray WITH France, rather than simply praying IN France. We feel it highlights the universality of the Church and allows an immersive experience where we see Catholicism through the eyes of the French people. We hope you will consider joining us!

Meet Your Guides



Dina Zelden is the founder of the Saint Symphorien Institute. She enjoys giving lectures about all aspects of French Catholicism, as well as curating trips. She wrote a children's book about St. Thérèse after visiting Alençon and is working on another. Her love of France is infectious and adds to the pilgrims' experience.



Christian Kleb joined the first Saint Symphorien pilgrimage in 2024 and enjoyed it so much, he's back as a guide. The ultimate traveler and lifelong pilgrim, Christian brings an easy-going manner and lots of enthusiasm for Saint Thérèse and the Normandy region as well.

"A Little Way" in France Daily Itinerary*

Day One: Friday 10/16

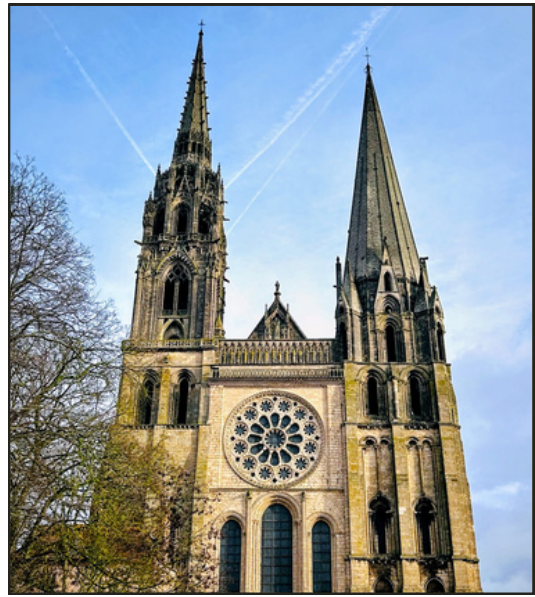
Flight from Dulles to Paris- dinner, entertainment and breakfast on your overnight flight.

Day Two: Saturday 10/17- Chartres

Bienvenue en France! Our minibus will take us straight to Chartres. Here we will discover Notre Dame de Chartres, the cathedral which is considered the greatest example of Gothic architecture and a treasury of stained glass. After an informative tour, we will eat lunch in the main square, then head to our accommodations, one hour west, for a relaxing evening.



Accommodations and dining at Montligeon



Chartres Cathedral

Day Three: Sunday 10/18- Lisieux

After breakfast, we drive to Lisieux to attend Mass at Saint Pierre. We will tour the Carmel and learn more about the spirituality of Thérèse and her "little way". We will spend some quiet time near her final resting place. We will have a group lunch and visit the Martin family home, Les Buissonnets, as well as the Basilica of St. Thérèse. We head back for dinner at Montligeon.

Day Four: Monday 10/19- Pontmain

After Mass and breakfast, we will drive two hours west to the tiny town of Pontmain, site of one of only 14 Vatican-approved apparitions of Mary. We will hear the amazing story and its place in French history, visit the basilica, and enjoy a picnic lunch. There will be time for strolling the grounds of Montligeon and reflection before dinner.

Day Five: Tuesday 10/20- Alençon

After Mass and breakfast, we will board our coach for the drive to Alençon, birthplace of Saint Thérèse. Here we will tour her childhood home and watch a film about her early years. We will get to know her entire family, especially her parents, through the story of their courtship and marriage. Next we will discover the charming town and visit the cathedral where Louis and Zélie were married and Thérèse was baptized. We will visit the Museum of Alençon Lace to see exquisite examples of "Point Alençon", the style of lace that Zélie made and sold. We will have lunch in town and after a full day we head back to Montligeon for dinner and a quiet evening.



Our Lady of Pontmain



The Martin family home in Alençon



The Carmel at Lisieux

Day Six: Wednesday 10/21- Rouen

After Mass and breakfast, we will drive two hours north to the medieval town of Rouen. Here we will visit the Joan of Arc Experience; an immersive, multimedia museum located in the Archbishop's Palace—the actual site of her trial. We will visit the cathedral which was painted over thirty times by Claude Monet. We will have lunch and enjoy free time in the town before heading back to Montligeon for dinner.

Day Seven and Day Eight: Thursday and Friday 10/22-23- Paris

After Mass and breakfast, we bid farewell to Montligeon and head to Paris. Sites and activities in Paris include the churches of: Notre Dame des Victories (Our Lady of Victory), St. Mary Magdalene, St. Sulpice, and Sacré Coeur. One highlight in Paris will be our accommodations at the guesthouse of the Basilica of Sacré Coeur. We will have access to the Basilica after it is closed to visitors and will participate in an hour of adoration each night in peace and solitude; truly a unique and moving experience. Breakfast and dinner will be at the Basilica, while lunch will be enjoyed while we are touring around the city. Exact itinerary for Paris will be shared before departure.

Day Nine: Saturday 10/24- Home

After breakfast and Mass, we head to Charles De Gaulle airport for our flight back to Dulles.

*Daily Itinerary is subject to slight changes due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.



Benedictine guesthouse at Sacré Coeur in Paris