Reflection on a pilgrimage to Lourdes  
Christy Tran ‘12

What I remember of Lourdes are the images—the beautiful church, the snowy Pyrenees Mountains in the background, the Gave River flowing through the town, the glowing candles, the grotto at the center of it all, and especially the immense number people from all over the world. The uniforms of the knights and dames of Malta were so different from modern day dress. These images made me feel as though I was transported to another world in another time. We were surrounded by our friends and the friends of God: St. Mary, St. Bernadette, and all the Christian faithful who sought healing.

The Order of Malta, whose ministry is devoted to the poor and the sick, certainly witnessed their faith by their generosity. The Order paid for the pilgrimage for hundreds of people and provided for our comfort, good food, a nice hotel, a private flight, and so much more. But what stood out the most was their refreshing and natural cheerfulness in their service to others.

Those who were sick and their families were full of hope and gratitude. Together, we visited the healing stream and the cathedral that was built around it. For one week, we traveled together. We shared meals, stories, and laughs. The great number of pilgrims who traveled to Lourdes this year shows us that, even in a world that puts so much trust in modern medicine and the progress of science, belief in miracles still exists. After so many years since Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette, we still have faith and hope in Our Lady’s love and intercession for us.

Strangers became friends quickly. The strong, the weak, the rich, the poor, the young and the old were together in one place. When 25,000 people from all over the world prayed together the same prayer and celebrated one mass, I was reminded of the universality of the Catholic faith. When I stood before the grotto where St. Bernadette stood, I was reminded of that the Catholic faith spans centuries and remains unchanged. Our faith is historic and universal- in all places and for all time. In moments like those at Lourdes, I learn to trust in God and the means He provides for our healing.

I left Lourdes reaffirmed in my choice to become a nurse. I am ever-grateful to God for leading me to His Church and His mother and for allowing me to partake in his healing work.