

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle - Pilgrimage to Lourdes



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Jumbulance 2019

After much consideration and thought, and following lengthy discussion amongst the Pilgrimage Core Group, senior diocesan staff, and others, I have had to make the difficult decision that the Hexham and Newcastle Pilgrimage is unable to take the Jumbulance to Lourdes in 2019.

Unfortunately, the 'Jumbulance Trust' Jumbulance was not available. In a gesture to assist us, 'Across' offered to make one of their Jumbulance available, but they were only able to accommodate us with a departure one day earlier than normal, ie the Wednesday rather than Thursday, and at an increased cost of an extra £5,000.

There are many legal implications that have brought me to this decision, including the safeguarding of vulnerable pilgrims, the safeguarding of our professional helpers and volunteers, the Health and Safety risks involved that cannot be resolved at this time, so far in advance of the pilgrimage, and the financial implications that would be incurred in using the Jumbulance in 2019.

I am reassured by the General Manager of 'Across', that anyone wishing to travel by Jumbulance to Lourdes in 2019 can make an application through their office to travel with them on one of their local 'Across' groups or on one of the national 'Across' Pilgrimages throughout the pilgrimage season.

Our diocesan pilgrimage will do all it can to make it possible for pilgrims to travel to Lourdes by Air on our 2019 Pilgrimage, taking all Safeguarding, Health and Safety implications and risk assessments into consideration. I am aware though that this decision may prevent some pilgrims from travelling with us, but hopefully travel on the 'Across' pilgrimage as mentioned above is an option that may be considered by those unable to travel with us.

Please be reassured that I take this matter very seriously and I would not be making this decision if I felt that we could offer a safe and risk free environment on the Jumbulance and in and around Lourdes.

I have already provisionally booked a Jumbulance for the following year, and as long as all safeguarding, health and safety conditions are legally met, and that as a pilgrimage we are able to provide the necessary professional care, that we have the correct number of volunteers, as well as being able to make the Jumbulance travel financially viable, we will be offering this once again for the 2020 pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Father Peter Stott.

Father Peter Stott
Pilgrimage Director

8th November 2018