

### **This is my destiny**

We are addressed as pilgrims twice in the prayers of the liturgy today, and so the following is a homily from Fr Augustin-Marie Aubry, given to the pilgrims walking in France at Pentecost this year.

You are on pilgrimage, but your *destiny* is heaven, the holy City of God. This, however, raises a question. Is your desire worthy of your *destiny*? Or do you perhaps say to yourselves: “Heaven is too high for me! It’s too far away, and too hard to reach. Heaven is for great saints, not for an average believer like me.”

If you do say that, you are wrong.

Your desires must be based on two things, what you are and what you wish for. Let me speak first of what you are.

You were created by God. He made you to His image and likeness, and you are the fruit of His wisdom and goodness.

You have an immortal soul; you are made for eternity, and fashioned for glory.

Now, secondly, what do you wish for? Enter into yourself, and think as follows: “The saints of paradise were not made of some different material from myself. If they were able to realize their destiny, why shouldn’t I?”

Our desires have to be trained, as we train an animal. That way, they gradually grow in strength and in breadth, until finally we will have the same capacity as all the saints have enjoyed. As St Thérèse puts it: “To work with love means to work with fervor; a loving heart runs forward. Nothing is too hard for it, and nothing can stop it.” Such is the greatness and strength of desire, when it is open to God’s grace.

Yet you also have within yourself, unfortunately, a power to make God’s intentions for you void. The Church, following Christ, has always taught that the state of our souls in eternity will depend on how we act in this life.

You have been created free, and so you *can* betray the love of God. If you sin, you trample upon a mystery; you make desire vain, and drive out the Holy Spirit whom you received at baptism. By sins of injustice or impurity or impiety, you would distort God's image within you. If your desires are fixed on creatures, your destiny will be to live without your Creator – not to see God, never to reach your true goal...

Pilgrims, take heart! Renew God's image within yourself, and be worthy of your destination. Let it be today that you will change your life, by purifying your desires.

We have come together to walk because we know that a road that lies before us: it is the road that leads from sin to grace, from lukewarmness to fervor, from a merely average life to holiness. And the important question is not: "How many of us are there walking to Chartres?" Rather, it is: "How many of us will have changed our lives by the time we get there?"

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The saints are those who changed their lives, yet none of these men and women were perfect. Just like St Peter, St Paul, and St. Mary Magdalen, they all had flaws, but they were empowered by the Holy Spirit to do great things.

And so, if they can do it, then we can too, even if we don't believe it.

We have them as our examples, because we have to live to be saints too.

In one of his sermons, Fr. John Macantelli, an Eastern catholic priest, gesturing at the walls of his church covered in icons, asked: "What is our goal? Our goal is to be up on the wall 50 years from now." Not seeking out a place of honor, but because if we are there then it means we changed.

We need to become saints.

It's something all of us need to remember.

No matter what the circumstances of our life, we can rise to the purpose that God has for us - to be holy, living examples of the Gospel.