

**Pilgrimage and Roman Catholic Evangelisation in a Changing Europe:
Lourdes and Bulgaria**

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(Summary)

Academic research on the growing links between East and West Europe have largely focussed on secular processes, especially labour migration. Because far less attention has been paid to the role played by religion in forging these links, this article seeks to uncover the historic and contemporary religious networks promoted through pilgrimage. It examines the development of Europe's most popular and highly modern shrine – Lourdes in the south-west corner of France – and the ways in which the Assumptionist Order and the Vatican sought to link the shrine to an evangelising mission which extended across a declining Ottoman Empire. This leads on to a discussion of the development of both Lourdes and the Catholic Church in Bulgaria during the 20th century, Vatican policy and relations with other religious traditions and secular politics, as well as the renewed links between the shrine and the Bulgarian Assumptionists since the collapse of the Communist regime.

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