Beat: Sports

THE PARALYMPIC TORCH ARRIVES TO LOURDES THE “CITY OF BROTHERHOOD”

ACCORDING TO ITS MAYOR THIERRY LAVIT

Paris, Washington DC, Lourdes, 25.08.2024, 19:34 Time

USPA NEWS - It is the second time, that the Olympic Torch brought the magic in Lourdes, as it arrived on 19 may, for the Olympics and bringing the same sparkling touch in the most famously holly city worldwide, south of France. Our correspondent was able to travel up, to the holly city, and interviewed the one-of-a-kind mayor, who happened to be a descendant of Bernadette Soubirous, the little girl who saw the Virgin Mary, in when miracles began, from that moment, in Lourdes.

The Mayor of Lourdes Thierry Lavit, who happened to be the descendant of Bernadette Soubirou which in 1858 saw miraculously the Virgin Marie in Lourdes. At Lourdes, the first miracles took place after the apparitions of the Virgin Mary to Bernadette in 1858. Since then, thousands of declarations of cures have been collected by an institution that is unique in the world: the “Bureau des Constatations Médicales” (Medical Bureau of the Sanctuary). While more than 7,000 cases of healing have been reported at Lourdes since the apparitions, 70 cases have been recognised as miraculous by the Church so far. More than 80% of the cures recognised as miraculous concern women.

PARALYMPIC TORCH HIT THE ROAD AMID FIERY HEARTS IN LOURDES

Today, August 25, 2024, a loop route of approximately 1.6 km will be set up in the city center. 24 torchbearers have been selected to carry the Flame over a distance of 200 meters each. The loop will be covered three times before the final lighting of the cauldron on the Place des Tilleuls.
Thierry Lavit explains “ Lourdes is the city of brotherhood, and it is the only French city, that welcomed both the Olympic and Paralympic
Thierry Lavit, is the Mayor of Lourdes and Vice-President of the Tarbes-Lourdes-Pyrenees Urban Community as well as President of the PETR Pays de Lourdes et des Vallees des Gaves. An estimated 200 million people have visited the shrine since 1860, with more than 3.1 million visitors in 2023, including 393,000 on organized pilgrimages.

As the Olympic Flame is extinguished at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris Games, the Paralympic Flame will be lit in Stoke Mandeville in the United Kingdom, the historic birthplace of Paralympic sport, to launch the first Paralympic Torch Relay in France. Lourdes was the only city in the South-West to host one of the 12 simultaneous Paralympic Flame Relays after receiving the Olympic flame on 19 May.

The Paralympic torch set out from the English port town of Folkestone and dipped into the Channel Tunnel escorted by a guard of honor of 24 British torchbearers. Hélène Raynsford and Gregor Ewan, who had lit the flame in Stoke Mandeville the day before, passed the torch to the captain of this team relay, Andrew Small, a Paralympic gold medallist in Tokyo 2020 and bronze winner in Rio 2016. Joining him on this undersea leg were the para-judoka Ian Rose and the para-canoeist Ian Marsden. All these relays will then converge towards Paris. (Source, COJO, Olympic, Paralympic Games, Paris2024)

THE PARALYMPIC TORCH TRAVELS UP TO LOURDES THANKS TO HIS MAYOR’S COMITMENT THIERRY LAVIT
OVER INCLUSION

In Lourdes, on August 25, 2024, the Paralympic flame arrived in Lourdes for the second time, after its first visit on May 19, for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Its route took the form of a loop of approximately 1.6 km set up in the city center.

The 24 torchbearers, symbolically this number in reference to Paris 2024, have been selected to carry the Flame over a distance of 200 meters each. The loop will be covered three times before the final lighting of the cauldron on the Place des Tilleuls. Two children have also been selected by the city of Lourdes to accompany the last torchbearer of the Paralympic Torch: Lilou Vignalet, 15 years old, member of the Dojo Club Lourdais, and Louis Boya, 11 years old, member of the Handball Club Lourdais. (Source Paris 2024)
This desire to welcome the Paralympic Flame underlines the commitment of the Hautes-Pyrenees Department and especially the dynamic impetus of the Mayor of the city of Lourdes, Thierry Lavit, who not only supports the values of sport but is above all a great defender of inclusion and disability awareness.

Indeed, the Mayor of Lourdes made a rather unique gesture, never seen before during the passage of the flame in other cities. He offered it to the people sitting in wheelchairs in a specific RMP area, participants. Thierry Lavit shared this moment of sharing joy and enthusiasm with the most vulnerable people present, by improvising a mini passing of the torch from one disabled person to another. It was the climax of the ceremony with this rather rare and generously unique gesture, in the image of this ultra-inclusive and humanist mayor.
After lighting the cauldron, Mayor Lavit explained to our correspondent during a short interview on site, after the cauldron was lit, and he finished patiently taking selfies still in possession of the "Olympic flame" object in his hands.

"I advocate for the inclusion of disabled people and the warm and fraternal welcome of people broken by life and among those who drink in the millions each year here in Lourdes.
The Mayor of Lourdes, Thierry Lavit, explains his gesture of sharing the Paralympic flame with the guests, in wheelchairs installed, in the front line, of the arena where the celebration of the lighting of the cauldron takes place...~TO be continued, an exclusive interview of Lourdes' Mayor Thierry Lavit to come soon.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-24834/-the-paralympic-torch-arrives-to-lourdes-the-city-of-brotherhood.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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