Columns
Spirituality



Luce, the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope's mascot, adorns the office window of author Jane Marie Bradish. (Jane Marie Bradish, OSF)



by Jane Marie Bradish

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April 7, 2025

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In October of 2024, the Dicastery for Evangelization unveiled a mascot for the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. It took a while for most people to notice. I don't know if this is a first of its kind "thing " but I'm not familiar with any previous jubilee mascots.

Enter Luce, and she is adorable! Luce, Italian for "light", is a Jubilee pilgrim in the form of an anime-type character. She's available in sticker, keychain, graphic and plush forms. Maybe it's my age or experience, but I find great comfort in having something soft and cuddly around, especially when life gets hard. Her arrival on my doorstep all the way from Rome brought me childlike delight. She currently sits in my office window looking out over all the people who pass by every day.

Everything about Luce carries symbolism. I'm enjoying discovering more and more each time I look at her or someone inquires about her. Her raincoat is the color of the Vatican flag, her shoes are covered in the mud of pilgrimage and she carries a walking stick. She wears a Fulton Sheen World Mission-style rosary and her eyes shine. Apparently, she has friends too, but they are not available in stuffed form — for now, at least.

What am I learning from the little 10 inch plush stuffy?

Luce's bright yellow raincoat is the first thing I noticed when unpacking her. It has long sleeves and a hood. In my part of the world, coats with sleeves and hoods are a must. When I shop for a coat, I have two non-negotiables: it has to be waterproof and have a hood. If it's not raining, then it's snowing or windy, or sometimes all three at once. Having a good coat to keep yourself dry and warm is important when setting out on a journey, especially when the journey takes you to unknown places — and don't most pilgrimages do that?

> "Luce's rosary reminds me of the need for prayer, always. So often in this 'modern age,'prayer is reserved for times of need or crisis. I really try to follow the words attributed to various people: 'pray at all times'": Sr. Jane Marie Bradish on the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope's mascot.
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Luce's walking stick is nothing special, no fancy design or anything, but serious walkers know having something to guide you and lean into is important. The journey of life comes with uneven and potentially rocky terrain. A stick gives you extra support, something to lean on, or even something to poke with. Luce's green boots covered in mud make me smile. Good boots or shoes are a must, both for comfort and safety. Pilgrims know you will walk and walk and walk and the chance of literally stepping in something is very real. My place of ministry has concrete floors, so I learned early on that I needed "good shoes" to save the wear and tear on my body. No flip-flops for me.

Luce's rosary reminds me of the need for prayer, always. So often in this "modern age,"prayer is reserved for times of need or crisis. I really try to follow the words attributed to various people: "pray at all times." The form of prayer doesn't matter much to me, although I do have preferences. Rather, it's the connection and relationship with God that prayer brings that I need in my life.

The sparkling eyes of Luce scream for attention. Displaying as sea shells, often a sign of pilgrimage, her eyes call to even the most casual observer. A look can say so much — ask any kid if their parents have ever given them "the look." That same look can also be one of incredible intimacy. I recall well the last time my parents' eyes locked with each other. It is said the eyes are a window to the soul, so eyes for me are a way of connecting.

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I recently discovered there are all kinds of pilgrimage suggestions on the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope's website (www.iubilaeum2025.va). I don't plan on making any official pilgrimages, but I will pilgrimage my own way. So far, my plans include:

- A new retreat center. The one I frequented for years is no more. There will be new spaces, people and protocols to learn, and that's ok. Retreat, for me, has always been a time of encounter and deep meaning — and I usually come home exhausted and wondering what I had gotten myself into by going.
- A new quiet space in the yard. The yard where I live is getting a make-over of sorts. The landlord wants easier mowing and trimming, which is understandable as right now there are flower beds scattered everywhere throughout the yard

(compliments of his late wife). Some plants have overgrown or outlived their spaces and will be moved or discarded.

- Hidden spaces will also be pilgrimage sites for me. One disadvantage of living or ministering in the same place for any period of time is the accumulation of stuff. It's good to merge and purge on occasion. I can be sentimental, but when I'm in the mood I can "clean out" with the best of them.
- Our community chapel has just reopened after nine months of restoration and renovation. I know the chapel pretty well, but my pilgrimage will be to see what has changed and to look at everything with fresh eyes. From a recent brief look, I can already tell there will be a lot to explore.

Luce and I invite you to pilgrimage this Jubilee Year of Hope.