

Lourdes News

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Who gathers us here?

Read pp. 2 and 3

Editorial

Bless me, Father!

BY FATHER ANDRÉ CABES,
RECTOR OF SANCTUARY

Every day, crowds flock to Lourdes to plant their feet in the footsteps of Bernadette, looking for Mary's smile. Sick and able-bodied, young and old, all bring their joys, their hopes, their worries, their sufferings to the hollow of the Grotto; they caress the rock, drink at the spring, light a candle; they ask the priest for a blessing; and a mysterious peace invades the depths of their soul. We have become children again, the youngest, the poorest, who simply need to be supported, to be comforted. And, in this way, little Lourdes arise in our cities and our villages, and we make our world a little more human. ■



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An inexhaustible source

The Unitalsi, an Italian association dedicated to the service and transport of the sick on pilgrimage, is working in Lourdes to let everyone see the hope that God gives.

Going to Lourdes does not only mean praying or collecting water from the taps. Going to Lourdes is not only worshipping the Virgin or praying at the Grotto with the murmur of the Gave flowing behind us. It is not only about walking alongside the suffering and bringing them hope. We go to Lourdes to share, to keep our hearts pure, far from all sorts of pollutants. In Lourdes, we all stand in front of a big mirror that reflects the image of who we are, what we are trying to be. In this place, each one of us can examine our consciences without a filter and in full light, this same light which, more than 150 years ago, illuminated Bernadette's path. Every year, volunteers, the sick, the elderly and children meet in Lourdes, each with their own desire to listen to

others, not for themselves, but for the other person. In Lourdes, stories, people, hospitaliers, men and women all intertwine, all united by a simple but powerful gesture, this "thank you" for all they have received, good or bad. People who come to Lourdes are attached to hope by this thread which is both delicate and strong, a combination of prayer and forgiveness, like the cord that connects the beads of the rosaries which so many people here carry in their hands.

Here, in this place which is one of the most visited places in the world, one notes the desire for peace and tranquillity. In Lourdes, there are hands that search, that ask for support, without feelings of fear or shame because of our weaknesses. There are expressions that, even



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though we are absorbed by our thoughts or prayers in the face of misfortune, can turn to smiles as soon as they make eye contact with another person. Lourdes is a world that goes against the current: the other person comes first, the one who is in need, the gesture of love, and everything else comes afterwards. Lourdes is an inexhaustible source of energy and hope, where we give without seeking to receive. ■

Massimiliano Fiore
Head of Communication for
Italian Pilgrimages UNITALSI
www.unitalsi.it

▶ Who gathers us here?

Pages coordinated by Martine Korpala and Joel Luzenko

During the 9th apparition, on 25th February 1858, the Lady asked Bernadette to "go and drink at the spring". On 2nd March, during the 13th apparition, she invited people to "come here in procession." What, for more than 160 years, has made the crowds answer her call, each year faithfully for some of them? We asked a few of them who are here this summer.

📅 10-14th July The Beatitudes

For more than thirty years, the Beatitudes have been gathering pilgrims around activities very much in keeping with the graces of Lourdes; healings, the approach to divine mercy and evangelisation of hearts for a renewal of faith, through the charisms of the Spirit. There are all sorts of people, especially children, teens and young people, as well as some sick people. They come to Lourdes often to be nourished for an entire year through beauty, meetings, graces of forgiveness, reconciliation, relief from physical or emotional distress. **Father Michel Martin-Prével, Director of the pilgrimage of the Beatitudes**
lourdes.sessions@beatitudes.org / www.pelebeatitudes.org



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📅 12-14th July and 1st-4th August Tamil Indian and Sri Lankan Catholic Chaplaincy

The Mother of God

Whatever the language, there are no words that can adequately describe the intensity of a mother's love. In Tamil culture, the mother is at the centre of the family, she is the most important person. It is therefore Mary, the Mother of God, that we come here to find. Tamil pilgrims, Catholics and Hindus, receive many graces through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. That's why they come back every year to thank her and to submit their new intentions for which they will continue to invoke her back home.

Contact at the Sanctuary: Father Linus Souza, O.M.I., chaplain of Lourdes - leene@hotmail.fr



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📅 14-19th July French-speaking Switzerland



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"French-speaking Switzerland in Lourdes", is the name we give to this joyful pilgrimage. Families and their children, young people, teenagers and pilgrims take the sick to Lourdes every summer. A pilgrimage full of fervour, at the heart of which lie the sick and where everyone helps each other!"
www.pelerinagelourdes.ch

📅 19-26th July Liverpool (UK)

A pilgrimage is above all a spiritual time, experienced in Lourdes, where we enter into a personal relationship with God. And this spiritual experience finds its culmination in the service of other pilgrims, especially sick people. Our gathering in Lourdes is therefore the work of the Father, who leads us to each other, to make us grow by learning from one another..
Liverpool Hospitality / www.liverpool-lourdes.org.uk



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📅 6-9th August Open "Source" (France)

"It's Mary who draws us here". Come to the spring, to learn to pray with Mary, to be healed in the mercy of God! In the spirit of WYD, Open "source" brings together in Lourdes thousands of young people from all over France. Everyone converges in Lourdes! Open "source" is 2 days of healing in the heart of summer. In Lourdes, the Virgin Mary is waiting for you, draws you in, consoles you and heals you. Prayer, meeting, sharing, teaching, vigil...

www.paris.catholique.fr/open-source-lourdes-2019

Contact in Lourdes: sjeunes@lourdes-france.com / Tel. +33 (0)5 62 42 79 64

open
"source"



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Throughout the summer **Families** answer the call of Lourdes

Our experience of service in Lourdes has been very rewarding because we have had experience of many different services. It has been more than 30 years since we started coming every summer, always in the same spirit: to be able to serve pilgrims, and especially the sick, in the name of Jesus. Through them, we receive the strength that moves us forward ... We realize how lucky we are to be able to have this experience. Lourdes is also a place where we meet with friends from different countries, with whom we can share a few days in the company of Mary. Lourdes for us is: family, friendship, service and solidarity. **Mara and José, Lourdes Hospitality (Spain)**



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11-16th August **National (France)**

The best answer to the call of Jesus

Each year, the National Pilgrimage revamps its programme and its activities (celebrations, conferences, workshops) for all ages, sick and able-bodied people. In August 2019, Bishop Luc Ravel, Archbishop of Strasbourg, will preside at this gathering of the family of the Assumption and guide us by his preaching. "The Virgin Mary welcomed the call of God all the way to the illumination of the Resurrection. She turns us towards her Son. Our pilgrimage is the best answer to this call," says Father Vincent Cabanac, director of the National Pilgrimage.

**Contact: Association Notre-Dame de Salut – 63, avenue Denfert-Rochereau 75014 Paris - Tel. +33 (0)1 58 36 08 75
www.national-pelerinage.org**



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16-25th August **Travellers and Gypsies**

Called by Mary and Saint Bernadette

"We are coming to Lourdes, with our families, to meet the Lord, called by his Mother and Saint Bernadette, and we expect to come back with tons and tons of love to share with those who have not been able to come. We don't travel empty!", reports Father José de Antonio, in charge of the pastoral care of Migrants and Travellers.

Contact: jose.deantonio@sfr.fr



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22nd August **Family of Our Lady of Lourdes (International)**

"To Jesus through Mary". Eight days after the Feast of the Assumption, we remember the woman crowned with stars of whom the Apocalypse speaks (Revelation 12). In Lourdes, 22nd August also marks the "rebirth" of the archconfraternity of the Immaculate Conception, the birthday of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes. The family that stretches right around the world and wants to remind us that, through baptism, we are all children of God and brothers of Jesus. Mary, who has received everything, including the queenship of heaven, invites us here and brings us together to remind us that she is the way to Christ. As St. Louis Grignion de Montfort said: "To Jesus through Mary."

Chelo Feral, member of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes

Who brings us together here? The Virgin of course. The "Family Our Lady of Lourdes" is a wonderful family belonging to which gives us great pleasure, and from which I draw heat, strength and support for the animation of our prayer groups and to bring people to the love of the Madonna. **Gino Testa, Prayer Groups of Padre Pio in Paris, member of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes**

**Contact: famillendl@lourdes-france.com
www.lourdes-france.org/famille-notre-dame-de-lourdes/**



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17th-21st September **Lourdes Cancer Hope (France)**

Mary, listening to everyone

This year, the pilgrimage Lourdes Cancer Espérance (LCE) is presided over by Bishop Jean-Christophe Lagleize, Bishop of Metz. "In response to Mary's call, we find in Lourdes a haven of peace where we can lay down our burden. We know that the Mother of God, always ready to listen to everyone, always attentive, intercedes with her Son so that, this year again, the graces received strengthen us and help us", rejoices Marie-Claude Aizpurua, president of Lourdes Cancer Hope.

**Contact: Lourdes Cancer Hope – Place du Champ Commun – 65100 Lourdes
lourdes.cancer.esperance@wanadoo.fr / Tél. +33 (0)5 62 42 11 91**



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OVER TO YOU

Did you come here alone, with your family, with friends, with a group ... what motivated your visit? Have you felt that "Mary is listening to you" as is so often described by the pilgrims of Lourdes? After your pilgrimage, did you receive any graces?

Write to us:
tmoignage@lourdes-france.com



Desperate, he left Italy for Lourdes by bus...

In financial difficulties since 2002, Riccardo decided to use the last of his savings to buy a bus ticket for a first pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Exactly ten years ago, around 9th February 2009, without a permanent job, I'd been in dire straits since 2002. With the last of my money, I decided to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes by bus. Leaving Italy on Friday afternoon, I arrived on Saturday at 7:30am. I remember that day as if it were yesterday. The weather had been terrible all day: snow, wind, rain and then finally, in the afternoon, beautiful sunshine. I was confused because it was my first time on a pilgrimage. I had



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little money with me -my economic situation was dreadful- and only a packed lunch. I was exhausted and resigned. I prayed, invoked the Virgin Mary in front of the Grotto with great intensity, unable to hold back my tears. I asked for the grace to finally find a permanent job. At 48, my work situation had stalled since 2002 with only a few fixed-term jobs that did not allow me to

live in dignity or to fulfil my minimum requirements such as renting a house ... At the end of January 2009, just before my pilgrimage, I began a new period of unemployment following an umpteenth fixed-term contract. In the evening, after a last goodbye to the Grotto, I boarded the bus that took me back to Italy the next day at 1:00pm. A few days later, much to my surprise, I received a fixed-term job offer; then, in March, a second job with a very important company with a six-month contract (a dream for me). In May, a public service examination was opened for a one-year job in a community in Milan. I sat the exam in June. I thought I had succee-

ded, but I continued my work forgetting to find out about the result. In July, I received a call informing me that I was fifth in the standings and wondering if I was available! I cried for joy and confirmed my acceptance. I started working as an administrative clerk and gradually I was able to solve my various financial problems. The following year, I passed another examination with the same company and since January 2011, I have found total serenity through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Since then, I have returned twice to Lourdes and I'm coming back this year. I will thank Our Lady, every day that God grants me, for all she has done for me. ■

Riccardo (Italy)

Besides the unexplained physical healing attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, officially recognised as miraculous by the bishops of the dioceses where the healed people live (70 to date), we receive many testimonies of graces received in Lourdes. These pages are dedicated to them.

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

"At the end of the Jubilee of Mercy, I wanted to offer the Church the World Day of the Poor, a concrete sign of the charity of Christ for those who are most in need. To the other World Days instituted by my predecessors, I have added this one."

Excerpt from Pope Francis' message for the first World Day of the Poor (19th November 2017).



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The next World Day of the Poor will be held on Sunday, 17th November 2019. The Fratello pilgrimage to Lourdes takes place from 14th- 17th November.

Bernadette said...

In 1862, Mgr Laurence, bishop of Tarbes, published the order confirming that the Blessed Virgin appeared 18 times to Bernadette Soubirous. To Father Corbin's question: "And if Monseigneur de Tarbes had judged that you had been mistaken, what would you have answered?", Bernadette replied, "I would never be able to say that I did not see or hear."

(Life of Bernadette, Laurentin)



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I'm walking in the footsteps of Bernadette

I would like to witness to an inner healing. As I passed the grotto, I felt something very profound. After Lourdes, I went to Nevers, near the shrine where Bernadette's body remains intact. There, the experience I had in Lourdes was confirmed: I understood that I was called to become a deacon or priest. I come back to Lourdes this year to entrust Our Lady with my preparation. I am the happiest man alive. I'm walking in the footsteps of Bernadette, and my soul sings. ■



Michel (France)



www.bernadettedelourdes.fr

BERNADETTE DE LOURDES

THE MUSICAL FROM JULY 1, 2019
ESPACE ROBERT HOSSEIN - LOURDES

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"Bernadette of Lourdes" is the story of the Marian apparitions to young Bernadette Soubirous.

The musical show "Bernadette of Lourdes", playing in Lourdes over several months, is a magnificent saga that combines the talent of its creators (scored by Grégoire, directed by Serge Denoncourt, words by Lionel Florence and Patrice Guirao) with incredible historical accuracy to offer an unprecedented discovery of the message of Lourdes.

www.bernadettedelourdes.com

Freed from the past

In October 1997, I participated with my mother and the group "Las pequeñas Almas" (Small souls), in a pilgrimage to several Marian shrines, including that of Lourdes. And it was at the baths of Lourdes that I received healing from an event that had marked me significantly. I was sexually abused by a very close relative, which made me feel dirty and helpless, and all that goes with this abuse.

I was in Lourdes with my aunt and a Peruvian friend, we were in line to enter the baths with the sick. There were a lot of people. A lady appeared out of nowhere, took me by the arm and guided me to the entrance of the baths, passing through all the people. During the bath, I experienced a moment of grace that was completed afterwards with the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. I thank the Blessed Virgin for her intercession, and I give glory to God for his Mercy and for healing me! Thanks to their love, I was able to completely overcome all the events of the past and all the after-effects! ■

Maria Francisca
(Santiago de Chile)

The most beautiful thing that ever happened to me

I had just got out of the bath and was making my way over to where my clothes were, I stood in front of where my clothes were when I began to experience a magnificent feeling coming into my feet and making its way right up through my body and out of my head. I never experienced anything like this before or after it. I have to say it was the most beautiful thing that ever happened to me. My next visit to Lourdes will be my 22nd time there. I live in Ireland. ■

Tony (Ireland)

"It's the end," said the doctor

After long treks through Asia, Stan has now lived in the Pyrenees for seven years where he feels he has been linked for decades to the Sanctuary of Lourdes by his family history.

Apart from his father, Bernard, a humble and discreet man who died in 2016, all the rest of his family, as well as the inhabitants of his childhood village, never stopped reliving the memories of one winter night in the heart of the Jura in the 1930s. The diphtheria that took the children of the region had not spared little Bernard, 10 years old, at whose bedside the family doctor stood, sorry and helpless. "It's the end," said the physician, telling grieving relatives that he would return the next day to confirm the death. But then, during the night, a friend of the family came to the door of the young dying boy, a mother who had lost her son to the same evil. Facing indescribable weather conditions and through snow-covered roads, she had travelled to Lourdes to fetch water from the spring flowing from the grotto of the Apparitions ... because "we cannot stay here and do nothing, we must save little Bernard". She bathed the child's face with the water and tried to make him drink. In vain: he was unable to swallow anything anymore and could hardly breathe. Then everyone went away, some praying some talking, to the main room of the house. Suddenly, "boom boom!" Two knocks on the



floor of the room that death due to was to visit resounded in their ears. This was a signal agreed between Bernard and his family, the young boy would tap the floor with a cane when he needed something. But how did he still have the strength to do this? Everyone rushed up the stairs and reached little Bernard's room where they found him sitting on his bed, fit and healthy though a little tired. "My father was going to die that night, there was no reasonable chance of him recovering" says Stan,

as modest and discreet as his father (he agreed to testify in gratitude for this mysteriously saved life.) My father, this generous man, has throughout his life been grateful to the Virgin Mary, who had saved him a second time during a battle in Tunisia, when shrapnel had stuck in a mass-book which he always carried in the pocket of his field jacket, stopping short of a picture of Mary, which served as a bookmark. He had seen a sign ..." ■

Stan (France)

Faith makes you free

I received a grace of release from a professional problem. This allowed me to overcome a delicate phase that could have led to my company going bankrupt. My difficulties were not completely resolved, but it was the sign of hope I was waiting for. Every day, every night, every moment, we prayed to the Virgin Mary who heard us and interceded with her son Jesus. If God wills it, we can definitely save ourselves and solemnly promise that the rest of our lives will be dedicated to staying close to those who, like me, experience anxiety in their professional life, or live in precarious situations. Faith makes us free and protects us from the pitfalls of a cynical and materialistic world. May Our Lady of Lourdes intercede again with God and give us the true freedom of children. I implore him to help me pray and give me the courage and strength to continue fighting for life. ■

Francesco (Italy)

Thank you, Saint Bernadette

I prayed to St. Bernadette for my grandson Oliver, who was only a month old. He became very sick. After a battery of tests, it appeared that it was simply an intolerance to cow's milk. Thank you, Saint Bernadette for taking care of Oliver, my grandson. ■

Angeles (Espagne)