

Lourdes News

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8th December: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, the Mother of God, was preserved from all sin from the first moment of her conception, in the womb of her mother. Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma in 1854, four years before the "Beautiful Lady" of Massabielle gave her name to Bernadette Soubirous on 25th March 1858: "Que soy era Immaculada Counceptiou".

Welcome to Lourdes!

"May you find the grace of abandoning yourself to the mercy of God, the joy of a serene faith, shared and celebrated with others, the desire for a life committed to sharing and giving of yourself, in the Church and in the world!"

Antoine Hérouard,
apostolic delegate



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"In Lourdes, we are in the world of the Gospel where the least among us are the most important."

Bishop Olivier Ribadeau Dumas,
Rector of the Sanctuary



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Become a living host

During the apparitions, Mary introduced Bernadette to the Eucharist through gestures. This year, the Rosary pilgrimage will be reviving these to help pilgrims experience communion more profoundly. Each gesture corresponds to a stage in the preparation of the hosts that will be distributed during the closing mass.

God comes to us in our poverty

It was in a crevice in a rock that Jesus was born and that Mary appeared to Bernadette. Through these poor places, God comes to tell us that it is because of our poverty that he comes to us (cf. James 2:5). In front of the Grotto, after a deliberate and beautiful sign of the Cross, let's say, very slowly, an Our Father.

To be born to Christ

The water of the spring reminds us of the water of our baptism. Each of us can let someone else wash our hands, a sign of our baptism that makes us children of God. But to be that, we must be willing to die to self for Christ and to bear fruit (cf. Jn. 12:24 & Rm. 6:11).

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Like the Hebrews (Ex. 12:8),

Bernadette ate grass. This grass reminds us of the bitterness of sin that Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to conquer by reconciling us to the Father, to others and to ourselves! We live by the sacrament of reconciliation. We can each eat a bit of sorrel from the mountains and make a gesture of reconciliation.

The sacrament of confirmation

The flame of the candle reminds us of the warmth of the Holy Spirit who unites us in one body and makes us witnesses of the Gospel. These flames, recall the importance of the sacrament of confirmation which initiates us into the life of the Church and which prepares us to receive the Eucharist. Like Bernadette, at the school of Mary, we prepare ourselves to receive



© Sophie Delay-Pèlerinage du Rosaire

the Eucharist. By following the preparation of the hosts for the closing mass, we come to understand that the Eucharist calls us to become living hosts which are pleasing to God (Rm. 12:1). It transforms us in the One who gives himself, the Christ. It transforms us into one body, the Church. ■

Brother Olivier de Saint-Martin, Dominican, Director of the Rosary Pilgrimage

www.pelerinage-rosaire.org

Even in winter, experience

pages coordinated by Martine Korpál

The "chapelains" and indeed all the services in the Sanctuary are happy to welcome you and support you on your pilgrimage. Depending on the length of your stay, there are several options available to you.

If you are in Lourdes for

1/2
day

PILGRIMAGE TO THE GROTTO

Through the signs of Lourdes (the water, the rock, the light), we'll take you to the heart of what a pilgrimage is about.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BERNADETTE

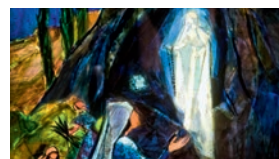
Discover the places where Bernadette Soubirous, the saint of Lourdes lived. (the Boly Mill, the Cachot, the parish church, the Hospice)

VISIT: DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary is the Church's response to Mary's request to build a chapel here. This visit takes you through the history of the Sanctuary's construction.

THE MARIAN APPARITIONS OF LOURDES

Discover and understand the apparitions of Mary in Lourdes through a 30-minute film, and commentary by a "chapelain".



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1
day

DAY PILGRIM

The basics in one day. Video. A talk on the message of Lourdes. Mass for pilgrims. Pilgrimage to the Grotto. Rosary at the Grotto. Stations of the cross.



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The Lourdes "Chaplain"

"Chaplain" is the name given to the priests who minister at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes; they are the "guardians of the Chapel". They come from different countries to welcome pilgrims in all six official languages used in the Sanctuary, and especially for the ministry of confession. It is a "chaplain" who says the rosary at the Grotto: in French, every day, at 3:30 pm; in English on Mondays and Wednesdays at 2:30 pm; in Italian, every day, at 6:00 pm; in Spanish on Thursdays at 4:30 pm and in German at 2:30 pm on Tuesdays from April to October.

The Espelugues Stations of the Cross (the High Stations)

On 24th November 1869, Mgr. Laurence, bishop of Tarbes, bought the Espelugues hill which was then just a steep rock. He was unable to carry out the project himself, because he died in Rome on 30th January 1870. It was the Missionary Fathers of the Grotto who started the construction of the Stations of the Cross with the successive bishops. Completion of this imposing piece of work, which boasts characters on average 2 metres tall, was entrusted to the Maison Raffl in Paris. Its inauguration took place on 14th September 1912, presided over by a cardinal legate of Pope Pius X, in the presence of 20,000 pilgrims. Bishop Izart, praised the Stations, saying, "They help you to pray, they help you to cry and they help you to heal."

Be a pilgrimage in Lourdes

Become a volunteer

Being a volunteer is a commitment to live in a spirit of brotherhood and to be attentive to the "least among us". If you are at least 18 years old, you can volunteer in many different capacities according to your time, your skills, your wishes and our needs. We will see to it that you can find the service that suits you best.

For further information, please contact The Volunteer Centre : Tel. +33 (0) 5 62 42 79 04 - benevole@lourdes-france.com

2
days

HEALINGS AND MIRACLES

Lourdes, place of physical and spiritual healing. Exhibition about the miraculous healings. Video about healings and miracles.

WITH MARY

Choose the Virgin Mary as your mother.

Video. A talk on the message of Lourdes. Mass for pilgrims. Pilgrimage to the Grotto. Rosary at the Grotto. Commitment to the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes.



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3
days

MY PILGRIMAGE IN LOURDES

Video. Your choice of talk (about the message of Lourdes, about Mary, about Bernadette, about the healings). Mass for pilgrims. Stations of the Cross. Reconciliation. Pilgrimage to the Grotto. Rosary. Baths. Choice of visits.



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→ You can register on www.lourdes-france.org or enquire in person, at the Information Centre.

Mary

Prayer in the form of a dialogue between the soul and Mary that St. Bernadette copied onto a picture.

Courage, my child, you have found the precious pearl with which to buy the Kingdom of Heaven. Always love what God wills. Will it always... Desire it always... Do it always. It is the greatest secret of perfection, the key of paradise, the foretaste of the peace of the Saints. The more your heart is united to Mine, the more you will understand the truth of these words... When you have no other will but God's, your heart and mine will become one and the same. Learn to say each day with me the Ecce Ancilla of perfect obedience; Whatever trials the Lord sends you, the sacrifices he asks of you, the duties he imposes upon you, always have on your lips and in your heart this response of love and fidelity: Behold your servant, O my God, ready to undertake everything, to give everything ... to surrender everything ... to sacrifice everything, so long as your will is fulfilled, in me and throughout the earth ...
Personal notes, Bernadette Soubirous, pp. 37-38.

3 cribs for 3 churches

Inspired by Bernadette's life, three cribs have been created by the Italian artist Emilio Burri (Genoa). They represent the Boly mill, the Grotto and the family home. These cribs will be placed in the crypt, the Rosary Basilica and the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. They will be inaugurated on 8th December during a celebration presided over by Bishop Antoine Hérouard, Auxiliary Bishop of Lille, Apostolic Delegate for the Sanctuary of Lourdes.



© EMILIO BURRI



11th TO 13th OCTOBER

1st pilgrimage for the culinary professions in the catering and the hotel industry www.lourdes-france.org

SUNDAY 8th DECEMBER

Feast of the Immaculate Conception - Offering of roses - Inauguration of cribs: Rosary Basilica, crypt, Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

FRIDAY 13th DECEMBER

The relics of St. Bernadette return from Spain.

SATURDAY 21st DECEMBER Light of bethlehem

Rally with the Scouts at the Christmas Village, in front of the Palais des Congrès. Fireworks at the castle and departure in procession to the Grotto.

WEDNESDAY 25th DECEMBER Christmas Day



In the clutches of heroin

Frederic knew the effects that drugs can have. Despite a religious education in his childhood, as young adult he had lost his faith. After years of hardship, during which he believed that only death could save him, he followed the light that would eventually lead him to Lourdes, to where he now returns each month to help the pilgrims.

The descent into hell

At the age of 15, I started using cannabis. At that time, I had no faith, despite having had a typical religious education. At 21 I tried heroin, just to see what it was like, but I quickly became addicted. Conscious of having fallen into a death trap, I tried to

wean myself off, without success, because the drugs were too powerful for me. I was put into prison twice for trafficking; then I suffered my first overdose, which resulted in terrible physical and mental suffering. At 23, very thin, exhausted and in distress, I left the city to get away from the toxic environment, but still could not wean myself off and saw death as the only way to end the suffering ...

The Arch of Rescue

It was then that one evening, while I was leaving an emergency doctors, an arch of bright white light appeared to me in the dusk, on the other side of the road. Transfixed, I went over to it, and saw that it was surrounding the porch



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of a church, which I entered. There, I prayed like I'd never prayed before, for a long time, and in tears. The next day I suffered a second overdose and woke up in the hospital, but this time in great shape and with a bright smile! It took me several days to realise that I was cured! I rebuilt my life but, for 30 years, I wondered how I would ever be able to pay back this grace. In Lourdes, I

saw many arches identical to the one I had seen (the arches, the crypt, ...). I felt my heart strengthen and that I had finally found my faith. At 62, I volunteer here, as much to pay back this grace as to thank all those who supported me in my recovery. Courage to those who are in distress, have confidence in the future and pray ...■

Frederic (France)

8th December: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

"(...) If our life is allowed to be transformed by the grace of the Lord, for the grace of the Lord does transform us, we will not be able to keep to ourselves the light that comes from his face, but we will let it pass on to enlighten others. Let us learn from Mary, who kept her gaze constantly fixed on the Son and her face became "the face that looked most like Christ's" (Dante, Paradise, XXXII, 87) ..."

Pope Francis, Angelus, 8th December 2014



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Bernadette said ...

"What else: to do the Stations of the Cross, to hear Holy Mass, to receive Holy Communion, these are my great devotions," said St. Bernadette. (Logia 714)



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In the footsteps of Our Lady of Lourdes

Ever since I was born, Our Lady of Lourdes has guided my life, and I trust to God that this will continue. My family testimony begins with my great-great-grandmother Rita Tinoco, born on 11th February 1870 - twelve years after the first apparition of the Immaculate Conception in Lourdes. This gave birth to a deep love for the Virgin Mary and then for her husband Nicolás Castro, and what a great surprise for them when their first son was born on 11th February 1892. My great-grandfather Pastor Castro Tinoco was an upright family man, a responsible citizen, and a devout Catholic under the protection of Our Lady of Lourdes. And he educated his children, Manuel (Archbishop Manuel Castro Ruiz, Archbishop of Yucatán), Miguel, Rafael, Alicia and Concepción, in the same way. The good God led my great-grandfather Pastor to become a miller - like François Soubirous, the father of Saint Bernadette. He suffered a lot of



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economic difficulties before turning an old mill in the city of Morelia into one of Mexico City's most important businesses of the 20th century. Obviously, the family business was named "Harinera de Lourdes*" (*The Mill of Lourdes). Years later, my grandfather Rafael Castro, owner of "Harinera de Lourdes", named one of his daughters (my mother) María de Lourdes, in

gratitude for the economic prosperity that the mill had always brought him. This is where my family testimony connects with my personal testimony: I like to say that I am a whim of Our Lady of Lourdes ... because I was born on 11th February 1983! On 31st December 2018, I had the opportunity to visit the Sanctuary of Lourdes in France for the first time. And what better place than Lourdes to end the year 2018 and start 2019 - the jubilee year - under the protection of my patron saint? This was without a doubt the most beautiful experience of my life, going on a pilgrimage from Mexico to finally see Our Lady of Lourdes and thank her for all the graces granted to my family, to offer her my whole life and my whole being. I entrust to God the intentions of my family and the Mexicans, and I invite all the Christians of the world to trust in Our Lady of Lourdes. ■

Sergio (Mexico)

Lourdes is the art of living

I was very young (7 or 8 years old) when I was consecrated to Mary at the Grotto of Massabielle. For me, Lourdes is the art of living, where I feel a deep peace, hope. Even far away from the Grotto, my heart is always turned towards Mary. I am silent and come closer to her in prayer. ■

Yves (France)



Bruno (centre) © DR

I cannot do without Lourdes

The first time I came to Lourdes, I was 12 years old. It was thanks to my grandfather, who had been coming for more than forty years. It made me want to join my parish. I never miss an opportunity to help. I cannot do without Lourdes. I feel the need to return each summer. In Lourdes, I draw strength for the whole year. ■

Bruno (French-speaking Switzerland)

A grace of protection

I've just visited your website and that's why I'm writing to you several years after these events happened.

It was in Quebec, Canada, in 1983. The mother of a friend went on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. I asked her for water from the Grotto. She brought me about a litre.

I left this water in my car winter and summer. It froze and remained unaffected. I thought I was protected by this water.

In January 1992, we had a serious car accident. My partner drove dangerously in 20 cm of snow and we slid head-first towards a snow plough. Facing certain death, we felt a force urging us to put our heads on our knees, then a tyre burst, which caused the car to roll over, forcing our vehicle out of its fatal path towards the snowplough by sliding on its roof off the road. We had our three children on board. A few seconds after the vehicle had completely stopped, the force in question let me relax. Then, I saw my children and my spouse relaxing too. Despite the total loss of our car, no one had been hurt.

Under the impact, everything flew out of the car and at the same time the windows shat-



tered, and the roof crashed in on us.

However, the water bottle of Lourdes had remained in the car. The next day, my husband was shaking with the container of water that was completely frozen, since it frequently reaches -30 ° in Canada this season. In the centre, you could see that the ice was turning black. After three days it had all turned black. It was inexplicable. I thought we had all been protected by Our Lady of Lourdes. In the spring, I

went to the forest to give this water, which had remained black ever since, back to nature. I am convinced that it was a miracle. If the tyre hadn't burst, we would not have avoided crashing into the plough (snowplough). In addition, the force that kept our heads on our knees prevented the roof from crashing in on our heads when the car was rolling. In short, it was a grace of protection in my opinion. Thank you to Our Lady of Lourdes! ■

Maryse (Canada)

Mary is always near me

Three years ago, I went to Lourdes to ask that Mary intercede with her Son for my father, who was suffering from very advanced prostate cancer. Following my visit to the Sanctuary, my father's tumour decreased in just a few days. It has not disappeared, but it has regressed to the initial phase and for the moment has not changed for three years. I'm sure Mary is near me, because I see signs of her presence wherever I go. ■ Francesca (Italy)

The call of Lourdes



Thanks to my elementary school's chaplaincy, I came to Lourdes with a group of young people, for the first time at the age of 12. Since then I come back every year to find this joy, this sharing, this beautiful solidarity specific to this place that is known throughout the world. Today, I'm 16 years old. I help with sick people or the elderly and have formed wonderful friendships, in particular with Bernadette (our picture), as well as with the pilgrims and members of other hospitalities. Lourdes has a unique atmosphere. From my first pilgrimage, I felt the call. As if Mary was telling me the way. I sometimes go through difficult times. Lourdes brings me strength, and energy. I feel good. I know I will find everything I am looking for. Since I answered this call, all my prayers have been answered, and so quickly! ■

Adeline (French-speaking part of Switzerland)