

Lourdes News

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THE JOURNAL OF GRACES

8th December: The 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 introduced herself to Bernadette Soubirous, on 25th March 1858: "*Que soy era Immaculada Councepciou*".

Prayer

to Our lady of Lourdes

To remain in the grace of our encounter at the Grotto of Massabielle, let us make an act of confidence in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Blessed are you, God our Father,
For creating Mary in all her beauty,
And for giving her to us as our Mother
At the foot of the Cross of Jesus.
Blessed are you for inviting us,
Like Bernadette,
To see Mary in your light
And to drink at the source of your Heart.
Mary, you know the misery
and sin in our lives
and in the life of the world.
We want to place
our trust in you today
Totally and without reservation;
Through you,
we will be reborn every day
By the power of the Spirit,
We will live by the life of Jesus
Like humble servants
of our brothers and sisters.
Teach us, Mary,
To bear the life
of the Lord to others.
Teach us the 'yes' of your heart.

"I am the Immaculate Conception"

The Lourdes pilgrimage 2020

On 25th March 1858, after three weeks of Apparitions and three weeks of silence, the Lady declared to Bernadette, "I am the Immaculate Conception". This is the theme chosen for pilgrimages to Lourdes in 2020. Like Bernadette, whom we have come to know throughout 2019, let's go to the Grotto to meet Mary. We suggest some concrete actions to make this meeting real.

We can bring our images of Mary to Lourdes

Christians love to draw closer to Mary, our beautiful Mother. Her image is venerated all over the world. Let us bring to Lourdes the images that are special to our communities.



Lourdes 2020

Each of us can receive a white pebble

In Lourdes, Mary reminds us of her love. We are her beloved children. Here we find a thirst for God, for adoration, for listening to the Word, for a life in the service of our brothers and sisters. On the white pebble, we can write the mission we received during a time of prayer and sharing.

We can join the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes

Mary, our Mother, wants us to be together. The Church is our family, where the saints have preceded us.

We can choose the one who will especially help us. We bring to Lourdes many intentions that have been entrusted to us. To remain in the grace of our meeting with Mary, we can receive the scapular of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes. There is also a monthly newsletter which, along with meditation, will help us stay in touch with each other. Like Bernadette, let us welcome the grace of Lourdes and enter into the immense hope which we find on the path marked out by Mary who leads us to Christ. ■

Lourdes this winter

Pages coordinated by Martine Korpai

The "chapelains" and indeed all the services are always happy to welcome and support you. Depending on the length of your visit, you can choose whichever option is right for 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.



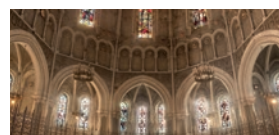
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BERNADETTE

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



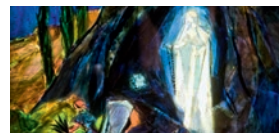
VISIT: DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF THE SANCTUARY

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 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.*"

The Lourdes "Chapelain"

"Chapelain" 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 "chapelain" 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.

Every weekend, at the Grotto, an international rosary by torchlight

Throughout the year, pilgrims can come to bare their hearts in front of the Grotto and leave with renewed strength. The torchlight procession is the most popular image of Lourdes. There will be an international rosary by torchlight this winter at the Grotto on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, starting at 8:30 pm. This will allow pilgrims or visitors to feel more welcome through a specific time of prayer.

2
day

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.



© SNDL/VINCENT

3
day

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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A path of cribs

From 8th December, there will be the opportunity to follow a path of cribs, every day at 2:30 pm.



© EMILIO BURRI

Pilgrimage to the Grotto

Every Saturday and Sunday, go to the Information Centre at 2 pm to take part in this guided tour.



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→ If you wish to take part in one or the other of these activities, contact the Information Centre:
saccueil@lourdes-france.com +33 (0)5 62 42 20 08

To serve

Being a volunteer is a commitment to live in a spirit of brotherhood and to be attentive to the "little ones". 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.

Please contact: Volunteer Centre - Tel. +33 (0) 5 62 42 79 04 – or email benevole@lourdes-france.com

Being a member of the Hospitality of Our Lady of Lourdes

is to live in a spirit of sharing and friendship. By making our 'engagement' in the Hospitality, we commit to making our pilgrimage and carrying out our service so as to experience a renewal of our faith and fraternal life.

<http://hospitalite-nd-lourdes.com/de/stages-formations-5/requests-stage.html>

SOME DATES...

- ⊗ **Sunday, 8th December:** The Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Mass at 10 am, Basilica of St. Pius X) - offering of roses (11:30 am, Grotto) - blessing of the cribs in the Immaculate Conception Basilica, the Rosary Basilica and the Crypt (5:30 pm, Rosary Basilica).
- ⊗ **Wednesday, 18th December:** The relics of St. Bernadette return from Spain. 11 am Mass of thanksgiving at the Crypt, in the presence of a delegation from the Federation of Spanish Hospitalities.
- ⊗ **Saturday, 21st December - Light of Bethlehem** - Rally with the Scouts at the Christmas Village, Place du Champ Commun (Cantegrill side). Fireworks (7:30 pm) at the castle and procession to the Grotto.
- ⊗ **24th December:** 8:30 pm Rosary by torchlight
9 pm Vigil and Midnight Mass (in French) at the Rosary Basilica.
- ⊗ **Wednesday, 25th December:** Christmas Day - Mass in English at 9 am in Chapel of St Jean Marie Vianney.
Mass in French at 10 am and 11:15 am at the Rosary Basilica.
- ⊗ **31st December:** 11pm Mass at the Grotto presided over by Mgr Nicolas Brouwet. (If wet, at the Rosary Basilica)

THE LITTLE HOUSE OF BERNADETTE

On the first floor of the Information Centre, the Little House of Bernadette offers accompanied children a whole range of games and activities to help them find out about the message of Lourdes. Christmas holidays hours: From 2nd December to 6th January from 2 pm to 5 pm.



In 2019, France, Italy, and Spain hosted the relics of St. Bernadette.

Vic (Spain) welcomes Saint Bernadette

Spain hosted the relics of St. Bernadette from 31st August to 17th December. What a powerful experience for all Spaniards to be able to make a pilgrimage as if they were coming to Lourdes. Some of them have never made such a pilgrimage and others cannot any longer. From 14th to 16th November, thanks to the Hospitality of Our Lady of Lourdes of Vic, this veneration was offered to the faithful of the diocese.

The President of the Hospitality of the Diocese of Vic testifies:

"The visit of the relics of St. Bernadette has been one of the most important events in the city of Vic for those who visit the shrine every year. But also for many people who have never been there and who have great devotion to the Virgin of Lourdes and for others who, for years, have

been unable to go for various reasons and those who have always thought of making the pilgrimage and have not yet experienced this wonderful encounter. Having the relics among us stirs profound emotions, feelings, prayer, and joy that this saint should be visiting our city. All that Lourdes evokes in us pervades our streets and fills our cathedral. We are so moved because we



feel like we are in Lourdes. An exceptional event that it is almost impossible to describe. The faces, the expressions, the looks, the prayers of hundreds of the faithful were truly filled with this emotion. The veneration was a success, completely filling the Cathedral of Vic and later the church of the Santa Teresa convent. We prayed for the strength and courage to continue to support the many sick,

elderly or disabled people in Lourdes. This was a truly unique experience that renewed all the human and spiritual values that often lie dormant in our hearts. Congratulations and thank you for the Sanctuary initiative that brought the mystery of Lourdes to our cities and churches." ■

Xavier Farrés,
President of the Hospitality
of Lourdes diocese
of VIC (Spain)

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.

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 do you want: to do the Stations of the Cross, to hear Holy Mass, to take Holy Communion, these are my great devotions," said St. Bernadette. (*Logia* 714)



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In Italy

From 27th April to 22nd August 2019, the relics of St. Bernadette visited 34 Italian dioceses. The response that this girl gave to Mary's message touched young people in particular. Father Nicola Ventriglia, "*chaplain*" of Lourdes, coordinator of Italian pilgrimages, heard their testimonies:

"Sometimes we young people live life as if it were a circle, we turn away and focus selfishly on ourselves, always doing the same things, maybe even repeating the same mistakes without breaking out of our habits or our deceptive feeling of security. Living your life is like

throwing an arrow. It flies to its target. It is the goal of a life driven by the desire to achieve one's goals. As Pope Francis told us, "Do not be these young people who spend their lives sitting on the couch or looking out of their window! In fact, we have to achieve our goals,

just like an arrow pointing towards its target." Bernadette's entire life testifies to this: unconditionally focused on the Lord. Many young people, when they were in the presence of Bernadette's relics, understood how to give meaning to their lives. ■

With the Little Sisters of the Poor

From 1st November 2019 in Pau, Bernadette arranged to meet the diocese of Bayonne. In this year when the pastoral theme of the Sanctuary was "Blessed are the poor", the Little Sisters of the Poor in Billière, near Pau, launched a wonderful invitation to the entire diocese of Bayonne: the veneration of the relics of Bernadette, from the 1st to 11th of November. ■



© DR

Saint Bernadette in Normandy

In 2019, the Benedictines of Bayeux welcomed St. Bernadette during Lent.

After Séez, it was the turn of the diocese of Bayeux-Lisieux on Sunday, 24th March 2019 to welcome the relics of Bernadette Soubirous. This was a first for the department of Calvados. For the Normans, it was little like Lourdes coming to their home. The faithful gathered in large numbers before the reliquary. ■

The weak come first

The Dutch journalist Jos Vranckx affirmed, from first-hand experience, that the parodies we hear about Lourdes are totally unjustified. We are not talking about miracles, but about therapy for the heart. And that goes further than we think.

Our society advocates a health ideal that involves fitness, a perfectly sculpted body. Or a high-performance medicine in the hands of specialists and emergency services. We prefer to put failure, sickness and pain under the bushel, out of sight. Until reality catches up with us.

In Lourdes, it's the opposite. Here, the sick are the centre of attention and they are welcomed "like kings". In all celebrations and all activities, they have priority. Each of them is personally surrounded with attention, respect and affection. There is no shame. "Here you can be just what you are." Take the astonishingly joyful atmosphere in the Accueil Notre-Dame. People share their often-tragic life stories, but during meals together we know how to laugh too.

Nothing asked of the volunteers is too much. Day



and night there are doctors, nurses and stretcher-bearers who can help. Even cooking and table service are provided by volunteers. There are lawyers, engineers, architects, firefighters and even a judge. People who are isolated especially, who often suffer from loneliness, feel the attention they receive here rather like a refreshing and warming bath. That's what Paul (62), a former bank director with

leg prostheses and chronic back pain, experienced. "The warmth of volunteers is priceless, as they work for free and they even give up a week of their holiday. Unlike hospitals, here nurses can take their time. I can really be who I am, without any limits. This gives me a new energy which will sustain me for several months. The cross on my shoulders is lighter, I can straighten my back." ■

Here, faith is catching

I came to Lourdes for the first time last summer. I come from Togo. I'm 35 years old and I've lived in France for ten years. I arrived here to study and after my studies I wanted to stay. In fact, in my country you can't get a good job without a bit of string-pulling. For years I was terrified because I did not have a green card. I could not take the risk of travelling to Lourdes. I'd already had experience of calling 115 and of shelters even with a baby ... Recently, thanks to my green card, I finally came to Lourdes. And I've been bowled over by my stay. Here everything is a miracle; the passion of faith is catching. My mother back in our home country was able to follow through WhatsApp. I filmed for hours. Thanks to KTO she says the rosary every day in union with the pilgrims of Lourdes. It's a little like her home too! There's just one drawback. 15th August is just not festive enough. Fortunately, the Indians and Africans were in festive clothes. I would be so happy to be able to charter an aircraft from Togo one day. ■

Acheta (Togo)

In Lourdes, the most vulnerable are heard

From 14th to 17th November, to celebrate the 3rd World Day of the Poor in Lourdes, the *Fratello* Pilgrimage gathered together more than 1500 people excluded from society in some way.

The "Fratello" pilgrims responded to the Pope's call, "Go with Mary that she will make you apostles of God's tenderness".

Jacquot (Saint-Niziers, France)

This gathering in Lourdes allowed me to meet many people. What touched me the most was the change in an atheist friend. Not long ago he told me that faith was not for him. Everything that happens here is great!



Maria-Magdalena (Spain)

In Lourdes, I found only mercy, friendship, mutual support. I give thanks to God for all this love.



Marie-Christine (France)

I was supposed to come with my husband. Unfortunately, he died. I came despite everything.

I experienced a real pilgrimage: baths, celebrations ... I found out all about Bernadette's life. Everything is beautiful, really moving. I met many people and I could trust them. There was no taunting. Here, people approach me. I was even able to advise someone and help them.

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