

REOPENING OF THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES

SANCTUARY OPENING TIMES
FROM 2PM TO 6PM

ACCESS

SAINT MICHAEL'S GATE
SAINT JOSEPH'S GATE

ACCOMPANIMENT

GROUP OF TEN PILGRIMS

ACCESS OPPOSITE THE GROTTA
AT THE CHAPELS OF LIGHT
AS WELL AS THE TAPS FOR
WATER FROM THE GROTTA
CONFESSIONS

WEARING A FACE MASK IS
COMPULSORY IN THE SANCTUARY

NO CELEBRATIONS

BATHS CLOSED

UNINTERRUPTED PRAYER
AT THE GROTTA CONTINUES

On Saturday 16th May 2020, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes will reopen its doors for individual pilgrims from the nearby locality. "The reopening on this Saturday 16th May is a great sign of hope! I am very happy and on this occasion, I want to launch this appeal: Help the Sanctuary to rise again!"

Mgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, rector of the Sanctuary of Lourdes

**PRESS BRIEFING AT 1:30 PM - SAINT-JOSEPH'S GATE
2 P.M. - OPENING OF THE GATES**

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE SANCTUARY

- **The wearing of face-masks will be compulsory in the Sanctuary.**
- **At the two main entrances**, members of the hospitality will be available to welcome and provide information for pilgrims.
- **The members of the religious communities of Lourdes**, helped by markings on the ground, will be accompanying groups of ten people wishing to visit the Grotto.
- **The "chapelains" will be continuing the uninterrupted prayer in the Grotto** and will be offering **the sacrament of Reconciliation** at the Church of St. Bernadette, respecting social distancing.
- **Opposite the Grotto** (right bank), **at the chapels of light, as well as at the Grotto water taps**, pilgrims are invited to respect social distancing. Markings on the ground will make it easier for everyone to understand how this works. Members of the Hospitality and Sanctuary guards will ensure that the duration of personal meditation is not excessive.

8 MILLION EUROS IN FORECASTED LOSSES. HISTORICAL DEFICIT FOR THE SANCTUARY

Every day since the start of the crisis, organised pilgrimages have been cancelling their visits. The Sanctuary is facing an almost empty season, completely devoid of any sick pilgrims.

> **The resources of the Sanctuary are reliant on the pilgrims who visit the site.** Without them, without their offerings and donations, Lourdes cannot exist.

> **The Sanctuary was hit by these economic difficulties just after it had returned to financial equilibrium.**

> **To secure its future and to preserve jobs, it is vital for the Sanctuary to appeal to the generosity of its donors.**

SUPPORT THE SANCTUARY

BY BANK CHEQUE, made payable to the Diocesan Association of Tarbes and Lourdes at Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes Donor Service - Operation Covid19
1, avenue Monseigneur Théas 65108 Lourdes Cedex

BY BANK TRANSFER, by mentioning "Operation Covid19"

Diocesan Association of Tarbes and Lourdes Agency: Societe Generale - Lourdes
IBAN: FR76 30003 02051 00037260102 02 SWIFT address (BIC code): SOGEFRPP

SIGN OF HOPE

"The countless testimonies and prayer intentions that have come to us confirm that the role of this Sanctuary is to be a beating heart of prayer for the world and with the world."



Mgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas,
Rector of the Sanctuary ND Lourdes

PROVISION AT THE ACCUEIL NOTRE-DAME

In agreement with the health authorities, it is possible for those people wishing to remain in lockdown outside their home, to stay at the Accueil Notre-Dame.



16th MAY 2020 **REOPENING OF THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES**

PRESS CONTACT
COMMUNICATION SERVICE: 06 21 50 42 71
COMMUNICATION@LOURDES-FRANCE.COM

Dear friends of Lourdes,

When I had to have the gates of our Sanctuary closed on 17th March, for an indefinite period, I knew that we were entering one of the greatest crises in the Sanctuary's recent history. The first thing I wished for, along with with Mgr, Antoine Hérouard, apostolic delegate, was that we would reopen as soon as possible.

The reopening this Saturday 16th May is a great sign of hope! I am very happy and, on this occasion, I want to launch our appeal: Help the Sanctuary to rise again!

For 162 years, Lourdes has been a place of friendship centred on the poor and sick, an unparalleled school of life, service and prayer. It is a spiritual jewel that never ceases to give meaning and hope to our lives. It is the "common home" of all those around the world who love Lourdes and live in the spirit of this unique place.

If the Grotto of Lourdes could testify, it would speak simply of humanity! How much peace has been found, and how many graces have been received in this "melting pot" of humanity, what suffering has been relieved, and what emotional thanks has been expressed by millions of pilgrims since 1858. In Lourdes, countless volunteers have found meaning in their lives through friendship in action with the sick, disabled or vulnerable. It is also a school of life for tens of thousands of young people who are able to express their faith in an international atmosphere.

The first initiative that followed the closure of our Sanctuary was to start uninterrupted prayer in the Grotto, led throughout the day in various languages by the chaplains. This prayer, broadcast on social networks, on Lourdes TV and Catholic TV channels around the world, has supported millions of people on all continents. The countless testimonies and prayer intentions that have come to us confirm that the role of this Sanctuary is to be a beating heart of prayer for and with the world.

Today, hundreds of pilgrimages to Lourdes have been cancelled. Other cancellations will take place; that worries me of course, but I understand these decisions are the consequences of the measures in force and that they aim to protect the weakest, the most vulnerable who always come first in Lourdes. Because the most important of the good works is to look out for other people as we would for our brothers or sisters, for their physical, moral and spiritual health. The Sanctuary is facing an almost empty 2020 season and the Sanctuary's entire ecosystem is in the grip of huge difficulties.

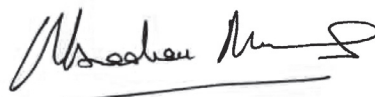
The resources of the Sanctuary are reliant on the pilgrims who visit the site. Without them, without their offerings and donations, Lourdes cannot exist. The Sanctuary was hit by these economic difficulties just after it had returned to financial equilibrium. We have estimated a loss of 8 million euros. 85% of the staff (240 people) are on shortened hours. It will not be possible to hire any seasonal workers (80 in normal times).

It is therefore a real call for help that the Sanctuary is sending out to all those who love Lourdes and who consider this place to be part of our spiritual heritage.

Crossing the Rosary Esplanade devoid of pilgrims every day, makes me truly realise the incredible beauty of pilgrimage which shakes up our everyday life and brings us back to what is important, to the Gospel, shared prayer, comforting gestures, kind looks, appreciation shown through arms and hearts. In the evening, the void is even more glaring: we miss the processions, with their endless stream of torches and unique soundscape.

We must have hope for the future. Hope is not an illusion but it is often a struggle. We will fight so that Lourdes once again attracts thousands and thousands of pilgrims from all over the world.

Please be assured of our prayers at the Grotto for you and your loved ones. I know I can count on your help and I thank you for it.



Mgr. Olivier RIBADEAU DUMAS
Rector of the sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

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AT THE GROTTA CONTINUES

GRADUALLY, THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES EMERGES FROM ITS LOCKDOWN

SATURDAY 16th MAY 2020, AT 2 P.M.,
THE SANCTUARY OPENS ITS DOORS AGAIN
FOR INDIVIDUAL PILGRIMS FROM THE
LOCALITY

Respecting hygiene and social distancing measures put in place by the prevention and security service of the Sanctuary and in agreement with the Prefecture of Hautes-Pyrénées, individual pilgrims from the locality are being invited to return to the Sanctuary. They will have the opportunity for private reflection opposite the Grotto of the Apparitions on the other bank of the Gave de Pau, and be able light a candle in the chapels of light.

No public celebrations of worship can be held before the date set by the authorities. The basilicas remain closed.

MEASURES TAKEN BY SANCTUARY

- **The wearing of face-masks will be compulsory in the Sanctuary.**
- **At the two main entrances**, members of the hospitality will be available to welcome and provide information for pilgrims.
- **The members of the religious communities of Lourdes**, helped by markings on the ground, will be accompanying groups of ten people wishing to visit the Grotto.
- **The "chaplains" will be continuing the uninterrupted prayer in the Grotto** and will be offering **the sacrament of Reconciliation** at the Church of St. Bernadette, respecting social distancing.
- **Opposite the Grotto (right bank), at the chapels of light, as well as at the Grotto water taps**, pilgrims are invited to respect social distancing. Markings on the ground will make it easier for everyone to understand how this works. Members of the Hospitality and Sanctuary guards will ensure that the duration of personal meditation is not excessive.

PROTECTION

The Sanctuary monitoring unit, led by the Rector, Mgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, in constant contact with the Hautes-Pyrénées Prefecture and the health authorities, has drawn up a protection plan for pilgrims welcomed in the Sanctuary of Lourdes.

PROVISION AT THE ACCUEIL NOTRE-DAME



In agreement with the health authorities, it is possible for those people wishing to remain in lockdown outside their home, to stay at the Accueil Notre-Dame.

THE SANCTUARY CONTINUES TO PRAY FOR THE WORLD

EVERYTHING STOPPED EXCEPT PRAYER

THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES BEFORE THE CRISIS

EVERY YEAR:

5,000 MESSES CELEBRATED

2,200 ROSARIES AND CATECHESSES
BROADCAST ON TV

MORE THAN 80 INTERNATIONAL
MESSES

500 PROCESSIONS DURING THE
YEAR

835 CELEBRATIONS OF THE
ANointING OF THE SICK

350,000 BATHS

240 EMPLOYEES
80 SEASONAL WORKERS

During the lockdown, the
Sanctuary has received,
via its website, more than
100,000 messages of support
and prayer intentions.

The community of "chapelains"



The first decision after the Sanctuary closed on 17th March 2020, was to open a channel of uninterrupted prayer at the Grotto. This uninterrupted prayer in which pilgrims can all come together, will be led from now on by the "chapelains" who will follow each other at the Grotto throughout the day to pray in various languages. This prayer is broadcast continuously on social networks and on TV Lourdes, the web TV of the sanctuary. TV stations are also broadcasting parts of this prayer.

WORLDWIDE, MORE THAN 3 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE JOINED THE UNINTERRUPTED PRAYER AT THE GROTTO



- Broadcasting of celebrations on the KTO channel:
averaging 2.5 million viewers each day from the French-speaking world



- Broadcast of the Italian rosary on TV2000:
averaging 1 million viewers each day in Italy



- Broadcast of the rosary in English, Spanish and German on EWTN - USA (**250 million viewers from 140 countries**)



- The Sanctuary Youtube channel:
135,000 subscribers. During lockdown: 1.7 million views / month (*usually 650,000 views*)



- The Sanctuary's Facebook page:
715,000 subscribers to the page. During lockdown: 3,500,000 views / month (*usually 20,000 views*)

The Sanctuary "chapelains" come from various communities and dioceses, and from different countries such as Italy, Canada or Sri Lanka. They contribute to the pastoral work of the Sanctuary and welcome pilgrims from all over the world. They are providing uninterrupted prayer at the Grotto and are offering confession.

THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT PILGRIMS

THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES BEFORE THE CRISIS

ANNUAL ATTENDANCE:

3 MILLION VISITS
> 1.2 MILLION PILGRIMS *
> 1.8 MILLION VISITORS
> 80,000 SICK OR DISABLED
PEOPLE

* OF THESE, 51% ARE ORGANISED
PILGRIMS, 49% ARE INDIVIDUAL
PILGRIMS.

> ANNUAL BUDGET: 30 M €

> 1.7 MILLION CANDLES

> 3.5 MILLION LITRES OF GROTTA
WATER SUPPLIED FREE

> 8 MILLION EUROS IN EXPECTED LOSSES
AT THE END OF THE YEAR. AN HISTORICAL
DEFICIT FOR THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES

Every day since the start of the crisis, organised pilgrimages have been
cancelling their visits. The Sanctuary is facing an almost empty season,
completely devoid of any sick pilgrims.

THE ESTIMATION OF ORGANISED PILGRIMAGES THAT HAVE BEEN CANCELLED IS 100% FROM APRIL TO JUNE, 70% FOR JULY, 30% FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

SITUATION AS OF 16th MAY 2020

> **The resources of the Sanctuary are reliant on the pilgrims who visit the site.** Without them, without their offerings and donations, Lourdes cannot exist.

> **The Sanctuary was hit by these economic difficulties just after it had returned to financial equilibrium.**

> **All possible precautionary measures have been taken to limit outgoings,** in particular by reducing all operating costs and by adopting short-time working. These measures affect 85% of employees.

> To secure its future and preserve jobs, it is vital for the Sanctuary to appeal to the generosity of its donors.

SUPPORTING THE SANCTUARY

BY BANK CHEQUE, made payable to the Diocesan Association of Tarbes and Lourdes at
Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes Donor Service - Operation Covid19 1, avenue Monseigneur Théas 65108 Lourdes Cedex

BY BANK TRANSFER, by mentioning "Operation Covid19" in the subject line of your transfer
and by informing us by email: donateur@lourdes-france.com
Diocesan Association of Tarbes and Lourdes Agency: Societe Generale – Lourdes
IBAN: FR76 30003 02051 00037260102 02 SWIFT address (BIC code): SOGEFRPP

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF LOURDES

THE SANCTUARY, THE
CITY OF LOURDES AND
SOCIO-PROFESSIONALS
A SHARED DESTINY.



Mgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas,
Rector of the Sanctuary ND Lourdes

A CHALLENGE FOR LOURDES

The closure of the Sanctuary, on 17th March 2020, resulted in the closure of hotels and religious souvenir shops.

An extract from the letter of Mgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, rector of the Sanctuary, to socio-professionals in Lourdes:

"This extremely reduced, almost dead season, is something that we are all experiencing together. I would like to reiterate how much I share your concerns, your anxiety for the future. I think of all those who were already facing serious difficulties. I am thinking of employees, seasonal workers too. It is no secret that the economic situation of the sanctuary which had found a satisfactory balance is once again very vulnerable."

APART FROM THE SANCTUARY, THE ENTIRE ECOSYSTEM OF THE CITY OF LOURDES HAS COME TO A STANDSTILL.

THE CITY OF LOURDES BEFORE THE CRISIS

2.6 MILLION OVERNIGHT STAYS

200 HOTELS

47.5% AVERAGE ANNUAL
OCCUPANCY RATE

HOTEL CAPACITY: 12,000 BEDS

3,900 JOBS RELATED TO TOURIST
ACTIVITY

> **350 service establishments (out of a total of 570) in the city of Lourdes are directly impacted by the crisis**, due to their activities (accommodation, catering, transport and drinking places); or more than 60% of service establishments and more than 80% of associated employment (200 religious souvenir shops).

> The Sanctuary collaborates with 835 suppliers. Through the 7 months of its seasonal activity (April to October), the Sanctuary boosts the economic life of Lourdes and its surroundings.

> The reopening of the Sanctuary, in operation and in investment, is a pre-requisite for restarting the local economy.