

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

THE STORY OF



St Bernadette



A MESSAGE FROM

Bishop John



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am very pleased to welcome you as we gather together in prayer to celebrate the centenary of our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Over the coming days, hundreds of people from our Diocese will be travelling to Lourdes on a special pilgrimage of faith, hope, and renewal.

Although you may not be travelling with us to Lourdes this summer, Our Lady invites you - nonetheless - to be part of this journey of pilgrimage, by opening your hearts and minds to the special gifts and charisms of Lourdes.

Many of us will already know the story of Bernadette Soubirous. A humble young girl from a small French town whose trust and devotion to Our Lady opened the door to the physical, mental and spiritual healing of countless people from around the world, including many from our own Diocese.

So, I invite you to have faith, have hope. Join us as we imitate St Bernadette in gathering together in trustful prayer, opening our hearts to a life of renewed faith and hope in the Lord. Through prayer we can confront the challenges that beset our world and renew our mission to be ambassadors for Christ.

May God bless you during these special days and I ask you to please keep a place in your prayers for all who are sick in our Diocese at this time.

Stay with us, Lord, on our journey,
+ John Arnold
Bishop of Salford.



**Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.
Saint Bernadette, pray for us.**

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us sinners who have recourse to thee.



The Story of ST BERNADETTE

BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS was born on 7 January 1844 in the small French town of Lourdes. From humble beginnings, Bernadette's childhood was marked with poverty and ill-health but her remarkable tale and beautiful relationship with Our Lady has inspired generations of Christians the world over.

The story began on 11 February 1858, when 14-year-old Bernadette went out to gather wood with her sister and their friend on the outskirts of town.

When they came to the stream in front of the Grotto of Massabielle, Bernadette fell behind, looking for a dry place to cross. Suddenly, Bernadette heard the sound of wind but noticed that none of the trees were moving. Looking across to the alcove of the grotto, Bernadette saw "a dazzling light and a white figure", who Bernadette described as a "small young lady."

This was to be the first of 18 visions that occurred until 16 July 1858.

During these visions, Bernadette experienced a range of emotions; from joy and trust, to penitence and sorrow.

As the visions continued, news of Bernadette's remarkable experiences spread throughout the town, dividing opinion amongst its residents.

On 25 February, Bernadette reported that the Lady had asked her to "drink from the water of the spring, wash in it, and to eat the herb that grew there".

After she had done this, she returned to the grotto the following day to find that the muddy water ran clear.

Bernadette's later visions signalled the start of her legacy to make Lourdes a place of pilgrimage. She reported that the Lady told her: "Tell the priests that people should come here in procession and build a chapel here."

It wasn't until nearly the end of her visions that Bernadette revealed the identity of the Lady. After repeated questioning, the vision finally answered: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Until that point, Bernadette hadn't spoken of the identity of the Lady, merely describing her as a lady with a white and gold rosary, wearing a white veil, a blue girdle, with a yellow rose on each foot. In 1866, The Apparitions of Lourdes were authenticated by the Bishop of Tarbes. In that same year, Bernadette left Lourdes to live out her religious vocation within the community of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers. She died in 1879, was proclaimed blessed in 1925, and became a saint in 1933.

Today, the Catholic Church recognises 70 miracles as a result of the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, with people across the world journeying in prayer with Our Lady and St Bernadette, on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary.







Prayer to Mary

by Fr Léonce de Grandmaison

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
preserve in me the heart of a child,
pure and clean like spring water;
a simple heart that does not remain absorbed ...
in its own sadness;
a loving heart
that freely gives with compassion;
a faithful and generous heart
that neither forgets good
nor feels bitterness for any evil.
Give me a sweet and humble heart
that loves without asking
to be loved in return,
happy to lose itself
in the heart of others,
sacrificing itself in front
of your Divine Son;
a great and unconquerable heart
which no ingratitude can close
and no indifference can tire;
a heart tormented by the glory of Christ,
pierced by His love
with a wound that will not heal
until heaven.

Relics of St Bernadette - U.S Tour 2022
Sanctuary Our Lady of Lourdes (France)

LOURDES
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Prayer to
ST BERNADETTE

St. Bernadette,
pure and simple child,
you who were privileged to behold
the beauty of Mary Immaculate
and to be the recipient of her confidence
eighteen times at Lourdes;
you who did desire from then on
to hide yourself in the cloister of Nevers
and there live and die as a victim of sinners,
obtain for us that spirit of purity,
simplicity and mortification,
which will lead us also to
the glorious vision of God
and of Mary in Heaven.

Amen.



