



Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

On February 11, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubiroux in the hollow rock of Massabielle in southern France. That year Bernadette would report a total of 18 apparitions of a woman she described as “lovelier than I have ever seen.” The woman in the vision revealed herself as the “Immaculate Conception,” in confirmation of this dogma of the Catholic faith which was infallibly defined by the Holy Father just four years previous. Our Lady told Bernadette to drink from an unseen fountain at the grotto, and called for a chapel to be built there. When Bernadette scratched at the ground, a stream of pure spring water surged forth. This stream demonstrated healing properties, and it continues to draw pilgrims to the grotto from around the globe. A basilica was built upon the rock of the Massabielle in response to Our Lady's request, and in 1876 it was consecrated as the "Church of the Rosary.” Due to the multitudes of medically documented miraculous healings, the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in the world. Our Lady of Lourdes is the Patron of the seriously ill.