



Our Lady of Lourdes

Feastday: February 11



Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared eighteen times to fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous in a small town located in the foothills of the Pyrene mountains of southern France.

Bernadette could neither read nor write and spoke only the dialect of her area. Her family was sinking into poverty, and the day the first apparition took place she was gathering firewood to help her mother. Her attention was drawn to the noise of rustling bushes near the Grotto of Massabielle. Then Bernadette saw a beautiful girl "dressed in a white robe, girded at the waist with a blue ribbon. She wore a white veil which gave just a glimpse of hair. Her feet were bare but covered by the last folds of her robe and a yellow rose was

upon each of them. She held on her right arm a rosary of white beads with a chain of gold shining like the two roses on her feet."

Bernadette knelt and began to pray the rosary. At the end of the five decades the woman smiled and disappeared. Bernadette returned and on February 18 Our Lady began her message telling Bernadette, "I do not promise to make you happy in this life but in the next." On February 24, Mary asked for prayer for the conversion of sinners and the following day, she instructed Bernadette to dig the ground near the grotto. From that a spring came forth which to this day is used by pilgrims to Lourdes.

On March 2, Bernadette was instructed by Our Lady to "tell the priests that people should come here and that a chapel should be built on the site." On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, the Blessed Virgin told Bernadette in the dialect of Lourdes, "I am the Immaculate Conception." This dogma had only been defined by Pope Pius IX just a few years earlier in 1854.

The Basilica at Lourdes was consecrated in 1876 and pilgrims flock to the holy grotto where to this day healings, both physical and spiritual, have taken place. Great emphasis is placed on devotion to the Eucharist and just as at the wedding feast of Cana, Mary points to her Son. The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes was established for February 11, approved by Pope Leo XIII; his successor, Pope St. Pius X proclaimed that it be observed throughout the universal Church.

Bernadette entered the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1866. She worked as sacristan and avoided publicity as best she could. She referred to herself as "a broom which Our Lady used, but now I have been put back in my corner." She died on April 16, 1879 at the age of thirty-five, and was canonized by Pope Pius XI on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1933.

GROWING CATHOLICS

Leaflet



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Gospel • January 23, 2022 Luke 5:1-11

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret.

He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."

When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.



EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

The Sea of Galilee was known by several names, including Lake Gennesaret and the Sea of Tiberias (a Roman name used in St. John's Gospel). This lake is thirteen miles long and seven and a half miles wide. In Jesus' time, there were ten towns around the lake. Most of the people made their living from fishing. The lake must have been rich in this resource.



GOD'S GENEROSITY

The miraculous catch of fish is a miracle of abundance and resembles other miracles — such as feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9: 12-17) and the wine Jesus supplied at the Wedding at Cana. (John 2: 1-11) These "abundance miracles" show both God wants to meet our human needs and they are also a demonstration of His power.



SEEDS FOR CONVERSATION

Though Simon says they'd been fishing all night and were ready to wrap it up, they ended up doing what Jesus asked, and what is the reason Simon gives?

What happens after Simon submits to the authority of Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus chose to do this particular miracle? What does this miracle say about Jesus and His Father?

For Simon and his partners, fish equaled money. How would you expect him to respond to this large catch of fish?

What does he do instead? What is strange about that?

Simon acts surprisingly, but what he says is odder still. What does Simon tell Jesus and why is that such a strange request? What do you think is going on in Simon's heart that causes him to act this way?



In this passage we hear of Simon. Jesus later said he would call him by the name Peter. Peter means stone in Greek; Peter is sometimes referred to as Cephas which means the same thing in Aramaic.



Families can evangelize! Again and again I have heard from adults that it was the family of a Catholic friend, or Catholic neighbors who first introduced them to the Faith. In fact, in my case it was a colleague who drew me through her joy and through [repeated] invitation to explore Catholicism.

What can you do? Here's a few easy ideas:

Let people know you are Catholic (and like it)!

When someone shares a sorrow, ask to pray with them.

Invite a friend to go to Mass.

Share some fun Catholic Culture (a Lenten pretzel, an Easter butter lamb.)

Invite a friend to come to fish fry, Family Fun Night, or an other social occasion.

Share a book (a Matthew Kelly book is always good.)

Pray for those you love to find faith (or open their heart).

Reach out with love when people are in trouble.

Give someone a Bible if they don't have one.

Always be prepared to speak of your faith - have an "elevator talk" - a quick way you can simply share what Catholics believe. Watch this space next week!

Dear Christian families, proclaim joyfully to the whole world the wonderful treasure which you, as domestic churches, possess! Christian couples, in your communion of life and love, in your mutual self-giving and in your generous openness to children, become, in Christ, the light of the world. The Lord asks you daily to be like a lamp which does not remain hidden, but is put "on a stand, and ... gives light to all in the house" (Matthew 5:15). - Pope St. John Paul II,

