

# LITURGY BYTES

## Our Lady of Lourdes



Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, is the day that marks the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1858 to a 14-year-old girl, Marie Bernade, known to us as St. Bernadette. Between February 11<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup> of that year, the Blessed Mother appeared eighteen times and showed herself to St. Bernadette in the hollow of the rock at Lourdes. It was on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) that she referred to herself as the “Immaculate Conception.”

There have been many miracles performed through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes that prompted the Church to institute a special feast in her honor. At the first apparition, Mary invited Bernadette to say the rosary with her which was repeated at several apparitions. On another occasion, the Blessed Mother asked Bernadette to speak with Church officials about her and ask them to build a church on the spot where she appeared and organize processions there. Bernadette was also told to drink and wash at the spring which was still hidden under the sand. What tremendous faith was exhibited by a 14-year-old girl.

The report of cures at the grotto spread quickly, and the more the news spread, the greater the number of Christians who visited this special place. Finally, four years later, the Bishop declared the apparitions to be supernatural and permitted the public veneration of the Immaculate Conception in the grotto. Soon after, a chapel was erected there and since then, numerous pilgrims come from all over the world to a special place of grace and healing.

Let us remember the humble words Bernadette addressed to Our Lady: “Yes, *gentle Mother, you lowered yourself, you came down to earth to appear to a helpless little girl. You, the Queen of Heaven and earth, designed to make use of what was most humble for the world.*” Those words are from a journal of St. Bernadette written in 1866. Let us continue to embrace the wonderful examples of faith shown by so many of our beloved saints.

***Have a blessed, healthy, and safe week! ~ Michele Hall***