

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELICS

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A relic is a part of the physical remains of a saint after their death, such as a fragment of bone or hair, or an object that has been in contact with their body. In the Catholic tradition, relics are not objects of worship but are venerated as a way of honoring the holiness of God, made manifest through the lives of His saints.

Why Are St. Bernadette's Relics Journeying to Us?



Pilgrimage is a profound spiritual practice, allowing us to step outside our daily routines and draw closer to God. Conscious that many who have a love of Lourdes and devotion to St. Bernadette the relics of St. Bernadette are being brought to Ireland during September and October 2024. This visit allows individuals and communities to experience the spiritual richness of pilgrimage in their own churches, offering opportunities for healing, conversion, and even the discovery of one's vocation.

Why Are Relics Important to Catholics?

The veneration of relics is not unique to Catholicism; it reflects the universal human instinct to care for and honour the remains of those we love. In the Christian tradition, relics have been revered from the earliest centuries. The relics of saints, such as St. Polycarp, were described as being "more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold."

From the time of the early Church, relics—especially those of martyrs—were held in special veneration. Christians would gather for prayer services in the catacombs of Rome, and by the fourth century, the Eucharist was celebrated over the tombs of the martyrs. As St. Augustine explained, the bodies of saints and martyrs are precious because they were temples of the Holy Spirit during their earthly lives.

There are two principal reasons why Catholics venerate relics:

1. God's Grace Through Relics: Throughout history, God has shown His approval of relics by granting healing and other graces to those who venerate them with faith. Relics serve as channels of God's mercy and power.
2. Connection to Holiness: Relics help us feel closer to the holy person they belong to, making the communion of saints more real and present in our lives. They inspire us to seek holiness in our own lives, reminding us that we, too, are called to live as instruments of the Holy Spirit.

St. Bernadette's Legacy and Lourdes

St. Bernadette Soubirous, to whom the Virgin Mary appeared in Lourdes, has become a beacon of hope and healing for millions of pilgrims. Her life of humility, suffering, and deep trust in God continues to inspire people around the world. The relics of St. Bernadette make this spiritual connection with her even more tangible, inviting us to experience the same grace that has flowed through Lourdes for generations.