

RESOURCE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



St Bernadette's Life



Born: 7th January 1844

Died: 16th April 1879

Feast Day: 16th April

Patronage: The Sick,
Shepherds, Poor, and
Lourdes, France

Saint Bernadette Soubirous, was born on January 7, 1844, in Lourdes, France. She was the eldest daughter in a poor miller's family and despite her fragile health and frequent illnesses, Saint Bernadette is best known for experiencing 18 apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1858 at the Grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes.

During these apparitions, a "young lady" who later identified herself as the "Immaculate Conception," instructed Bernadette to dig in the ground, revealing a spring of water. This spring, known as Lourdes water, is believed to have miraculous healing properties and has attracted millions of pilgrims worldwide.

Despite scepticism from many and following an extensive investigation, the Catholic Church declared Bernadette's visions as worthy of belief in 1862. Bernadette later joined the Sisters of Charity in Nevers, France, where she lived a humble and holy life, working in the infirmary until her death at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879. She was made a saint in 1933.

The Message of Lourdes

St. Bernadette's Life - A Journey of Love and Faith

18th February 1858: Extraordinary Words

- Mary spoke for the first time to Bernadette, saying, "What I have to say to you does not have to be written down."
- Mary's message was one of deep, personal connection—heart to heart. From the very beginning, Mary invited Bernadette to receive a message of love.

A Special Invitation

- Mary then asked, "Would you be so kind as to come here for fifteen days?"
- For Bernadette, this respectful and loving request made her feel valued as a person. This message for all of us: We are all loved and respected by God.

Promises for the Next World

- Mary said, "I do not promise to make you happy in this world but in the other."
- While life can be hard, God's love is with us, and true happiness awaits us in heaven.

The Power of Love

- Despite her hardships and humble beginnings, Bernadette radiated happiness. Born into poverty, she struggled with chronic illness throughout her life, yet her faith remained strong.
- Acceptance of Suffering: Bernadette embraced her suffering, seeing herself as a simple tool of God, offering her pain for the greater good.
- Despite her hardships, Bernadette found strength in God's love, transforming her suffering into a path toward holiness.

A Hidden Treasure: The Spring

- In the ninth apparition, Mary revealed a spring, symbolising the healing love of Jesus. Her call to "penance" means turning our hearts to God.

A Name Revealed: The Immaculate Conception

- On 25th March 1858, Mary told Bernadette, "I am the Immaculate Conception," affirming Mary's role as the Mother of God and affirming her purity.

Video Resources



SCAN CODE



SCAN CODE



SCAN CODE

Reflection Activities

Video Activity:

- Scan the first two QR codes provided above.
- Watch the two videos: *Saint Bernadette - Relic Pilgrimage Ireland 2024* and *Our Lady of Lourdes*
- Pray and Reflect on both videos.
- Gather in a group, open with prayer, reflect on the life of St. Bernadette and Our Lady's Message.
- Discuss, using the questions below.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think St. Bernadette felt when she first saw Our Lady? How would you react in her situation?
- How does the message of Our Lady of Lourdes resonate with you today?
- What does the life of St. Bernadette teach us today about faith and trust in God?
- How can St. Bernadette's life inspire us today?
- How can we embrace the vision of Our Lady of Lourdes in our lives and communities?

Activities:

Encourage the young people to identify concrete actions or steps they can take in their school or community. Some ideas are:

- Reach out to the sick or marginalised in the community
- Engage with a charitable initiative that focuses on the message and focus of Lourdes.
- Commit as a group to praying the Rosary.
- Plan or take part in a pilgrimage to Lourdes.