

## Saint Bernadette Soubirous



St. Bernadette was born in Lourdes, France on January 7, 1844. Her parents were very poor and she was the first of nine children. St Bernadette is remembered for seeing apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes.

### **The Story of the Apparitions at Lourdes**

Bernadette was out with her sister and a friend, they came to a spot where a large, shallow grotto had formed. Bernadette's sister and friend decided to cross the stream. Bernadette was not well and she knew her mother would be angry if she went too, so she stayed behind. After a few minutes, she got tired of waiting and crossed the stream herself.

The bushes that grew out of the grotto walls started blowing around and Bernadette looked up and saw a girl. The girl was wearing a long white dress with a blue sash and a white veil. Yellow roses were at her feet, and she held a rosary. She stretched out her arms to her; Bernadette was afraid but she stayed where she was and knelt down. She reached into the pocket and found her own rosary, and started to pray with the girl. When she finished, the girl disappeared. Bernadette didn't know who or what she had seen. All she knew was that being there had made her feel happy and peaceful. She told her sister and friend what had happened, and soon the whole village knew.

Over the next few weeks, Bernadette returned to the grotto and saw the beautiful girl several times. Each time she went, more people went with her. Only Bernadette could see the girl in white but when others prayed with her in the grotto, they felt peaceful and happy too. Those who were sick even felt that God had healed them while they prayed. During the apparitions, the girl spoke to Bernadette only a few times. She told her about the spring that flowed under the rocks; this is where people go today for the waters to heal them. She also told her that she was Our Lady but not everyone believed Bernadette when she told them. Despite this, she was inspired to take her final vows as a nun with the Sisters of Charity at Nevers, France, in 1878 and served God throughout her life. On April 16, 1879, Bernadette died and was buried in the convent chapel. She was beatified in 1925 and was canonised as St. Bernadette on December 8, 1933. Her feast day is on the 16<sup>th</sup> April.

Today, millions of people go to Lourdes every year, to the grotto where Bernadette saw Mary. They go to pray and to open their hearts to God.

### **Prayer by Saint Bernadette**

How happy my soul, good Mother, when I had the good fortune to gaze upon you!

How I love to recall the pleasant moments spent under your gaze, so full of kindness and mercy for us.

Yes, tender Mother, you stooped down to earth to appear to a mere child...

You, the Queen of heaven and earth, deigned to make use of the most fragile thing in the world's eyes. Amen.