

Pathway of discovery FOLLOWING IN BERNADETTE'S FOOTSTEPS

The First Apparition BERNADETTE'S STORY

Who are you Bernadette? THE ESSENTIALS

Life Story BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS (1844-1879)

Nevers 700KM FROM THE MARIAN CITY

TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION



Sanctuary Information Centre

Videos and a museum to discover and understand the Message of Lourdes. Information and schedule of Sanctuary activities available on site.

Bernadette Cinema

Film "My name is Bernadette"
Sessions every day: 2pm, 4:30pm and 9pm
Original in French, Italian translation with headphones.
Subtitles in English, Spanish, German, Dutch.
6, avenue Monseigneur Schoepfer
Tel. +33 (0)5 62 34 90 89
<http://cinema-bernadette.wixsite.com>

The Musical: Bernadette of Lourdes

In the "Robert Hossein" Center, there will be a show dedicated to Bernadette Soubirous, to whom the Virgin appeared in 1858.
She will be personified by a former contestant of "The Voice Kids". And the casting doesn't stop there, the musical comedy has been brought to life by some of the biggest names in French music: the producers of "Robin Hood" and the famous singer/songwriter, Grégoire!
www.bernadettedelourdes.fr
Tickets on sale at the Tourist Office



FOLLOWING IN BERNADETTE'S FOOTSTEPS

Pathway of Discovery
of the places that marked her life



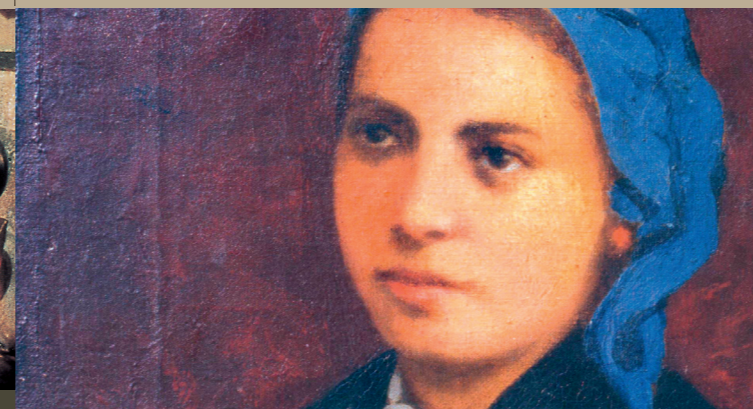
A walk around the Marian Shrine town.



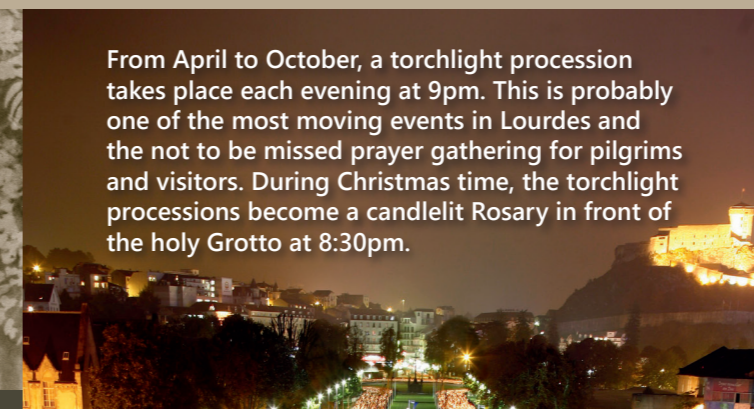
The Grotto as it was on February 11th, 1858 (painting).



Photo from the film "Bernadette" by Jean Delannoy.



Bernadette in her religious habit in Nevers.



From April to October, a torchlight procession takes place each evening at 9pm. This is probably one of the most moving events in Lourdes and the not to be missed prayer gathering for pilgrims and visitors. During Christmas time, the torchlight processions become a candlelit Rosary in front of the holy Grotto at 8:30pm.

Enter step-by-step into the story of Bernadette

LOURDES was just a small village of 4,000 inhabitants nestled in the Pyrenean foothills, beneath its castle, when, on February 11th, 1858, the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous.

We invite you today to explore the streets of Lourdes to discover the places that marked the life of Bernadette. To walk at your own pace in her footsteps, is to better understand her story and the history of the Marian Shrine Town, from the 19th century to the present day. From the Boly Mill where she was born, to the Grotto of the Apparitions in the heart of the Sanctuary, Lourdes still resonates with the fragile footsteps of Bernadette Soubirous. A charming, inspiring walk for all ages.

© Photos Sanctuaire Notre-Dame de Lourdes - Avril 2019

"I came back in front of the cave to take off my shoes. As I did so, I heard a noise coming from behind me. I turned towards the meadow; I saw that the trees were not moving at all, so I continued to take off my shoes; I heard the same noise. I raised my head, to look into the cave. I saw a lady dressed in white: she had a white dress on and a blue belt with a yellow rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her rosary. When I saw her, I rubbed my eyes; I thought I was mistaken. I reached into my pocket for my rosary. I wanted to make the sign of the cross; I could not bring my hand to my forehead. The vision made the sign of the cross. My hand was trembling; I tried again, and this time I managed it. I said my rosary; the vision ran her fingers over her own beads, but she did not move her lips. When I finished my rosary, the vision I saw, suddenly disappeared."

Bernadette Soubirous



COLOUR AND LIGHT

The stained glass windows of the Immaculate Conception Basilica recount the most important apparitions but also the first healings, episodes that have marked the history of Lourdes.



CINEMA

The History of the Apparitions

Free projection, every day, at the Information Center (30mn)

Her appearance. Bernadette is "a small brunette" as she is only 1.44 meters tall. "Her face is pleasant, her eyes are very beautiful." Dressed simply like all the girls of her age and of her social status at the time, she is of discrete appearance. Bernadette can easily go unnoticed. Only her hoarse voice and constant coughing fits can perhaps make her noticeable.

Her characteristics. Bernadette defines herself as a "hot tempered" person, that is to say, someone with very strong reactions, sometimes lacking in subtlety. She also describes herself as being "arrogantly proud." She has always been a strong woman, with a sturdy character, reinforced by an uncommon sense of pride and duty. She is also impressively humble and modest.

Her faith. A few words from Bernadette resume her spiritual attitude: "Our first reaction to something is not necessarily our own, but the second is." Thus, in action as in contemplation, Bernadette never relies on her strong and sometimes rebellious nature alone, but on the grace received from God.

- **January 7th, 1844:** Her birth at the Boly Mill.
- **November 1844 - April 1846:** Nursed in Bartrès.
- **Winter 1857:** Moving in to the "Dungeon."
- **September 1857 - 17th January 1858:** Second stay in Bartrès.
- **February 11th, 1858:** First apparition at the Grotto.
- **June 3rd, 1858:** First communion.
- **July 16th, 1858:** 18th and last apparition at the Grotto.
- **July 15th, 1860:** Boarding, at the hospice of Lourdes.
- **April 4th, 1864:** Asks to become a Nun.
- **July 4th, 1866:** Departure from Lourdes.
- **July 7th, 1866:** Arrival in Nevers.
- **December 8th, 1866:** Death of her mother, Louise.
- **October 30th, 1867:** Religious profession.
- **From November 1867:** Employment as a nurse.
- **March 4th, 1871:** Death of her father François.
- **End of May 1873:** Illness, stops nursing.
- **September 1874:** Becomes very ill.
- **December 11th, 1878:** Becomes bedridden.
- **April 16th, 1879:** Death.
- **April 19th, 1879:** Funeral.
- **December 8th, 1933:** Proclaimed Saint.

Bernadette's religious life

In April 1864, Bernadette makes the decision to become a nun with the Sisters of the Charity and Christian Instruction of Nevers. The congregation hesitates to accept her, because of her poor health and the disorder that the presence of such a celebrity could bring into the community. Bernadette signs her official application for admission in April 1866 and leaves Lourdes on 4th July. She later said: "I am going to Nevers because no one tried to entice me to come there." In Nevers, Bernadette becomes Sister Marie-Bernard. In the last hours of her life she asks for a crucifix to be placed on her chest: this act speaks louder than any words. She died on April 16th, 1879. Bernadette did not live in the nostalgia of the Apparitions: she said that in Heaven, the Virgin would be "even more beautiful." She was declared "Saint" on December 8th, 1933. It is not because of the Apparitions that the Church decided to venerate her, but because of the path she chose to take during the twenty-one years that followed.



HER BODY IS INTACT

Bernadette's body was repeatedly exhumed (1909, 1919 and 1925) yet still found to be intact. She is today beautifully encased in a glass shrine in Nevers, and can be visited by anyone who wishes to see her.



Lourdes Tourist Office
Place du Champ Commun - 65100 Lourdes
Tel. : +33 (0) 5 62 42 77 40 - www.lourdes-infotourisme.com
Sanctuary Information Centre
1 av. Monseigneur Théas - 65100 Lourdes
Tel. : +33 (0) 5 62 42 20 08 - www.lourdes-france.org

1 **The Boly Mill**
"THE HAPPY YEARS"

2 **The Parish Church**
BERNADETTE'S BAPTISM

3 **The Dungeon**
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

4 **The Grotto**
THE PLACE OF THE APPARITIONS

5 **The Hospice** THE TIME
OF THE BOARDING SCHOOL

6 **Bartrès**
A SMALL VILLAGE NORTH OF LOURDES

THE BOLY MILL entrance lobby

THE PARISH CHURCH crypt

At the Grotto; Silence and Reflection.

The corridor leading to the oratory.

The barn Bernadette knew at Bartrès.



Bernadette surrounded by her family.



A place to remember our own baptism.



The Dungeon Today.



At the Grotto; Silence and Reflection.



The corridor leading to the oratory.



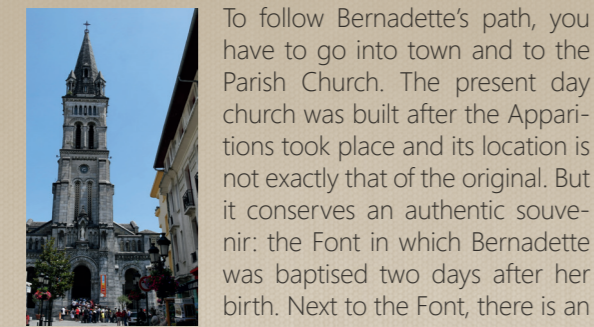
The barn Bernadette knew at Bartrès.

Bernadette's Birthplace

The first ten years of Bernadette's life were spent at the Boly Mill, the "mill of happiness", as it was said. Bernadette was born there on January 7th, 1844. Nine children were to be born at the Soubirous home, but only four reached adulthood. Despite their bereavements, the family lived in peace thanks to a good understanding between themselves, mutual love, a sincere faith and prayer. Their Father's work as a miller, allowed them to live simply.

The Boly Mill is open to visitors and recreates Bernadette's family life in her real surroundings.

The Baptismal Font



To follow Bernadette's path, you have to go into town and to the Parish Church. The present day church was built after the Apparitions took place and its location is not exactly that of the original. But it conserves an authentic souvenir: the Font in which Bernadette was baptised two days after her birth. Next to the Font, there is an enlarged photograph of the baptism certificate with the names of Bernadette, her parents, her godfather and godmother. The souvenirs of the old church are preserved in the Lourdes' Castle, which we recommend you to visit.

On the 11th February, she left from here

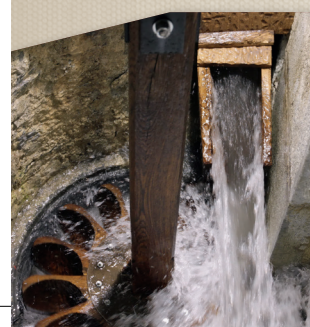
From 1854, the Soubirous family's situation takes a turn for the worst. They have to leave the Boly Mill. They move several times, but each time their accommodation becomes worse than the one before. In November 1856, the family eventually end up in the dungeon, so called because it had formerly served as a municipal jail. It is a 12 square meter room, which is damp and poorly lit.

It is from this dungeon that Bernadette left on February 11th, 1858 to go and look for fire wood, without knowing that she was to meet a "beautiful young lady," as she said.



A POPE IN PRISON?!

During his pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2008, for the 150th anniversary of the Apparitions, Pope Benedict XVI walked in Bernadette's footsteps. He did not fail to go and visit the dungeon.



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

On the ground floor of the mill, you can see the millstones that crushed the grain during the time of Bernadette, supplied by water from the Lapacca stream.



HAVE YOU SEEN?

A modern terracotta that evokes some key moments in Bernadette's life, such as her baptism on January 9th, 1844.

Here, Heaven touches the Earth

It is here, at the Grotto, where Lourdes's heart really beats. And it is here that the fate of both Bernadette Soubirous and Lourdes, through the eighteen apparitions, was to change forever. It all begins on the morning of February 11th, 1858. In a halo of light, Bernadette sees the silhouette of a girl, as young and as small as herself, who smiles at her warmly. On their third meeting she asks Bernadette to "do her the honor" of coming here each day for a fortnight, which she does. The last apparition of the Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Conception, was to take place on July 16th, 1858.

Open and welcoming, the Grotto is a place of prayer, where everyone who comes can experience a true feeling of hope.



A BIT OF HISTORY

The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, sculpted by Joseph Fabisch, was put in place on April 4th, 1864, just two years after the official recognition of the apparitions.

Bernadette lived here from age 16 to 22

The Sisters of the Charity and Christian Instruction of Nevers found this hospice between 1834-1835, at the request of the Municipality. Not knowing how to read or write, Bernadette attends the Sister's School, which is twinned with the hospice. It is in the very small chapel (at the exact location of the current oratory and not the large chapel, visible from the outside) that she makes her first, much desired, Holy Communion, on June 3rd, 1858.

In 1860, Bernadette boards at the hospice to escape from curious prying eyes. In close proximity to the Sisters, the children and the sick, it is here that she slowly discovers her vocation: to become herself, a sister of the Charity of Nevers. We recommend that you stop for a few moments in the small museum, just before the oratory.



DID YOU KNOW?

The facade of the hospice (1843), with its characteristic columns, is the one Bernadette would have known, even though the building was heightened in 1901.

The Pathway to Bartrès

Bartrès is one of the places that best evokes Bernadette and her time. The village is located on a hill just north of Lourdes. When Bernadette is ten months old, she is sent to Marie Laguès where she is nursed for 18 months (November 1844 - March 1846). She returns to the Laguès' farm for a few months, from the summer of 1857 to January 1858. Bernadette's second stay in Bartrès is very much a part of her story, because it is immediately before the Apparitions. She returns to Lourdes three weeks before the 11th of February. Her motive: The Priest of Bartrès had left and, with him, all hope of preparing for her first Holy Communion.

Today, to go to Bartrès, a pedestrian footpath allows us to walk there in peace, avoiding the road (more information at the Information Centre of the Sanctuary and at the Lourdes' Tourist Office).



NOT TO BE MISSED

The church, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, has conserved beautiful gilded wooden altarpieces. Bernadette must have spent many hours looking at them during her time in Bartrès.