

Patron Saint: Physical illness, Lourdes, France, Shepherds and shepherdesses, Poverty, Those insulted for their faith, Family

Bernadette Soubirous was born in 1844, the first child of an extremely poor miller in the town of Lourdes in southern France. St. Bernadette was raised in poverty. Her family was evicted from their mill, a dilapidated building, when Bernadette was young. She had very little education and was said to be a slow learner. She suffered from poor health most of her life, because she had cholera at a young age.

Bernadette is known for her visions of our holy mother, Mary. The first apparition occurred when she was gathering wood with her sister at the age of 14. Bernadette did not know who the "small, young lady" was, but when the lady started to pray the Rosary, Bernadette did likewise. According to Bernadette, the Lady of her visions was a girl of 16 or 17 who wore a white robe with a blue sash. Yellow roses covered her feet, a large rosary was on her right arm. Bernadette returned to the grotto and the third time she saw the vision, the lady asked her to return every day for 15 days.

Most days consisted in praying the Rosary. During the 8th apparition, Mary told her "Penance! Pray to God for the conversion of sinners." She asked Bernadette to "get down on her knees and kiss the ground as a penance for sinners." During the 9th apparition, Mary told Bernadette, "Go drink at the spring and wash in it." Bernadette looked around but there was no spring! Mary pointed to a place where Bernadette found a little muddy water, so she started to drink and wash herself in the muddy water. She did this multiple times until the water was no longer so muddy. At this point, many thought she was crazy. However, that water continued to flow and is now the source of the healing waters at the grotto.

Local authorities tried to prevent her from going to the grotto because she was drawing a crowd, but she was obedient to Mary and kept returning to the grotto. On the day of the 15th apparition, a girl was cured of her blindness after washing her face in the spring and being kissed by Bernadette. Bernadette had asked the lady's name multiple

times, but it was not until the 16th apparition that the lady told her "I am the Immaculate Conception." This is a reference to Mary who was conceived in her mother's womb without the stain of original sin. Bernadette did not know the meaning of the words, which helped solidify the belief of those who visited the grotto that it was the Virgin Mary who was appearing there.

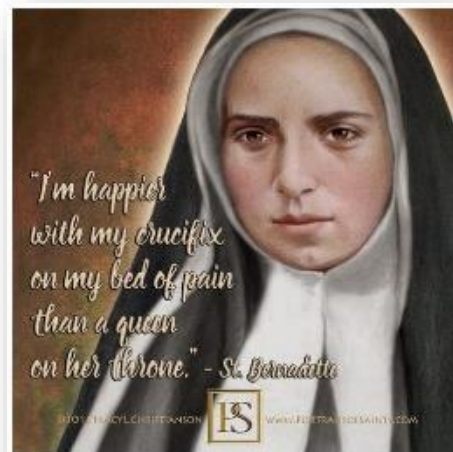
There were 18 apparitions total, after which Bernadette never again saw a vision of Mary while she was alive. Few visions have ever undergone the scrutiny that these appearances of the Immaculate Virgin were subject to. Lourdes became one of the most popular Marian shrines in the world, attracting millions of visitors. Miracles were reported at the shrine and in the waters of the spring. After thorough investigation, Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions in 1862.

During her life, Bernadette suffered much. She was hounded by the public as well as by civic officials until at last she was protected in a convent of nuns. Five years later, she petitioned to enter the Sisters of Notre Dame of Nevers. After a period of illness she was able to make the journey from Lourdes and enter the novitiate. Her mistress of novices at the convent, believing that Bernadette must have developed an inflated ego from all the attention she received from the apparitions, was hard on her. Near the end of her life, she developed tuberculosis in her knee that was very painful for her and within four months of her arrival she was given the last rites of the Church and allowed to profess her vows. She recovered enough to become infirmarian and then sacristan, but chronic health problems persisted. She died on April 16, 1879, at the age of 35. She was surrounded by the sisters of the convent praying for her when she died.

Bernadette Soubirous was canonized in 1933. Though her body was frail from illness in life, she is now recognized as an incorruptible saint, meaning that her body has not decayed with time.

<https://www.praymorenovenas.com/st-bernadette-novena>

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-bernadette-soubirous>



How to Pray the Novena Chaplet of St. Bernadette

Opening Prayer: Oh ever Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Mercy, Healer of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Consoler of the Afflicted, you know my wants my troubles, my sufferings. Look upon me with mercy. When you appeared in the Grotto of Lourdes you made it a privileged sanctuary where you dispense your favors, and where many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession. My loving Mother, ensure my request. I will try to imitate your virtues so that I may one day share your company and bless you in eternity. Amen

Day One: St. Bernadette, you grew up in great poverty. You were born the daughter of a miller, and your family was evicted from the mill while you were still a child. Your father worked odd jobs and your mother did laundry for richer neighbors and other jobs to help support the family. You played a large role in helping to raise your siblings. Bernadette, patron of those in poverty, help me to see you in all those who live in poverty. Hail Mary...

Day Two: St. Bernadette, you suffered from physical illness throughout your life. You said, "It is so good, so sweet, and above all, so beneficial to suffer." Your simple faith helped lead to the healing of so many. But you did not receive physical healing yourself. When you were asked why, your response was, "You see, my business is to be ill." Grant me your simplicity to understand the value of suffering in my own life. Hail Mary...

Day Three: St. Bernadette, you had such a love for the Eucharist. You prepared so hard to make your first Communion even though your catechism class was difficult for you. You said, "The Eucharist bathes the tormented soul in light and love. Then the soul appreciates these words, 'Come all you who are sick, I will restore your health.'" Give me your heart for the Eucharist. Hail Mary...

Day Four: St. Bernadette, you had a beautiful devotion to Our Lady, especially in the most holy Rosary, even before the apparitions. You would have your Rosary with you when you were in the fields as a shepherdess. You said, "In the evening when you go to sleep, hold your beads, doze off reciting them. Do like those babies who go to sleep mumbling 'Mama! Mama!'" Help me to approach Mary with the same childlike faith as you. Hail Mary...

Day Five: St. Bernadette, many who were closest to you did not believe that what you were seeing was real when you told them about your apparitions. Your sister made fun of you, your mother told you that you were dreaming, your aunt said it was an illusion. Through it all, you remained strong and calm. Bernadette, patron of those insulted for their faith, help me build a strong foundation for my faith that can weather whatever difficulties may come. Hail Mary...

Day Six: St. Bernadette, Our Lady asked you to "pray to God for the conversion of sinners." You once said, "O Jesus and Mary, let my entire consolation in this world be to love you and to suffer for sinners." Today, I offer my suffering up for sinners, especially those in most need of God's mercy. Hail Mary...

Day Seven: St. Bernadette, you had such perfect obedience. When Our Lady asked you if it would bother you to "get down on [your] knees and kiss the ground as a penance for sinners," you responded "Oh, no! with all my heart." You dug with your fingers in the mud, drank muddy water, and ate grass as an obedient response to Our Lady's requests. People thought you were crazy for your actions, but it was through your obedience that at that location, a healing spring now exists. Soften my

heart that it may become more immediately obedient to God's promptings. Hail Mary...

Day Eight: St. Bernadette, at the young age of 14, you had people questioning you regularly about the apparitions. You stated what happened over and over again as they tried to trick you into speaking inconsistently. You said, "My job is to inform, not convince." Teach me to speak Truth simply with conviction. Hail Mary...

Day Nine: St. Bernadette, how great your humility! After all the attention you received from the apparitions, you referred to yourself as "the broom placed behind the door after it has been used." You said, "Those who are humble of heart will be glorified. How beautiful the heavenly crown will be for those who are genuinely humble despite outward humiliations, those who follow the humility of the Savior in every way." Through your physical trials and difficulty learning, the Lord was your strength. Teach me true humility that recognizes that the Lord is the source of my strength. Hail Mary...

<https://www.praymorenovenas.com/st-bernadette-novena>

Closing Prayer: Dear Saint Bernadette, Chosen by Almighty God as a channel of His Graces and Blessings, and through your humble obedience to the requests of Our Blessed Mother, Mary, you gained for us the Miraculous waters of Spiritual and physical healing. We implore you to listen to our pleading prayers that we may be healed of our Spiritual and physical imperfections. Place our petitions in the Hands of our Holy Mother, Mary, so that she may place them at the feet of her beloved Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that He may look on us with mercy and compassion. Help, O Dear Saint Bernadette to follow your example, so that irrespective of our own pain and suffering we may always be mindful of the needs of others, especially those whose sufferings are greater than ours. As we await the Mercy of God, remind us to offer up our pain and suffering for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins and blasphemies of mankind. Pray Saint Bernadette, that like you, we may always be obedient to the will of Our Heavenly Father, and that through our prayers and humility we may bring consolation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary that have been so grievously wounded by our sins. Holy Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, Pray for us. Amen.

<https://www.virgosacrata.com/prayer-to-saint-bernadette.html>

Optional Extra Prayers when using these prayers as a Novena:

Opening Each Day: O Most Holy Mother of my Jesus, you who saw and felt the extreme desolation of your dear Son, help me in my own time of desolation. And you saints of Heaven who have passed through this trial, have pity on those who are suffering it now and pray that I be given the grace to be faithful until death. And in a particular way, dear St. Bernadette, I ask for your intercession for the intentions on my heart (insert special intentions).

Closing each day: Grow, Jesus, grow in me, in my heart, in my spirit, my imagination, my senses, by your modesty, your purity, your humility, your zeal, your love. Grow with your grace, your light, your peace. Grow despite my resistance, my pride. Grow until you reach the fullness of human perfection. Grow as you did at Nazareth before God and before men, for the glory of your Father.

