

# Our Lady of Lourdes



In our Church we have an altar in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The statues show her with a young French girl, Bernadette Soubirous who lived in Lourdes in France.

On February 11th 1858, Mary appeared to 14 year old Bernadette whilst she was collecting firewood.

This was to be the first of 18 visits, many of them with hundreds of people present.

When Bernadette asked the Lady's identity, she replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Our Lady told Bernadette to dig in the dirt and drink of the stream. Bernadette began to dig, and after several attempts she was able to find the water to drink. The water continued to flow from where she had dug with her hands until it was producing many thousands of gallons of water a day—as it still does.

The Blessed Virgin, through Bernadette, had come to call sinners to a change of heart. Her message was a request for prayer and penance. She also instructed Bernadette to tell the priests that a chapel was to be built on the site and to hold processions.

Each year over 2 million people make their way through the mountainous country of south eastern France to Lourdes. They come seeking cures, hoping to find answers, believing, and praying.

At Lourdes, people recall the Lady dressed in white, with a blue sash, yellow roses at her feet, and a Rosary on her arm—the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The word rosary comes from Latin and means a garland of roses, the rose being one of the flowers used to symbolize the Virgin Mary. Saying 'The rosary' is a devotion in honour of the Virgin Mary.

We may never travel to Lourdes and join in the processions, but we can know always that we have a Mother to help us and lead us to her Son, Jesus.