

CELEBRATING OUR LADY OF LOURDES

**O Mary conceived without sin,
pray for us who have recourse to you.**

**February 11 is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes
and is a day set aside for us to pray for all those who are suffering
from illnesses of any kind.**



On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. A little more than three years later, on February 11, 1858, a young lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous. This began a series of visions. During the apparition on March 25, the lady identified herself with the words: “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Bernadette was a sickly child of poor parents. Their practice of the Catholic faith was scarcely more than lukewarm. Bernadette could pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Creed. She also knew the prayer of the Miraculous Medal: “O Mary conceived without sin.”

During interrogations Bernadette gave an account of what she saw. It was “something white in the shape of a girl.” She used the word aquero, a dialect term meaning “this thing.” It was “a pretty young girl with a rosary over her arm.” Her white robe was encircled by a blue girdle. She wore a white veil. There was a yellow rose on each foot. A rosary was in her hand. Bernadette was also impressed by the fact that the lady did not use the informal form of address (tu), but the polite form (vous). The humble virgin appeared to a humble girl and treated her with dignity.

Through that humble girl, Mary revitalized and continues to revitalize the faith of millions of people. People began to flock to Lourdes from other parts of France and from all over the world. In 1862 Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions and authorized the cult of Our Lady of Lourdes for the diocese. The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes became worldwide in 1907.

Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized over 60 miraculous cures, although there have probably been many more. To people of faith this is not surprising. It is a continuation of Jesus’ healing miracles—now performed at the intercession of His mother. Some would say that the greater miracles are hidden. Many who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their needy brothers and sisters. There still may be people who doubt the apparitions of Lourdes. Perhaps the best that can be said to them are the words that introduce the film Song of Bernadette: “For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible.”

**“Lo! Mary is exempt from stain of sin,
And earth applauding celebrates with joy Her triumph, far and high.
Unto a lowly timid maid she shows Her form in beauty fair,
And the Immaculate Conception truth Her sacred lips declare.”**

Leader: Let us remember that we are always and everywhere in the presence of our God Who loves us beyond our wildest expectations and comforts us in our time of trouble.

Leader: Blessed be the name of the Lord!
All: Both now and forever.

Leader: Our help comes in the name of the Lord.
All: Who made heaven and earth.

Hymn: THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD
Refrain

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin sick soul.

Some times I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again. (Refrain)

If you can't preach like Peter,
If you can't pray like Paul,
Just tell the love of Jesus,
And say He died for all. (Refrain)

Leader: We meet in the presence of God
Who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

PSALM 20

The LORD answer you in time of distress;
The name of the God of Jacob defend you!
May God send you help from His holy place and be your support.
May God remember your every offering,
graciously accept your suffering and distress,
May God grant what is in your heart, fulfill your every need.

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK 1:29-39

On leaving the synagogue
Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.
Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever.
They immediately told Him about her.
He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up.
Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

When it was evening, after sunset,
they brought to Him all who were ill or possessed by demons.
The whole town was gathered at the door.
He cured many who were sick with various diseases.
The Gospel of the Lord!

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 11:28

**Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened,
and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me;
for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.
For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. The Gospel of the Lord!**

REFLECTION: Pope Benedict XVI

Dear brothers and sisters tried by illness, I invite you to offer your condition of suffering, together with Christ, to the Father, certain that every trial accepted with resignation is meritorious and draws divine goodness upon the whole of humanity.

I express appreciation to those who help and care for you in residential centers, day hospitals and wards providing diagnosis and treatment, and I exhort them to strive to ensure that medical, social and pastoral assistance for those in need is never lacking, respectful of the dignity proper to every human being.

Let us pray for one another and for Jesus' healing of our minds, bodies and souls.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

O God, Everlasting Love, enfleshed in Christ Jesus, poured upon us through the Holy Spirit, we come to You this day to receive our prayer for those among us who are ill.

**Response: Lift from us our burden,
and in your power, renew us.**

- + Tender, compassionate God, fill us that we may receive all who are ill with Your love, we pray . . .**
- + Life-giving God, fill us, that our faith will assure those who are suffering, that their pain will blossom into life, we pray . . .**
- + Redeeming God, help all who are ill to offer their suffering with that of Jesus for the needs of the church and the world...**
- + Strength-giving God, pour into all who care for the sick, the embracing, enduring love of Jesus, we pray . . .**
- + All Knowing God, fill us with vision and courage to pursue research that will bear fruit in healing, we pray . . .**
- + Welcoming God, receive from our hands the loved ones we return to you, we pray . . .**
- + Righteous God, empower us to struggle against the injustices of the present health care systems, we pray . . .**

**O God, hear our prayer—these we have spoken and those yet in our hearts.
We trust in Your loving response, through Christ the Risen One. Amen.**



*I can do all things in Him
Who strengthens me.
Philippians 4: 13*

THE ANOINTING

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF JAMES 5: 15-16

And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well. And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. The Word of the Lord!

HYMN: LAY YOUR HANDS

Refrain: Lay Your hands gently upon us.

Lay Your hands gently upon us,
Let their touch render Your peace.
Let them bring Your forgiveness and healing,
Lay Your hands gently, lay Your hands. (Refrain)

You were sent to free the broken hearted.
You were sent to give sight to the blind.
You desire to heal all our illness,
Lay Your hands, gently lay Your hands. (Refrain)

Lord, we come to You through one another,
Lord, we come to You in all our need,
Lord, we come to You seeking wholeness.
Lay Your hands gently, lay Your hands. (Refrain)

BLESSING WITH OIL

This is simply a blessing using perfumed oil as a reminder of Jesus' healing touch in our lives. It is not the Catholic Sacrament of the Sick. John writes in 1 John 2:27, that anointing refers to a sacred spiritual process in which the Holy Spirit empowers a person's heart and mind with God's truth and love. The Prophet Isaiah writes in Isaiah 10:27, that the yoke of the evil one will be destroyed because of the anointing oil. When the oil is placed on our forehead/hands, we recall God's promise of HIS strength (Ps.92:10).

PRAYER

We ask Your presence among us, O God, Creator of the universe, Sustainer of life, Redeemer of humankind; bring Your healing light and power into our wounded hearts and bodies and minds and souls, clear the way for each of us to discover within ourselves the fullness of Your power and all of Your wondrous blessings; help us dear God to respond to Your vast love and to bless You, so that we may be a beacon through which You may shine into the world and be everlasting citizens of Your Kingdom both in heaven and on earth. Amen.

THE ANOINTING

BE REMINDED OF THE HEALING TOUCH OF JESUS!

HYMN: SHINE JESUS SHINE

Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth You now bring us

**Shine on me, shine on me
Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth Your word Lord,
and let there be light
Lord, I come to Your awesome presence
From the shadows into Your radiance
By the blood I may enter Your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me
As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story
Shine on me, shine on me**

BLESSING

**May God the Father bless you,
May God the Son heal you,
and may God the Holy Spirit give you strength
to carry your cross of illness.
May God the holy and undivided Trinity
protect and heal your mind, body, and your soul,
and bring you safely to our heavenly home
where God will wipe away every tear from your eyes
and where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.
There shall be no more pain, for the former things will have passed away.
Amen.**

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**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help those who are ill to carry their cross with dignity and hope.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts.
Forever!**