

# Saint Bernadette

- Feastday: April 16
- Patron Saint of: illness, people ridiculed for their piety, poverty, shepherds, shepherdesses, and Lourdes, France
- Birth: January 7, 1844
- Death: April 16, 1879
- Beatified: 1925
- Canonized: by Pope Pius XI on December 1933



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St. Bernadette was born in Lourdes, France on January 7, 1844. Her parents were very poor and she was the first of nine children. In 1858, fourteen-year-old Bernadette was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, when a very beautiful lady appeared to her above a rose bush in a grotto. The woman wore blue and white and smiled at Bernadette before making the sign of the cross with a rosary of ivory and gold. Bernadette fell to her knees, took out her own rosary and began to pray. When Bernadette continued to visit the grotto, her parents were embarrassed and attempted to stop her, but were unable to do so.

On February 25, Bernadette claimed to have had a life-changing vision. The vision had told her "to drink of the water of the spring, to wash in it and to eat the herb that grew there" as an act of penance. The next day, the grotto's muddy waters had been cleared and fresh clear water flowed. During her sixteenth vision, Bernadette asked the woman her name, but her question was only met with a smile. Bernadette asked three more times and finally the woman said, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

In 1866, Bernadette took the religious habit and joined the Sisters of Charity. Bernadette spent her life working as an infirmary assistant, and a sacristan.

*"Why must we suffer? Because here below pure Love cannot exist without suffering. O Jesus, Jesus, I no longer feel my cross when I think of yours."*

Unfortunately, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis and was unable to take part in convent life. She died at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879, while praying the holy rosary. Thirty years later, two doctors and a sister of the community exhumed her body. They claimed the crucifix and rosary she carried had been oxidized but her body remained incorrupt. The incorruption was cited as one of the miracles supporting her canonization.

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Source: Catholic Online. St. Bernadette - Saints & Angels. Catholic Online.

<https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?>