

Liturgical Living: Our Lady of Lourdes

On February 11, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, when Mother Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette in Lourdes, France in 1858. Mary appeared to Bernadette a total of 18 times that year!

One day, 14-year-old Bernadette was out with her sister and a friend to gather wood for the fire. Bernadette, who suffered from asthma and was often sick, did not cross over the stream to gather wood. While her sister and friend were on the other side of the stream, Bernadette heard a noise over near a cave-like area, and she went to investigate. There, Bernadette saw a lovely lady dressed in white who had a blue sash around her waist and a yellow rose on each foot.

Bernadette prayed the rosary with this lady before she disappeared. The lady asked her to come back again. Bernadette was teased and laughed at; many believed that she was either imagining the appearances of Our Lady or making it up.

When a spring miraculously appeared after one of the visits, many who doubted her began to believe. Those who bathed in the spring were often cured of serious sickness or disability. Eventually, the lady identified herself: "I am the Immaculate Conception," she told Bernadette. It was then that people realized for sure that it was Mary, the Mother of God, appearing to Bernadette.

What are some ways to celebrate this feast at home?

- [Try this craft](#) to make a simple paper grotto
- Watch *The Song of Bernadette*, a family-friendly movie
- Read [a lovely picture book](#) about Our Lady of Lourdes.
- Listen to this [Saints Alive audio drama](#) about St Bernadette
- Start a [novena to Our Lady of Lourdes](#), or pray the rosary as a family
- Cook up something French for dinner or dessert!

If you are short on time, you can pick up some Ferrero Rocher candies. Why? In 1996, at the 50th anniversary of the company's founding, Michele Ferrero is quoted as saying, "The success of Ferrero we owe to Our Lady of Lourdes; without her we can do little." He was a man of strong faith and every year he went on pilgrimage to Lourdes taking his top manager. Each of the Ferrero plants and offices around the world have a small statue of Our Lady. It is said that the company's Rocher pralines, first produced in 1982, were inspired by the grotto at Lourdes.

Rocher is translated as “rock” and the craggy rock formation at the shrine in Lourdes is called the Rocher de Massabielle. It is easy to see how the chocolate's nutty surface resembles a rocky grotto.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us!