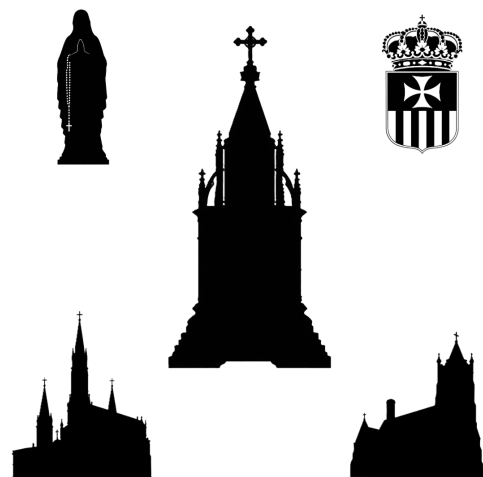


Saint Bernadette Relic Visit Frequently Asked Questions

Our Lady of Lourdes Church • Philadelphia • Pilgrimage Day • October 3, 2026

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2026*



Planning your pilgrimage? These questions answer the practical details we know now. Some arrangements may be adapted as we learn more about attendance and final site logistics. Please check ourladylourdes.org before you travel for the latest information.

BEFORE YOU COME: Check the website, arrive early, allow time for drop-off or parking and walking, and plan from the recommended queue-arrival time rather than from the event start time. If you may need to wait outdoors, dress for the weather and consider bringing a clearly labeled portable chair.

Reservations and Admission

Do I need a reservation to visit the relics?

No. You do not need a reservation simply to come and venerate the relics. Priority Entrance Reservations are being used only for the Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience™, the 4:00 PM Vigil Mass, and Solemn Vespers because the church may reach capacity.

Does a Priority Entrance Reservation guarantee me a seat?

A Priority Entrance Reservation provides priority entrance if you arrive by the designated time. After the cutoff, admission is subject to available capacity and standby procedures. A reservation does not guarantee a particular seat.

Is there a charge?

No. Admission to Pilgrimage Day and Priority Entrance Reservations are free.

When do public Priority Entrance Reservations open?

Public reservations open at **12:00 AM on September 8**. The reservation widget is on the main page of ourladylourdes.org.

Can I come just to venerate Saint Bernadette's relics?

Yes. Saturday includes periods of public veneration outside the three reserved events. Depending on attendance, we may make adaptations to help pilgrims venerate the relics in an orderly way.

When is the best time to come?

Please see the complete schedule on the parish website. The most limited period will be 10:00 AM-Noon during the Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience™. During the 4:00 PM Vigil Mass and Solemn Vespers, we will seek to accommodate pilgrims in an organized fashion as space permits.

Getting Here, Parking, and Accessibility

Where is Our Lady of Lourdes?

Our Lady of Lourdes Church is at **6301 Woodbine Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151**, at the intersection of Lancaster Avenue (US-30), Woodbine Avenue, and North 63rd Street.

How do I get there?

If you are driving, the easiest option is to use a map application on your smartphone or print directions before you leave. Our small parish staff has not prepared separate printed driving directions.

Where can I park?

Overbrook Farms is a neighborhood on the west side of Philadelphia with street parking in the area west of the church. Parking is free, but please arrive early and be prepared to walk a few blocks. We are arranging a drop-off lane in front of the church. If you have a Priority Entrance Reservation, allow extra time for drop-off, parking, walking, and queuing. **Plan from the recommended time to be in the queue, not from the event start time.**

Is the church accessible?

Yes. The entrance being used for pilgrims is the ramped entrance on the Lancaster Avenue side of the church. An accessible restroom trailer will be located near the main entrance area. Because the

restroom is outside the church, pilgrims will need to exit and then re-enter; volunteers will help facilitate re-entry.

Will there be a drop-off area for elderly or disabled pilgrims?

We are arranging a drop-off lane in front of the church. There will still be some walking from the drop-off area to the queue, so please allow time and ask a volunteer for assistance if needed.

Will outdoor seating be provided?

No. Pilgrims who wish to bring a portable chair are welcome to do so. Please clearly mark the chair with your name or attach a luggage tag. When entering the church, chairs may be left on the Parish Center porch as space permits. The porch is monitored by security cameras; however, the parish cannot assume responsibility for personal belongings left there.

Will restrooms be available?

Yes. Deluxe restroom trailers will be available, including an accessible restroom trailer near the main entrance area. Because the restrooms are outside the church, pilgrims will need to exit and then re-enter; volunteers will help facilitate re-entry.

Prayer, Mass, and Pilgrimage Program

Will Confessions be available?

Yes. Confessions are part of the pilgrimage schedule. As we get a better sense of expected attendance, we will do our best to add confessors and facilitate the process. The church has two confessionals. If needed and feasible, we may also seek to add outdoor confession stations.

Can I attend Mass while the relics are present?

Yes, as space permits. If the church reaches capacity, we plan to provide sound outside the church.

What happens at the Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience™?

The Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience™, from 10:00 AM to approximately 12:00 noon, is a guided spiritual program that brings elements of a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes to those who are unable to travel to France. The experience includes the story of the 1858 apparitions, tactile Grotto rocks, genuine Lourdes spring water, and communal prayer.

Pilgrimage Day will conclude, weather permitting, with an outdoor candlelight Rosary procession

with the reliquary and an image of Our Lady of Lourdes. Throughout the day, pilgrims will also have opportunities to submit written petitions to be taken to the Grotto in Lourdes.

What is happening in Ivy Hall?

Our current plan is to show a 45-minute video about Saint Bernadette and Lourdes in the Ivy Hall ballroom. We also plan displays from groups connected with Our Lady of Lourdes, the local Church, and the Overbrook neighborhood, which has been closely connected with the parish throughout its 132-year history. Additional details will be published as plans are finalized.

What happens if the church reaches capacity?

For public veneration, we will seek to pace the number of pilgrims entering and exiting the church. For planned prayer events, once the church reaches capacity, we will do our best to provide sound outside the church and manage standby admission as space becomes available.

Families, Groups, and Practical Questions

Will food or refreshments be available?

The parish cannot guarantee refreshments. We will publish a guide to nearby shops and food options. We also plan to provide address information that pilgrims can use with food-delivery apps.

Can groups come?

Yes. Groups are welcome, but group arrival does not guarantee priority access. Priority Entrance Reservations are still required for the three reserved events if the group wishes to use priority entrance.

Can groups or buses come?

Yes. Groups and buses are welcome. We ask groups planning to arrive by bus to contact the parish in advance so that we can help coordinate arrival and drop-off.

Please note that arriving as a group or by bus does not provide priority entrance or guarantee admission to the church. For the three events offering Priority Entrance Reservations, members of a group who wish to have priority entrance should make the appropriate reservations.

Can I bring children?

Absolutely. Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.” Our Lady of Lourdes is staffed by the Mercedarian Friars, who have a special devotion to Saint Raymond Nonnatus, patron of expectant mothers, unborn children, and Christian families. We believe that if the church is not crying, it is dying. **Bring the children!**

May I take photographs?

The parish does not generally restrict photography. However, when it comes to photographing the relics themselves, we will follow the policies given to us by the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. Please respect any instructions posted or given by volunteers.

How long should I expect to wait?

At this point, we simply do not know. This is a once-in-a-generation—perhaps once-in-a-lifetime—pilgrimage for our parish, and attendance is difficult to predict. Please keep checking the website as we get closer to October 3, and come prepared for some waiting.

What happens in bad weather?

We will do our best to adapt. **Pray for good weather.**

Volunteering and Updates

How can I volunteer?

Complete the volunteer form linked from ourladylourdes.org. Our volunteer captains will contact volunteers as assignments are made. You do not need to be an Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner to volunteer.

Where can I find last-minute updates?

Continue to check ourladylourdes.org. The parish website is the authoritative source for current pilgrimage information and last-minute changes.

