

Who is Saint Bernadette?



St. Bernadette was born at Lourdes, France. Her parents were very poor and she herself was in poor health. One Thursday, February 11, 1858, when she was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, a very beautiful Lady appeared to her above a rose bush in a grotto called Massabielle. The lovely Lady was dressed in blue and white. She smiled at Bernadette and then made the sign of the cross with a rosary of ivory and gold. Bernadette fell on her knees, took out her own rosary and began to pray the rosary. The beautiful Lady was God's Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She appeared to Bernadette seventeen other times and spoke with her. She told Bernadette that she should pray for sinners, do penance and have a chapel built there in her honor.

Many people did not believe Bernadette when she spoke of her vision. She had to suffer much. But one day Our Lady told Bernadette to dig in the mud. As she did, a spring of water began to flow. The next day it continued to grow larger and larger. Many miracles happened when people began to use this water. When Bernadette was older, she became a nun. She was always very humble. More than anything else, she desired not to be praised. Once a nun asked her if she had temptations of pride because she was favored by the Blessed Mother. "How can I?" she answered quickly. "The Blessed Virgin chose me only because I was

the most ignorant." What humility!

On April 16, 1879, Bernadette -- or Sister Marie-Bernard, as she was known within her order -- died in the Sainte Croix (Holy Cross) Infirmary of the Convent of Saint-Gildard. She was thirty-five.



Bernadette's body was exhumed on Sept. 2, 1909, in the presence of witnesses, and although her rosary and crucifix had both oxidized her body appeared "incorrupt" - preserved from decomposition. The church exhumed the body twice more, in 1919 and 1925 and the body was still preserved. In 1925 she was placed in a gold and glass reliquary in the Chapel of Saint Bernadette at the motherhouse in Nevers. To this day, pilgrims view her incorrupt form.

She was beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1933 by Pope Pius XI, not so much for the content of her visions, but rather for her simplicity and holiness of life. She is the patron saint of sick persons and of Lourdes. Her Feast Day is April 16.

(excerpted from [Catholic Online](#))