



The Apparitions at Lourdes in 1858

Sixteen Visions Granted to Bernadette Soubirous

Between 11 February and 16 July 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared sixteen times to Bernadette Soubirous at the grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes in the Hautes-Pyrénées, France. These apparitions gave rise to one of the world's greatest Marian shrines, drawing millions of pilgrims each year.

Key Messages of the Apparitions:

- ☐ Penance, Prayer and Conversion
 - ☐ The Immaculate Conception Confirmed
 - ☐ A Spring of Miraculous Healing
 - ☐ Intercession for Sinners
 - ☐ The Building of a Chapel and Processions
 - ☐ The Eternal Promise of Heavenly Happiness
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Approved by the Bishop of Tarbes, 18 January 1862 · Basilica consecrated 1876

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The Apparitions at Lourdes — 1858

Apparitions 1-4

1

11 February 1858

The First Vision

Bernadette Soubirous, aged 14, saw a beautiful Lady in white at the grotto of Massabielle whilst gathering firewood. She was alone in her experience.

Significance:

The initial call — Bernadette's humility and openness became the vessel for a divine message to the world.



2

14 February 1858

The Second Appearance

Bernadette returned with companions. She sprinkled holy water at the vision; the Lady smiled and bowed. Her companions saw nothing.

Significance:

The personal nature of faith — visible only to the pure of heart and those called by grace.



3

18 February 1858

"Will You Return?"

The Lady spoke for the first time, asking Bernadette to return for a fortnight. She promised happiness "not in this world but the next."

Significance:

The promise of eternal beatitude — orienting earthly life towards heavenly fulfilment.



4

19 February 1858

Gifts of Grace

Bernadette brought a candle at the Lady's request. The flame did not burn her hands — the first of several extraordinary signs.

Significance:

Miraculous protection as a sign of divine presence, echoing the burning bush of Moses.



The Apparitions at Lourdes — 1858

Apparitions 5-8

5

20 February 1858 The Prayer Taught



The Lady taught Bernadette a personal prayer, never revealed publicly. Bernadette wept throughout.

Significance:

Sacred intimacy — the mystical dialogue between the soul and the divine transcends human language.

6

21 February 1858 "Penance! Penance! Penance!"



The Lady's first public message: a call to penance and prayer for sinners. Crowds began to gather at the grotto.

Significance:

The call to conversion — central to the message of Lourdes and the Catholic understanding of redemptive suffering.

7

23 February 1858 A Secret Revealed



The Lady confided a secret to Bernadette intended for her alone — never disclosed throughout her life.

Significance:

The seal of private revelation — the faithful hold mysteries that sustain interior life.

8

24 February 1858 Prayer for Sinners



The Lady repeated the call to pray for sinners. The urgency of intercession was emphasised strongly.

Significance:

The intercessory heart of Lourdes — a shrine of prayer for those furthest from God.

The Apparitions at Lourdes — 1858

Apparitions 9-12

9

25 February 1858

The Spring Uncovered

The Lady directed Bernadette to drink from a spring. Bernadette scraped the earth; muddy water appeared — the miraculous spring of Lourdes.

Significance:

Water as the symbol of baptismal grace and physical healing — the spring has since witnessed thousands of cures.



10

1 March 1858

First Public Witness

For the first time a large crowd witnessed the apparition. A local woman, Catherine Latapie, reported healing of her hand.

Significance:

The communal dimension of Lourdes — a place where faith becomes visible and healing becomes public testimony.



11

2 March 1858

"Go to the Priests"

The Lady asked that a chapel be built at the grotto and that processions be held there. Bernadette delivered the message to Abbé Peyramale.

Significance:

The institutional Church is affirmed — private revelation serves the public mission of the Church.



12

3 March 1858

The Priest's Demand

Abbé Peyramale demanded a sign: that the rosebush at the grotto flower in winter. Bernadette reported this faithfully.

Significance:

The role of rightful scepticism — the Church's discernment process protects against credulity.



The Apparitions at Lourdes — 1858

Apparitions 13-16

13

4 March 1858

End of the Fortnight

The final day of the promised fortnight. A crowd of 20,000 gathered. The Lady appeared but gave no extraordinary sign; the rosebush did not flower.

Significance:

Faith without spectacle — the apparitions do not conform to human expectations but call to deeper trust.



14

25 March 1858

"I Am the Immaculate Conception"

On the Feast of the Annunciation, the Lady finally revealed her name: "Que soy era Immaculada Concepciou" — just four years after Pius IX defined the dogma.

Significance:

The supreme theological moment of Lourdes — heaven confirms the Church's dogmatic definition of 1854.



15

7 April 1858

The Miracle of the Candle

Bernadette held a lighted candle during the apparition. The flame passed over her fingers for fifteen minutes without burning her.

Significance:

A public supernatural sign — witnessed by Dr Dozous, who documented it, bridging faith and empirical testimony.



16

16 July 1858

The Final Apparition

Despite the grotto being barricaded by civil authorities, Bernadette knelt on the far bank of the Gave. She saw the Lady one last time, more beautiful than ever.

Significance:

No earthly barrier can prevent divine encounter — the final apparition points to the eternal beauty of Our Lady in heaven.

