

Tommorrow, feast of
Our Lady of Lourdes . . .

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Go to Mass and Communion
for the sick. Confession
tonight.

The Grotto.

This is about the little girl at the Grotto.

She's there every day. Perhaps you have never noticed her when you went by on your way to the laundry, or to your hall, or when you stopped for your nightly visit with the roommate after supper. But she's there. Be sure you look for her on your trip tonight.

You should know this little girl. If she should ever leave the Grotto, the place would have no meaning. And your devotion to the Lady at the Grotto will not be complete unless you know about her.

Father Sorin had been at Notre Dame for two years before this maid was born. And Notre Dame heard nothing about her birth. There was nothing notable about her coming, nor her family, except perhaps its poverty.

Notre Dame and the maid grew up together, she in Southern France, and Notre Dame in Northern Indiana. When Notre Dame was sixteen years old, she first heard about this girl. The maid then became prominent. She did not want it, she did not seek it. But God wanted it. He gave Bernadette a great mission. For that was her name, Bernadette.

We write today about this little shepherdess, and she was that, because tomorrow she and Notre Dame and the world will celebrate the anniversary of a marvelous event in Bernadette's life.

Back in 1858, Bernadette had planned nothing of importance for February 11. Perhaps the day was little different from other days in that the fire needed more fuel and there had to be wood for the midday meal. This necessity sent Bernadette with her companions hunting wood. There was a stream to cross and Bernadette wanted to wade it. She sat down to remove her stockings. And then it happened.

There was a whistle of wind, like the wind you hear when a storm is approaching. Bernadette looked up. It was strange; not a tree was stirring. She thought little about this phenomenon. She had put one foot into the water when the shrill rustle was repeated. Again Bernadette looked up. And there before the child's eyes in a niche in the grotto on the banks of the stream stood a lady of beauty - you can't imagine her loveliness.

This was the first of eighteen appearances of the wonderful Lady to Bernadette. On this first visit, the Lady approved of the child's saying the rosary. She said nothing; only the "Glory be to the Father . . ." at the end of each decade. On other visits the Lady spoke. We should know those words: "I do not promise to make you happy in this world, but in the next." . . . "You will go and tell the priests to have a chapel built here, and to come in procession" . . . "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Very soon miracles took place on the spot where Our Lady and Bernadette met - and they still take place there. The Church that was ordered has been built. Thousands have come to the Grotto where the Shepherdess and Our Lady looked at one another.

Lourdes still stands. The Lady still works her miracles, cures sick bodies and sick souls. But the little girl, she's gone - to heaven. She's a saint, a canonized saint: St. Bernadette. Like Bernadette, kneel and listen to the Lady. She will console you, encourage you, protect you. To every Notre Dame man she has appeared - with her love.