

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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Stop At The Grotto Tonight

Today's feast -- Our Lady of Lourdes -- recalls the apparitions of the Mother of God to little Bernadette Soubirous that began on February 11, 1858, and were repeated on 17 other occasions. Like mountainous Fatima, Lourdes was as shabby and unlovely a spot as there was in France. Like Fatima, too, the person singled out for the visions and conversations with the Beautiful Lady was a peasant of the peasants, bent on the menial errand of gathering firewood for the family hearth. It was in such a lonely recess that she first beheld the vision of "the Lady wearing a white dress with a blue sash about her waist, who said: 'I am the Immaculate Conception. Penance, Penance, Penance!'"

On subsequent occasions the same "Lady" met and talked with Bernadette, telling the little girl many things that were to be repeated to the pastor, the Bishop, and the neighbors. She and the "Lady" even said the Rosary together -- at the bidding of the Blessed Mother.

It should be easy for us to cultivate a devotion to one who was on such familiar terms with the Mother of God -- even easier to cultivate a great devotion to God's Mother who showed herself on such familiar terms with one of us!

And that is exactly what has happened at Notre Dame over the years. We have recreated the scene of the apparitions exactly as it exists at Lourdes. And we go there to pray, as all the world goes to Lourdes. Generations of Notre Dame men before you have learned to love this holy spot on our campus, and have found it easy to pray there at the Grotto. It is a place of beauty -- where the sun lingers longest at evening, and the snow lies whitest in winter. At night it is never lonesome, because of the flickering candles, and the quiet, shadowy figures that constantly steal up from the darkness for a brief prayer, and then quietly melt away into the night again. You too, should be included in this holy, constant, daily drama!

Stop At The Library Tomorrow

For there you will find an exhibit of pictures, books and other material describing the famous French Shrine. Not the least of items on display is a letter written by the little girl of the apparitions who is today a saint. She wrote it in 1859, when she was 15 years of age. No Ph. D., she wrote the letter in school-girl French to a Mademoiselle and Dr. Dozous, conveying her New Year's Greetings to them. The late Fred Snite, Jr. -- the Notre Dame "Boiler Kid" -- who lived in his iron lung for 18 years, obtained the letter in 1939 while at Lourdes, and later presented it to the President of Notre Dame, Father O'Hara. It helps to bring Lourdes and St. Bernadette a little closer to the campus and to you.

The story of Lourdes has always been close to Notre Dame and to the student body. The Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception (Our Lady of Lourdes) was established on the campus in 1874 by Father Sorin, with the express purpose of honoring the Blessed Mother under this title, and to thank her for her apparitions and her favors at Lourdes. In 1896, the idea of the Grotto was suggested and realized through the assistance of a former Notre Dame student -- Father Carroll of Oil City, Pa. Some weeks ago the Bulletin invited you to join the Confraternity. You need but sign the card found at the pamphlet racks, and send it to Box 153, Notre Dame, Indiana. It admits you to illustrious company, and a rich share of spiritual gifts.

PRAYERS - Deceased: uncle of Tony Champagne of B-P; Mr. J. J. Hussey. Ill: mother of Fr. Lisewski, CSC; mother of George McTernan of Morrissey; friend of Chris Welch of Badin; Mr. J. F. Donahue (trustee). Three special intentions.