

## Reflection Thursday Week 5 Our Lady of Lourdes 2021

**Our Lady of Lourdes.** In 1858 the immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, near Lourdes in France, in the cavern called “de Massabielle.” Through this poor, fourteen-year-old girl, Mary calls on sinners to change their lives. She has inspired in the Church a great love of prayer and good works, especially in the service of the poor and the sick. The lives of untold millions of pilgrims have changed as a result. The Assumptionists were the first to arrange organised pilgrimages to Lourdes and still plan the French National Pilgrimage there every year.

Mary chose a young girl hardly able to read and write in order to relay a message of repentance, the message of her son, Jesus. To strengthen her appeal, many have been healed and cured through Mary’s intercession in Lourdes. Mary, as our mother, teaches us about what we often call the feminine qualities of life. What some call the feminine side of God. Qualities also found in Jesus and his ministry, care, love, sensitivity, compassion, healing. The call to repentance was repeated by Our lady in Lourdes. And, if we have not taken this message of repentance seriously before, the pandemic has forced us to do this. Forced or not, however, people have become more caring and more sensitive to other people’s needs, more generous with their time and support. It has brought communities together working for a common aim. It has shown us the degradation caused by poverty and created a desire to change things to help restore dignity, self-worth, and personal value in people, which, after all, is the whole purpose of repentance. Bernadette teaches us the we don’t need great qualities of understanding or knowledge, be brilliant at this or that, in order to serve God and bring Good News into people’s lives. In fact, if you think yourself incapable of serving god in any positive way, God is more likely to choose you to do and be someone great in helping grow his Kingdom here on earth.

Thank you, Bernadette.

Our Lady of Lourdes. Pray for us.

Our Lady Immaculate. Pray for us.

**An elderly lady** slipped and strained her knee. Her doctor bandaged it and warned her, *'If you don't take great care it's unlikely to heal properly. Don't rush around and don't climb any stairs.'*

A fortnight later the old lady returned to have the bandage removed. The doctor was delighted to see that the leg had healed perfectly. *'Thank goodness for that!'* said the old dear. *'I can't tell you what a fool I've felt, shinning up and down the drainpipe.'*

