

## Reflection Friday Week 5 Our Lady of Lourdes 2022

In 1858 the immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, near Lourdes in France, in a cave 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 meaning of Massabielle has a long history. One suggestion is that it comes from words meaning the *source of life (water)* another is that it means the *old rock*. Apparitions of God in scripture often happened on mountains and Mary seems to have followed suit here. And certainly, as history has shown, the waters of this grotto have brought new life and healing to so many. The important link of this feast with the Parish is that Mary declared herself to be the *Immaculate Conception* to Bernadette who had never heard of this recently proclaimed dogma (1854) of the church. Mary, the Immaculate Conception, is the patron who so lovingly watches over our parish and this town of ours in Hitchin. Today we joyfully give thanks and praise, truly grateful that she is the best and most caring of mothers to us.

*If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had not incurred the stain of original sin, this would diminish the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Saviour of all. Consequently, after Christ, who did not need to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place. For Christ did not contract original sin in any way whatever, but was holy in His very Conception. But the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract original sin, but was cleansed from it before her birth from the womb.* (ST III, q. 27, a. 2, ad 2). Thomas Aquinas

*Our Lady of Lourdes pray for us.*

*Our Lady Immaculate pray for us.*