

# Visit of the Relic of Saint Bernadette



## RESOURCE PACK



# CONTENTS

1	Foreword - Saint Bernadette's Relic Tour	2
2	Prayer to Saint Bernadette	3
3	Schedule - Newry, Armagh, Dundalk	4
4	Resources for Parishes	8
	- <i>The Importance of Relics</i>	
	- <i>Primary Schools and Young Families</i>	
	- <i>Secondary Schools and Young People</i>	
	- <i>Novena to Saint Brigid</i>	





# Foreword by Archbishop Eamon Martin

In September and October of this year, the relics of St. Bernadette will journey from Lourdes in France on a pilgrimage around the cathedrals and dioceses of Ireland, including the Archdiocese of Armagh and the Diocese of Dromore. The relics will visit both dioceses from the 17th to the 20th of October 2024, offering a wonderful prelude to the Jubilee Year 2025, with its theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.”

As both Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Administrator of Dromore, I know how deeply the people in both of these dioceses cherish their connection to Lourdes and St. Bernadette. Many of you have travelled on pilgrimage to Lourdes, whether for prayer, healing, or service, and have found there a special place of care, love, and compassion for the sick and disabled. For many years, dedicated parish and diocesan groups from Armagh and Dromore have worked tirelessly to organise these pilgrimages, and I know how much joy, comfort, and hope they bring to those who participate.

The pilgrimage of St. Bernadette’s relics across Ireland will be a source of great hope and inspiration, especially for the many who have been uplifted by their experiences at Lourdes. In welcoming these relics, we are reminded that Lourdes is a place of prayer and compassion for the sick and vulnerable. Irish people, young and old, have volunteered in Lourdes and returned home with their hearts touched by the experience of serving others in need.

As we prepare to welcome the relics of St. Bernadette, I invite the faith communities of Armagh and Dromore to pray together in the ‘spirit of Lourdes,’ drawing inspiration from Our Lady’s message, which continues to resonate powerfully in our world today.

It will be a great blessing for myself and Bishop Michael Router, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, to welcome the relics of St. Bernadette into both the Archdiocese of Armagh and the Diocese of Dromore. I encourage everyone to take this opportunity to encounter the inspiring person that St. Bernadette was and to listen to the powerful message she conveyed from Our Lady.

Please join me in prayer that many gifts and graces will be granted to our dioceses during this pilgrimage, especially for those who are sick, vulnerable, or in need of hope.

**Every blessing on you all,**

*+ Eamon Martin*

**+ Eamon Martin**

**Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore**



# PRAYER TO SAINT BERNADETTE

**Our Lady of Lourdes help our faith!**

**Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognise  
God's call.**

**Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps.**

**Help us to be touched by his love,  
that we may touch him in faith.**

**Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him  
and to believe in his love,  
especially at times of trial and illness.**

**Remind us that those who believe are never alone.**

**Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus,  
that he may be light for our path.**

**And may this light of faith always increase in us.**

**We make this prayer through your Son, Christ our Lord.**

**Our Lady of Lourdes – Pray for us.**

**St. Bernadette – Pray for us.**

### 3. SCHEDULE - ST. PATRICK AND ST. COLMAN, NEWRY

# VISIT OF RELICS OF SAINT BERNADETTE TO NEWRY CATHEDRAL

## Programme of Events – Thursday 17 October

**1:00pm**

Welcome of Relics to the Cathedral  
Beginning of Veneration

**1:30–7:00pm**

Public veneration of relics *including* visits from school groups. *Confessions available*

**7:00–8:15pm**

Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes *with*  
Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

**8:15–9:00pm**

Public veneration of relics. *Confessions available*

**9:00–10:00pm**

Marian vigil of prayer  
*Cathedral closes at 10:00pm*



### 3. SCHEDULE - ST. COLMAN'S CATHEDRAL, NEWRY

# VISIT OF RELICS OF SAINT BERNADETTE TO NEWRY CATHEDRAL

## Programme of Events – Friday 18 October

**8:00–10:30am**

Public veneration of relics, Confessions available

**10:30–11:15am**

Mass of Saint Bernadette

**11:15am–3:00pm**

Public veneration of relics with  
visits from school groups, Confessions available

**3:00–3:45pm**

Stations of the Cross

**3:45–7:00pm**

Public veneration of the relics, Confessions available

**7:00–8:00pm**

Candlelight rosary procession & vigil (weather permitting)

**8:00–9:45pm**

Public veneration of the relics, Confessions available

**9:45–10:00pm**

Night Prayer of the Church  
Cathedral closes at 10:00pm. Visit of relics ends.



### 3. SCHEDULE - ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, ARMAGH

**St Patrick's Cathedral**  
**Armagh**  
Archdiocese of Armagh



#### **SATURDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>10am</b>     | <b>Reception of the Relics &amp; MASS</b><br>(at St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh) |
| 12noon          | Angelus & Rosary   |
| 12noon - 4pm    | Confessions available  |
| 1pm - 5pm       | Rosary on the Hour   |
| 6pm             | Angelus & Rosary   |
| <b>6:30pm</b>   | <b>MASS</b>  |
| 8pm             | Torchlight Procession<br>(around the Cathedral Grounds)                          |
| <b>9pm</b>      | <b>Benediction</b>   |
| 10pm - Midnight | Solemn Veneration  |

#### **SUNDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>8am</b> | <b>Morning Prayer</b><br>(for departure of the relics to St Patrick's Church Dundalk) |
|------------|---|

[stbernadette.ie](http://stbernadette.ie) | [armaghparish.net](http://armaghparish.net) | [armagharchdiocese.org](http://armagharchdiocese.org)

# 3. SCHEDULE - ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, DUNDALK

**St Patrick's Church**  
**Dundalk**  
Archdiocese of Armagh



## **SUNDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

- 10am** Greeting of the Relics  
(at St Malachy's Friary Church, Dundalk  
to accompany the relics to St Patrick's Church, Dundalk)
- 10:45am** **Reception of the Relics  
at St Patrick's Church, Dundalk**
- 11am** **SUNDAY MASS** with the relics and water gesture
- 12noon - 4pm** Rosary with meditations on the hour & Confession  
(with visiting choirs)
- 6pm** **Marian Procession with Torchlight**  
(from St Nicholas' Church, Dundalk to St Patrick's Church)
- 6:30pm** **Solemn Evening Prayer**  
(with Anointing of the Sick)
- 8pm - 10pm** Rosary with meditations on the hour  
(with visiting choirs)
- 11pm** **Solemn Night Prayer & Benediction**

## **MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

- 8am** **Solemn Morning Prayer**  
(for departure of the relics to Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar)

[stbernadette.ie](http://stbernadette.ie) | [stpatricksdundalk.com](http://stpatricksdundalk.com) | [armagharchdiocese.org](http://armagharchdiocese.org)



# 4. ST. BERNADETTE'S RELIC: RESOURCES FOR PARISHES



# THE IMPORTANCE OF RELICS

## The Importance of Relics

A relic is a part of the physical remains of a saint after their death, such as a fragment of bone or hair, or an object that has been in contact with their body. In the Catholic tradition, relics are not objects of worship but are venerated as a way of honoring the holiness of God, made manifest through the lives of His saints.

## Why Are St. Bernadette's Relics Journeying to Us?



Pilgrimage is a profound spiritual practice, allowing us to step outside our daily routines and draw closer to God. Conscious that many who have a love of Lourdes and devotion to St. Bernadette the relics of St. Bernadette are being brought to Ireland during September and October 2024. This visit allows individuals and communities to experience the spiritual richness of pilgrimage in their own churches, offering opportunities for healing, conversion, and even the discovery of one's vocation.

## Why Are Relics Important to Catholics?

The veneration of relics is not unique to Catholicism; it reflects the universal human instinct to care for and honour the remains of those we love. In the Christian tradition, relics have been revered from the earliest centuries. The relics of saints, such as St. Polycarp, were described as being "more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold."

From the time of the early Church, relics—especially those of martyrs—were held in special veneration. Christians would gather for prayer services in the catacombs of Rome, and by the fourth century, the Eucharist was celebrated over the tombs of the martyrs. As St. Augustine explained, the bodies of saints and martyrs are precious because they were temples of the Holy Spirit during their earthly lives.

There are two principal reasons why Catholics venerate relics:

1. God's Grace Through Relics: Throughout history, God has shown His approval of relics by granting healing and other graces to those who venerate them with faith. Relics serve as channels of God's mercy and power.
2. Connection to Holiness: Relics help us feel closer to the holy person they belong to, making the communion of saints more real and present in our lives. They inspire us to seek holiness in our own lives, reminding us that we, too, are called to live as instruments of the Holy Spirit.

## St. Bernadette's Legacy and Lourdes

St. Bernadette Soubirous, to whom the Virgin Mary appeared in Lourdes, has become a beacon of hope and healing for millions of pilgrims. Her life of humility, suffering, and deep trust in God continues to inspire people around the world. The relics of St. Bernadette make this spiritual connection with her even more tangible, inviting us to experience the same grace that has flowed through Lourdes for generations.

# RESOURCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL'S AND YOUNG FAMILIES





# St Bernadette and Lourdes

## USING THIS GUIDE

### Preparation:

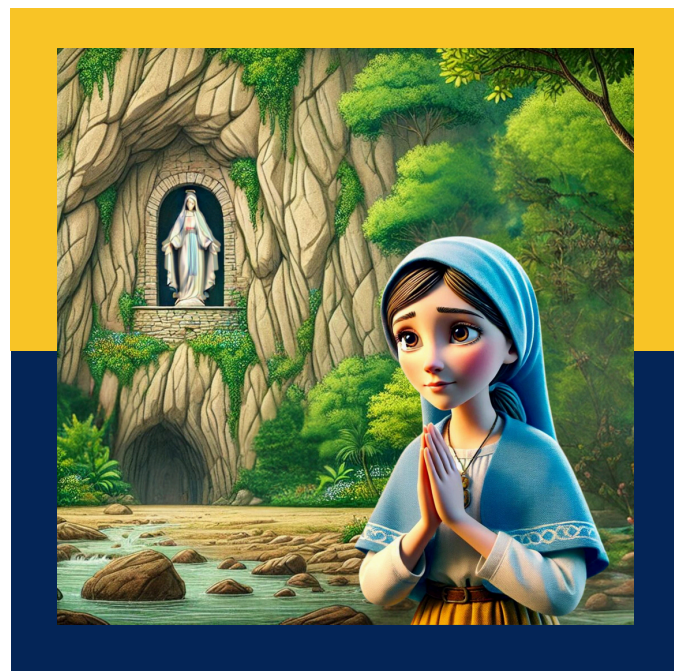
Read through Saint Bernadette's biography and key stories to familiarise yourself with her life and significance.

### Presentation:

Share the stories and key points with the children in an engaging and interactive manner, encouraging them to reflect on the lessons from Bernadette's life.

### Activities:

Conduct the reflection activities and crafts to deepen the children's understanding and connection to Saint Bernadette's life.



### Prayer:

Lead the children in the prayers provided, encouraging them to reflect on how they can live as Saint Bernadette did in their daily lives.

# St Bernadette's Life



**Born:** 7th January 1844

**Died:** 16th April 1879

**Feast Day:** 16th April

**Patron Saint of:** The Sick, Shepherds, Poor, and Lourdes, France

## Biography Summary:

Saint Bernadette Soubirous, was born on January 7, 1844, in Lourdes, France. She was the eldest daughter in a poor miller's family and despite her fragile health and frequent illnesses, Saint Bernadette is best known for experiencing 18 apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1858 at the Grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes.

During these apparitions, a "young lady" who later identified herself as the "Immaculate Conception," instructed Bernadette to dig in the ground, revealing a spring of water. This spring, known as Lourdes water, is believed to have miraculous healing properties and has attracted millions of pilgrims worldwide.

Despite scepticism from many and following an extensive investigation, the Catholic Church declared Bernadette's visions as worthy of belief in 1862. Bernadette later joined the Sisters of Charity in Nevers, France, where she lived a humble and holy life, working in the infirmary until her death at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879. She was made a saint in 1933.

# Key Miracles

- The First Apparition: On February 11, 1858, while gathering firewood with her sister and a friend, Bernadette saw a vision of a young lady in white at the Grotto of Massabielle, which was then the rubbish dump for the town. This marked the first of 18 apparitions, during which the Lady revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception.
- The Healing Spring: During one of the apparitions, Bernadette was instructed to dig in the ground, where she uncovered a spring. The water from this spring became known for its miraculous healing properties, leading to numerous cures.
- The Candle Incident: During one of her visions, Bernadette held her hand over a burning candle for an extended period without suffering any burns, a phenomenon witnessed by many onlookers and considered miraculous.



# Reflections and Activities

## Discussion Questions:

- What do you think St. Bernadette felt when she first saw Our Lady? How would you react in her situation?
- What does the story of the healing spring teach us about faith and trust in God?
- How can Bernadette's humility and obedience inspire us in our own lives?

## Craft Activity:

Create a "Lourdes Grotto" model using simple materials like cardboard, clay or papier mâché. Children can shape the grotto, add a statue of the Virgin Mary, and place a small spring or well to represent the miraculous water. They can also paint or colour the grotto.

## Service Project:

Encourage children to practice acts of kindness and humility, such as visiting the sick or helping those in need, reflecting St. Bernadette's service to others despite her own hardships.



# Prayers to Our Lady and St. Bernadette

## Prayers to Mary



## Hail Mary

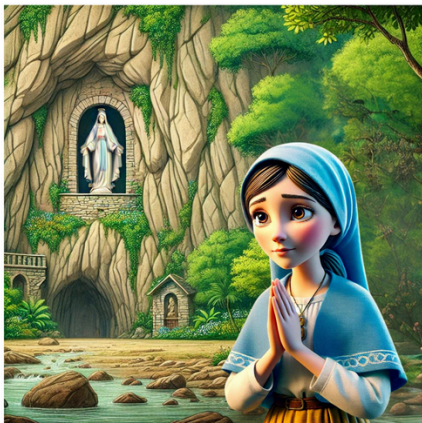
Hail Mary full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

## Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

## Saint Bernadette



## Saint Bernadette

Dear St. Bernadette,

Our Lady asked you to pray to God to help people who do wrong things so that they can find their way back to Him.

You once said, "Jesus and Mary, let my happiness in this world be to love You and to help those who need it the most."

Today, I offer any hard times or sad feelings I have to help people who need God's love, kindness and mercy the most in this world.

Amen



# RESOURCE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



# St Bernadette's Life



**Born:** 7th January 1844

**Died:** 16th April 1879

**Feast Day:** 16th April

**Patronage:** The Sick,  
Shepherds, Poor, and  
Lourdes, France

Saint Bernadette Soubirous, was born on January 7, 1844, in Lourdes, France. She was the eldest daughter in a poor miller's family and despite her fragile health and frequent illnesses, Saint Bernadette is best known for experiencing 18 apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1858 at the Grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes.

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Despite scepticism from many and following an extensive investigation, the Catholic Church declared Bernadette's visions as worthy of belief in 1862. Bernadette later joined the Sisters of Charity in Nevers, France, where she lived a humble and holy life, working in the infirmary until her death at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879. She was made a saint in 1933.

# The Message of Lourdes

St. Bernadette's Life - A Journey of Love and Faith

## 18th February 1858: Extraordinary Words

- Mary spoke for the first time to Bernadette, saying, "What I have to say to you does not have to be written down."
- Mary's message was one of deep, personal connection—heart to heart. From the very beginning, Mary invited Bernadette to receive a message of love.

## A Special Invitation

- Mary then asked, "Would you be so kind as to come here for fifteen days?"
- For Bernadette, this respectful and loving request made her feel valued as a person. This message for all of us: We are all loved and respected by God.

## Promises for the Next World

- Mary said, "I do not promise to make you happy in this world but in the other."
- While life can be hard, God's love is with us, and true happiness awaits us in heaven.

## The Power of Love

- Despite her hardships and humble beginnings, Bernadette radiated happiness. Born into poverty, she struggled with chronic illness throughout her life, yet her faith remained strong.
- Acceptance of Suffering: Bernadette embraced her suffering, seeing herself as a simple tool of God, offering her pain for the greater good.
- Despite her hardships, Bernadette found strength in God's love, transforming her suffering into a path toward holiness.

## A Hidden Treasure: The Spring

- In the ninth apparition, Mary revealed a spring, symbolising the healing love of Jesus. Her call to "penance" means turning our hearts to God.

## A Name Revealed: The Immaculate Conception

- On 25th March 1858, Mary told Bernadette, "I am the Immaculate Conception," affirming Mary's role as the Mother of God and affirming her purity.

# Video Resources



SCAN CODE



SCAN CODE



SCAN CODE

# Reflection Activities

## Video Activity:

- Scan the first two QR codes provided above.
- Watch the two videos: *Saint Bernadette - Relic Pilgrimage Ireland 2024* and *Our Lady of Lourdes*
- Pray and Reflect on both videos.
- Gather in a group, open with prayer, reflect on the life of St. Bernadette and Our Lady's Message.
- Discuss, using the questions below.

## Discussion Questions:

- What do you think St. Bernadette felt when she first saw Our Lady? How would you react in her situation?
- How does the message of Our Lady of Lourdes resonate with you today?
- What does the life of St. Bernadette teach us today about faith and trust in God?
- How can St. Bernadette's life inspire us today?
- How can we embrace the vision of Our Lady of Lourdes in our lives and communities?

## Activities:

Encourage the young people to identify concrete actions or steps they can take in their school or community. Some ideas are:

- Reach out to the sick or marginalised in the community
- Engage with a charitable initiative that focuses on the message and focus of Lourdes.
- Commit as a group to praying the Rosary.
- Plan or take part in a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

# NOVENA TO ST. BERNADETTE



# Introduction to the Novena to St. Bernadette



This novena is designed to be reflective in nature and can be prayed individually or communally. Whether used in liturgical settings, parish gatherings, or with family members, the prayers and reflections offer a pathway to deepen our trust in God, find hope amidst suffering, and embrace the healing that Christ offers through His saints.

Through St. Bernadette's example, may we open our hearts to the grace and blessings that flow from God, trusting in His mercy and compassion.

The novena can be used as individual, group or communal preparation in advance of your visit to the relic of St. Bernadette in the cathedral of St. Colman and St. Patrick, Newry, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh or St. Patrick's Church Dundalk.



# Introductory Prayer

Dear Saint Bernadette,

Chosen by God as a channel of His graces and blessings, and through your humble obedience to the requests of our Blessed Mother, Mary, you gained for us the miraculous waters of spiritual and physical healing.

We implore you to listen to our prayers, that we may be healed of our imperfections.

Place our petitions in the hands of our Holy Mother, Mary, so that she may place them at the feet of her beloved Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that He may look on us with mercy and compassion: (*mention request here...*)

Help us, dear Saint Bernadette, to follow your example, so that irrespective of our own pain and suffering we may always be mindful of the needs of others, especially those whose sufferings are greater than ours.

As we await the mercy of God, remind us to offer up our pain and suffering for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins and blasphemies of mankind.

Pray for us, St Bernadette, that like you, we may always be obedient to the will of our Heavenly Father, and that through our prayers and humility we may bring consolation to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary that have been so grievously wounded by our sins.

Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, Pray for us.

Amen.



# 9 Day Novena Reflections

## Day 1: Trust in God's Will

Theme: Trust in God's will, even when life seems overwhelming.

Reflection: St. Bernadette accepted her path in life, despite her suffering from poverty and ill health. Her humble beginnings and constant trust in God's will guided her through difficult times.

Reflection Questions:

- How can we trust God in moments of difficulty?
- What areas of your life do you find it hard to trust God in?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## Day 2: Hope Amidst Suffering

Theme: Hope that God can bring light into moments of suffering.

Reflection: St. Bernadette persevered despite continuous illness and social rejection. She found hope in her relationship with God and through the apparitions of Our Lady, who provided her with strength.

Reflection Questions:

- When have you experienced suffering?
- How has God been present for you in those moments?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## Day 3: Devotion to the Eucharist

Theme: Drawing strength from the Eucharist in difficult times.

Reflection: St. Bernadette had a deep love for the Eucharist. Even though she found her catechism classes difficult, she persevered and prepared herself wholeheartedly for her first Holy Communion, recognizing the grace that flows from Christ in the Eucharist.

Reflection Questions:

- How does the Eucharist nourish your soul?
- In what ways can you turn to Christ in the Eucharist for healing?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

# 9 Day Novena Reflections

## **Day 4: Devotion to Mary**

Theme: Seeking Our Lady's intercession in moments of need.

Reflection: Even before her apparitions, St. Bernadette had a special devotion to the Rosary. She saw herself as a child of Mary and trusted in her maternal guidance throughout her life.

Reflection Questions:

- How can Mary's example guide you in your life?
- When have you experienced Mary's maternal care?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## **Day 5: Facing Doubt and Disbelief**

Theme: Remaining faithful in the face of doubt or disbelief.

Reflection: St. Bernadette faced ridicule and disbelief from her own family and townspeople when she shared her visions. Despite these challenges, she remained calm and trusted in God's plan.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you react when others doubt your faith?
- In what ways can you strengthen your faith when faced with disbelief?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## **Day 6: Offering Up Suffering for Others**

Theme: Offering your own struggles for the good of others.

Reflection: St. Bernadette understood the value of offering her suffering for the conversion of sinners, embracing her illness as part of her spiritual mission.

Reflection Questions:

- How can you offer your own pain and suffering for the conversion of others?
- What challenges in your life can you unite with Christ's suffering?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

# 9 Day Novena Reflections

## **Day 7: Obedience to God's Will**

Theme: Obeying God's will, even when it seems strange or difficult.

Reflection: St. Bernadette's obedience to Mary's requests, even when misunderstood by others, led to the creation of a healing spring that continues to bring grace to pilgrims today.

Reflection Questions:

- When have you been called to do something difficult for God?
- How can you cultivate a spirit of obedience to God's will?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## **Day 8: Speaking the Truth**

Theme: Courage in speaking the truth, even under pressure.

Reflection: Even when interrogated by church officials and others about her visions, St. Bernadette remained firm in her recounting of the truth, always keeping her answers simple and faithful.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you stay true to your faith when questioned?
- In what ways can you share the truth of your faith with others?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

## **Day 9: Humility**

Theme: Embracing humility in all things.

Reflection: St. Bernadette's life was marked by profound humility. Even after the apparitions brought her fame, she referred to herself as a simple servant of God, always pointing to His glory rather than her own.

Reflection Questions:

- How can you cultivate humility in your daily life?
- In what ways can you follow St. Bernadette's example of humble service?

Concluding Prayer: Decade of the Rosary + Memorare.

# Concluding Prayer

After quiet meditation on the theme and reflection for the day. You are asked to consider and further reflect on the questions provided in this novena guide.

When you have concluded your period of reflection you are asked to:

- Pray one decade of the Rosary.
- Pray the Memorare

## **Memorare:**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
That never was it known that anyone who fled to thy  
protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession  
was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins,  
my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and  
sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,  
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.

O Mary conceived without sin,  
pray for us who have recourse to Thee.

(Repeat three times)