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**A Guide to  
Lourdes**

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THE  
AVE MARIA

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# A GUIDE TO LOURDES

WITH TWO PLANS

*By*

REV. AIDAN PICKERING, M.A.

LONDON

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY  
PUBLISHERS TO THE HOLY SEE

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## INTRODUCTION

EVERY YEAR two million pilgrims travel to Lourdes to honour Mary the Mother of God, and through her to honour God Himself.

Perhaps you too are thinking of going to Lourdes. Unless you are very experienced in Continental travel, you would be well advised to travel with an approved organized pilgrimage. All bookings and travelling arrangements will thus be made for you, and besides, it is only those pilgrimages which have Episcopal approval that can secure many of the privileges to be obtained in Lourdes itself.

Before you start it will be advisable to know something of what happened there ; who St Bernadette was, what appearances our Lady made to her, and what message our Lady has for the world and for you. Only by thinking over these facts for a long while beforehand will you obtain the fullest spiritual benefit from your pilgrimage.

The life of St Bernadette is so well known that it is unnecessary to repeat it here. If you wish to read it, I cannot recommend a better book than *Bernadette of Lourdes* by Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J., published by the C.T.S. (B 250, price 1/-).

### Our Lady's Message for us

When we are in Lourdes, we honour the Mother of God by doing the things she asked Bernadette to do.\* We say our rosary, we take part in processions, we carry lighted candles, we leave candles to be burnt in the Grotto, we drink Lourdes water and we bathe in it, we bend to kiss the ground. All these things we do in a spirit of filial and humble obedience to the wishes of our Mother.

\* *The Lourdes Pilgrimage Prayer Book*, published by the C.T.S. (price 2/6), will be of great use to you while joining in the processions and taking part in other Lourdes devotions.

But our Lady did not appear merely to teach us these outward and relatively trivial actions. She appeared to teach us the two most fundamental principles of the spiritual life—Prayer and Penance. Constantly she asked and encouraged Bernadette and the crowds with her to *pray*; constantly she asked them to *do penance*, both for their own sins and for the sins of others. This is the message of Lourdes, as it is of Fatima. Our Lady has appeared to bring the world back to her Son, for it is by prayer that we raise the mind and heart to God, and it is by penance that we take our heart and will away from all that is not God. It is in order that we may realize the urgency of this message that we go to Lourdes.

When most people think of Lourdes, they think of miracles. Yet our Lady never once mentioned miracles to Bernadette, nor did she at any time promise that she would work them. For they are of secondary importance compared with her message of Prayer and Penance. Why, then, does she work miracles? Surely it is to attract people to Lourdes, especially those who are sick and suffering and who most of all need the consolation and encouragement of her message.

Holiness consists in the union of our will with the Will of God. This union we achieve in two ways, actively and passively. We achieve it *actively* by the active performance of our duties, by obeying the laws of God and His Church, and in carrying out the duties of our state of life; *passively*, by the loving acceptance of all God sends to us at each moment. If we study the progress of any saint in sanctity, we can clearly see that at first the saint is more active, striving to practise virtue and to perfect himself; but then God gradually takes control of his soul, which becomes more passive and perfectly abandoned to Divine Providence. So in rather the same way healthy people must reach God through the active life, by carrying out their work for His sake; whereas in the case of the sick, God relieves them of these duties, and instead asks them to accept the passive burden He lays upon them. He has changed their vocation in life. He no longer wants them to be working for Him, but to suffer for Him, and "to fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ" (Col. 1:24).

Bernadette put this in a nutshell when she once remarked,

"You see, it is my business to be ill". And on her death-bed her constant prayer was, "My God, it is Thy Will. I accept the cup Thou hast given me. Blessed be Thy Holy Name". If only we could accept our sufferings as she did, we should have learnt our Lady's message exceedingly well, for our sufferings would be both prayer and penance, and would quickly carry us to close union with God.

The sick are the centre-piece of Lourdes. Our Lady asked for Penance; God has imposed Penance on the sick without their asking, and therefore it should be the aim of all to help as much as possible those who are thus privileged in suffering. If sick people are to travel with your pilgrimage, offer your services as a *brancardier*\* or as a lady helper before the pilgrimage starts. The organizers will be glad to know on whom they can rely for help, both on the journey and at Lourdes. If you have not sick pilgrims travelling with you, offer your help at the bureau of *brancardiers* or at the hospitals in Lourdes. Certainly your pilgrimage will be the better for this contact with the sick. At the very least go among them, visit them, and join with them in their prayers at the Grotto and at the Baths. Their very company can teach us a lot about God. Their acceptance of their sufferings is surely the great miracle of Lourdes. They may come to Lourdes with hopes of a cure, yet all leave happy and resigned to the Will of God, content to remain sick. Their faces radiate the happiness they have received.

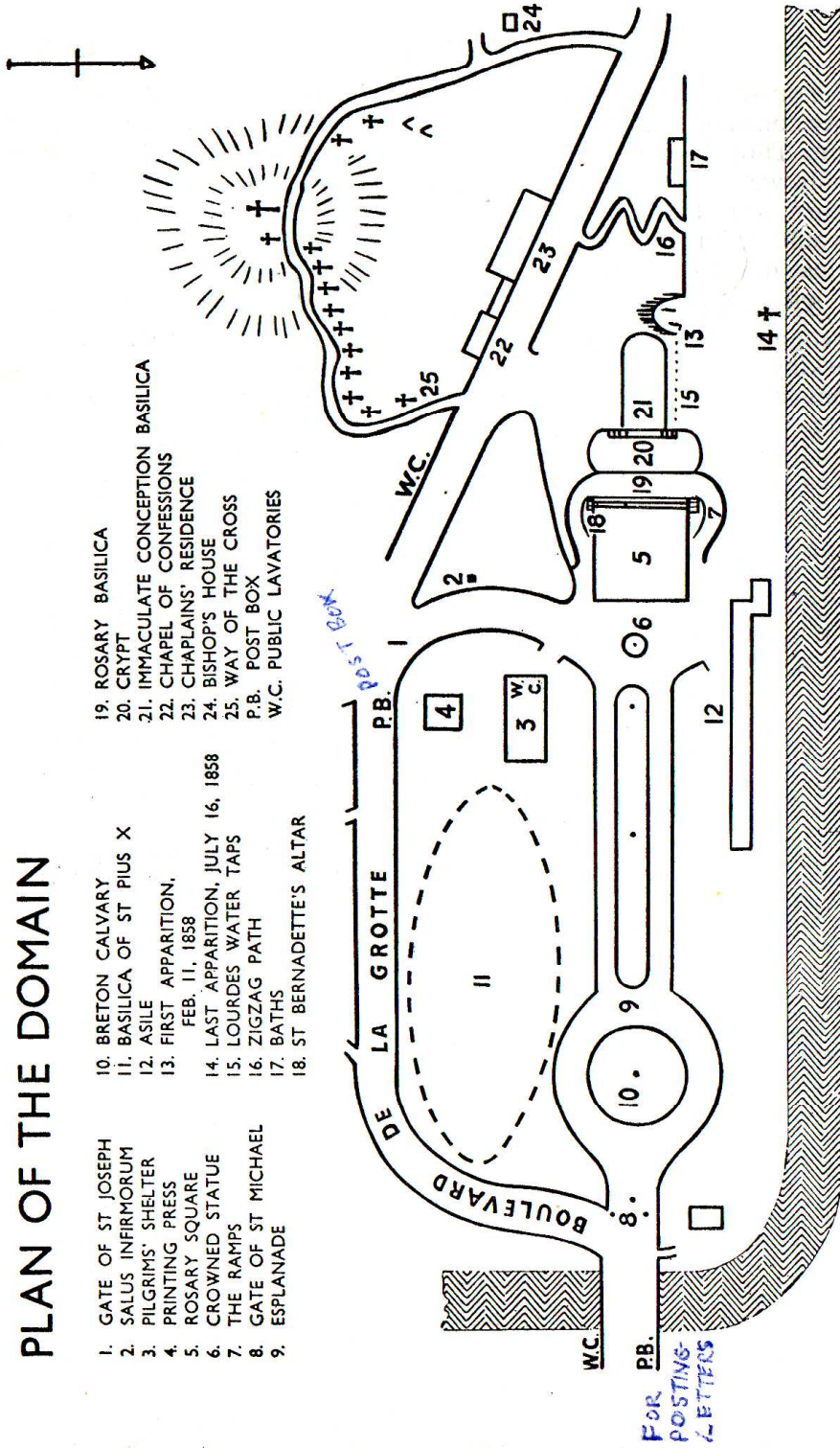
\* *Brancardiers* are the men you will see in Lourdes who wear leather straps over their shoulders, and who act as stretcher-bearers for the sick, and as stewards.

# PLAN OF THE DOMAIN

1. GATE OF ST JOSEPH
2. SALUS INFIRMORUM
3. PILGRIMS' SHELTER
4. PRINTING PRESS
5. ROSARY SQUARE
6. CROWNED STATUE
7. THE RAMPS
8. GATE OF ST MICHAEL
9. ESPLANADE

10. BRETON CALVARY
11. BASILICA OF ST PIUS X
12. ASILE
13. FIRST APPARITION, FEB. 11, 1858
14. LAST APPARITION, JULY 16, 1858
15. LOURDES WATER TAPS
16. ZIGZAG PATH
17. BATHS
18. ST BERNADETTE'S ALTAR

19. ROSARY BASILICA
20. CRYPT
21. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BASILICA
22. CHAPEL OF CONFESSIONS
23. CHAPLAIN'S RESIDENCE
24. BISHOP'S HOUSE
25. WAY OF THE CROSS
- P.B. POST BOX
- W.C. PUBLIC LAVATORIES



## GUIDE TO LOURDES

In the middle of this pamphlet is a map of Lourdes. As soon as you arrive there you would be well advised to mark in the position of your hotel. You will then be able to find your way to the Grotto and to other places of interest.

### THE DOMAIN

The Domain of Massabielle is the name given to the great enclosed park round the Grotto which is owned by the Church.\* The whole of the property has been kept as unspoiled as possible, with lawns and trees, yet so as to provide the broad pavements and squares necessary for the holding of processions and liturgical functions. On your first visit you will naturally make your way straight to the Grotto, but at some future time you may like to notice the following points of interest as you enter the Domain.

#### A. Entering through the Gate of St Joseph

Most people enter the Domain by this southern entrance, the **Gate of St Joseph (1)**. (These numbers refer to the plan of the Domain opposite.) This is because most of the hotels have sprung up in the New Lourdes, the town now existing between the Old Bridge and the Grotto. At one gate post is a statue of St Joseph, the Guardian of our Blessed Lady.

\* Before you go to Lourdes you may hear the accusation that the town is too commercialized. Judge for yourself. In the whole of the Domain there is only one shop for the sale of candles and booklets, and this is so unobtrusive as to be difficult to find. If, therefore, Lourdes is commercialized, the Church is not to blame. There may be too many "piety" shops, but they are not on Church land, and are there only to supply the demands of the pilgrims. But there is one scandal at Lourdes, that these shops open on Sundays, against the express and repeated wishes of the ecclesiastical authorities. The cure for this lies with you: if pilgrims would only refuse to buy on Sundays, the shops would soon put up their shutters.

A little further down the slope, on your left, is a group of figures showing our Lady, **Salus Infirmorum (2)**, the Health of the Sick, with her arms outstretched to an invalid, around whom are grouped a priest, a nurse and a brancardier. These figures symbolize our Lady's pity, human suffering, prayer, and the charity of those men and women who care for the sick.

Over to your right is a large building, the **Pilgrims' Shelter (3)**, open day and night, and having two halls, one for men and one for women, with toilet facilities beneath. Close by is the **Grotto Printing Press (4)**, on the site of the Savy sawmills of Bernadette's day.

As we come on to the great **Rosary Square (5)**, you will see across to your right the **Crowned Statue (6)**, showing our Lady with her head encircled with twelve stars which are lit up at night. The statue is surrounded with rose-beds, and on the railings the faithful place their bouquets of flowers in her honour.

To reach the Grotto, make your way diagonally across the square and under the arches of the **Ramps (7)**, the sloping roads that lead on each side to the upper churches.

### **B. Entering through the Gate of St Michael**

If your hotel is in the vicinity of the New Bridge or **Gate of St Michael (8)**, your entrance to the Domain will be through this gate at the east end. In the centre, inside the gateway, is the statue of the archangel Michael, triumphant over Satan and sin. To your left is a statue of the archangel Gabriel, with a book in one hand on which is inscribed his greeting to our Lady at the Annunciation, "Ave Maria"; on your right is the archangel Raphael, the companion and protector of Tobias (and of all travellers and pilgrims).

Before you lies the quarter-mile stretch of the **Esplanade (9)**, used for the afternoon and evening processions. Down to the right, among the trees near the river, is the Hostel of St Michael, where brancardiers may stay much more cheaply than at hotels.

In the centre of the first large circle of grass is the **Breton Calvary (10)**, given by the people of Brittany in 1900. The

figures round the Cross are our Lady, St John, St Mary Magdalen, and St Longinus, the centurion who pierced our Lord's side with a lance.

As we walk down the Esplanade several statues attract our attention. On the centre plot of grass is a statue of the Sacred Heart, and in front of Him the kneeling figure of St Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom He made the twelve promises, and through whom He initiated the devotion of the Nine First Fridays. The surrounding hazel hedge is grown from cuttings from the actual bush in the middle of which our Lord appeared to her at Paray-le-Monial.

Further on is a statue of the Curé d'Ars, presented by the priests and people of his own diocese. Over to the right is a statue of Saint Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, by Marie-Bernard, the Trappist monk artist.

To your left is the huge new underground Basilica, the **Basilica of St Pius X (11)**, which was consecrated on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th, 1958, by Cardinal Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII). Oval in shape, it is capable of holding 20,000 pilgrims around its central altar. It is 220 yards long, and on wet afternoons is able to accommodate the whole of the Blessed Sacrament procession.

Over to your right you can see a long building, the **Asile (12)**, a large hospital able to house 700 sick pilgrims during their stay in Lourdes.\* It is run by the Sisters of Nevers, the order to which St Bernadette herself belonged. There is a statue of her as a nun of this order at the end of the hospital nearest to the Grotto. The statue was erected in the year of her canonization, 1933.

Having now come the full length of the Esplanade, we are at the edge of the great **Rosary Square (5)**, and can find the Grotto by keeping to our right along the river bank, or under the arches of the **Ramps (7)**.

\* In accordance with the new plans, the Asile is to be dismantled, and a very large hospital, the Hôtel Dieu, is to be built on the far bank of the river. This new hospital will be much more accessible by both road and rail, and its wards with their 900 beds will have a magnificent view of the Basilicas and Grotto. It will be built on the site of the present Carmel, for the nuns are to have a new convent built for them on a more secluded site on the hill above the Bishop's house.

### THE GROTTO

As we pass through the arches of the **Ramps (7)**, we pass an important notice board (illuminated at night) from which we can learn what pilgrimages are present in Lourdes, and where they are holding their various functions each day. Built into the underside of the sloping Ramp itself are a bureau where Mass intentions may be handed in, a lost property office, and the bureau of Brancardiers (Hospitalité), where men may volunteer to help the sick.

Here also is the Medical Bureau, open to doctors of all creeds or of none. They may join the International Medical Association of our Lady of Lourdes, whose members number 5,000 from 30 countries. It is their privilege to investigate any claims to a cure by an immediate examination and another a year later.\* The doctors follow immediately after the Blessed Sacrament during the blessing of the sick in the afternoon procession. The Medical Bureau is open to pilgrims when the doctors are not in session; you may see there interesting photographs and records of cures investigated and confirmed.

After passing through the arches, we have on our left the one official candle and booklet shop already mentioned; perhaps you would care to patronize it. Over to your right is the river, the Gave de Pau. Notice that the whole river has been diverted from its original bed close to the Grotto, and now flows some seventy yards or so from it.† The Savy mill-stream which Bernadette crossed on February 11th, 1858, has now disappeared underground, but its course, and the exact spot where Bernadette knelt when our Lady first appeared, are marked by two plaques let into the cement floor in front of and slightly to the left of the Grotto as you face it (13). The spot where she knelt in the meadow

\* So cautious is the Church in admitting a cure to be miraculous, that of the thousands of cures which the doctors have pronounced as being "without natural or scientific explanation" only seventy have formally been termed miraculous by the Church.

† According to present plans, either a new bridge is to be built across the river opposite the Grotto to give pilgrims access to the farther bank, or else the river will be thrust still further back to increase the size of the space in front of the Grotto.

across the river for the last apparition is now marked by a large cross erected on the steps opposite the Grotto near the river bank (14).

As we approach the Grotto, we see against the wall on our left the **Lourdes Water Taps (15)**, from which we may obtain Lourdes water, to drink or to take away with us. Above the taps are carved our Lady's words to Bernadette, "Allez boire à la fontaine" ("Go to the spring and drink"). On a white marble plaque on the wall up to your left as you face the taps is a list of the eighteen apparitions to Bernadette.

As we come into view of the Grotto itself we naturally fall into that *STRICT SILENCE* ordered by the Church authorities, which not only encourages recollection in ourselves, but also shows consideration for those who are praying there. In the niche where Bernadette so often saw the Mother of God, we now see her statue in white marble, placed there in 1864, and carved to agree as closely as possible with the description Bernadette gave: "She has the appearance of a young girl of sixteen or seventeen. She is dressed in a white robe girdled at the waist with a blue ribbon which falls down her robe. She wears upon her head a veil which is white also; a veil which gives just a glimpse of her hair, and then falls down at the back below her waist. Her feet are bare, but covered by the folds of her robe, except at a point where a yellow rose shines upon each of them. She holds on her right arm a rosary of white beads with a chain of gold shining like the two roses at her feet". Above the statue in correct French, and below in the dialect of Lourdes, are the words our Lady used of herself: "I am the Immaculate Conception".

In the Grotto is an altar where Mass is said from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. each morning from Easter to October. A second door behind the Tabernacle enables Holy Communion to be given during Mass without disturbing the celebrant. At certain times, when no function is taking place, pilgrims are allowed into the Grotto. The rock beneath the statue is worn smooth by pilgrims kissing it and touching it with their rosaries. At the back of the Grotto (in what has been called "our Lady's post-box") can be placed your own and your friends' petitions, but it should be remembered that no offerings for the upkeep of the churches





should be enclosed in the envelopes, since all the petitions are eventually burnt unopened. You will notice the large number of candles left burning in the Grotto in accordance with our Lady's request, and every pilgrimage, no matter how small, should make a point of giving as large a candle as it can afford at its farewell ceremony. At the left of the altar rises the spring, miraculously discovered, from which are fed the taps, the Baths, and, to act as a reserve, a large tank beneath the Rosary Basilica.

Beyond the Grotto we see the sacristy where the priests vest for Mass at the Grotto, and just beyond this the **Zigzag Path (16)**, down which Bernadette came for all the apparitions except the first and the last. Further along are the **Baths (17)**, where we obey our Lady's instruction to Bernadette to "Go and drink at the spring and wash in it". These are the words carved over the doors in the Lourdes dialect, and in English, French, German and Italian. The Baths are open each morning and afternoon, the actual times being posted up on a notice board, (though they are usually from 9.30 to 11.0 a.m., and from 2.30 to 4.0 p.m.). As we wait our turn we have the opportunity of joining in the public prayers which are said while the sick are being bathed.

### THE BASILICAS AND THE CRYPT

The great **Rosary Square (5)**, is used for the blessing of the sick during the Blessed Sacrament procession in the afternoon. It is also used for the gathering of the faithful of all nationalities after the evening torchlight procession, when the Credo is sung in our common mother-tongue—Latin. The square is sometimes used for open-air Masses attended by extraordinarily large congregations; it is able to hold 100,000 people. On Wednesdays and Sundays the Basilicas are flood-lit during the evening procession.

As we approach the church steps we have on the left **St Bernadette's altar (18)**. Her statue is above the altar, showing her just about to cross the mill-stream on the occasion of the first apparition. The roof of the chapel is an attractive mosaic of the Lady she then saw.

As we are about to enter the **Rosary Basilica (19)**, we may notice the group above the door, showing our Lady holding the Infant Jesus, Who is handing the rosary to St Dominic. This Basilica, below and in front of the two above, was the last to be built, being consecrated in 1901, and is the largest of the three, being able to hold a standing congregation of 6,000. As we kneel before the High Altar we are struck by the mosaic above, portraying our Lady with outstretched arms, lavishing graces upon us, and the inscription "Par Marie à Jesu", "Through Mary to Jesus". There are fifteen side chapels, dedicated one to each of the fifteen mysteries of the rosary, which are portrayed by the mosaics forming the background to each chapel, beginning on the gospel side of the church.

Next we may mount to the Crypt, either by the steps immediately outside the Rosary Church, or up the gentler slope of the **Ramps (7)**. If we face the churches and go up the left hand slope we pass statues of St Remi, St Vincent de Paul, St Joachim, St Bernard, and St John the Baptist; and up the right ramp those of St Martin of Tours, St Louis de Montfort, St Anne, St Hyacinth and St John the Apostle. At the top we see at close quarters the huge gilt crown and cross which was the gift of the second Irish National Pilgrimage in 1924. The top of the ramp is a good point from which to view the processions, and we might well do this, at least on one occasion.

The **Crypt (20)** is so called because it was in fact the crypt before the Rosary Basilica was built below, and it is the original chapel built in answer to our Lady's request to the clergy. It was consecrated in 1866, and Bernadette herself was present at the ceremony. Inside, on the left, is a bronze group showing St Pope Pius X giving Communion to a boy and a girl. This reminds us that he was the Pope who encouraged early and frequent Communion. The crypt is by far the smallest of the three churches, and forms an intimate setting for the Holy Hour and Midnight Mass for any small pilgrimage fortunate enough to secure that privilege. Above the main altar is a white statue of our Lady, while the three windows behind show the Archangels Gabriel and Michael, and St Elizabeth, our Lady's cousin. On the gospel side the chapels are dedicated to the Sacred Heart and

St Peter, and on the epistle side to St Joseph and to St John the Apostle. There are many additional altars down the length of two corridors on either side of the church.

By a further flight of steps we reach the **Immaculate Conception** ✓ **Basilica (21)**, or the Upper Basilica, consecrated in 1876. Over the door, in a mosaic made in the Vatican workshops, is shown Pope Pius IX, who had himself, in 1854, four years before the apparitions, defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. By this doctrine we hold "that in the first moment of her conception, the Most Blessed Virgin was preserved immune from every stain of Original Sin".

Far above us is the spire, with its four bells (the largest weighing two tons), and the famous Lourdes clock which chimes the "Ave". The church is able to hold a standing congregation of 2,000, and hence is used by pilgrimages of a moderate size. During our visit we are struck by the beauty of the sanctuary and white marble altar. Around the walls are many marble tablets, war decorations, and other testimonies to the power of the intercession of Mary's prayers. The windows round the church develop the theme of the Immaculate Conception in the Old Testament on the gospel side, and in the New Testament on the epistle side. Again the number of side chapels is fifteen, with a statue and stained glass window denoting the saint to whom each is dedicated: beginning on the gospel side, from the door, they are—St Germaine, St Francis of Assisi, St Peter, St John the Baptist, St Joseph, our Lady of Victories, our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Sacred Heart (in the centre of the apse), our Lady of the Rosary, our Lady of La Salette, St Anne, St Joachim, St John the Apostle, St Francis Xavier, and St Bertrand.

If we cross the road from these upper churches, we find the **Chapel of Confessions (22)** with nearly fifty confessionals, where confessions are heard in all European languages. Further up the hill there is a bureau for the receipt of Mass intentions, and for requests for the posting off to your friends of bottles of Lourdes water. The charge made no more than covers the cost of bottle, packing and postage.

The next building up the hill is the **Chaplains' Residence (23)**. Here live the fourteen permanent chaplains, and during the summer the twenty or thirty extra secular priests chosen by the Bishop to help with confessions, processions and liturgical functions; they are called the Chaplains of the Grotto.

Still further up the hill (you will see it best on your way down from making the Stations of the Cross), is the **Bishop's House (24)**, where lives the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, and the prelates he invites to stay with him as his guests while they are in Lourdes.

✓ From a gate just below the Chapel of Confessions we enter the **Way of the Cross (25)** to make the Stations of the Cross. This ascent of Mount Calvary is almost a mile long, and is one of our great acts of penance in Lourdes. To make the Stations takes almost an hour, yet many choose to do it barefoot. As we pass through the gate, and up towards the first station, we see on the right an altar erected to the memory of 33 French pilgrims killed in a train accident on August 1st, 1922 (called "the pilgrimage of sorrow").

At the first station is the Scala Sancta, the Holy Staircase, a replica of that opposite St John Lateran's in Rome, which is held to be the stairway from Pontius Pilate's house in Jerusalem, down which our Lord walked to receive his Cross. By mounting the steps on our knees while meditating on the Passion, we may receive the same indulgences that are attached to this devotion in Rome. This devout exercise is quite separate from the Stations of the Cross, and we can omit it if we wish. The Station figures are of bronze, and are larger than life size, and seem greatly to help our meditation. Pilgrimages are often given the additional privilege of Mass at the twelfth station.

After finishing the Stations of the Cross, if you look across the field to the left you will see the Scout Camp, which has forty beds, and charges only a few francs a day for accommodation (Address: Camp Permanent des Scouts de France, Lourdes, Hautes Pyrénées, France). Further over still you can see the new Cité Secours Catholique, the Poor Pilgrims' City, where needy

pilgrims, seminarists and priests will be housed and fed without any charge. Several of the Pavilions, each capable of housing 72, are already in use, and more will be built each year. The chapel is an exact replica of the Bergerie or Sheepfold used by Bernadette at Bartrès. The hostels are in the care of the Sisters of Charles de Foucauld. You are invited by those in charge to go and inspect this great work. (Address: Cité Secours Saint Pierre, 1 Chemin de la Forêt, Lourdes, Haute Pyrénées.)

As we come down from Mount Calvary we see up on our right two chapels set in grottoes in the rock, dedicated to our Lady of Sorrows and to St Mary Magdalen, both so closely connected with the Passion of our Lord. And as we emerge on to the main road we pass a fine Celtic cross, given by the first Irish National Pilgrimage in 1913. Just below this point we can also catch a glimpse of the **Bishop's House (24)**, through the gates on the left.

### A TOUR OF THE TOWN OF LOURDES

The organizers of large pilgrimages are unable to take you round the several places of interest in the town of Lourdes. You must make sure that you see these for yourselves, by following the route indicated by the dotted line on the map. The five principal places connected with Bernadette are the Cachot (pronounced "Casho"), the Parish Church, the Hospice, the Boly Mill, and her father's house. This pilgrimage in honour of Saint Bernadette will take about two hours.

#### The Cachot (A) \*

From the Old Bridge one walks up the Rue de la Grotte almost to its end, and then down a narrow side-street to the left (the Rue des Petits Fosses). Here is the Cachot, the disused prison cell, only thirteen feet by ten, where the entire family of six lived at the time of the apparitions. Her parents slept behind the door, while Bernadette and Marie-Toinette slept opposite, and the two boys

\* These letters refer to the map of Lourdes in the centre of the pamphlet.

under the window, which is still barred as it was then. Their total furniture consisted of two beds, two chairs, some cheap red crockery, and a box. The room, with its crude stone sink and fireplace, is as it was, except for an additional window, new roof planking, and the introduction of the altar and the statue of our Lady from the old parish church: before both of these, therefore, Bernadette used often to pray. Priests, with a group of up to 15 pilgrims, may say Mass here by previous arrangement with the caretaker. The Cachot is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to other pilgrims.

#### Parish Church (B)

- 2 From the Cachot cross into the square containing the blue-tiled fountain. The War Memorial here marks the site of the old parish church of Bernadette's day. The present church is on the opposite side of the road. In it we may see the original ✓ holy water stoup from which the children took the holy water to sprinkle "the lady". We can also see the font, immediately inside the main door on the left, in which Bernadette was baptized. In the crypt (the entrance is near the High Altar on the gospel side) is the tomb of her gruff but saintly parish priest, the Abbé Peyramale, who died on our Lady's birthday, Sept. 8th, 1877. The square opposite the church is named in his honour.

#### The Hospice (C)

- 3 This is also called the St Bernadette Hospital. Coming out of ✓ the parish church on to the main road, turn right and keep on until you come to a cross-roads, and find opposite to you a statue of Bernadette. Cross over to it. This is perhaps the most attractive of all statues of her, showing her as a peasant child. It was presented in 1934 by the local people, and has the inscription in the local dialect "A ra nouste Bernadette", "To our own Bernadette". Near the statue, through the wrought iron gates, is the entrance to the Hospice, now a hospital, but then a school in which Bernadette lived as a boarder and postulant before she left for Nevers. Here, by permission of the Sisters, you will see the cloister in which she played, the school bell she often rang, and the school chapel.

Next to the school chapel is a small private chapel where she made her first Communion. In it you may see the priedieu on which she knelt on that occasion, and also the statue of our Lady, which she considered of all others to be most like "her Lady". There is also a display case full of photographs and other important mementoes of the Saint. Here too you can venerate her relic. Mass may be said in this chapel by arrangement, with a congregation of up to 25 pilgrims. Close to the chapel is the visiting room where Bernadette was questioned and interviewed by as many as 10 to 20 visitors each day during her eight years there. The Hospice is still in the charge of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers who taught Bernadette, and whose order she joined.

#### The Maison Paternelle (D)

4 ✓ Back at the cross-roads where St Bernadette's statue stands, we turn right, and then first left down the hill into the Boulevard de la Grotte. Turn right, and then look for the first turn left down a very narrow alley, where there is a notice directing you to the Maison Paternelle. This is her father's house. The house was given to her family after Bernadette became a postulant at the Hospice, as a way of rescuing them from their dire poverty. Bernadette herself never lived here, but it was in the kitchen that she fainted with sorrow in saying goodbye to her mother for the last time when leaving for the convent in Nevers.

#### The Boly Mill (E)

5 ✓ Further down the same hill is the Boly Mill, where Bernadette was born, and where she lived until she was ten, when her family was evicted from the mill and finally took refuge in the Cachot we have already visited. Much of the house furniture still remains, and in the basement we can see the machinery of the mill.

By continuing down the hill and climbing the steps on to the main street, we shall find ourselves on the Bridge of St Michael and at the entrance to the Domain.

### OTHER PLACES TO VISIT IN LOURDES

We may now mention other places you might care to visit, as time and opportunity allow.

#### The Museum of Our Lady of Lourdes (F)

6 ✓ This most interesting museum can be reached by two entrances opening from the Boulevard de la Grotte. Here you will see many historical relics and photographs of Bernadette, and also an excellent plaster model of the town of Lourdes at the time of the apparitions; this is well worth studying. There are also a great number of photographs and diagrams showing people who have been cured at Lourdes and explaining their cases. Be sure to see St Bernadette's shawl and rosary beads, which she wore and used during the apparitions. Entrance to the museum is free.

#### Seven Dolours' Hospital (G)

7 ✓ You may care to visit the two beautiful chapels, one above the other, which are attached to this hospital. Its wards are able to accommodate 600 sick pilgrims, whom you will have seen being wheeled along the street on their way to and from the Grotto.

#### 8 ✓ Convent of the Poor Clares (H) ✓

The convent is a little way below the Hotel de la Grotte on the same side of the street. And a hint to those who may be staying at this and neighbouring hotels—the street leading down to the right of the convent is a pleasant and uncrowded way to the Domain along the river bank.

#### 9 ✓ Chateau Fort (J) ✓

The whole town of Lourdes is dominated by its Castle, called the Chateau Fort, which you will see flood-lit during the torch-light procession. It contains an interesting folk-lore museum, and gives a magnificent view of the Domain and the Basilicas below. But a visit entails an entrance fee and a stiff climb,

although a lift is available for the final ascent into the castle itself. This castle was once in the possession of the English.

### Caves

Deep caves, gouged out of the limestone rock by the action of rain and flowing water through the ages, are relatively common in the Pyrenees. If you wish, you may visit the Saracens' Caves (K) in the town, or the Grottes des Loups a little way beyond the Bishop's House (and on the way you pass an interesting Missionary Exhibition). Or you may prefer to visit the larger caves of Bétharram, some ten miles out of Lourdes. These caves were discovered by one of the Sacred Heart Fathers of Bétharram, who have their head house here (they have a college at Droitwich). You should visit their church and museum, and fifteen stations of the cross, each station a chapel on the hillside, the fifteenth commemorating the Resurrection of our Lord.

### Swimming Baths (L)

Finally, since fuel is so dear in France, and consequently baths are still a difficulty in most French hotels, you should know that a really excellent and hygienic swimming bath has recently been opened in Lourdes. It is to be found not far from the cross-roads near the Hospice.

## EXCURSIONS OUT OF LOURDES

### a. Short Excursions

☞ **Bartrès.** First and foremost among trips out of Lourdes, you should try to visit Bartrès, as part of your pilgrimage in honour of St Bernadette. This is the village, some three miles out, where she stayed for nearly five years in all. Here you will see the typical village church, with the grave of her foster-mother, Marie Laguës, outside. At the bottom of the hill is the farmhouse where they lived, with the main room kept as it was then,

with an earth floor, the old baking oven by the fireside, and the bed where foster-mother and child slept. If you have come to Bartrès on a conducted tour, you will be taken out to the fields where Bernadette tended her flocks, and the sheep-fold (the Bergerie) where she and they found shelter. A small chapel near the road-side was built by the villagers, each family bringing its own stones and materials, on the site of a cross before which the saint used often to pray. You may be told stories of miracles said to have happened at this time, e.g., that during a storm a stream divided in order to allow her and her sheep to pass through on their way home, but these tales are to be discounted on the testimony of Bernadette herself—"There is not a word of truth in it".

**Other Short Excursions.** If you wish to enjoy a view of Lourdes, you may care to travel up one of the neighbouring hills by cable-car (téléférique). You have the choice of the Pic du Jer (the hill with the illuminated cross on it—you will have seen it at night); or Béout, the hill with the illuminated star. The first gives the better view of the town and of the Pyrenees. The starting point for both ascents are on the outskirts of the town. A slightly longer excursion of the same type is to go out by bus to Pibeste, where one then climbs 4,500 feet in eight minutes in the cable-car. The view of Lourdes from the summit is more distant, but on a clear day one can see over a hundred miles along the range of the Pyrenees.

### b. Longer Excursions

Since your pilgrimage to Lourdes is likely to be your annual holiday, you may feel justified in making a longer excursion out of Lourdes.

**Biarritz.** It is possible to travel to Biarritz and back in a day. This is a famous and fashionable seaside resort to the West of Lourdes. But you are warned that the journey there and back is long and uninteresting.

✓ **Gavarnie and the Pont D'Espagne.** These are two of the most popular excursions into the Pyrenees—glorious and inspiring mountains such as you may never see again. On these outings it is the journey itself which is enjoyable. Whichever you choose, it is worth while to ensure that the driver makes the short detour necessary for you to stop at the ancient fortified abbey church of St Savin, which contains many features of interest in the church itself and in the museum attached to it.

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

*Saint Bernadette Speaks.* Albert Bessieres S.J. (Clonmore & Reynolds) 10s.6d.

*We Saw Her.* B. G. Sandhurst (Longmans Green) bound 15s., paper 6s.

*Bernadette.* Marcelle Auclair (Desclee) 20s.

*Our Lady of Lourdes.* Mgr Joseph Deery (Brown & Nolan) 18s.

*Bernadette* (for children). G. B. Sterne (Nelson) 12s. 6d.  
With colour illustrations.

The above are obtainable from the C.T.S. Bookshop, 28a Ashley Place, London, S.W.1, or C.T.S. Provincial Depots.

#### *Selected C.T.S. Publications*

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| B 384 | <b>The Story of Bernadette</b><br>Very Rev. J. I. Lane  | 6d   |
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| B 405 | <b>I Met a Miracle - The Story of Jack Traynor</b><br>Rev. Patrick O'Connor                         | 4d   |
| B 307 | <b>The Story of Lourdes and Bernadette</b> (for children)<br>Agnes G. Coxe                          | 4d   |

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