

LOURDES

A Campaign for
the 21st Century





It is time to renew Lourdes for the next century

Prayer. Penance. Healing.

The message of Lourdes is just as relevant today as it was when Our Lady told it to Bernadette over 160 years ago.

Throughout the global pandemic, millions found comfort and reassurance in the unique spirituality of Lourdes online. It is a place like no other, and I hope that it will always be a sanctuary for those seeking peace and healing.

Looking forward, the world needs the comforting embrace of Our Lady more than ever, and pilgrims deserve a Shrine fit for the 21st century.

May the Blessed Mother protect you and your loved ones and reward you for your generosity towards her Lourdes.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Olivier Ribadeau Dumas".

Mons. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas
Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes



The chaplains of Lourdes together in 2020



Lourdes, a brief history

The story of Lourdes is well known throughout the world. Not only has it been immortalized in print, on stage and on the silver screen, but for millions of believers around the world it has become part of daily prayer through the Rosary.

It is the story of a poor peasant girl in France in the 19th century by the name of Bernadette Soubirous who could neither read nor write due to bouts of frequent illness as a child, yet who would be chosen by God to receive apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On 11th February 1858, Bernadette was out gathering firewood with her sister Toinette and a friend near the grotto of Massabielle, just outside the town of Lourdes in the French Pyrenees, when she experienced the first vision of “a smiling figure of a lady dressed in white and enveloped in a soft light”.

On her third visit, the vision in white asked Bernadette to return to the Grotto every day for a fortnight in what would become known as ‘la Quinzaine sacree’ or ‘holy fortnight.’

Between the 11th February and 16th July, Our Lady would appear to

Bernadette no less than 18 times, during which the Blessed Mother imparted four messages, or revelations, to Bernadette:

- Do penance and pray to God for sinners
- Go and drink at the spring, and wash yourself in it
- Build a chapel here, and tell the priests that people are to come here in procession
- The proclamation ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’







Following extensive investigations, Church authorities finally confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions in 1862.

In the 160 years since Our Lady pointed Bernadette towards the (as yet undiscovered) spring in the ground which would become a place of pilgrimage for the next two centuries, 70 official cures have been verified by the Lourdes Medical

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*The lady said,
in the local dialect
Gascon Occitan,
“I am the Immaculate
Conception”.*



Pilgrims light candles for personal prayer intentions, especially for those unable to physically travel to Lourdes.

Bureau as ‘inexplicable’, where no other explanation was found following rigorous medical and scientific examinations.

The Lourdes Commission that examined Bernadette after the vision also ran an extensive analysis of the water from the spring and found that, while it had a high mineral content, it contained nothing out of the ordinary that would account for the cures

attributed to it. Bernadette said that it was faith and prayers that cured the sick: *“One must have faith and pray; the water will have no virtue without faith.”*

Bernadette created a sensation at the time. At first her parents were very embarrassed, asking her not to return to the Grotto. She became engulfed in a media frenzy. Despite many offers, she accepted no payment for her story, saying *“I want to remain poor”*. She did





not bless the many rosaries thrust at her either. *"I don't wear a stole"*. She did not sell medals. *"I am not a merchant."*

The local bishop, writing about the Apparitions, commented on Bernadette's *"simplicity, the candour, the modesty of this child"* always giving *"clear precise responses, impressed with a strong conviction."*

Bernadette herself said of the Apparitions: *"The Virgin used me as a broom to remove the dust. When the work is done, the broom is put behind the door again."*

In the wake of the Apparitions, her parish priest decided that she needed to be protected. Bernadette entered the convent of the Sisters of Nevers aged just 16, and made her solemn profession as a postulant on July 29, 1866 taking the name of Sr. Marie-Bernarde.

Later, she wrote to her family "My mission in Lourdes is finished", withdrawing in order to give all space and honor to Mary.

Bernadette Soubirous passed to Eternal Life on April 16, 1879 at the young age of 35.

On December 8, 1933, Pope Pius XI declared Bernadette Soubirous a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. Her feast day is observed in Lourdes on the day of the third apparition during which the Blessed Virgin spoke to her for the first time, and in the rest of the world on the day of her death, April 16.



The Pontifical Swiss Guard forms an honor guard for the Blessed Sacrament procession during the annual Military Pilgrimage.



Cardinal Parolin in Lourdes, August 15, 2020.



Mons. Xavier d'Arodes de Peyriague, Vice-Rector of the Shrine, accompanies HSH Princess Caroline of Monaco in prayer at the Grotto.



Lourdes today

Today the Shrine attracts almost 6 million visitors every year from every corner of the world. It is universally recognized as a unique place of peace, of prayer, of contemplation and especially of healing.

Although there have been **70** Lourdes miracles formally recognized by the Church since Our Lady's appearances to Bernadette in 1858, there are actually over **7000** cases which have been officially investigated, and over **100,000** claims of cures over the history of the Shrine.

The spring to which Our Lady guided the young Bernadette to discover has always been seen as a sign of grace, and today hundreds of thousands of pilgrims drink the water from the same spring and bath in the water of the famous baths which have traditionally been regarded as a place of healing and cure.

There is also a strong association with the Holy See. St. John Paul II visited on multiple occasions both as cardinal and pope, as did Pope Benedict XVI. In the Vatican Gardens there is an identical grotto to that of Lourdes. Many popes have stopped before it on their daily walk to recite the Rosary.

Our Blessed Mother is also acknowledged by other faiths as a holy person of importance, a fact reflected in the many visitors from other faiths who visit Lourdes every







year. The many national chapels at Lourdes reflect the universality of those who visit Lourdes from every corner of the world, offering the opportunity to experience the grace of a personal encounter with God and His blessed Mother Mary, as well as the reconnection to one's true self.

Lourdes is also a place of welcome, of inclusion for all, regardless of age, gender, status, physical or mental wellbeing. It is a place of penance and compassion, of healing and love, and these components are the 'everyday miracle' of Lourdes for our modern times.

The Shrine has **25** permanent chaplains, ministering spiritually to the pilgrims with more than **60** Masses scheduled each day during the season as well as the Sacrament of Reconciliation available every day all through the day. Lourdes also welcomes about **180** priests as auxiliary

confessors and **250** seminarians who are ministering to Day pilgrims.

While thousands of sick and disabled pilgrims visit Lourdes every year, God's healing power extends to those with a devotion to Our Lady who cannot visit Lourdes physically. It allows those who cannot make the journey to be present spiritually with those who make the pilgrimage on their behalf, part of the wider 'Lourdes family'.

Now the Shrine at Lourdes is facing a new challenge. After the Coronavirus pandemic ends and the lockdown is lifted throughout France but especially at Lourdes, the Shrine will become more important than ever as a sign of renewal for all Christians and for our world. (During the pandemic crisis millions of faithful have been following the Rosary at Lourdes on line or through various TV channels.)

Lourdes is a place of penance and compassion, of healing and love, and these components are the 'everyday miracle' of Lourdes for our modern times.



The original spring which Bernadette found still flows.



Holy Water is present throughout the Shrine.



The nurses of the Order of Malta are an important presence at Lourdes.

Testimonials

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Since 1883 there has been a resident doctor at the Shrine of Lourdes.

Every day I see pilgrims who had been very sick who are possible miracles and I always have to ask myself, ‘Is this an unexplained cure?’ I have to make sure before considering an unexplained cure whether there is no other possible explanation to their recovery from a serious illness, a recovery which no scientist can explain.

Some 7500 claims have been studied over the history of the Office of Medical Observations, but only 70 cures have been found to be “unexplained according to current medical knowledge” by this office and declared a miracle by the person’s bishop. The last Miracle was recognized in 2018. Over 300 doctors studied the case but couldn’t explain the cure.

In the course of one year I will see over 100 possible cures in my office. All examples of great faith. As to whether they are all miracles, well, why not?

”

Dr Alessandro de Franciscis,
Président of the Office of Medical Observations of Lourdes



“

Unable to have children, my mother went to pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lourdes. She had expressed the desire to have a little girl. Nine months later, she gave birth to twins: Bernadette and Geneviève. I am one of them.

”

A pilgrim

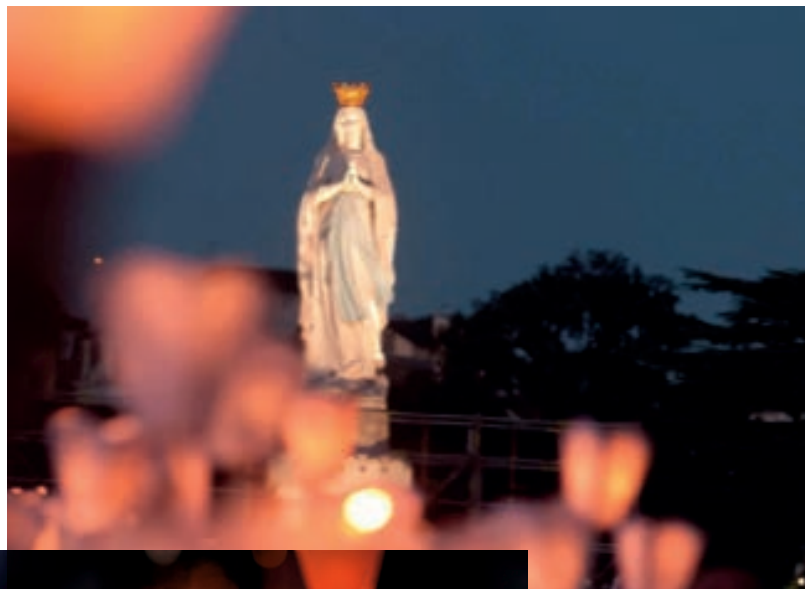


“After many happy years of marriage, my wife became ill. I knew vaguely about Lourdes. I decided to go with my family (actually as a tourist with a camcorder and a camera). At the Grotto we followed the pilgrims as they filed around the rock. My son and my wife were walking in front of me. In the middle of the grotto, something very strong and sudden happened. An intense emotion invaded my body and my mind, and tears flowed from my eyes without me being able to stop them. I did not understand why. As we came out of the Grotto, everything stopped as suddenly as it had started. I pretended to be filming so that people could not see my eyes. Even today, I do not know what happened. I even wonder if I was not perhaps confused or tired. We went home that same evening.

Over time something deep inside me started growing: a force that was pushing me to do something but what? I found out that people could serve in the sanctuary. I knew that I had found what I was looking for. I became a hospitalier.

A year later leukaemia was found in my 7-year-old granddaughter. In a split second, your life can change. I had often asked the Lord not to test my faith because I did not know how I would react. Helpless, our only way to fight is to pray, and to pray again. One afternoon, in my daughter's room, I recited a prayer. In the middle of it, you are asked to make the sign of the cross. My little girl was sitting on her bed, she could not see me. As I crossed myself, she looked at the ceiling and said three times, “Jesus.” She immediately started playing as if nothing had happened. I finished my prayer but did not dare to ask her what she had seen. Today, she is better. She is continuing her chemo. I am not able to say or understand what happened, but I want to believe that the Most High has given us a grace.”

Pierre, 60.



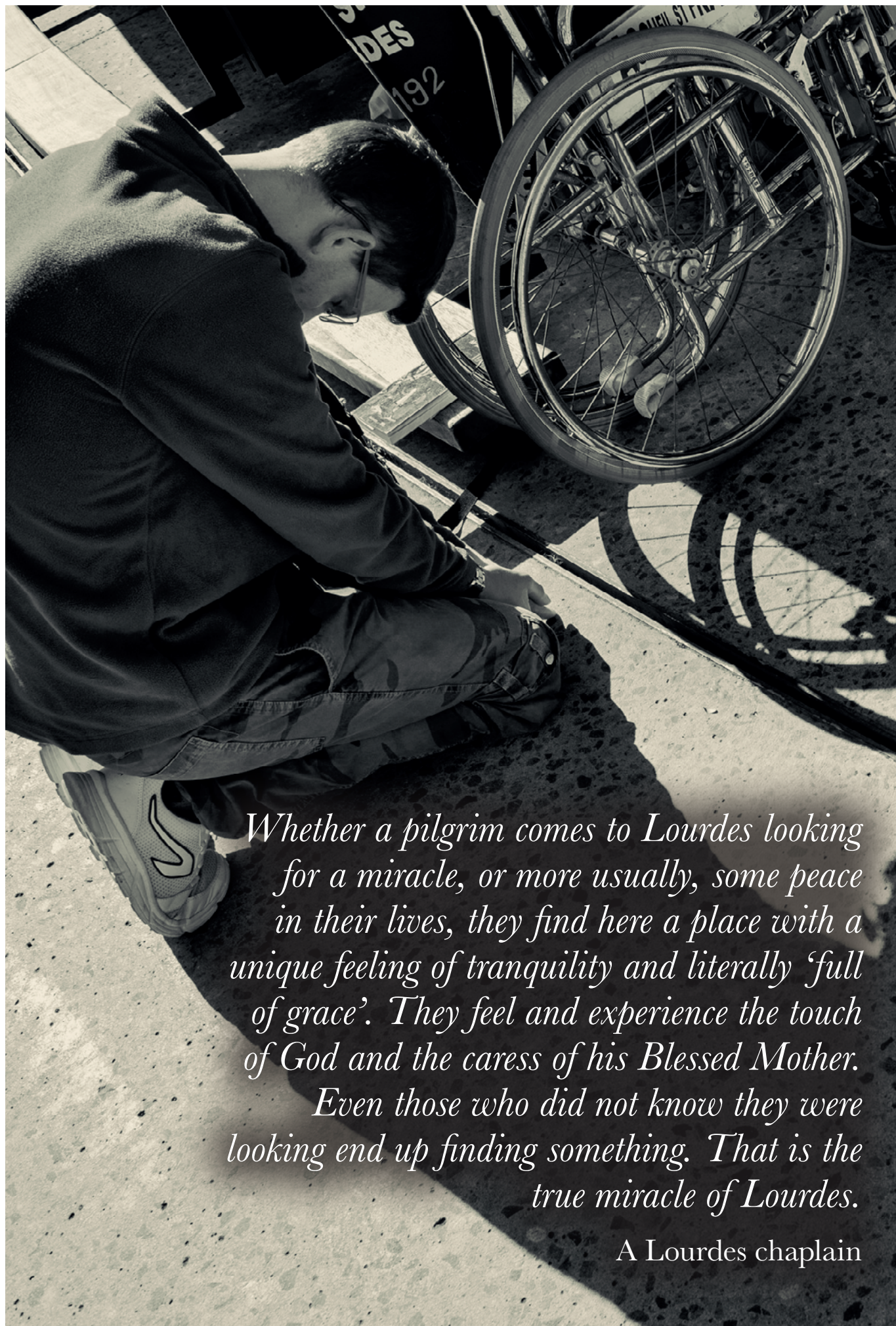
**Morgan Freeman visits Lourdes
with Sr. Bernadette, the 70th miracle**

“

I discovered Lourdes in 2017 during a pilgrimage beginning in Rome where, in front of a Pietà, I had felt Mary's pain and, at the same time, a great peace. In Lourdes, at the Baths, I was at first intimidated and I found the water very cold. Then very quickly I was attracted by the gaze of the Virgin on me, that of the statuette placed in front of me. At the same time a gentle heat filled me. This feeling was very fleeting. The next day, despite my tight schedule, I heard a sort of call to go back to the Baths. This time, under the very reassuring eyes of the ladies, I understood that Mary was there. She was waiting for me. As soon as my foot touched the water, it felt hot and a warmth flooded me from head to toe. My heart rate accelerated. And always I felt this inner peace. I heard both in my ears and in my heart a small voice saying, “Come here and help me, help the people who are suffering.” I was still very calm as I embraced the ladies of the hospitalité. As I left, guided by Providence I tried to find out how I could serve at the Sanctuary. One year later, here I am working in Lourdes. During each act at the Sanctuary, I feel that I am home.

”

Joanne, Trinidad and Tobago



Whether a pilgrim comes to Lourdes looking for a miracle, or more usually, some peace in their lives, they find here a place with a unique feeling of tranquility and literally 'full of grace'. They feel and experience the touch of God and the caress of his Blessed Mother.

Even those who did not know they were looking end up finding something. That is the true miracle of Lourdes.

A Lourdes chaplain

A new chapter of Renewal



Just 18 years after Our Lady appeared to the peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous in 1858, the Basilica at Lourdes was built.

The architect wrote at the time *'In order to get even closer to this holy place, a crypt or sanctuary will be constructed below this chapel, to be located between the upper sanctuary and the Grotto.'* This 'chapel' quickly became known as **the Upper Basilica**.

Since the Upper Basilica was built in 1871 there have been very few structural interventions. Some repairs to its roof took place in 1951 and a further temporary stabilization was made to the roof in 2012.

As a result, an urgent intervention to the Upper Basilica is required to ensure the safety of the building for future generations.

It will be the first comprehensive program of works in more than a century to address serious signs of wear and tear, not just in the Upper Basilica but also in the Bell tower, its spire, and the two smaller Parvis towers.

In addition, the Shrine will take this opportunity to address other priorities within the Upper Basilica, including works to the sanctuary and

the nave, the provision of state-of-the-art heating, lighting, sound and airconditioning, and new disabled access, all designed to significantly enhance the pilgrim experience.

Perhaps most significantly, changes will be made to the Crypt to move the relics of Saint Bernadette from the side chapel to a prominent new setting at the main altar, with a rededication of the Crypt as the 'Chapel of Saint Bernadette'.

As Mons. Xavier d'Arodes, Vice-Rector of the Shrine, says: 'The renovation works to the Upper Basilica and the Crypt represent not just a visible sign of hope and renewal for all people of faith, but also a 'second chapter' in the history of Lourdes, renewed by the renovations to the original church erected by the faithful on command of Our Blessed Mother.'

The total cost of the entire renovation program is 13 million euro which will be raised almost entirely through an international fundraising campaign.



Renovation and Renewal The Upper Basilica



- Reordering of the Basilica Sanctuary and the Nave.
- In a 400msq area within the Basilica the centre of the nave will be raised and the two side aisles will be lowered to create one level throughout in order to allow better access by the sick and disabled to the entire Basilica.
- Underfloor heating will be installed throughout the Basilica for the first time and a new stone floor will also be installed.
- A new lighting system will be installed in the Upper Basilica and in the Crypt, emphasizing and illuminating the altar, the nave, the statue of the Virgin and the relics of Saint Bernadette.

The Sanctuary and Choir



- A new altar of white Carrara marble in a style faithful to the original. The altar will have four columns defining three panels in bas-relief of the Crucifixion, the Nativity and the Annunciation;
- A new 'ambo' or lectern in white marble;
- A new tabernacle with an icon of Our Lady;
- A mobile pulpit made of cedar wood;
- A celebrant's seat made from cedar wood with dark mahogany varnish;
- 34 seated benches made from cedar wood;
- A credence table made from cedar wood;
- A new chandelier in a complementary design;
- An 'umbraculum' or umbrella representing the pontifical status of the Basilica;
- Renovation of the statue of the Blessed Virgin.

The Organ



The magnificent organ in the Upper Basilica has not been renovated for 50 years hence there is severe deterioration to address. In 2003 a heatwave in France caused significant damage to the leather bellows of the organ and to other parts. The proposed work to be undertaken now includes restoring those parts which have deteriorated due to normal wear and tear over the decades, and reconstitute those new elements that have been lost or modified, in order to restore the organ faithfully to its original state.



The Vaulted Ceiling



The 144 years which separate us from the original consecration of the Basilica have inevitably left their traces.

Whether through the passage of time or the millions of prayers of supplication and thanksgiving which were sent heavenward from within the Upper Basilica, there now remains the challenge of 2200m sq of ceiling vaults and walls to restore.

From the plastering and painting of the walls to the individual shrines and votive candle stands, the goal is that the entire interior of the Basilica will regain its original lustre and continue the testimony of faith desired by Our Lady.

Stained Glass Windows



The basilica has 42 narrative stained glass windows, telling the story of the apparitions and the evolution of the Shrine. These were designed by Canon Lambert from Paris and subsequently rendered in the style of painting by the famous stained glass artist Lucien Laurent-Gsell. In total they cover an area of 380m sq throughout the Upper Basilica and the Crypt.

The Crypt



The presence of the relics of St. Bernadette are pivotal in importance for the renewal of the Shrine for the future. Bernadette, the messenger of Our Lady, should be at the very centre of the liturgical life of Lourdes and of the pilgrim experience. A new altar setting will be created in the Crypt below the Upper Basilica, a place worthy of receiving the original reliquary, which will be moved to a new setting at the Crypt's main altar. The Crypt itself will be renamed 'The Chapel of the St. Bernadette' in honour of the girl chosen by Our Lady to receive the message of the Blessed Mother of God.

The Bell Tower, Spire and Parvis Towers



There has been little intervention on the Bell Tower since 1877. Due to extensive wear and tear, water damage, erosion and fissures caused by earthquakes in the area over 140 years, major interventions are required for the Bell Tower, the spire, and the two Parvis Towers.



The elements needing restoration include

- Upper Spire
- Lower Spire
- 4 pinnacle towers and 4 gable walls
- Lancet windows and Bell Chamber
- Bell Tower
- Entrance Gate
- Parvis Staircase
- Belfry
- Bell Tower Clock
- North and South Parvis Towers



The significant part of the intervention for the Basilica Bell Tower will consist of removing and replacing the stones which have deteriorated beyond repair.



These include

- The stone facings.
- The crockets which have become fragile and are in danger of falling away.
- The cracked colonettes which must be completely replaced while retaining the original tie rods.
- Reconstruction of all the facing joints which have suffered a lot from repeated frosts over the past 140 years.
- The cracks and fissures which are also a result of the frequency of earthquakes in the area. The worst cases appear towards the end of the spiral staircase, located at the junction of the bell tower and the nave. These will be 'stitched' together.
- The clockface and hands which require restoration and re-gilding.
- The beams of the original structure which will be strengthened with a metal frame.

How will this be achieved?

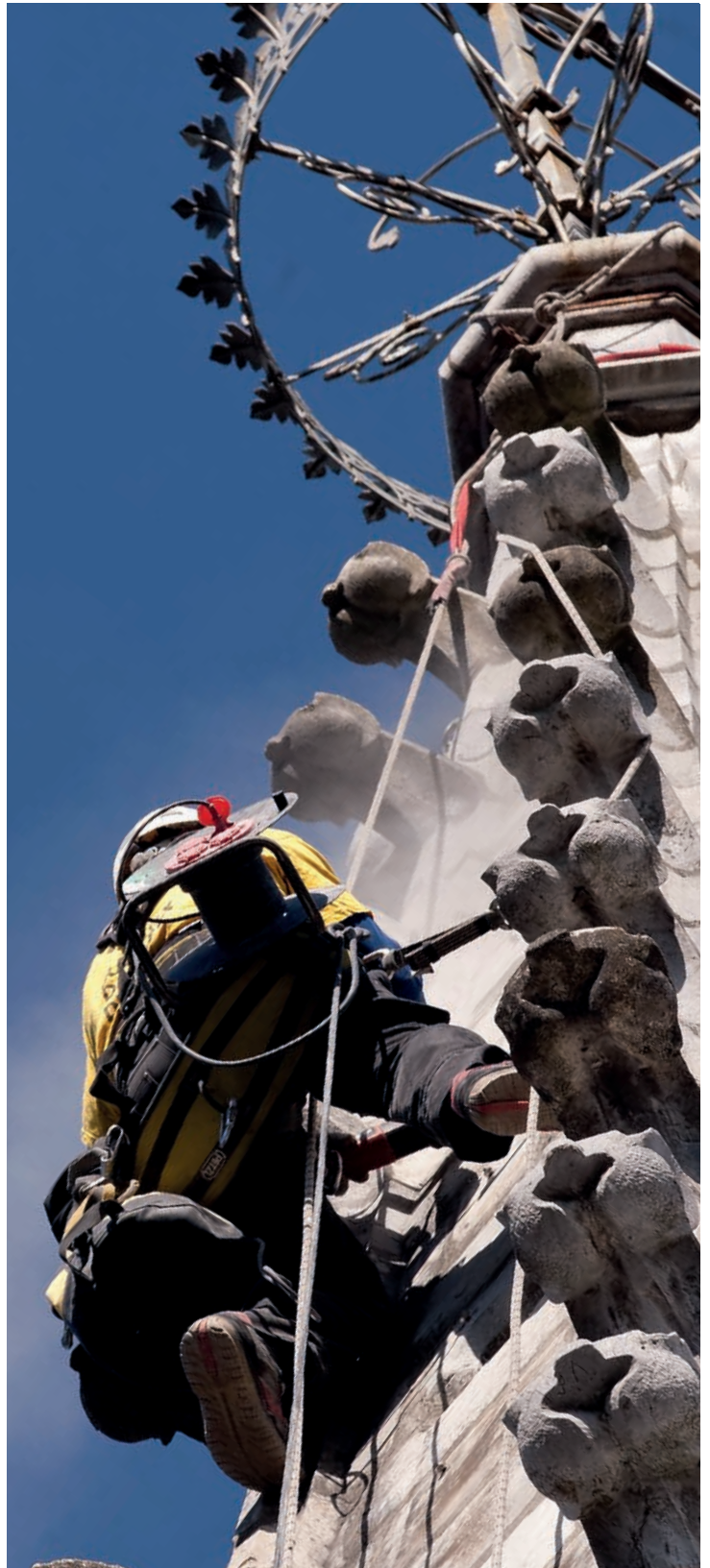
Where possible, an 'identical' restoration will take place, substituting like for like. Where areas of the Bell Tower are too damaged to be preserved or reused, a major intervention will be required.

As identified thus far, the non-salvageable elements are essentially those areas that are cracked and disintegrating, ie. the crockets on the spire, the parts of the balusters supporting the four smaller conical turrets, and any stones in which the staples or metal fasteners have rusted and caused the stone to shatter. (This particularly concerns the top part of the spire where the cross shaft is attached).

The original metal reinforcements to the Bell Tower will be reused after cleaning and an anti-rust treatment applied, or they will be replaced if, after removal, the parts connected to the stonework prove to be too damaged to be reused.

It is estimated that the top 5 metres of the 70 metre tall spire will most likely have to be completely replaced.

Similarly, almost all of the balusters supporting the four conical turrets will need to be removed and replaced.



Architectural Carvings

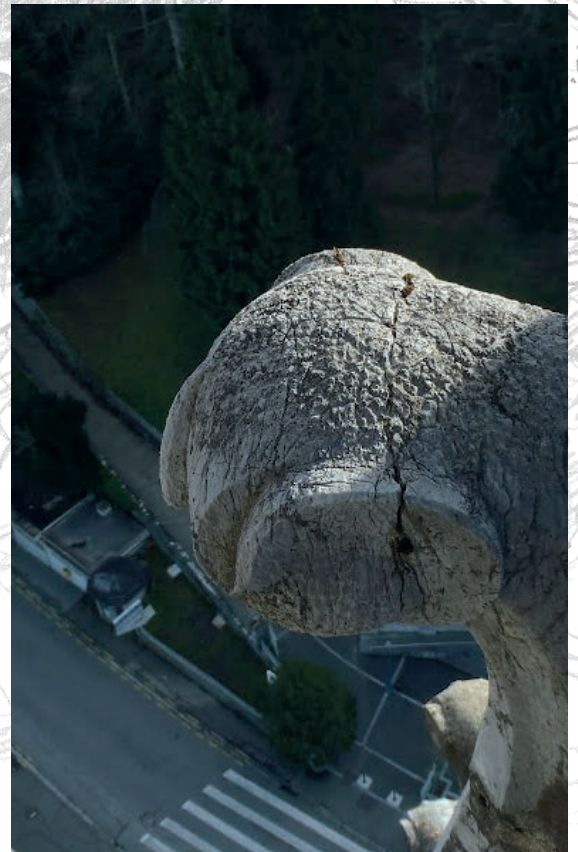
Damaged carvings on the façade of the Bell Tower will need to be faithfully reproduced by conservation craftsmen. During restoration, the parts that can be reinstated will be carefully numbered in order to respect the authenticity of every piece of stonework.



Water damage

The spire is particularly prone to water damage. The masonry has allowed water infiltration over the many decades, and therefore the water tightness of the spire is particularly poor. This has resulted in water entering the joints, which is very dangerous for a building that is frequently subject to seasonal frost.

Hence, particular care needs to be paid to the joints. First, the damaged joints that have suffered from water penetration will need to be extensively chiselled out before being repaired. Secondly, the joints in the areas that are to be removed need to be fitted with a slightly sloped chamfered edge to help the water to run off. This work is labour intensive and extremely delicate, particularly around the summit of the tower. Thirdly, the mortar for the masonry and for the repair of the joints will be filled with hydraulic lime in order to ensure an effective sealant.



Cleaning treatment

The bell tower, after decades being subjected to bad weather, has taken on a particular 'patina'. It is particularly bad on the north and west sides. After a light 'scrub' cleaning in order to ensure accurate matching of all the facings, a light lime treatment will be applied. This process has already been used satisfactorily on stonework in the nave.



Metal work and joinery

The wrought iron works have more or less deteriorated, attacked by rust. They will all need to be removed and restored before being put back in place. Prior to this they will be cleaned and coated with an anti-rust treatment.



Bell Tower Cross

The visible part of the high cross atop the Bell Tower will require special treatment due to the materials with which it is constructed and the alterations which are planned for it. The shaft will be fitted with a welded collar to prevent the water which runs along the cross from entering the summit stone. The bays are fitted with louvred oak shutters. Those on the west and north sides will be replaced exactly as they were before. The others will be restored as much as possible.



The Parvis Towers



These two smaller Parvis towers with their magnificently crafted lead pinnacles flank the bell tower and were built for the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions in 1908.

The south tower contains an elevator which serves the Rosary Basilica. The north tower was originally used by early pilgrims as a way to connect from the Grotto to the Basilica. Today it is used by the chaplains as a quick and discreet passage down to the Grotto.

Both towers have suffered major wear and tear over the years, mirroring many of the same problems found in the bell tower and spire, ie. water and frost damage, deteriorating rods, crockets and joints, and cracked stonework.

A major intervention will attempt to repair and restore the original features where possible, otherwise replacement with new stonework and metal will be used to restore the century old towers to a new and safe condition.

Budget Costs



THE UPPER BASILICA:

€

The Organ	300,000
The Sanctuary and the Choir	500,000
The Vaulted Ceiling and buttresses	2,200,000
The Nave (flooring, heating, lighting)	1,600,000
The Stained Glass Windows	760,000
Signage and technical equipement for disabled	200,000
Outside ramp for disabled	800,000
Entrance and vestibule	150,000

THE CRYPT:

The Chapel of St Bernadette	250,000
The Crypt (Flooring, heating, lightning)	800,000
Access for disabled	150,000

EXTERNAL:

The Belltower and Spire	3,000,000
The Towers	910,000
Street furniture and pathway for disabled	320,000
Access from the Grotto	1,200,000

TOTAL:

€ 13,140,000



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