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## St. Bernadette Death

During her childhood, St. Bernadette lived in Lourdes, France. She was the oldest of her eight siblings. Two days after she was born, Bernadette was baptized at St. Pierre's Church. St. Bernadette had terrible asthma as a child. As a result, she lived the duration of her life with fragile health. When she was fourteen, St. Bernadette went with a friend and her sister, to collect firewood at a grotto. Suddenly, a woman appeared to Bernadette above a rose bush. The woman made a sign of the cross and prayed the rosary. In response, Bernadette knelt and prayed her own rosary. However, Bernadette's sister and friend said that they never saw a woman.

Several days later, the girls went back to the grotto. Bernadette claimed that she could see the woman again and to pray her rosary. Bernadette went into a daze and one girl threw a rock to try to snap her out of her daze. The rock broke when it hit the ground and the woman vanished. A few days later, Bernadette had a vision of the woman and she asked her to go to the grotto everyday. At each visit, Bernadette saw the Virgin Mary. These visions became known as "la Quinzaine sacree", which means "holy fortnight."

Bernadette's parents became ashamed of her visits to the grotto. One day, Bernadette had a vision, which told her "to drink of the water of the spring, to wash in it and to eat the herb that grew there" as an act of penance. The next day, the muddy water from the grotto became clear. She had another vision which said that "a chapel should be built and a procession formed." Her sixteenth vision lasted for over an hour, where Bernadette asked the woman what her name was, but the woman only responded with a smile. After asking the woman what her name was several more times, she replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Many people in her town disagreed with Bernadette's visions. Some believed she was telling the truth, but others thought she had a mental illness. Church authorities and the French government interviewed Bernadette and decided that she they believed her. Since the spring started making clean water, the Lourdes Medical Bureau verified that it had cured sixty-nine people. However, there wasn't a scientific explanation for the cures.

Bernadette asked a priest to build a chapel at the grotto, which is now known as the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes and is one of the biggest Catholic pilgrimage sites of the world. After this, Bernadette learned to read and write at the school run by the Sisters of Charity of Nevers. Bernadette later became an infirmary assistant. People looked up to Bernadette for her humility. One time a nun asked her if she had temptations of pride from her visions. Bernadette responded, "How can I? The Blessed Virgin chose me only because I was the most ignorant."

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Bernadette died from tuberculosis and was unable to participate in convent life as a result. Her last words were “Blessed Mary, Mother of God, pray for me. A poor sinner, a poor sinner.”

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