

+++ *From the Pastor* +++  
*Sunday, February 8, 2015*

**Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, Patroness of the Sick, Pray for Us!**

The Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, is Wednesday, February 11, 2015. This day marks the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Blessed Mother's first appearance to St. Bernadette in the town of Lourdes, France. The Feast of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, is also World Day of the Sick. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has a special place in His Sacred Heart for the sick and the suffering.

During Holy Mass on this feast the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be administered. People who are enduring a serious, chronic medical condition or who are anticipating a surgery may receive this sacrament.

It was in 1858 that our Savior sent His Mother to St. Bernadette who lived in Lourdes, a town situated in the mountains in the south of France near the Spanish border. There our Blessed Mother revealed herself to St. Bernadette as the Holy and Immaculate Conception and declared to her that it was the will of God that a great shrine be erected on the site. Today, millions of people come from all over the world to worship and adore Almighty God at the grotto where a spring of water miraculously appeared in Lourdes and to be refreshed as they bask in the love, mercy and compassion of Christ which awaits them there.

Since Our Blessed Mother's appearances to St. Bernadette many miraculous healings have taken place at Lourdes and this holy shrine has become a beautiful place where the sick and the suffering are treated with tenderness, mercy and compassion. Indeed, at Lourdes, the sick and the suffering are treated like royalty. They are the First Citizens of Lourdes and are brought to the waters to know, in their souls, the depths of Christ's mercy and love. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness of the sick, pray for us!

***St. Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14: Saint's Day or What?***

St. Valentine was a third-century Christian Martyr whose feast day is kept on February 14. Actually he is one of 10 St. Valentines, including a ninth-century pope (and these ten are among 40,000 recognized saints, of whom only a fraction are commemorated on the calendar!). There are various explanations for the connection between his name and the current "Valentine" practices, none of which have anything to do with his life.

Regarding February 14's "original": he was a priest, possibly a bishop, and a physician from the city of Rome. He was beheaded on the 14<sup>th</sup>. It could be said that it was because of his love for the Lord and His people that his name has become so commonly associated with the devotion of lovers for beloved, children for parents, and friends for friends.

