

## GOING TO LOURDES AS AN ASSISTED PILGRIM

Hundreds of thousand of people visit Lourdes every year. Some spend a day, others spend 4/5 days and some members of Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes spend weeks there as volunteers.

Some pilgrims need assistance to complete their pilgrimage. Located within the Sanctuaries is Accueil Notre Dame. "Accueil" is the French word for "welcome".

The Accueil was designed to accommodate pilgrims who needed wheelchair, nursing or general assistance. People often refer to the Accueil as "the hospital".

Each pilgrimage group, and they are coming from all over the world, may choose to use the Accueil for their Assisted Pilgrims. The pilgrimages have Doctors, Nurses, Carers, Men, Women and Youth teams who travel to help with their Assisted Pilgrims in the Accueil and when taking part in the various activities of their Pilgrimage.

If you are interested in joining our Diocesan Pilgrimage or would like further information please fill out the following and return it to us:

### Limerick Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage

Diocesan Office

St. Munchins College

Corbally, Limerick

T: 061-350000

E: [lourdespilgrimage@limerickdiocese.org](mailto:lourdespilgrimage@limerickdiocese.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like information specific to one of the groups below please tick the relevant box.

<b>Pilgrim</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Assisted Pilgrim</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Nurse</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Carer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Handmaiden (female helper)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Brancardier (male helper)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Limerick Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage

19<sup>TH</sup> TO 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026



THE ANNUAL LIMERICK  
DIOCESAN  
PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES  
TAKES PLACE EACH JUNE  
LED BY BISHOP BRENDAN LEAHY.

*Would you or a member of your  
family like to participate?*





Each year millions of pilgrims and visitors from all over the world visit the Marian shrine in Lourdes, a city in the Pyrenees mountains range, in the south-west region of France.

The area around the Grotto is called the Sanctuaries. There are many churches within the Sanctuaries and there are three basilica – the Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Rosary Basilica and the Basilica of St Pius X – respectively known as the Upper, Lower and Underground Basilica.

The Crypt stands on the Rock of Massabielle between the Upper Basilica and the Rosary Basilica. It was opened on 19th May 1866 and has capacity for 120 people.

Between 11th February until 16th July 1858 a young, poor, uneducated 14 year old French girl reported 18 apparitions by “a lady”. After much scepticism from local clergy, Bernadette Soubirous’ story was declared worthy of belief and after canonical investigation in January 1862 the Bishop of Lourdes declared that the Virgin Mary did appear indeed to Bernadette.

During the apparitions “the lady” did not always speak to Bernadette but at the 3rd apparition the lady asked her “would you do me the grace to come here for fifteen days”  
The Lady also told her to:

- “Kiss the ground as an act of Penance” (8th apparition)
- “go drink at the fountains and wash (9th apparition)
- “Go tell the priests to come here in procession and to build a chapel here” (13th apparition)
- “I am the Immaculate Conception” (16th apparition)

On 16th July 1858, Bernadette saw “the lady” for the final apparition. Bernadette did not visit the grotto area, known as Massabielle, after that. In 1866, Bernadette entered the convent in Nevers and she never returned to Lourdes.

Many people make the journey alone with family or friends or as part of a pilgrimage group. The Grotto of the Apparitions is the heart of the Sanctuary. People come to the Grotto to pray and many pass through the Grotto touching the rock with their hands and kissing it.

Within the Grotto, you can see the water from the spring that Bernadette uncovered. Lighting a candle, drinking water at the fountains or making the “water gesture” at the Baths (Piscines) is all part of the experience. Previously, people came to bathe in the Baths to pray for recovery and well-being.

There are two daily processions during pilgrimage season-Easter to end of October.

The Blessed Sacrament Procession takes place at 5pm every afternoon and the Torchlight Procession takes place at 9pm every night. Everyone is welcome to attend and various pilgrimages are recognisable by their banners and flags, sometimes even their uniforms.

