

LOURDES, A PLACE OF HEALING.

- Lourdes is in the south of France. It is an important place of pilgrimage for sick people.



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- It all began when a poor young girl called Bernadette Soubirous, had a vision of Our Lady
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- Our Lady appeared to Bernadette 18 times, standing on a rock above a dirty old grotto (cave), where pigs used to shelter. At first people thought Bernadette was mad, but she persisted and did as Our Lady asked her. Often, she would pray the Rosary as she gazed at the figure. She did not know it was Our Lady at first. During the thirteenth time Our Lady appeared, she told Bernadette: *“Go, tell the priests to come here in procession and build a chapel here.”*
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- Another time, Our Lady told Bernadette to drink at the spring. There was no spring there, but Bernadette scrapped at the earth with her bare hands and, after a few tries, clear, clean water appeared. Later on, other people heard about it and a girl called Catherine, who had a paralysed arm, came and touched the rock and her arm was healed. After that, many people began to visit the grotto and eventually a number of churches were built to accommodate the pilgrims who came to pray.

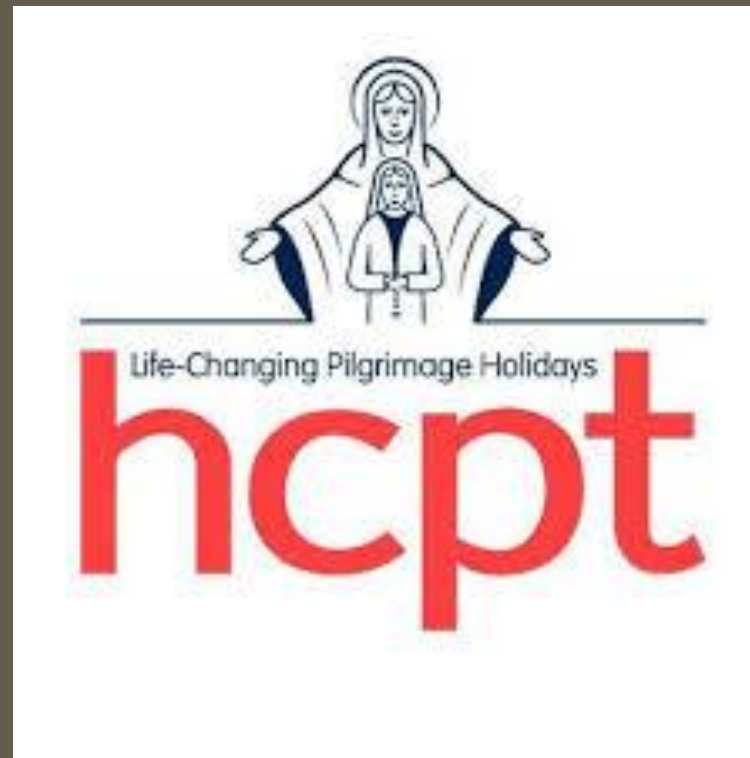
- Today 6 million people come to Lourdes every year from all over the world. Very many sick people come, some wanting a physical cure, but above all, a spiritual healing and to return and face life with an inner peace.



- There are five special signs at Lourdes:
- The water: many people who go to Lourdes bathe in special baths in the water from the spring.
- The rock of the grotto: pilgrims like to touch the rock of the grotto where Our Lady stood.
- Light: at night, there is a candlelight procession and all day there are candles burning in front of the grotto, reminding people of the light of Christ.
- The crowds are huge, coming from every race and nation, young and old, sick and healthy. Lourdes is a true experience of the Church, a gathering together of all the scattered children of God.
- The sick are given a special blessing every afternoon. It gives them comfort and their helpers also gain from the experience of being with the sick and serving them as Christ cared for the sick when he was on earth.

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- HCPT - The Pilgrimage Trust is an organisation which enables those who may need help, especially children and adults with disabilities, learning difficulties and social and emotional needs, to experience a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Every year they organise trips to Lourdes for over 7000 people.



- **SOME KEY QUESTIONS**

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- What do you think of the way Bernadette acted ?

- Why do you think people go to Lourdes?

- Would you like to go and why?

- What do you think you might do in Lourdes?

- Which of the five signs appeals to you most and why?

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TASK - TUESDAY 30TH JUNE

TO LEARN ABOUT LOURDES, A PLACE OF HEALING.

- Research some information about Lourdes and design a poster for a school or parish trip to Lourdes and explain why it would be good to go, what the experience would be like and how it might shape your life.