

# LOURDES

and the

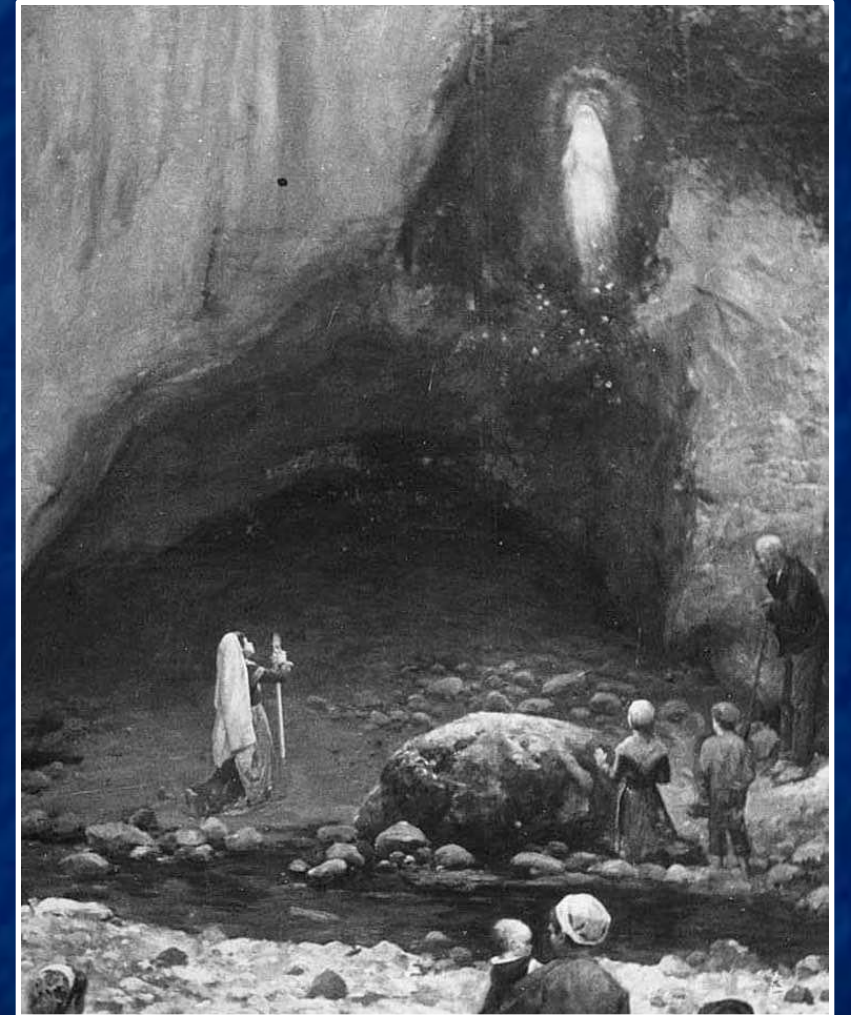
# Miraculous Cures

Steve Hemler & Lee Granger



# Presentation Outline

- The Story of Lourdes
  - Bernadette & Apparitions
  - Early Cures
- Recognition of Cures
  - Number of Cures
- Modern Cures
  - Decline in Number of Cures
  - Most Recent Cures
- Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes



# Why Pray to Mary?



- Church has always honored, not worshipped, Mary.
  - Declared “Mother of God” at Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.
- Mary is a special grace to humanity & draws us to her Son.
  - “Mary is like the moon, for her light is always the reflection of a higher light.” (Archbishop Fulton Sheen)
- As at wedding feast at Cana, Mother Mary intercedes to Jesus on our behalf.
  - “Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself.”

(CCC #2677)

# The Story of Lourdes



- Small, unassuming town in southern France at foot of Pyrenees Mtns, near Spanish border.
- Many rock outcrops, largest called Massabielle.
  - Large grotto on the side.
    - Big enough to shelter in bad weather.
    - Trashy dumping area where wild pigs foraged.
- Feb. 11, **1858**, while gathering firewood, 14-year old Bernadette Soubirous saw vision of “a beautiful lady” in an alcove above the grotto.
  - Total of 18 apparitions, final on July 16, 1858.
- *Video: Bernadette and the Apparitions.*



# Early Cures

- **Catherine Latapie**

- 39-year old from neighboring French town of Loubajac.
- Two fingers of her right hand paralyzed after she fell from a tree in 1856.
- On March 1, 1858, she awoke in wee hours of the morning with a strong urge to visit Lourdes Grotto.
- Met Bernadette at dawn, washed her hand in spring, fully cured.
  - Original agility restored even before she had dried her hand.
- That night, she went home and gave birth to her third child, who was ordained a priest in 1882.
- 1<sup>st</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on Jan. 18, 1862.



# Early Cures

- **Louis Bouriette**

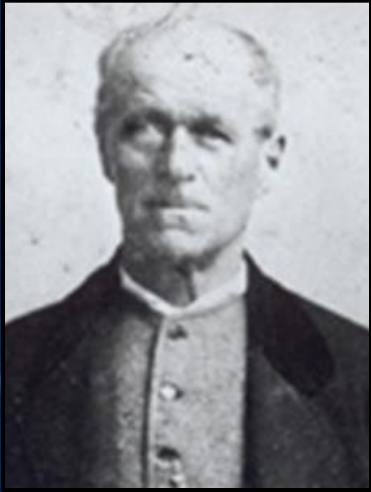
- Born in 1804. Lived in Lourdes.
- Permanently blinded in right eye after hit by shrapnel from quarry explosion, which killed his brother Joseph, who was at his side.
- In March 1858, Louis repeatedly bathed and re-bathed his right eye with water from the spring.
- After these ablutions his sight was fully restored.
- Verified by his doctor several days later.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on Jan. 18, 1862.



# Early Cures

- **Pierre de Rudder**

- Born in 1822 in Jabbeke, Belgium.
- Feb. 16, 1867, 45-year-old Pierre's left leg crushed by fallen tree.
  - Smashed both tibia and fibula below knee.
- Bones did not knit together, but ends became dead & blackened.
  - Bandages on open, festering wound needed changed 3 times a day.
  - Refused to have leg amputated.
- April 7, 1875, Pierre and his wife took train to Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Oostacker, **Belgium** (replica of Grotto).
  - "Bones separated by about an inch in the swinging left lower leg."
- *Video: Pierre de Rudder's Cure.*

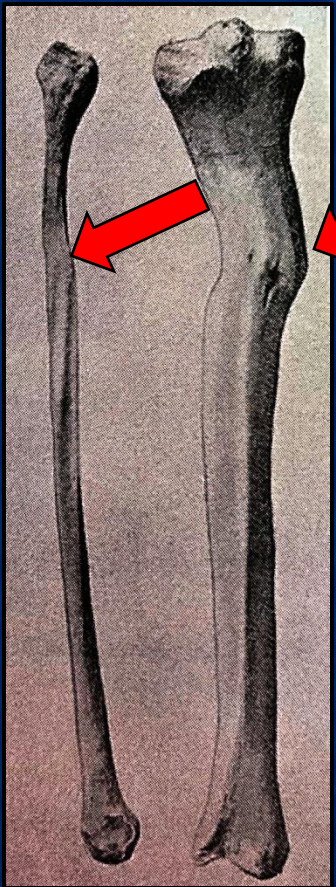






# Early Cures

- **Pierre de Rudder (continued)**



- Left leg suddenly as sound as right.
  - Swelling had disappeared and both legs were same length again.
  - Muscles of left leg firm and strong, despite 8 years of atrophy.
- Died of pneumonia on March 22, 1898, 23 years after cure.
  - Body later exhumed.
  - **2 inches** of missing bone added to tibia & fibula of his left leg.
    - 5 g of phosphate of lime required, but only 1.6 g in bloodstream.
- 8<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on July 25, 1908.
- Lourdes' "most-discussed miracle" did not even occur at Lourdes.
  - First miraculous cure to happen without use of Lourdes' water.

# Recognition of Cures

- Skeptics: Cures are psychological in origin.
  - Caused by religious hysteria, autosuggestion, and wishful thinking.
  - Many don't believe in God, thus supernatural miracles "cannot happen."
- How explain 2 inches of missing bone suddenly added to Pierre de Rudder's left leg?
- How explain documented cures of infants, young children, unconscious?
- Why are thousands of instantaneous cures documented at Lourdes and not that many elsewhere?
- Church established independent committees of doctors and medical professionals to thoroughly and objectively investigate reported cures.

# Recognition of Cures

- **Bureau des Constatations Médicales**, from 1883 to 1947:
  - Medical fact-finding and evaluation committee.
  - Composed of any doctor or health care professional who wanted to participate in reviewing case of a claimed cure.
- **Lourdes Medical Bureau**, established in 1947:
  - In charge of screening patients, conducting clinical investigation, and selecting cases for further discussion by National Medical Committee.
    - National Medical Committee decision-making body also formed in 1947.
  - **International Medical Committee of Lourdes**, est. 1954 based in Paris.
    - Does not pronounce a cure “miraculous.” That’s done by the Church.
    - Only pronounces that a cure is “medically inexplicable.”
  - Estimated only 10% to 20% of cures reported to Medical Bureau.

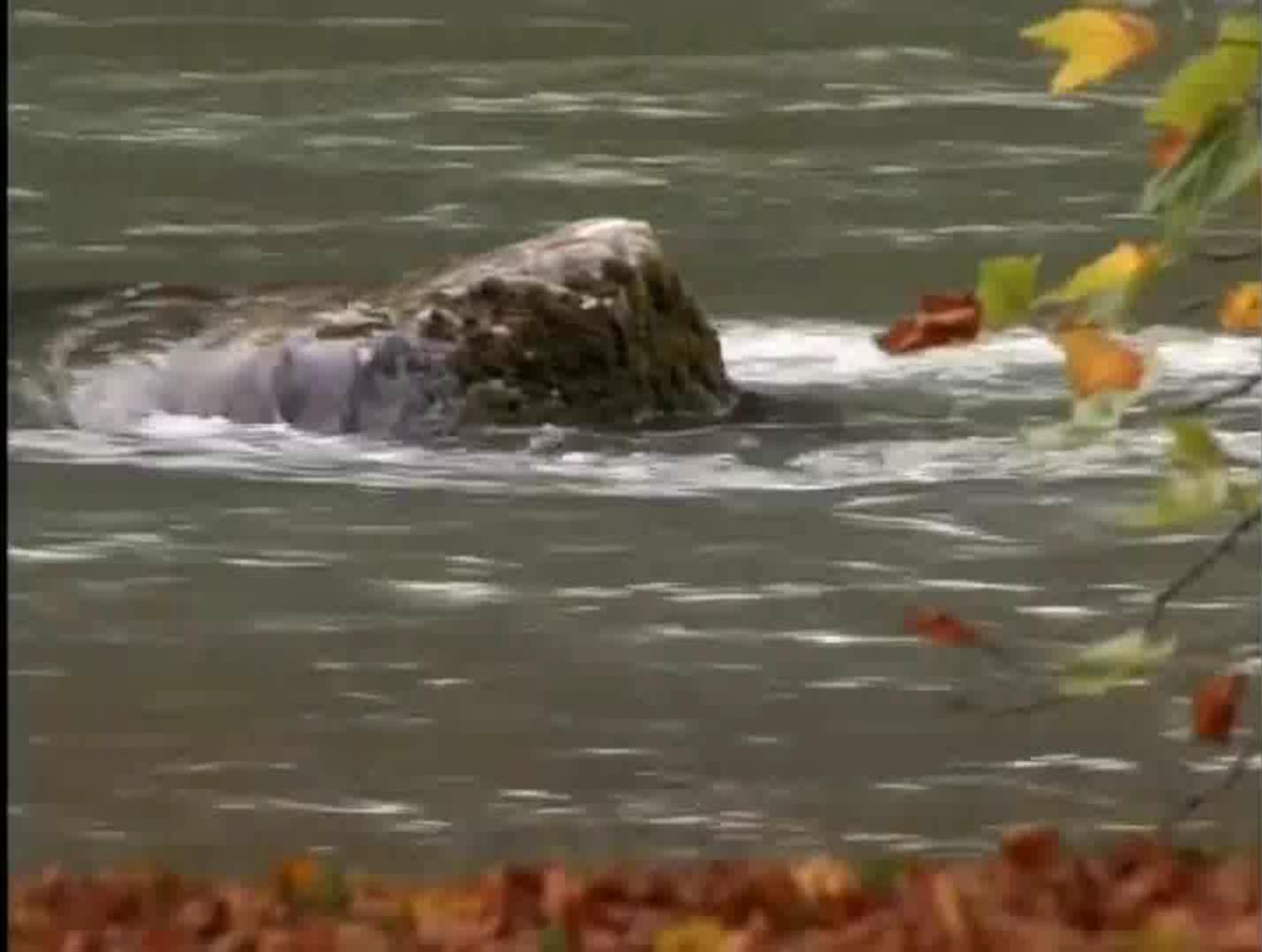
# Recognition of Cures

- For a cure to be recognized as “medically inexplicable,” certain criteria must be met and **all** the following facts established:
  1. The original diagnosis must be verified and confirmed beyond doubt.
  2. The diagnosis must be regarded as “incurable” with current means.
  3. The cure must happen in association with a visit to Lourdes or a Lourdes shrine (drinking or bathing in the water not required).
  4. The cure must be instantaneous (rapid resolution of symptoms and signs of the illness).
  5. The cure must be complete (with no residual impairment or deficit).
  6. The cure must be permanent (with no recurrence, e.g., after 5 years).

# Number of Cures

- Over 7,000 cases of unexplained cures have been documented at Lourdes.
  - More than 2,500 cases pronounced “medically inexplicable.”
  - Not all declared miracles by the Church.
- Only 70 cases of unexplained cures have been recognized as “miraculous” by the Catholic Church.
  - Not often done, since medical certification seen as sufficient.
  - From 1946 to 2018, 30 Lourdes cures declared miraculous.
- *Video: Healings at Lourdes*

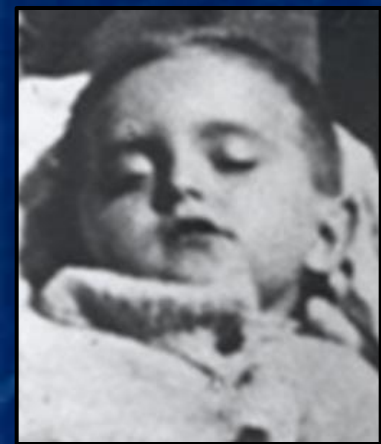




# Modern Cures

- **Francis Pascal**

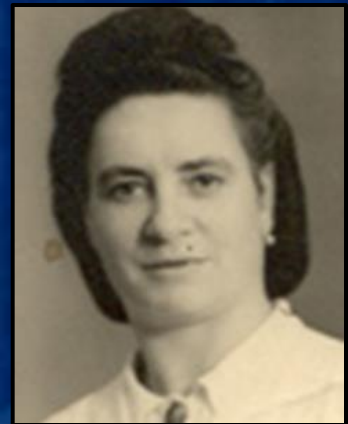
- From Beaucaire, France. Born Oct. 2, 1934.
- Developed meningitis of spinal cord when **3 years old**.
  - By June 1938, Francis' arms and legs totally paralyzed, also blind.
- In August 1938, his parents took the 3-year-old boy to Lourdes.
  - Doctor: "The child was traveling lying down and quite blind."
- After 2<sup>nd</sup> bath, Francis fully recovered sight and lost his paralysis.
- Lourdes Medical Bureau confirmed cure in 1946, 1947 and 1948.
  - Report: "Cure is now of 10 years duration. No medical explanation for instantaneous disappearance of the malady and its symptoms."
- 45<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on May 31, 1949.





# Modern Cures

- **Jeanne Frétel**



- From Rennes, France. Born May 25, 1914.
- Diagnosed with tubercular peritonitis in 1938.
  - Abdomen swollen and hard. Bedridden since 1945. Weighed 97 lbs.
  - Emaciated, high fever, needed strong doses of morphine daily.
- Arrived in a coma by train into Lourdes on Oct. 5, 1948.
  - Oct. 8, while unconscious, priest pushed tiny fragment of consecrated host into her mouth at Mass for the Sick at St. Bernadette's altar.
  - Immediately regained consciousness, stomach returned to normal, fever and pains disappeared, could get up, walk, and eat.
- Oct. 5, 1949, Lourdes Medical Bureau declared, "No medical explanation of this cure can be given. It is beyond natural laws."
- 52<sup>nd</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on Nov. 20, 1950.

# Modern Cures

- **Serge Perrin**

- From Lion d'Angers, France. Born Feb. 13, 1929.
- Feb. 1964, age 35, first neurological episode, right-side paralysis.
- Diagnosed with thrombosis (clot) in left carotid artery in Feb. 1969.
  - Right leg and arm paralyzed, losing sight in left eye.
- May 1969 pilgrimage to Lourdes. Returned home as bad as before.
  - Oct. 1969, granted invalidity pension, unable to do anything alone.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> pilgrimage to please his wife, train to Lourdes on April 26, 1970.
  - After Anointing of Sick on May 1, felt warmth throughout his body.
  - Could then walk unaided and see clearly without eyeglasses.
- Doctors' booklet on cure published Lourdes Medical Bureau 1973.
- 64<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on June 17, 1978.

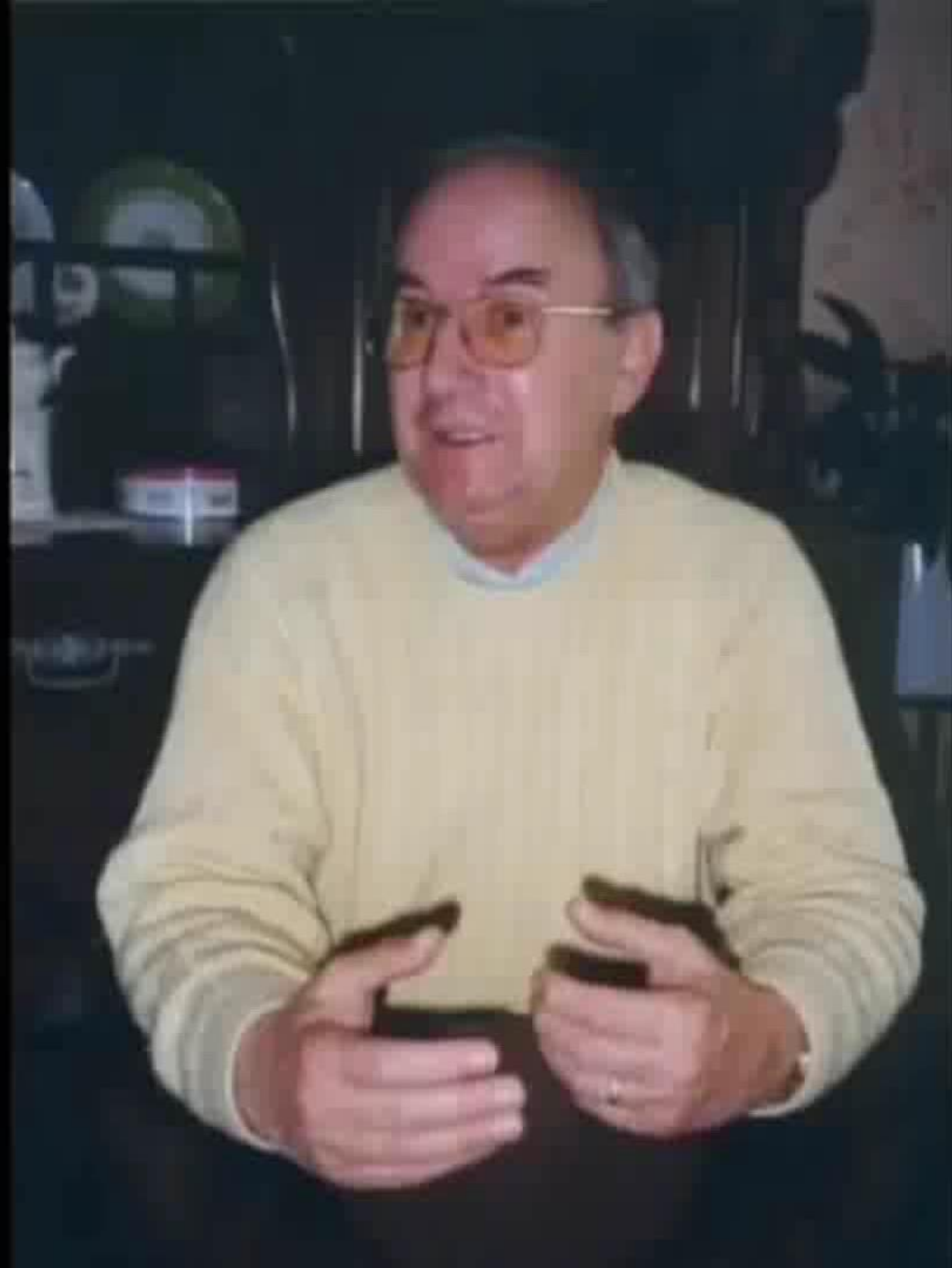


# Modern Cures

- **Jean-Pierre Bély**



- From La Couronne, France. Born in 1936.
- Paralyzed by multiple sclerosis that began in 1972.
- Classified by French health system as a total invalid by the time he went on pilgrimage to Lourdes in Oct. 1987 at age 51.
- Received Anointing of the Sick at end of pilgrimage.
  - That night, he felt warmth throughout his body, was able to walk.
  - All traces of the illness had disappeared.
- 66<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on Feb. 9, 1999.
- *Video: Jean-Pierre Bély discusses his cure.*



# Decline in Number of Cures

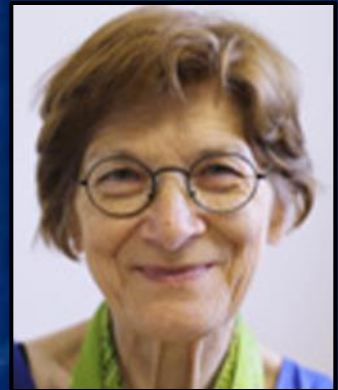
- Steady decline in number of **medically acknowledged** cures over last 100 years.
- Likely due to:
  - Increasing effectiveness of modern medicine (e.g., tuberculosis).
  - Strict criteria to be fulfilled and documented for a cure to be officially recognized as “medically inexplicable.”
  - Hassle and cost to travel to meetings in France to be medically evaluated, including follow-up meetings (e.g., yearly for 5+ years).
- *Video: Decline in acknowledged cures.*



# Most Recent Cures

- **Danila Castelli**

- From Bereguardo, Italy. Born Jan. 16, 1946. Wife and mother.
- At age 34, started having severe blood pressure hypertensive crisis.
  - Also suffered a number of other serious health problems.
  - Underwent hysterectomy, annexectomy, and partial pancreatectomy.
- Danila and her husband, a doctor, went to Lourdes in May 1989.
  - When came out of the Baths she experienced an extraordinary feeling of well being and reported cure to Lourdes Medical Bureau.
- Lourdes Medical Bureau certified cure after 5 meetings (1989-2010).
- 69<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on June 20, 2013.
- *Video: Dr. Alessandro de Franciscus, Director of Lourdes Medical Bureau, explains rigorous process by which cure was accepted.*





**Dr A. de Franciscis**  
président du Bureau  
des Constatations  
Médicales de Lourdes



# Most Recent Cures

- **Sister Bernadette Moriau**

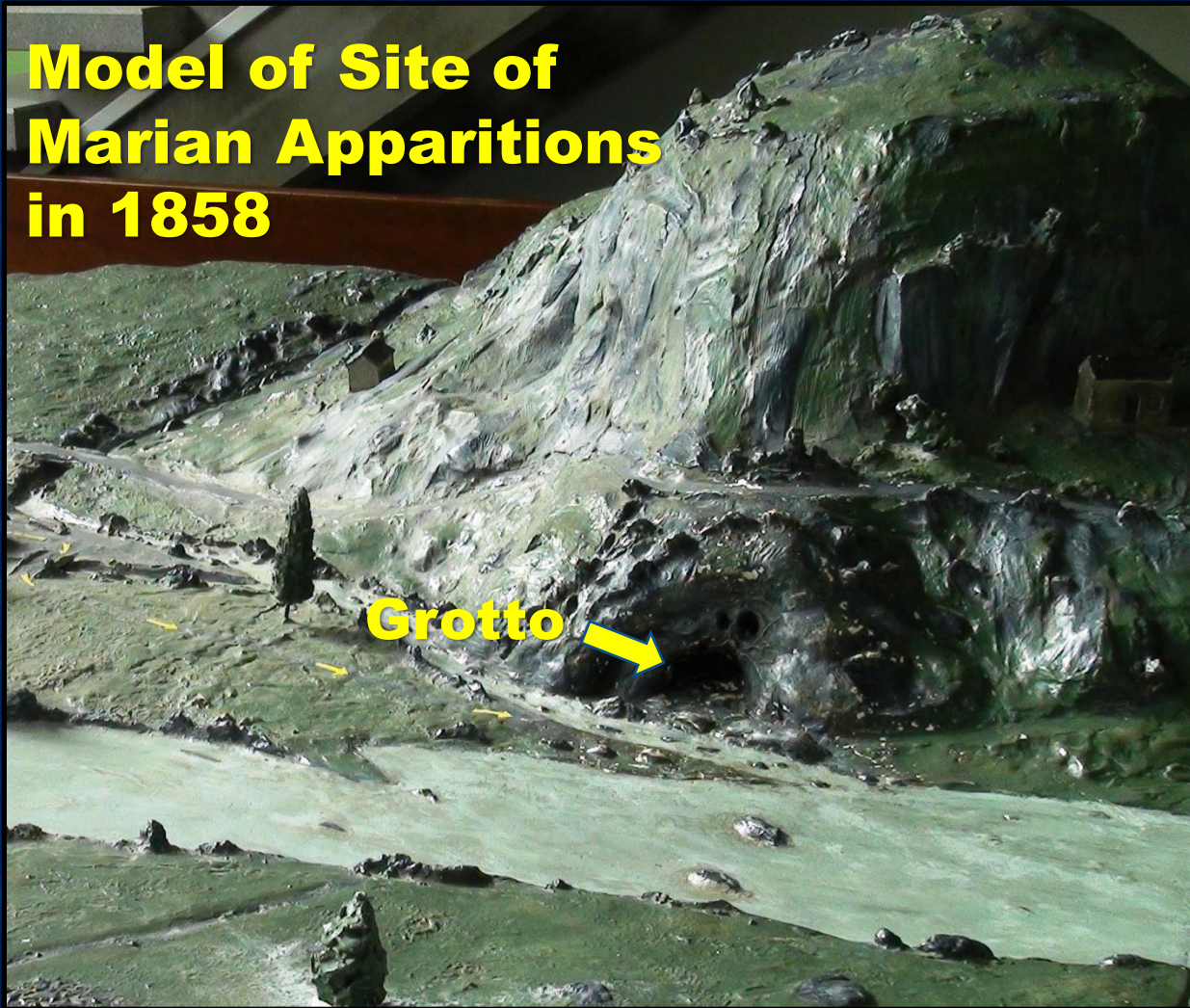
- From Beauvais, France. Born on Sept. 23, 1939.
- Neurological problems started in 1987.
  - Acute sciatic nerve trouble made it difficult for her to walk.
  - Medical treatments virtually useless.
- In July 2008, she joined her diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.
  - Condition no better upon her return home.
- On July 11, 2008, while in her convent chapel for Adoration, she felt an unusual sensation of warmth spread throughout her body.
  - Heard inner voice to get rid of all her medical aids, corset, and splint.
  - Her foot suddenly returned to normal position and she could walk.
- 70<sup>th</sup> cure recognized by Church as miraculous on Feb. 11, 2018.
- *Video: 60 Minutes & EWTN reports on Sr. Moriau's cure.*





# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

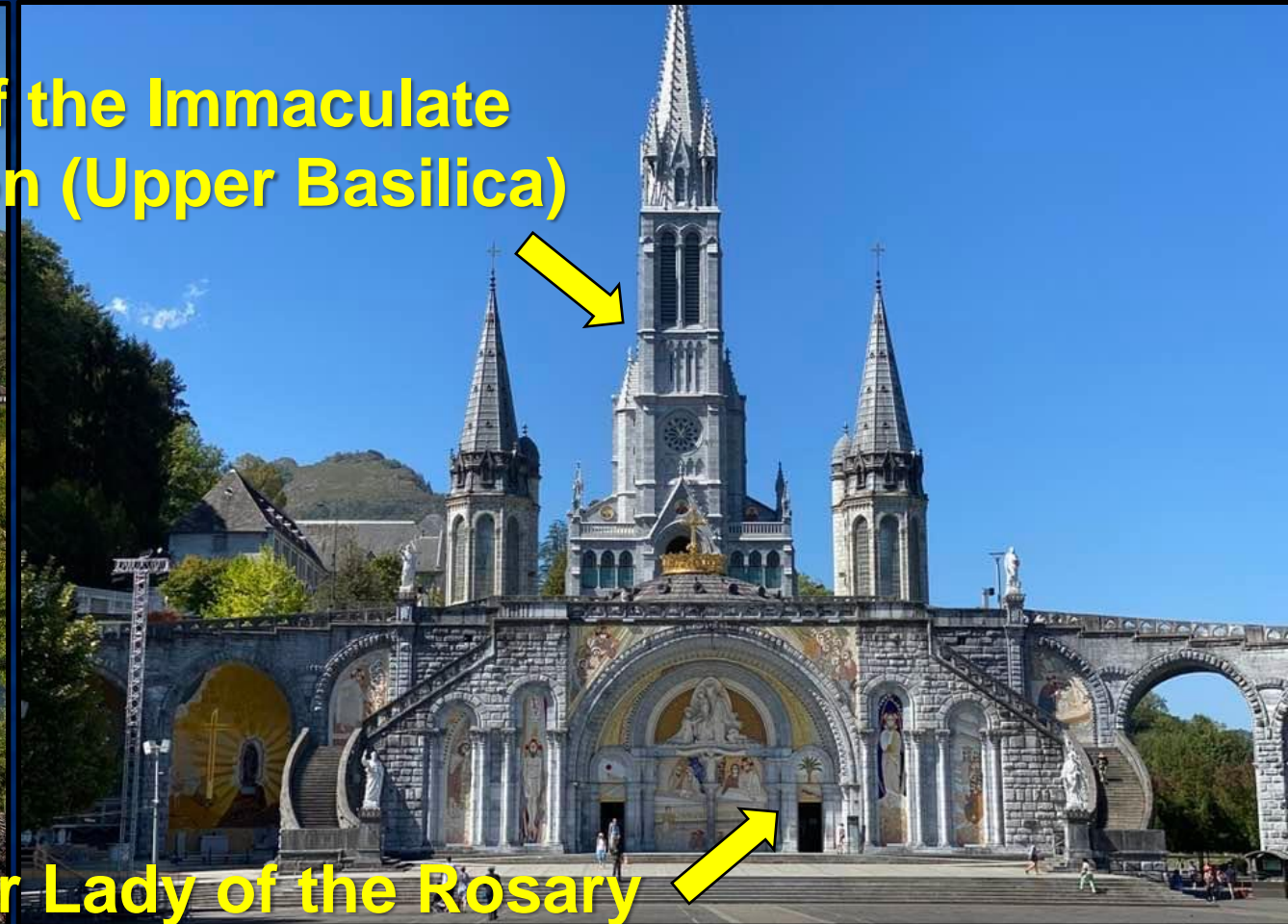
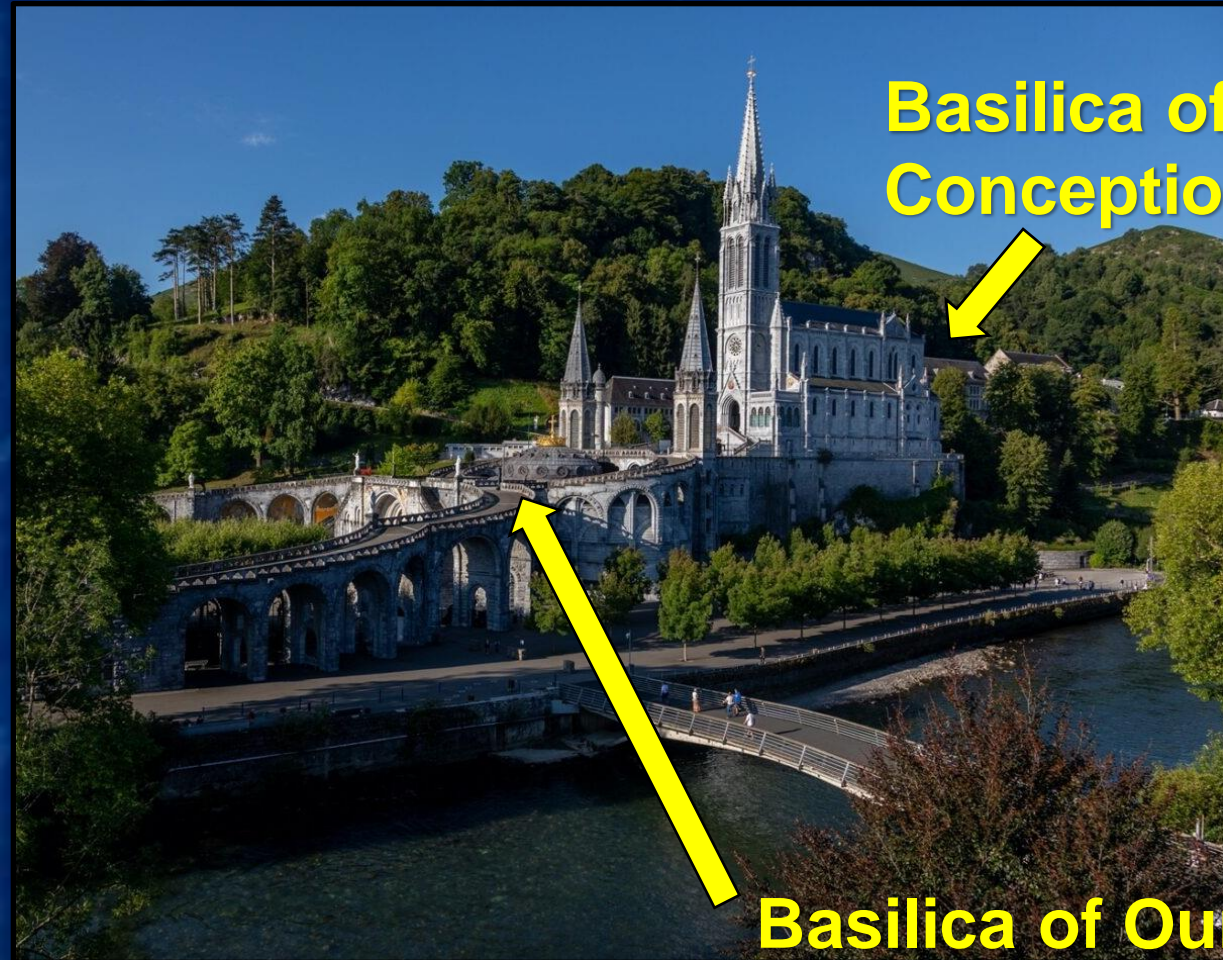
**Model of Site of  
Marian Apparitions  
in 1858**



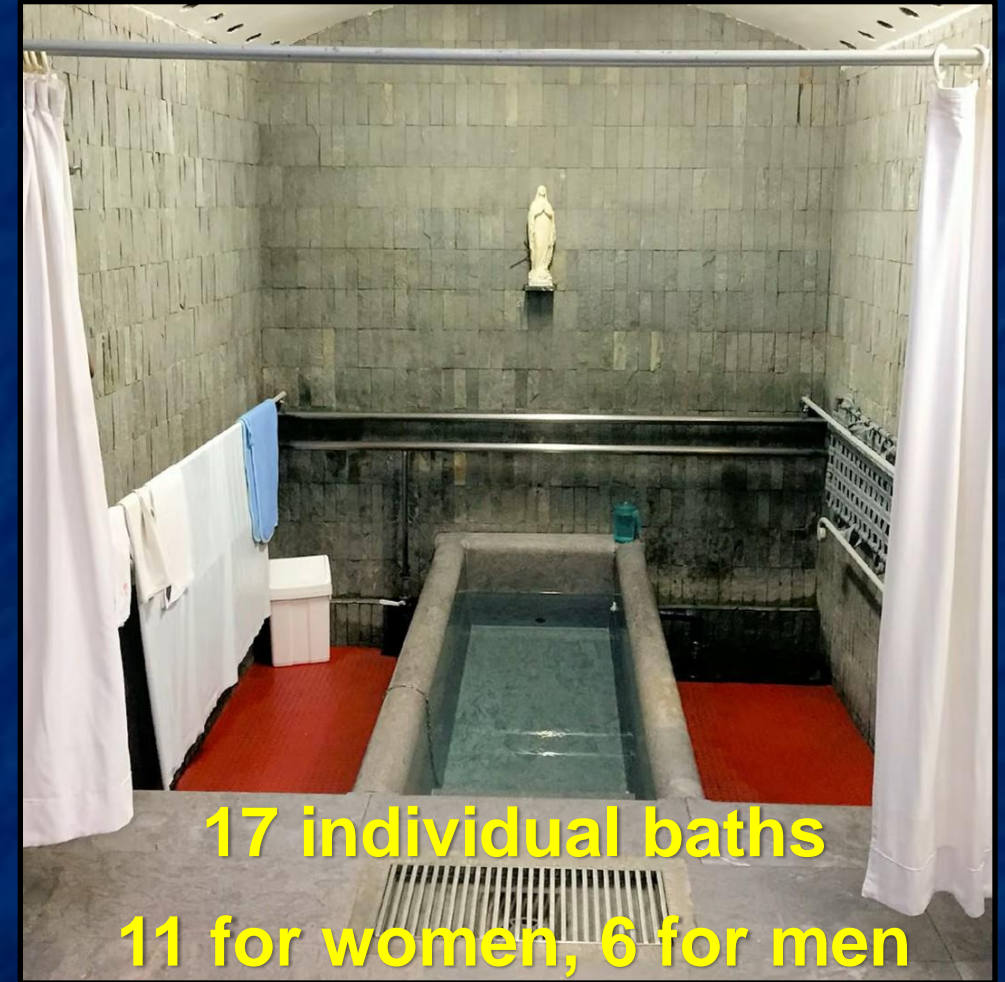
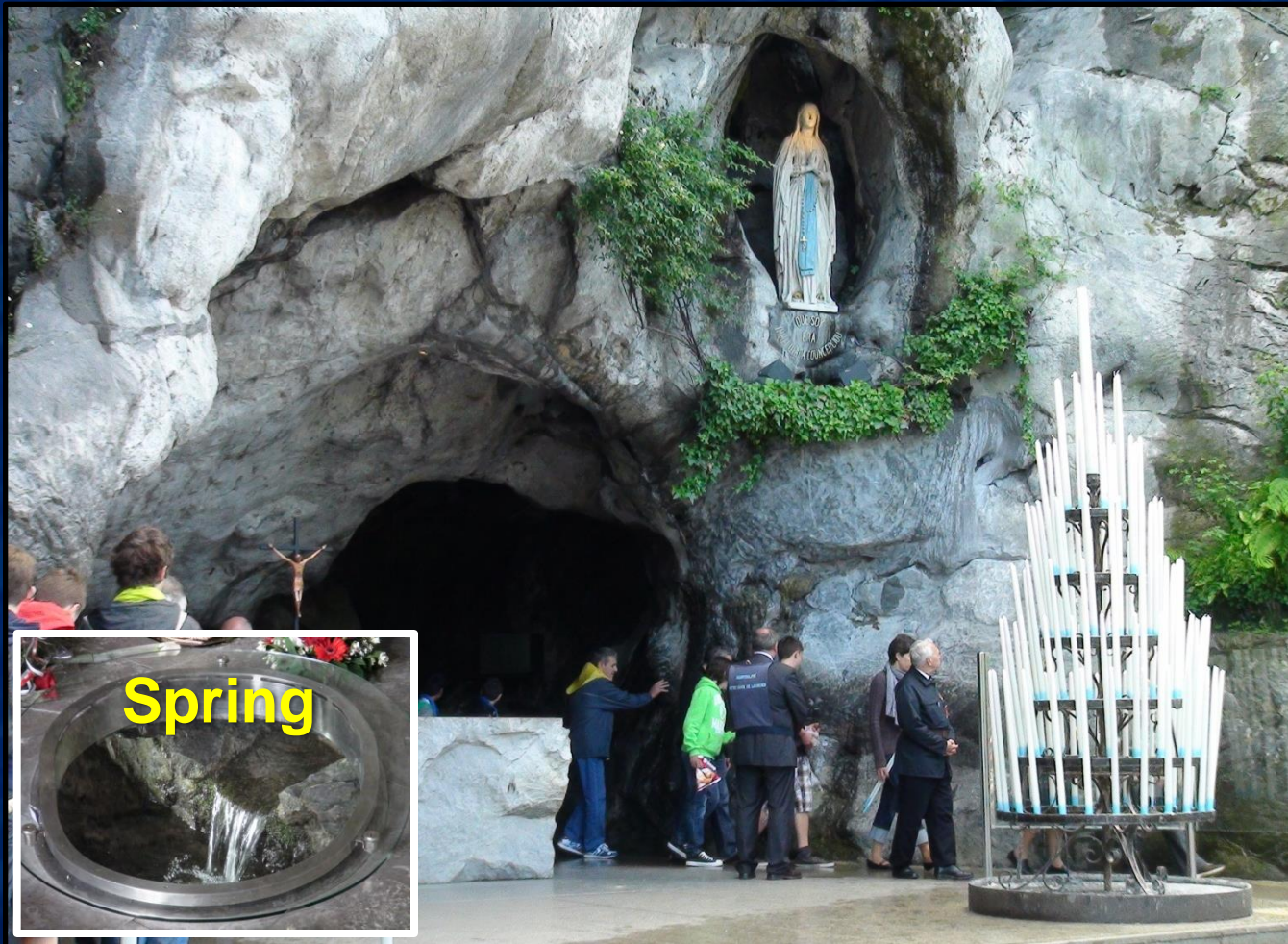
**Today's  
"Chapel"**



# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes



# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes



# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

**St. Bernadette Church**

**Upper & Rosary  
Basilicas**

Grotto

**Esplanade**

**Gave River**

**Underground Basilica  
of St. Pius X**

**Way of the Cross**



# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

**Underground Basilica of St. Pius X**



# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

## Way of the Cross





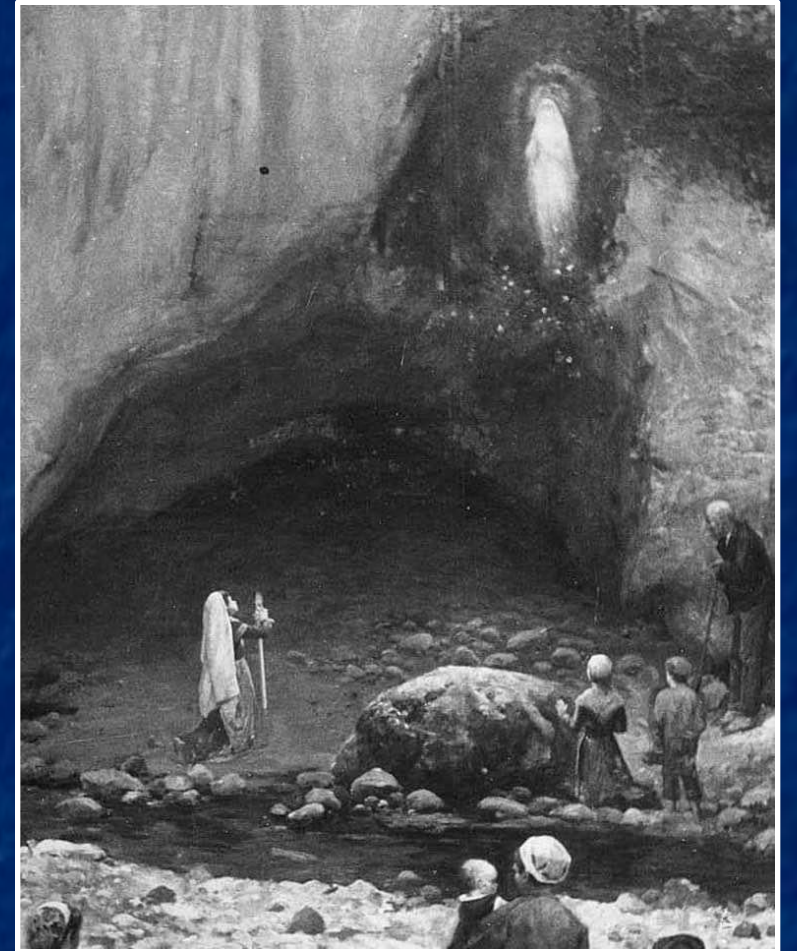
# Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

## Candlelight Procession



# Presentation Summary

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- *60 Minutes* Ending



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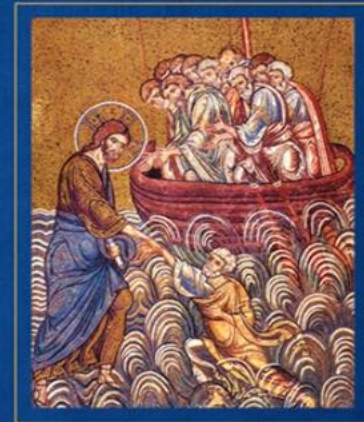
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Lee J. Granger

***Questions?***

***Comments?***



# *Our Lady of Lourdes Prayer*

O ever-Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Mercy,  
health of the sick, refuge of sinners,  
comforter of the afflicted,  
you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings;  
look with mercy on me.

# *Our Lady of Lourdes Prayer*

By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes,  
you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary,  
where you dispense your favors;  
and already many sufferers have obtained  
the cure of their infirmities,  
both spiritual and corporal.

# *Our Lady of Lourdes Prayer*

I come, therefore, with complete confidence  
to implore your maternal intercession.

Obtain, O loving Mother, the grant of my requests.

Through gratitude for your favors,  
I will endeavor to imitate your virtues,  
that I may one day share your glory.

Amen.

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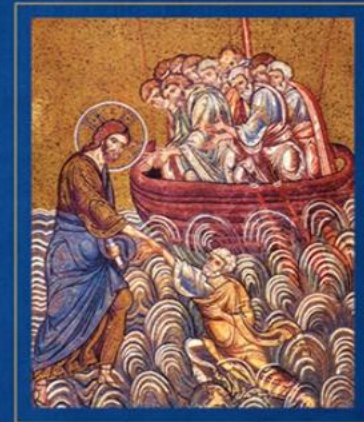
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