



Love in action

On 11 February the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of the feasts of Mary, the mother of Jesus; a day when we offer special prayers for the sick and the disabled.

The feast has its origins in the appearances of Mary to Bernadette Soubirous, a poor peasant girl, in the French Pyrenees in February 1858. The lady, who identified herself as the Virgin Mary, told Bernadette to dig and drink from the small spring of water, which bubbled up. She also directed that a chapel be built there. Almost immediately there were reports of cures among those who drank from or, in later times, bathed in the waters.

Well over 200 million people have visited the Grotto since 1860 and the Church has recognised around 70 healings as miraculous. Sick and disabled pilgrims continue to visit in the hope of a cure and, with others, to seek the spiritual refreshment of being in a sacred place of prayer.

This is the account of a visit in September 2024 by Celia Bailey, one of our parishioners and a long-time reader of *Lisvane Link*: 'Last year, a friend asked me if I would like to go to Lourdes with a pilgrim group. I had the most wonderful experience. We stayed in Hosanna House in Bartrès, just outside Lourdes, a beautiful place overlooking the Pyrenees.

'Hosanna House caters for pilgrims with all sorts of disabilities. The beautiful chapel has a stained glass window with walls of glass either side giving breathtaking views over the mountains.

'There were 39 of us in the group – people with varying levels of disability, medical staff and two priests – so our spiritual and temporal welfare was well catered for. We travelled in coaches with lifts to help those in wheelchairs. Every comfort we could wish for was provided.



The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception at Lourdes

'Our days were punctuated by visits to the Grotto in Lourdes, daily Mass in the chapel, relaxation time and fun, all infused with a wonderful spirit of being cared for and cherished.

'The helpers were marvellous, catering to our needs with cheerfulness and grace. The less able pilgrims brought something special to all of us and, judging by their faces, it was also a very special experience for them.

'We had an outing one day to Saint-Savin, a village in the Pyrenees with panoramic views. Saint Savin is believed to be interred beneath the altar of the 12th century Romanesque church. Our priests celebrated Mass there, a very special experience, which was followed by lunch in a nearby restaurant. That evening a band came to entertain us and there was much singing and dancing.

'The whole week was an amazing mixture of prayer, joy and fun, and everyone felt valued, whatever their situation.'

Elizabeth Taylor,
Christ the King Parish Advisory Council

Church services

Saturday, 6pm: Vigil Mass of Sunday

9.30am: Sunday Mass –
with children's liturgy in term time

9.30am: Tuesday Mass

9.30am: Thursday Mass

Activities (in the parish centre)

- Monday, 9.30 – 11am: Baby and Toddler Group
- Wednesday, 11am – 1.30pm: Welcome Space
- Friday, 6.30pm: Junior Club in term time (School Years 3–6)
- Saturday 8 February, 11am – 1pm; 2 – 4pm: Sustainable Clothes and Books Market
- Thursday 13 February, 7pm for 7.30pm start: Community Quiz Night

For further information, contact Christ the King's parish office (phone 2075 3945, email llanishen@rcadc.org) or Canon Matthew Jones (phone 2075 2389, email matthew.jones@rcadc.org) or visit the website (see below)

Services are streamed live at www.3churches.org

The church and parish centre are located at Newborough Avenue, Llanishen, CF14 5DB.