

LOURDES CENTENARY:

Without cessation, throughout the day at Lourdes, 60,000 pilgrims attended or heard Divine services, held to commemorate an anniversary in many ways unique even in Roman Catholic history. It was the 100th year since a vision of the Blessed Virgin appeared to the peasant girl, 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous in this place at the foot of the Pyrenees. Lourdes was a fortress town as far back as the 9th Century, but to the outer world unknown. Now millions go to the little house where the girl Bernadette, slept in this room 100 years ago.

With two other girls she went near a cave to gather wood. When Bernadette was alone she had her vision of the Virgin Mary, who reappeared to her (as all Catholics believe) on several later occasions. Soon afterwards Lourdes attracted the first of the millions who have since gone there to be made spiritually or bodily well. Catholics believe that miracles of healing have been performed at this place. In this centenary year probably eight million will make pilgrimage to Lourdes. Many will have been ill, and beyond medical aid, but hoping to show on their return, that their faith has made them whole.