

February 8, 2022



On Tuesday, February 11, we will celebrate the feast of Our Lady Of Lourdes.

The story of Lourdes is well known. Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary **appeared eighteen times** to fourteen-year-old **Bernadette Soubirous** in that small town located in the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains of southern France. (I've been blessed to have gone there on **pilgrimages**.)

On February 14 we will celebrate Valentine's Day with cards, flowers, or candy!

A thankful heart is a **happy heart!**? A thankful heart is **a heart full of gratitude for the things that God has done and continues to do in and through your life**. Gratitude is a **thankful appreciation** for what we receive, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, we acknowledge the **goodness** in our lives.



Being thankful in **all situations helps us develop our trust in God** and helps us to be humble. While much of our gratitude is related to **positive** experiences, we have to learn to appreciate the good and the bad. Thanking God in **difficult** situations can also help us **appreciate** the good times more. Are you able to do this?

Cultivating a grateful heart takes **practice**. We need to remind ourselves often of all we have to be **grateful** for, even during a pandemic.

It is easy to be **grateful** when we are **happy**, But the key is to appreciate and recognize **everything** we come across in our existence as a **gift**. **If** we can see everything as a gift, we can realize that there are so many **intangible** and **free things** worthy of giving thanks for, such as every minute, every breath, every person, every feeling, every meal, every detail of our lives.

Once we have recognized all these gifts, then we are able to give **thanks** for them and subsequently find happiness. The key is to **first give thanks** in order to find true **happiness**, **not** to give thanks **only** when we feel happy. **If** we wait for happiness to come to us before giving thanks, we could be **waiting** an entire lifetime without realizing **how much we already have to be thankful for**. If we are **not** grateful for what we have now, we will never be grateful, even when we get what we want. When we **stop worrying** about what we **don't** have and be grateful for what we already **have**, we will be on the path to **happiness**.

Look at the sky at night, observe the beauty of then stars, realize that **you** are one of them, and thank those who helped you shine.