

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES FINDS A HOME AT BECKET – Becket Bulletin
October 13, 2003**

Someone once asked why Catholics have so many representations of Mary the Mother of God. It occurred to me that, like any good mother, she likes to be at her best for her children and to dress for the occasion. That is one reason why her garments looked different at Rue du Bac, Lourdes, Fatima and all the other places where God sent her with a message of faith, love, and encouragement to Christians to continue taking delight in Jesus and in following Him. After all the Sunday Masses on **October 25-26** we shall go to **Our Lady of Lourdes** outside and ask the Lord to shower with his grace all who will see her; so that she may attract all her children to Jesus – especially those who do not yet know his love for them. Until then, join us in praying the Rosary and meditating the mysteries of Jesus' life, with a novena of more intense devotion and faith October 15 to 24 leading up to this dedication. Don't miss Fr. Madore's talk on the Rosary.

Note September 8th, 2004, Feast of the Nativity of Mary.

Actually, the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was not ready in time in the Fall of 2003 for an installation outside by the dates announced – October 25-26. Instead, the statue was set up in the Sanctuary, in the space between the rail and the relic of St. Thomas à Becket, on a pedestal covered by a golden cloth. On the rail were posters of pictures of Bernadette and Lourdes, and in front of it was a table with a large punch bowl full of water from the spring at the Grotto of Lourdes. Parishioners were invited to take a little water home until the weekend of Christ the King – November 22-23 – by which time the statue was ready and installed on its stonework pedestal in front of the Parish Rectory, Office, and Cahill Hall. The statue was blessed and sprinkled with holy water and the Dedication prayer was prayed by the Congregation at all Masses on the weekend of October 25-26, and after all Masses on Christ the King, those who dared brave the cold weather went to the statue outside and said a brief prayer as a welcome to Our Lady and request that she watch over our children, families, members, church and neighbourhoods. Fr. Gilles A. Surprenant



“Cast all your worries upon Him, because He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

YOU CAN ORDER LOURDES WATER DIRECTLY

Simply write your request and send it with a cheque for transportation cost to the order of: **M. l'Économe de l'œuvre de la Grotte, Sanctuaires Notre-Dame – 65108 LOURDES CEDEX.** Bank drafts or postal money orders are accepted. The water is a gift from the Immaculate Conception, so it is always free. The charges are only for transportation and container costs (Sanctuary bottles/jugs) by priority post as follows **in Euros: ¼ liter – 10 E / ½ liter – 18 E / 1 liter – 29 E / 5 liters – 87 E / 10 liters – 140 E.** St. Bernadette said, as she cared for the sick with water from the Grotto, that it is not the quantity of water applied in any particular need but rather the faith of the person that matters in caring for the sick. God bless you.

Becket Bulletin – October 19, 2003

Dear Parishioners of St Thomas à Becket,

Wow!!! What a wonderful two week it has been. Having already written you a thank you letter in last weekends bulletin, I wanted to now share with you some of the wonders that have happened since being ordained and by the grace of God been able to go on a wonderful pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage that we took began with an invitation to go on an international priests retreat in Lourdes France. After telling Father Gilles about it and getting excited about this event, I then told Father Gendreau, who as well got excited about it and wanted to go. Father Gendreau then told Mgr Norbert Lacost, a retired priest, and he too wanted to go. So it happened that the four of us started to make preparations to go to Lourdes. Having bought the airline tickets, and amidst preparing for my ordination, news finally came in that the retreat for priest was cancelled due to the John Paul II's 25th anniversary of his pontificate. We all decided that we would go anyway. Little did we know how much Our Lady would take over for us our itinerary.

The trip changed from only being in Lourdes to a cross country trek to many Marian shrines and Holy sites. Our first day we arrived in Toulouse and rented a Mini-Van. We picked up at the airport an elderly Australian priest who came by himself to go to Lourdes as well. We had just enough room for him in our van. (were we playing the good Samaritan?) And then we were off to Lourdes. We arrived at Lourdes to swarms of pilgrims. It just so happened that we caught the end of a retreat pilgrimage given by the Dominican order, and we were invited to participate in their last vigil and mass they were beautiful. What struck me most was the intense prayer and silence amidst the thousands gathered at the grotto where Mary appeared to Bernadette.

Then we were off again. Our next trip took us all the way through the Pyrenees mountains into northern Spain to a rocky mountainous area of brown dusty looking cliffs. Out of nowhere comes this huge lake and jutting out into this lake was a cliff face upon which lay and old mediaeval chapel and tower. An impressive site it was. Behind this chapel was a huge sanctuary called Torreciudad. A place of pilgrimage dedicated to none other than Our blessed mother the Virgin Mary. I con-celebrated their my first Spanish mass. Our next stop was Barcellona, where we were all struck and moved by the enormous Basilica they were building dedicated to the Holy family. The "Sagrada Familia" has been under construction for over a hundred years and is mostly the vision of a holy architect named Gaudi, who gave his life to the building of this Cathedral for the honour of God and the conversion of the people.

We then went to Avignon and visited the papal palaces there. During Certain time in Church history the Popes that were elected were french and settled outside of Rome in Avignon. From their we went to Lyon and from Lyon to a small village called "Ars". It was in this small secular and superstitious village that a humble priest was called to serve in the eighteen hundreds and was able to convert the whole town. His name was Jean Marie Baptist Vianny, Known now as Saint John Vianny the Curé d'Ars. He was reputed to hear confession for over twelve hours a day. The special grace that I received here was to preside mass using the Curé's own chalice on an altar built right in front of his glass sepulchre which showed his miraculously incorrupt body. A powerful moment in this journey which we dedicated to vocations.

After such an amazing event we then travelled to Nevers, a small town in central France where the Body of St Bernadette lay miraculously incorrupt as well. Our Lady just kept guiding us. Gods providence was watching over us and His abundant grace was filling us, strengthening us for the mission that awaited us when we came back. After going to Paris on our last day, ending our trip at Notre Dame de Paris we climbed aboard our jet which took us home blessed

and rejuvenated and feeling a great sense of communion with God and his people and with the virgin Mary.

*MAY GOD'S BLESSINGS GO WITH YOU ALL
FATHER STEPHEN OTVOS.*

FRUITS OF A PILGRIMAGE LIKE THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE

On returning to St. Thomas à Becket Parish from our pilgrimage to Lourdes and other holy places in France and Spain, I am struck by the light it has shed upon our pilgrimage of life. In every generation, each human being becomes aware of the struggle within them between two attractions: one from God towards fullness of life and love, and the other from the world around us towards the futile attempt to satisfy - by our own efforts - the insatiable hunger of our heart for love, thirst of our mind for truth, and cry of our spirit for a meaning and purpose for our life that illness, loss, failure, and death cannot diminish or destroy.

As Fr. Stephen has shared on the other side of this page, I too marvel once again at how Our Blessed Lady - the Holy Mother of God and ever Blessed Virgin Mary - has so maternally taken us by the hand to fill us with gifts to bring back and share with you all. Many of you wrote intentions from your heart in the little notebook left at the back of the church. The blank spaces represented all the unwritten ones engraved in the depths of your hearts. Friday October 10th, I knelt at the foot of the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes which has been since 1862 in the niche where St. Bernadette saw her. There, I carefully tore out the pages and placed them among the other slips of paper left by hundreds of pilgrims, entrusting them to our common Mother.

The next day we concelebrated Mass with over 300 priests and 25,000 pilgrims. We lifted high your intentions, those of every person in our Parish and Archdiocese and of all the baptized throughout the world, and in particular Pope John Paul II as he approached our celebration of praise and thanksgiving to God. For 25 years He has granted us and the whole world his grace through John Paul II's ministry as Bishop of Rome, as Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and as universal pastor of all the baptized - servant of the servants of God. Then, after lunch, I filled a 10-litre jug with water from the spring Our Lady instructed Bernadette to wash in, though at the time it was invisible below the ground. This blessed water has caused over 4,000 unexplainable healings - of which 65 have been rigorously authenticated as instantaneous miracles of God.

If you would like to bring home half an ounce of this water from the Lourdes Grotto, you may bring with you next weekend a small empty pill container and take one ladle full from the container at the feet of our wooden statue of Our Lady near the Blessed Eucharistic Presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle. There is enough for only one such ladle full per family; so please limit yourself to this amount. If you want to share it with others, prayerfully add a little holy water to it, which you can obtain from the stainless steel tank in the Narthex. We hope there will be some left after the last Sunday Mass for parishioners who will see it for the first time on the following Sunday. The slightest contact with even a minute amount of this water, given to us by Our Lady, combined with prayer from a humble, repentant, and believing heart, will always obtain the heavenly favours of Our Lady in accord with the holy will of God, our Heavenly Father.

As the fruit of the prayers, devotion, spontaneous request, offerings, and labour of many parishioners, Our Lady will manifest once again her desire to be near her children in the form of a statue representing her 1858 appearances to St Bernadette at the Massabielle Grotto in Lourdes. We will call on the Lord to bless the statue and all his children who in future see it and

in response to it open their hearts in prayer to Jesus with the help of Mary. After each Mass next week we will process to the statue and say some brief prayers together. You will also receive devotional materials from Our Lady's other appearances and messages to St. Catherine Labouré at Rue du Bac in Paris in 1830 and to three shepherd children at Fatima in 1917.

These appearances or visits by the Mother of God to her children on earth have common elements: the Rosary, prayerful contemplation of the Gospel Mysteries in Jesus' and Mary's lives revealing Divine Mercy's desire to pour itself into every humble, repentant, human heart, water given to earth as an instrument of grace for repentance and healing, and the gift of faith. Jesus chose to give of Himself - as the living gift of his Body and Blood in the form of Bread and Wine - to every generation. He unceasingly invites each human being to come to Him at the foot of the Altar. There we humbly admit the truth - our sinfulness and poverty - and He is glad to transform us - little by little - by holy communion in the Father's love.

These are holy gifts our Father offers to make us holy as He is holy. We are to take care not to treat them or the Giver with contempt by refusing to admit our sinfulness. Ours is not to judge anyone else - God alone is the judge of us all. Our part is to receive Jesus' words of truth and, as He did on earth, apply daily efforts to obeying them as the Father's will for us. Mary encourages us: "Do whatever He tell you." Even the pains and difficulties of life contain hidden gifts, if only we accept them with trust in God. Fr. Gilles

WHY AN OUTSIDE STATUE OF MARY? Becket Bulletin – October 26, 2003

Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church, has always been honoured and loved at St. Thomas à Becket Parish. Our wooden statue of Mary in the Church stands with Jesus, shown as the Sacred Heart, and Joseph. They are the Holy Family, and it is from them that Becket has always received special grace to be a faith community that makes a point of welcoming young families and children. They have always been prominent in our church, and they make visible to all our Father's will and plan for us at Becket in every generation.

Mary's first title as Mother of God comes from her privileged role in the Incarnation of the Son of God in her at the Annunciation. Through the years, Mary came to be known as Our Lady of Sorrows, Mother of the Church, and many other titles in different places. Each time our merciful Father has sent her to us, Mary has simply repeated the Gospel message itself. God has brought us into being because He loves us. He has destined us for eternal bliss and happiness with Him in heaven after we have lived our earthly life to the full. We accept this priceless gift by living in accord with our Father's will, which we can know through the beauty and order in nature, through others, and in the depths of our own conscience.

In the past century, Mary is reported to have appeared or to be currently appearing in hundreds of places around the world, most of which have yet to be approved by both the local bishop and the Pope as worthy of belief. Mary's visitations to earth in modern times are seen to have begun at Rue du Bac in Paris in 1830, with St. Catherine Labouré. Mary showed herself in two related postures, the second of which was cast and became known as the Miraculous Medal of the Immaculate Conception. The first posture has recently been cast and is known as the Virgin of the Globe, Mary Most Powerful.

In 1858, Mary revealed herself to Bernadette Soubirous as the Immaculate Conception in Lourdes, and came to be called Our Lady of Lourdes. She caused Bernadette to uncover a hidden underground spring of water, which has been the instrument of 66 proven miracles and over 6,500 healings. We believe that it's the will of God that she has come to be with us as Our

Lady of Lourdes as a statue outside on the grounds in order to draw the attention of her lost children to her maternal care; so that she might more easily bring them to know and love Jesus her Divine Son, the one Saviour of the world.

MARY CONTINUES HER MISSION TOO – Becket Bulletin November 9, 2003

Countless are the faithful and even non-Christians who have been touched and changed by the transforming power of God's love the ordinary spring water from the Lourdes Grotto. We now have past issues of the Lourdes Magazine brought back by our pastor, and they will be kept in the Parish Office where you can come by, make a selection, and do some reading in the Church before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and in front of Our Lady's statue. All we ask is that you handle the magazines carefully and not fold them the wrong way – they aren't as resilient as hard bound books – and we'd like as many to benefit from their contents as possible.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION – VIRGIN OF THE GLOBE

When the Mother of God appeared to St. Catherine Labouré at the Rue du Bac convent in Paris November 27 1830 Mary looked as we have seen her on the medal known as the “Miraculous Medal” because of the countless healings and other life-changing graces received from God by those who have prayed to Him with the inspiration and intercession of the Mother of the Church. Mary first appeared to Catherine as the “Virgin of the Globe” – holding a golden globe representing “the entire world, especially France, and each person in particular”, as Mary offers us up to the Father through her Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ. The Father has drawn Mary deeply into the saving work of Jesus, in his Incarnation and Birth, his human life at Nazareth, his public ministry, proclamation of the Gospel, and finally his passion, death, and resurrection.

The Father granted her participation in Jesus' Resurrection in her own Assumption. The golden globe held by Mary in Catherine's viewing shows Mary's God-given role in helping us offer ourselves to God and opening ourselves to receive from Him life, mercy, and blessing. Catherine saw beautiful and brilliant rays shining from rings on the Blessed Virgin's hands turned downwards as she held the golden globe. Of these rays, Mary said to St. Catherine, “This is the symbol of the graces which I will pour out on the persons who ask me for them.” Catherine saw in a large oval around the Blessed Virgin the words “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.” She heard “Have a medal struck on this model. The persons who wear it will receive great graces; the graces will be inexhaustible for those who have confidence.”

Then Mary appeared with empty and open hands, and Catherine noticed some rings were dull, and heard, “Those stones which give off no rays represent the graces that people forget to ask me for.” She saw on back of the medal the two hearts of Jesus – crowned with thorns – and Mary – pierced with a sword. Next week, we will have near the doors at a Virgin of the Globe/Virgin Most Powerful picture some medals of Mary in this image with prayer cards. Join us in a novena (9 days) of thanksgiving to God for blessing us through Mary, Mother of Jesus. We can also offer to the Father, with Mary's help, all that we endure willingly or at the hands of others in communion with Jesus, our Savior, for love of others and as a prayer for God's mercy on all of humanity in our day.