# "I Am the *Immaculate Conception*"

## Did you know?

Bernadette repeatedly asked the Lady at the Grotto to tell her name. Finally, during the apparition of **March 25, 1858—the Feast of the Annunciation—the Lady revealed her identity**.

Speaking in Bernadette's local dialect, she said: **"I am the Immaculate Conception."**

The words were remarkable. Only four years earlier, in 1854, Pope Pius IX had solemnly defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: that Mary, through God's grace, was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception. Bernadette had little theological education and did not fully understand the expression. She repeated the unfamiliar words over and over as she hurried to tell the parish priest so that she would not forget them.

For the Church, those words became one of the most significant elements of the Lourdes apparitions. Today, above the Grotto where Bernadette saw the Lady, stands the familiar image of **Our Lady of Lourdes**.

## Take a Moment to Reflect:

Mary always points beyond herself toward Jesus. Where is she inviting you to draw closer to her Son?

## Prayer:

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

