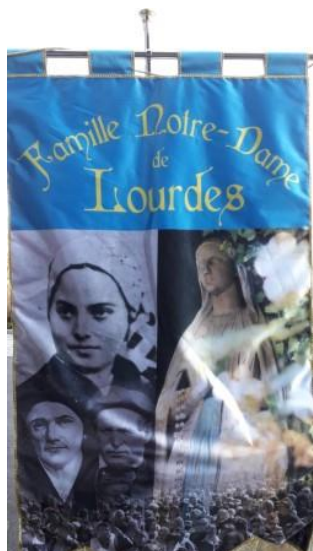


22 August 2025



A memory full of hope, an anniversary of love, an act of thanksgiving!

A memory full of hope: nine years to make all things new!

On this 22nd of August, in this “year of hope,” we celebrate not so much a birth or a foundation, but the **Restoration**—better still, the renewal—of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes, which has existed since December 8, 1872. It is, therefore, the memory of a new birth, marked by names and significant moments. The number nine, which accompanies this commemoration, first invites us to celebrate the moment when this Family received a new face. That very number symbolizes fulfillment, an opening to new horizons, deeper awareness, and a more complete love for the Immaculate Virgin, Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette, together with a sense of the absolute in the faith and devotion of the members of the Family. An anniversary is, above all, a journey into both personal and communal memory.

To celebrate this anniversary is to remember the collective path: what the Family has lived at Lourdes and throughout the world. It is to recall all that various groups have experienced together as one Family.

To celebrate this anniversary is thus not only to recall the past but to make it present. Already in Sacred Scripture, memory plays a central role in the history of the Covenant between God and Israel. In the Eucharist, the Church “remembers” Christ—his Incarnation, his death, his Resurrection, and his Ascension. On the night before his Passion, Jesus said: **“This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also the cup... This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”** (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)

An anniversary of love

Within the symbolism of the number nine, we celebrate love, altruism, compassion, generosity, solidarity, and the ideal of a Marian awareness—both personal and communal. This path of love is lived in pilgrimage with Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette. It also becomes a challenge: *“To love—love is enough!”* To remember the love the Virgin Mary bestowed upon the “little nothing” that Bernadette was; the love she gives to all her sons and daughters in the world; and the love that Mary’s children share among themselves at the Sanctuary of Lourdes and, in particular, within the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes. This memory

becomes a challenge of love between the sons and daughters of Mary. To love is to welcome, to accompany, to assist, to help, to be generous... This is the challenge of love that this celebration places before us.

To be devoted to Our Lady of Lourdes, to belong to the FNDL, is to live love in its fullness. This is our challenge! With Pope Francis, we affirm that remembering is “the medicine against the hardness of the heart.” In his words: “When the heart becomes hardened, we forget... we forget the grace of salvation and the gift freely given. A hardened heart leads to quarrels, to war, to selfishness, to the destruction of one’s brother, because there is no compassion.” For him, memory is a “grace” to be asked for in prayer, since it “keeps the heart open and faithful.”

In conclusion, to remember is to be humble, for humility, the mother of all virtues, preserves “the memory of our roots and of our salvation, which helps us to keep (...) a heart open and full of compassion,” in the manner of Our Lady of Lourdes.

An act of thanksgiving!

To remember is to give glory to God. First of all, we give thanks for the Immaculate Virgin, who visited little Bernadette eighteen times. We give thanks for that intimate and profound bond between heaven and earth in the Grotto of Massabielle; for the life and consecration of Sister Marie-Bernard; for all those who have contributed, especially Fr. André Cables, father of this Restoration. We give thanks for the Jubilee of Mercy (2015-2016), during which the Church of Lourdes desired to make it a sign of deeper commitment to the mission entrusted by Mary to Bernadette, so that the Church might always appear as an “oasis of mercy.”

We also give thanks for all the signs of the Cross, the rosaries, the penitential gestures, the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharistic celebrations, the times of adoration, prayer, and fraternal sharing in groups, the service of the Brothers, the visits to the sick and the needy; and for all the works of mercy accomplished according to the promptings of the Spirit, for the glory of God and the salvation of the world, through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette.

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes, dear devotees of the Immaculate Virgin: this ninth anniversary should be a moment of memory! It should help us to celebrate and to examine our bonds of prayer and charity—not only among the members of the Family, but also with those who long to join it. In short, the FNDL must continue to be that gentle breeze of the Grotto of Massabielle and that light called to reach the hearts of all the sons and daughters of the Immaculate, Our Lady of Lourdes, throughout the world.

Happy Anniversary to the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes!

Fr. Emmanuel Mvomo, Chaplain
Chaplain of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes