



## Spiritual Letter – January 2026

### From the manger, setting out toward the desert...

*All the prophecies concerning the Messiah gave us three essential insights about him.*

- He is the **Son of Man**, rooted in a genealogy. He comes from the line of Abraham, Jesse, and the other Patriarchs, down to Joseph. He therefore belongs to a long **history of love between God and humanity**.
- He is also the **Son of God**—Anointed One, Christ, Emmanuel, **Jesus**—names that express his unique relationship with his heavenly Father.
- Finally, he is the one sent by God to proclaim the **Gospel**, to care for and heal, to restore freedom, to be the Prince of Peace.

### This defines his mission.

John the Baptist, the prophet of the messianic age, proclaims that he is already among us: the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; the one who accepts baptism so that Scripture may be fulfilled and out of solidarity with the human condition. **He is thus truly human and truly divine, the one who gives God's own life.**

In short, the Lamb of God present among us in this Ordinary Time is God himself—born of God, dwelling among us to share with us the life of God. As Saint Paul writes: *“When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”* (Gal 4:4–5).

### The story of “God is with us” is also the story of humanity

Every human being has a divine origin and a human story. We are shaped by a cultural heritage, a genealogy—one we should come to **know better** in order to **know ourselves**—and ultimately by a mission, a vocation to which God calls us.

Like Christ, I too come from God, belong to a human lineage, and am entrusted with a mission. This Ordinary Time between **Christmas** and **Lent** allows John the Baptist to help us contemplate more deeply the Lamb and his mission among us, while also inviting us to reflect on our own story and our own calling. Yes, this is a time for life itself—for recognizing, affirming, and honoring the life God gives us.

### From the peaceful shelter of the mill to the prison cell

**The Soubirous family and Bernadette** also have their own story. It is a family history in which Bernadette belongs to a lineage, born of the love of her parents (even when her grandparents had hoped for something else), marked by infant mortality that spared her despite her fragile health.

Her life includes time spent with a wet nurse in Bartrès, recurring illness, Christian formation, and a deep love for Christ—whom she longs with all her heart to receive. It also includes the loss of the mill and the descent into poverty.

### Before February 11...

All of this shaped Bernadette as a person and prepared her to respond to the call of the “Beautiful Lady” in the grotto of Massabielle. Everything in her life contributed to this vocation. As **Saint Paul** reminds us:

*“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son... Those he predestined he also called; those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified” (Rom 8:28–30).*

Before February 11, Bernadette lived her own Ordinary Time—from the mill to her next address - 15 rue des Petits Fossés - the “cachot” (*the former prison cell*) —through the simple, everyday life of a Soubirous daughter in Lourdes.

### Before my February 11? Before my Lent? Like Mary before the Annunciation...

This Ordinary Time is also ours—before our own encounters at Massabielle, before the deserts and Lents of our lives. It is the time given to us to live fully our identity as beloved sons and daughters, to give thanks to God through a daily life that honors him, he who calls us according to the purpose of his love.

As sons and daughters of the Immaculate Virgin, let us entrust ourselves to her who lived her own Ordinary Time between her birth and the Annunciation.

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