

A Note from the Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing this well in advance due to my trip to Rome but I want to share several thoughts about two separate dates.

The first one is today, February 11th. This year it is the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time and the Sunday before the Lenten Season begins. In addition, February 11th is always the Day of Prayer for the Sick. St. Pope John Paul II instituted this observance in in order to highlight the need to be mindful of the sick and the suffering.

It is no coincidence that February 11th is also the Memorial or Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. In 1858, the Blessed Mother appeared to 14 year old Bernadette Soubirous in a cave near Lourdes, France. The Blessed Mother revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception. In January 1862, Pope Pius IX authorized veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lourdes. The devotion has spread around the world. A magnificent Basilica was built and it is one of the most visited shrines in the world. It is a peaceful, hopeful sanctuary.

One of the most striking aspects of the Basilica is the number of crutches and wheelchairs which have been left there after miraculous cures. Lourdes water is renowned for healing powers and it all goes back to the spring of water which appeared as St. Bernadette spoke to Our Lady. The Shrine at Lourdes stands as a testimony to the intercessory healing power of the Blessed Mother.

The other date to remember is February 14th. Usually, February 14 is known as St. Valentines Day but this year it is also Ash Wednesday. It is a day of Fasting and Abstinence. Those things are not usually associated with St. Valentine 's Day. May I simply suggest for those who wish to keep the first day of Lent holy that those who would normally go out for dinner on the 14th instead go out this year on Tuesday the 13th, Mardi Gras, which is a traditional day to celebrate before Ash Wednesday. Another time could also work as well.

As always, let us all keep praying that God's will be done in all things.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Monsignor Giandurco". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.