

# Our Lady of Lebanon

Harrisa,  
Lebanon

The Maronite people in Lebanon have always had a great love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the year 1904, the Venerable Patriarch Elias Howayek wanted to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception in a big way! Patriarch Howayek announced the construction of a shrine for the Blessed Mother to be built high upon the mountain and large enough to be seen from afar.

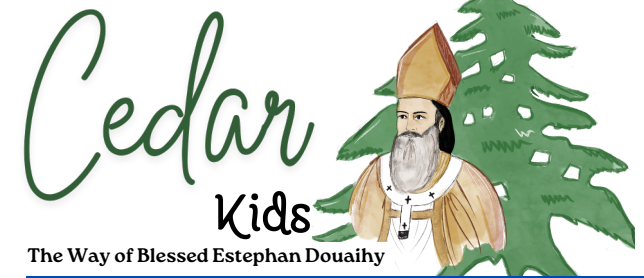
In October 1904, the laying of the foundation stone of the Shrine took place in the village of Harissa. The village of Harissa is located about 17 miles north of Beirut and overlooks the bay of Jounieh.



The statue of the Blessed Mother was created in 1907. It is made of bronze and painted white. The statue weighs 15 tons, which is over 33,000 lbs, and is almost 28 feet tall (about the height of a 2-story building).

In 1908, the engineers finished preparing the land and creating the statue's pedestal. Once the statue was in place, the Shrine was ready for the big day to celebrate Our Lady of Lebanon.

On May 3, 1908, the people gathered in Harissa for the inaugural celebration with prayers and the blessing of the statue. Patriarch Howayek celebrated the Divine Liturgy and in his homily he highlighted the Lebanese people's love and devotion to Mary, and asked for her protection and intercession. Patriarch Howayek also named the Blessed Mother as the "Queen of Lebanon."



The Way of Blessed Estephan Douaihy

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Our Lady of Lebanon

You are blest in heaven and on earth, O Mary.  
Mother of our Lord and God, we sing your praises.  
Alleluia! Give thanks to the Lord!





# The Immaculate Conception

Lourdes,  
France

Today we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Do you know what "immaculate conception" means?

If you don't, that's ok! Neither did fourteen year old Bernadette Soubirous when Mary appeared to her in 1858 and said, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

When Bernadette ran from the grotto and told her priest what Mary had said, Father knew exactly what this meant.



Benadette Soubirous, circa 1858

1. It was Mary who had appeared to her.
2. The Catholic Church's wording of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was true and accurate.

When God forms all of us, we enter His creation. Yet His creation has been stained. This stain is called "original sin" and it is a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. The only way to have this stain washed off from our souls is through the Mystery of Baptism.

However, Mary is an exception! God shielded her before He created her. Remember, she was going to become the New Ark of the Lord because Jesus was going to dwell inside of her before He was born. Jesus needed a pure and sinless home, so God did not allow Mary to receive the stain of original sin that we inherited from Adam and Eve.

Today when we celebrate the Immaculate Conception, we are celebrating the fact that God protected Mary from Adam and Eve's sin in the garden.

## Did you know?

Dogma: Something that is declared to be absolutely true by the Church.

Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception to be a dogma of the Catholic Church on December 8, 1854.

Four years later, in 1858, Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette.

## What you can do

Read a book or an article about St Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes.

Read about Our Lady of Lebanon.

Draw or paint a picture of Mary.



## Crack the Code

Solve the code to uncover Mary's message.

