

On Sunday, January 17, 2016, of this year what seemed once to be only a dream became a reality: the towering shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Santos Lugares neighborhood of Buenos Aires welcomed pilgrims for the first time into the newly finished upper church. Very Rev. Benoît Grière, superior general of the congregation, accompanied by one of his general assistants, Fr. Marcelo Marciel, and the provincial of the Andean Province, Fr. Juan Carlos Cisterna, joyfully celebrated a Mass of Re-dedication, officially inaugurating a new era for this treasured shrine.

Originally opened in the 1930s, the shrine, the first stone of which had been laid in 1922, was never completed for lack of funds. The upper church remained empty and unused, falling into greater and greater disrepair over the years.

In addition to the outdoor grotto, thousands of pilgrims visited the basilica's crypt where Mass and religious ceremonies have been held for the past 85 years.

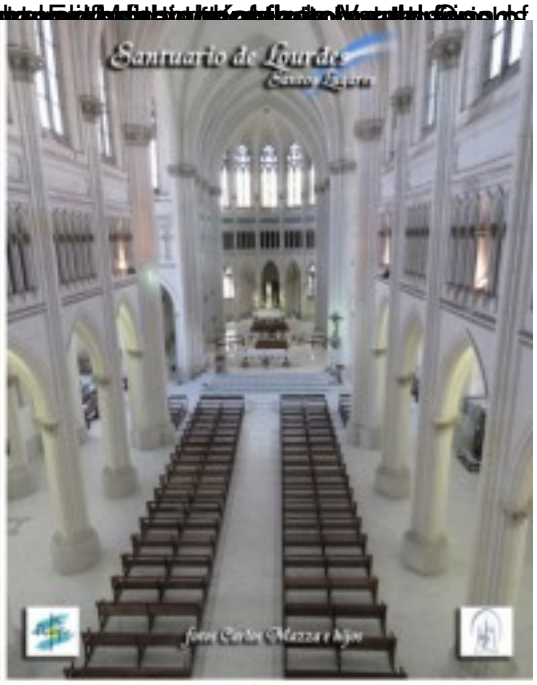
In 1972 this magnificent basilica of neo-Gothic style was declared a historical monument. Both the crypt and the upper church measure 72 meters (210 feet) long and 33 meters (110) wide.

It is estimated that on February 11 each year, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, between 50,000-100,000 pilgrims visit the shrine. Moreover, each 11th day of the month more than a thousand people arrive to pray and pay their respects to the Virgin.





Before



After



Mass of Re-dedication