

Praying the Way of the Cross With Bernadette



In teaching us the Our Father, Jesus allows us to share in his own prayer.

But his prayer isn't limited to the words said in the Our Father. Jesus' prayer is the offering of his whole life to the Father, for us, his brothers and sisters.

To make the Way of the Cross is to share in a particular manner with Jesus as he lovingly embraces the will of his Father.

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All: AMEN.

Let us pray: O Lord, grant that we, who meditate on the passion and death of Christ, your son, may imitate in our lives his living self-offering to you and to all on earth. We make our prayer through the same Christ our Lord, AMEN.

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus accepts the reality as it is made known to him. Faced with the prospect of his death, he turns toward his Father and says: "Father, if this cup can not pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done". In this manner Jesus affirms once again that his trust in his Father is greater than any suffering, even unto death.

In moments of doubt, of misunderstanding, of trials, Bernadette never stopped trusting God her Father: "When we realise that God has permitted something, how can we complain?"

We, too, when struggling with the death of loved ones or even our own death, should turn to the Father and ask for the bread of patience that will enable us to bear our hearts' suffering.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Second Station: Jesus takes up his Cross

In the midst of physical suffering and inner anguish, Jesus turns to his Father: "My food is to do the will of the Father". As a result, not only does the loving will of the Father not crush Jesus, instead it frees him to give up his life.

Bernadette welcomed the will of Mary. Even though it was difficult for her, she followed it completely. "If you knew how hard all that was for me" she said concerning the muddy water that she has been told to drink before the pure water of the spring began to flow. The loving will of Mary opened Bernadette's heart so that her life become an offering of love. We too, in moments of suffering should ask the Father for the bread that will give us strength to follow God's will rather than clinging to our own.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time

The devil tried to tempt Jesus by making him doubt his identity as the Son of the Father. Jesus answers that his identity comes, not from men, but from the Father: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4,4)

Bernadette also, in moments of temptation and trial, turned toward the One whom May had indicated was her Saviour. She learned her role as the daughter of the only Son: "Jesus my only model; Jesus my own Joy, Jesus my only treasure, Jesus my own friend".

We too, in moments when we have fallen into temptation, should ask the Father for the bread of humility.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother Mary

As the first disciple of her Son Jesus, Mary is also the first to put into practice the Words of her Son: "If anyone wants to be my follower, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me". For this reason, Mary told the disciples to do whatever Jesus tells them.

In her meeting with Mary, Bernadette is immediately invited to turn toward the cross, to make the sign of the cross, to welcome the cross as the means of passing from her personal reality to that of Jesus.

We, too, as soon as we turn toward Mary, we learn from her that it is through the mystery of the cross that we become disciples of Jesus Christ and through him, with him and in him, sons and daughters in the Only Son of the Father. In our prayer, let us ask the Father that we may see only Jesus, in all and for all.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps to carry Jesus' Cross.

Jesus tells us: "The Father and I are one". When he sees Jesus, Simon of Cyrene recognizes in him a brother. He acts in accordance with Jesus' words: "You have only one Father and you are all brothers and sisters".

In their exchanges, Mary carried Bernadette. But, little by little, Bernadette began to carry Mary. As their relationship deepened, Bernadette began to mirror Mary and to manifest her by becoming increasingly like her: the daughter of the Father.

We, too, by our union with those who suffer, complete in our flesh what remains to be undergone of the sufferings of Christ. In our prayer, let us ask the Father to give us the bread of charity.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Jesus is “the image of the Father who is invisible”. This is why he can say “Who sees me, sees the Father”.

Without stain, without sin, immaculate, Mary is the transparent reflection of her Son, he who is “the shining reflection of the Father’s glory”. By her faithfulness and love for Mary, Bernadette herself reflection the transparency of the Immaculate One.

We, too, are called to “reflect as a mirror the glory of the Father and to be transformed into that same image”. In our prayer, let us ask the Father to give us the bread of detachment from all that is not him.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time

In the second temptation, Jesus answers Satan by saying: “You must worship only the Lord your God”. Jesus always gives the first place to the Father.

Bernadette was tempted not go to any more to the Grotto, but she remained true to her word saying “I promised”.

We, too, are always tempted not to give the Father the first place in our lives, ready as we are to put material goods and other people before Him. In our prayer, let us ask the Father to give us the bread of truth.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Eighth Station: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

Jesus says to the women of Jerusalem: "Weep not for me but for your children". Only the Son of God could make such a statement. Actually, Jesus invites each one of us to welcome our individual suffering and that of others, which are the consequences of our nature contaminated by sin.

Bernadette, not only prayed to the Father for "sinners", but she also asked others to pray for her "a poor sinner".

We, too, in recognising our own weakness and sinfulness, are able to welcome the Son of the Father who came to save us. In our prayer, let us ask the Father for contrition for our sins.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

In the third temptation, Jesus rebukes Satan saying: "You must not put the Lord your God to the test." Like his Father, Jesus, who is all powerful, uses his power in the service of his brothers and sisters.

Bernadette welcomed with an open heart all she received from Mary. She put all her energy into communicating the message she had received, saying, "I was asked to tell you this".

We, too, as individuals have received not only the ability to love, but even more we have been charged with the responsibilities of our state in life: as fathers, mothers etc. In our prayer, let us ask the Father to give us the bread of willingness to serve.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothing

Jesus experienced being stripped of everything, signifying that he had given his all for those whom the Father had confined to his care.

During her religious life, Bernadette did not cling to all the graces she had received. She said simply: "Now I must live what I have received."

We, too, must not forget that: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In our prayer, Let us ask the Father to give us the bread of forgetfulness of self.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

"No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own free will." It is by his great love that Jesus offers himself to the Father to liberate us.

As she lay suffering, Bernadette pressed the crucifix to her heart and said: "He is enough for me."

We, too, are invited each day to use our free will to give our lives and thus to enter into the liberation that Christ has brought to us. In our prayer, let us ask the Father to give us the bread of interior freedom.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Until the end of his life, Jesus identifies with each one of us. For this reason, he makes his own the prayer of the psalmist: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Bernadette experienced the dark night of the soul to the point where she said: "Physical suffering is nothing in comparison to the torments of the soul."

We, too, who sometimes feel abandoned by God and humans, let us give ourselves over to the hands of the Father and ask him in our prayer for the bread of perseverance.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross

In death as in life, Jesus was dependent on others. His dependence signified his dependence with regard to the Father, of whom he has told us has counted every hair on our heads.

Bernadette always freely accepted her dependence on others: her parents, Mary, the Church, her superiors, her spiritual director...

We, too, must learn from our dependence on others to welcome the providence of the Father, and let us ask him in our prayer to give us the bread of abandonment.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is placed in the tomb

The Son of God became man sharing our human condition in death and entombment. In doing so, he joined us in that which separates us most definitively from the Father.

Bernadette was not afraid of death, but throughout her life she prepared for death as a loving meeting with Christ Jesus who is the way to the Father.

We, too, must accept our human condition which hides from us now the glorious meeting with the Father which Christ is preparing for us. In our prayer, let us ask the Father for the bread of hope.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Fifteenth Station: The Paschal Victory – love stronger than death

The risen Christ said to his disciples: “I am with you until the end of the world.” This presence of Jesus is manifested today in all the acts of generosity and love practiced by our brothers and sisters.

Bernadette welcomed without ceasing the Spirit of the Risen One, so that where there was division, love would reign, and, in the midst of the trials of life, that the love of the Father for all his children would be made visible.

We, too, with Bernadette and Mary and all the followers of Christ, should live as witnesses to the light of the Risen One. In our prayer, let us ask the Father for the bread of a strong faith.

(Pause for silent prayer)

God our Father, we have seen how you worked our salvation through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Teach us to unite our trials and sorrows to his sufferings and death, so that we may likewise share in the joy and glory of His resurrection. We ask this, through Christ our Lord, Amen.