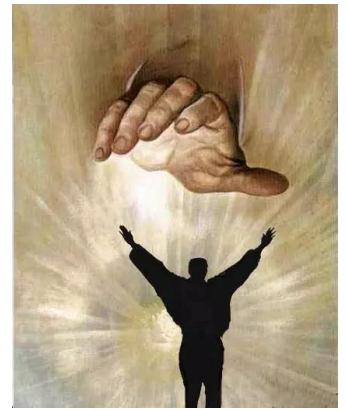


**November: Memory and Hope under “the
Fatherly Hand of God”**



Brothers and sisters,

We have entered the month of November, during which, after celebrating the Communion of Saints on November 1st, we commemorate, from the 2nd onward, all the faithful departed.

It is therefore the month of remembrance and hope, the month of charity and gratitude for those who have gone before us. How can we live it as sons and daughters of Our Lady of Lourdes? Bernadette shows us the way.

“It has pleased our Lord to take from us what we held most dear in this world: our beloved father.”

With these words, Bernadette writes to her sister Marie, expressing the pain of being separated from their father, called home to God.

The month of November always reminds us of the sorrowful reality of separation from our loved ones — especially our parents and those we have cherished.

Bernadette herself knew the experience of death within her family: not only through the frequent childhood deaths among the Soubirous, but also through the loss of her parents. In this letter to her sister, Bernadette teaches every Christian how to face death, especially when it deeply touches our own lives.

“I come to weep with you; yet let us remain always submissive and resigned, though deeply afflicted, to the fatherly hand of God which has struck us so hard in these times.”

Bernadette’s first lesson is one of unity and harmony within the Christian family, even when the head of the family is gone.

The truest expression of love for a departed one is to continue what we shared and received from them.

Bernadette’s family was known as a true “island of love.” After the heavenly birth of the one who was surely its craftsman, it was important for the family to weep together and remain faithful to God’s will in that same love, despite sorrow and pain. Bernadette desired this deeply for her family, even from afar.

A parent truly rests in peace when they see their children grieving together, supporting one another, remaining submissive to God’s will, and continuing the family path alongside those who now belong to its heavenly part.

How many divisions arise after a death — between siblings or relatives — because we think some did not do enough, because hidden truths come to light, or because the will does not please everyone. Bernadette teaches us to weep together and to remain united under “the fatherly hand of God,” even in suffering. But where can we find the strength for this?

“[...] Let us thank the Lord for this great grace. Let us pray much for the repose of his soul and that of our poor mother. I beg you to have Masses celebrated as often as you can.”

The strength to bear the cross of grief and separation comes only from God, and from prayer, that lifting of the soul toward Him. Prayer for the departed must first of all be a prayer of thanksgiving: to thank God for the gift of life, for the love shared, and for the bond that united us; to thank Him for having allowed us to accompany our loved ones and to continue honoring them even when they are no longer among us.

Then, we are called to commend the soul of the departed to the Lord. Every soul has walked through this valley of tears where, under the weight of original sin, we have all yielded to temptation. What our departed brothers and sisters await from us are our humble prayers. That is why the Church dedicates to them an entire month, to remember their lives and intercede on their behalf.

Above all, Bernadette invites us to entrust them to God’s grace through the Eucharistic celebration. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us:

“From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, particularly the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.”

This month gives us the opportunity to do so! With Bernadette, and with the whole Church, let us pray for our parents, brothers and sisters — including the Brothers and Sisters of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes — and for all the souls in purgatory, that, purified from their sins, they may contemplate the face of God and, in turn, intercede for us.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. Requiescant in pace. Amen.

P. Emmanuel Mvomo, CFIC

Chaplain Responsible for NDL Missions and the Relics of Saint Bernadette

Chaplain of the NDL Family

