



Archconfraternity of the Family of Notre-Dame de Lourdes
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Trial: A Place and a Means to Bear Witness to Christ

“I do not promise you happiness in this world...”

These words of the Beautiful Lady of Massabielle to Bernadette have been interpreted many times and in different ways. What remains certain is that Mary did not wish to make just any promise to Bernadette—a promise that might have stirred pride or spiritual complacency. A promise that would have given her guarantees and perhaps prevented her from continuing to “seek God.”

No! I do not promise you!

I do not promise that your family will escape poverty and applaud you...

I do not promise the healing of your asthma...

I do not promise that you will be more intelligent at school...

I do not promise that your parents will suddenly become richer and never fall ill...

I do not promise that the parish priest will joyfully welcome your story and give you first place in the parish...

I do not promise that Commissioner Jacomet, the judges, and the others will praise you...

I do not promise marriage to the prince of France...

No! I do not promise you anything! On the contrary!

From Trial to Trial...

The encounter with the Beautiful Lady sounds more like the beginning of trials, without those that already existed disappearing. The poverty of the Soubirous family remains; Bernadette’s illness persists... In short, **nothing changes in her daily life**. There is therefore no hope of a change in circumstances!

On the contrary, **other trials**—linked to the unexpected events of Massabielle—are added, and the little peace that remained in the Soubirous family vanishes. Bernadette must then carry the cross of what she has seen and heard at Massabielle: few believe her words; she is contradicted, mocked, questioned, struck (she receives a slap at the grotto during an apparition); yet at the same time she is sought after, followed, people want to “touch only the fringe of her garment,” and finally she must hide in the hospice.

The Christian Life: A Life of Trial...

The Christian life is **a life of trials**, not as a punishment given by the Lord, but as places in which faith is manifested. Trials demonstrate the authenticity of faith in God and deepen the spiritual life of the believer.

In the desert, Jesus undergoes trials:

“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread...”

“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, and they will bear you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone...”

“All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me” (Mt 4:1–11).

The three proposals of the devil concern pleasure, possession, and power. Jesus has an answer to each of these temptations, and His whole life will be a continual response to trial. Trial thus becomes not a flight from evil, but a testimony of life—a testimony of fidelity that expresses not the hope of change, but the hope of life in God.

Bernadette’s life then becomes a time of trial, a desert in which she must respond to everything while preserving her simplicity in harmonious truth—not only in the face of various provocations, even in the convent at Nevers—but in order ultimately to manifest a coherent testimony of life that expresses who she is before God.

It is this harmonious witness that first leads to the joy of the recognition of the apparitions and of the message that Bernadette faithfully transmitted. But above all, it is this harmony of life in trial that led to happiness “in the other life,” of which, through faith, we are all witnesses as we sing of Saint Bernadette Soubirous.

Moreover, her life and witness continually tell us that the supreme testimony is not to flee temptation and sin, but to love; for whoever loves truly lives, and whoever does not love merely passes through life.

Lent: The Time of Trial

“But Jesus answered: ‘It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

‘Again it is written: You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’

‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written: You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.’”

During His time in the desert, Jesus confronts the tempter and responds to his proposals. He does so with conviction, using the Word of God—the very Word that the tempter tried to manipulate to his own advantage by repeating, “It is written...”

Lent, therefore, is not a time to flee from trial, but a time of spiritual combat—a time to face trial by confronting it. It is the season in which we train ourselves to respond to the triple temptation with the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

Lent: Training for Perpetual Witness in Love

“I have loved you” (Rev 3:9).

The love of the Beautiful Lady for Bernadette is immeasurable, just as God’s love is for every son and daughter of Mary that we are.

To live Lent is to train intensely, for forty days, to confront trial so as to live continually in intimacy with God through Mary. By “training” at the grotto—through everything the Virgin made her experience (kissing the ground, eating grass, going on her knees, smearing her face with mud, drinking and washing, etc.)—Bernadette was able to persevere throughout her life, not seeking happiness on earth, but seeking the happiness of heaven through a harmonious life founded on virtue, especially the theological virtues.

In short, dear sons and daughters of Mary, Lent is the time to learn how, with Mary and Bernadette, to love. It is the time to train in the greatest of commandments: to love the Lord God with all one’s heart, with all one’s soul, and with all one’s mind.

A BLESSED AND FRUITFUL LENT 2026!

Fr. Emmanuel Mvomo, CFIC

Chaplain

Head of the NDL Missions and of the Relics of Saint Bernadette

Spiritual Advisor of the NDL Family

***The Covo of the Basilicas of Lourdes –
created by the faithful of Osimo-Campocavallo
(Marche – Italy)***

