

Holiness and sincerity become obvious. All movements are done in grace, and grace is *returned from God*. The movements themselves become a prayer in action.

One of the Sisters at Nevers asked Bernadette, “What should one do to be sure to go to Heaven?”

Immediately, Bernadette said, “*To make a proper Sign of the Cross is already a good start.*”

Bernadette’s life is an inspiration to us, not so much because she was favored with apparitions, and her body is now beautifully incorrupt, but because she heard and heeded *the words and actions* of Christ’s Mother.

Now look at yourself in the mirror and practice it a little bit. We should always be working for the next life, which is for all eternity, and not only for this one, which could be over in a flash.

Think about it. + + +



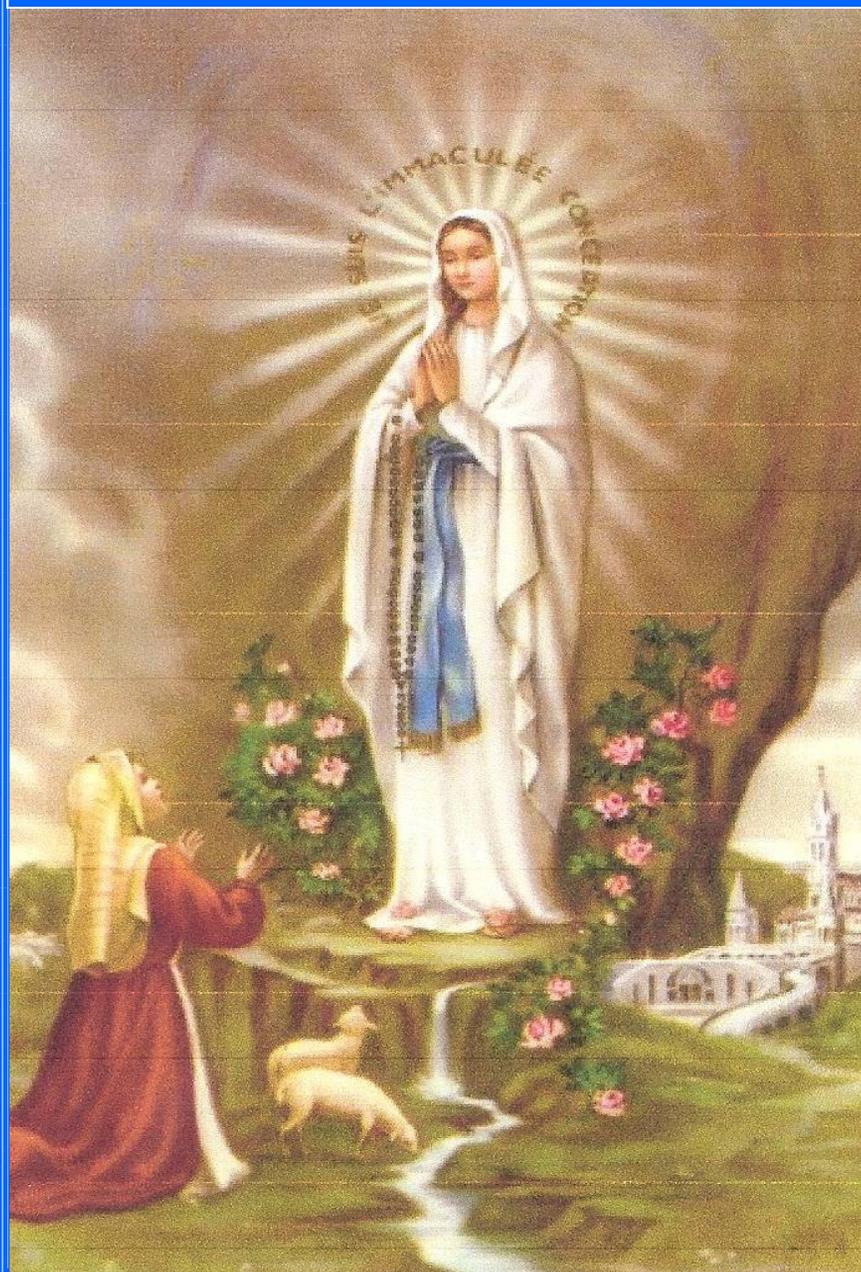
PRAYER TO SAINT BERNADETTE

*Gracious God, the incorruptible body of Saint Bernadette, though she died in 1879, remains un-deteriorated, a testament of her holiness and Your desire to protect our bodies from destruction. Because of her compassion, which she learned from life-long sicknesses and mistreatments, I ask her to intercede for all the people I know who have illnesses and diseases, all those who have asked me to pray for them as they hope for healing, and my own need to be healthy. Lord God, help us to grow in holiness so that our souls are purified and our bodies may testify to Your loving goodness.

Saint Bernadette, pray for us. Amen.

*(excerpted from www.marypages.com/bernadetteEng.htm)

Saint Bernadette’s “Sign”



The “Sign”

by Dr. Rosalie A. Turton

When one reads about the life of St. Bernadette, one becomes fascinated by her direct and decisive answers. She was a simple, uneducated, sickly young person, often unable to attend school, and barely able to learn her catechism, but she answered the piercing questions put before her with ease, simplicity, and great wisdom.

I feel that it was the Holy Spirit working through her, as a great gift from God. She confounded many people, even brilliant ones, by her tremendous logic.

When they criticized her for eating “grass” at the Grotto, she quickly responded, “You eat salad don’t you?” When they asked “Bernadette, pray, for me,” she sweetly responded, “pray for yourself,” well knowing that that person was not praying enough.

It should be very clear to us that when we pray, God always answers. Sometimes, however, His answer is “No.” But, even with that answer, we can be sure that He is giving us *something better* than what we asked for (Romans 8:20).

He knows what is best for us, and just as any parent does, He gives His child what is best at that moment, even if it was not exactly what was requested. A saintly nun once asked Jesus, “Do You always give us what we pray for?” He responded with a laugh, “I make *you pray* for what I want to give you!”

Her “Sign”

But what is *the sign* to which I am referring in the title of this article? Remember that when Our Lady first appeared to Bernadette in the Grotto, at that instant fear of the unknown struck her, and she attempted to make the Sign of the Cross as a protection from all evil. However, strangely, she was unable to move her arm.

Then Bernadette *intently* watched this most extraordinarily beautiful female Image make the most beautiful Sign of the Cross that she had ever seen! It was breath-taking and in that single instant, those motions burned deeply into Bernadette’s memory.

Bernadette fell in love with the Lady, never to recover from that love-sickness and joy. She was stricken with love-sickness and until her death, at the age of 35, no other love could surpass it.

Because of that great love, she was happy, but later Our Lady told her, “You will not be happy in this life, but in the next.” But she was happy, in spite of poor living conditions, treatment by others, and terrible illnesses. The first sight of this Image in the Grotto never left her mind and her heart. *Forever*, she could only be a joyful victim of love.

That first moment in the Grotto, the Lady had Rosary beads in Her hands. Bernadette took out her own beads from her pocket. So captivated had been Bernadette by the loveliness and charm of the movements of the Image, she herself then began making the Sign of the Cross, trying to copy the exact lovely movements, that the Image had just made.

Some 18 apparitions of Our Lady then occurred, and all the while, and in the interim, Bernadette, was practicing making the beautiful Sign. It reminded her of the Image of her love, of the hope to see Her again, and doubtlessly, of Heaven itself.

When Bernadette joined the convent in Nevers, after one talk, and one question and answer period, the nuns were never again allowed to speak about the apparitions. However, whenever possible, they would look at Bernadette to watch her make the impressive Sign of the Cross, and that movement spoke to them about Our Lady. If you would ask them what holiness, what stood out, what was special about Bernadette, they would answer in one voice, *her Sign of the Cross*.

How Did She Make It?

Many of us bless ourselves quickly, with some motions that may look like we are wringing our hands, or brushing away a fly. Sometimes we do not even touch our foreheads or bodies at each point of prayer, nor clasp our hands in a reverent finish.

Both Our Lady’s and Bernadette’s movements were *slow*, *ample*, and *prayerful*. The fingertips of the right hand *slowly touched the forehead*, (In the name of the Father) probably thinking about the Father...then touched the waist, *not* the center of the chest (And of the Son). thinking about Jesus...then touching the *farthest* side of the left shoulder (And of the Holy), then touching the *farthest* side of the right shoulder (Spirit), and then clasping the hands closed, fingers upward, (Amen).