

Prayers: Deceased, Sister Ver-University of Notre Dame
onica, S.N.D.; sick friend of Religious Bulletin
Larry Ash. February 11, 1952

Bob Hunter's (Wal) father
died. Grandparents of Bern
Endres, Ill. 6 sp. ints.

Visit The Grotto Today, Especially Today.

Today we commemorate the apparition of Our Blessed Lady at Lourdes. Hundreds of thousands of afflicted pilgrims have visited that famous shrine in the Pyrenees during these past 96 years. Many have been cured; medical records attest the facts. The vast majority have been sent away still afflicted. . . but never sad,

Two years ago the Notre Dame pilgrimage visited Lourdes. The sick and crippled were there by the hundreds. No moaning, no wailing, no sourness--but there was peaceful resignation in each pain-racked face. Herein, says Monsignor Benson, lies the greatest miracle of Lourdes. When Our Lady could cure them all, she straightens the limbs of only a few; yet she heals the hearts of all. None who have gone there seeking her intercession have come away sad. On the contrary, it is of almost daily occurrence that broken pilgrims ask that their sufferings be accepted as an offering for the cure of some one worse off than they.

"Penitence! Penitence!" That was the message Our Lady told Bernadette to give to the world. At Fatima forty-nine years later this same theme was repeated: "Pray, pray very much and make sacrifices for sinners. . . Many souls go to Hell because there is no one to make sacrifices for them."

"Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish," said Our Lord to the apostles. Self-denial, sacrifice, penance--unpopular words; their acts are more unpopular still. For Christians they are essential.

Why?

Although sanctity consists primarily in a perfect union of intellect and will with God, the true measure of which is charity, penance as atonement for past sins and as an interior act of self-denial are negative predispositions for the growth of charity.

Unless we deny ourselves, pick up our crosses daily, there's no use kidding ourselves, we are not following Christ. Christianity without the Cross is incomplete, lacks an essential characteristic. With each sin, mortal or venial, there is guilt and punishment due. We do penance to atone--or perish.

About the word "sanctity" there are too many misconceptions. The lowest degree of sanctifying grace in the soul is the first degree of sanctity. We won't enter heaven until we have been wholly sanctified, completely cleansed of guilt and punishment. Between sanctification and salvation there is no essential difference. Grace is the seed of glory. When we live in the state of grace eternal life has already begun. When in the state of mortal sin we are in the state of damnation--but not irrevocably, unless death catches us in our stupidity: "Thou, fool; this night do they require thy soul of thee."

Doing The Will Of God.

The whole business of sanctification, "which is performed on the level of reason and the virtues and on another by the Holy Ghost acting directly through His Gifts, can be summed up as the PERFECT OBEDIENCE OF OUR WHOLE BEING TO THE WILL OF GOD.

The practical work of saving our souls, reduced to its barest essentials, can be reduced to one simple formula, which we must apply to our life each day: avoid mortal sin by doing the will of God. The next stage of development is practicing virtue and avoiding deliberate venial sin. All this requires rigorous spiritual training in self denial. Initiative is important. God's grace will not force the will. It aids it, but will not supplant free will.

Prayers: (deceased) Herbert Burt, '23; grandmother of Hank Keating; Robert Castellini.