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Penitential practices remain vital to faith

In a climactic moment in the 1943 film "The Song of Bernadette," Sister Marie Therese confronts Bernadette, the young woman who saw Mary at Lourdes. Sister Marie Therese — Bernadette's teacher at the time of the visions — wonders why Bernadette of all people saw Mary. In the scene, she asks Bernadette what she knows of suffering, declaring, "In all our sacred history, the chosen ones have always been those who

suffered."

She then lists her own sufferings in God's name: eyes red from lack of sleep; throat parched from constant prayer; hands gnarled from work; body racked with pain from cold, stone floors.

"Yes, I have suffered because I know it is the only true road to heaven," Sister Marie declares, demanding of Bernadette why after all that suffering in the name of the Lord, Bernadette, and not she, had seen Mary.

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Monthly focus on Lenten observance

Editorial Director: Lee Strong

Editor: Michael J. O'Leary

Art Director: John F. O'Leary

Associate Art Director: Michael J. O'Leary

Design: Michael J. O'Leary

Photographer: Michael J. O'Leary

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