
DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

“‘All generations will call me blessed’: ‘The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.’ The Church rightly honors ‘the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of “Mother of God,” to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion. . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration.’ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the Rosary, an ‘epitome of the whole Gospel,’ express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.”¹

THE HOLY ROSARY

The Rosary is a centuries-old way of praying. “Medieval piety in the West developed the prayer of the Rosary as a popular substitute for the Liturgy of the Hours.” Although obviously Marian in character, it is Christ-centered in its essentials. It is a meditation on the lives of both our Lord and the Virgin Mary. “Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in . . . the Rosary.”

1. CCC, 971. The internal quotes are from Lk 1:48; MC 42, 56, and LG 66.

"Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ."

Meditation upon these mysteries leads us to contemplation: "This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him."²

The Rosary has a structure and method designed to help us more readily assimilate the mysteries into our spiritual life. Structurally, it is divided into four parts; each part, into five mysteries. For each mystery is said one "decade" consisting of one Our Father, ten Hail Marys and one Glory Be.

Though at first sight this method of repetition may seem to be tedious and boring, it is better understood when considered as an act of love: "when the Rosary is thought of as an outpouring of that love which tirelessly returns to the person loved with expressions similar in their content but ever fresh in terms of the feeling pervading them."³

It is also important to remember that though these repeated invocations are directed to Mary, our acts of love are ultimately directed to Jesus himself, through her intercession. In many Catholic families, there is a pious custom of reciting daily one part of the Rosary.

2. CCC, 2678, 2708.

3. RVM, 26.

Structure of the Rosary

Make the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There are, at present, many legitimate ways of introducing the Rosary, in different parts of the Church and following different customs. They should all appropriately prepare the mind for contemplation. The beginning of Psalm 70 is frequently used: "O God, come to my aid; O Lord, make haste to help me." Also common is the recitation of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Then, for an increase in the virtues of faith, hope, and charity:

Our Father. Three Hail Marys. Glory Be.

Now, begin the mysteries of the day. Start each decade by announcing the mystery and directing your imagination and attention towards that particular episode in the life of Christ or our Lady.

It can be useful to follow the announcement of the mystery with the reading of a related scriptural passage, as indicated below. In this way, the Rosary is not merely a matter of recalling information but of allowing God to speak to you directly through his word.

Ideally, this should be followed by a period of silence, in which to reflect upon the scripture passage before moving on to vocal prayer.

Then proceed to the recitation of the decade. On the large bead say the **Our Father**. On each of the ten small beads, say a **Hail Mary**. Then pray the **Glory Be**.

Each decade is a contemplation of the life of our Lord, witnessed by Mary—one aspect of the paschal mystery. In recognition of the connection with Christian life, one should conclude one's contemplation of each of them with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery. Alternatively, a more general prayer may be said, according to custom, such as the following:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, draw all souls to heaven, especially those who are in most need of your mercy.

or:

Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, shield me from the enemy and receive me at the hour of my death. Amen.

At the end of the Rosary any suitable prayers may be said, though the following are the most common: the Hail Holy Queen (p.451) followed by the prayer O God, whose only-begotten Son, . . . (p.421); or the *Sub Tuum Præsidium* (We Fly to Your Patronage) (p.416) followed by the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (p.417).

MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

Joyful

MONDAYS AND SATURDAYS

1. The Annunciation (Lk 1:26–38)
2. The Visitation (Lk 1:39–56)
3. The Nativity (Lk 2:1–20)
4. The Presentation (Lk 2:22–38)
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:41–51)

Luminous

THURSDAYS

1. The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan (Mk 1:9–11)
2. The Manifestation of Christ at the Wedding of Cana (Jn 2:1–12)
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with His Call to Conversion (Mk 1:14–15)
4. The Transfiguration (Mk 9:2–8)
5. The Institution of the Eucharist (Mk 14:22–26)

Sorrowful

TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS

1. The Agony in the Garden (Mt 26:36–46)
2. The Scourging at the Pillar (Jn 19:1)
3. The Crowning with Thorns (Mt 27:29)
4. The Carrying of the Cross (Jn 19:16–17)
5. The Crucifixion (Jn 19:18–30)

Glorious

WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS

1. The Resurrection (Mk 16:1–8)
2. The Ascension (Lk 24:50–52)
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–13)
4. The Assumption (Ps 16:10)
5. The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Rev 12:1–2)

WE FLY TO YOUR PATRONAGE (*SUB TUUM PRÆSIDIUM*)

Sub tuum præsidium
confúgimus, sancta Dei
Génatrix; nostras depre-
cations ne despicias in
necessitatibus nostris,
sed a periculis cunctis
libera nos semper, Virgo
gloriósa et benedícta.

We fly to your patron-
age, O holy Mother of
God. Despise not our
petitions in our neces-
sities, but deliver us
from all dangers, O ev-
er-glorious and blessed
Virgin.



LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The litany is a way of praying found among many peoples. It is a prayer made to be repeated; one phrase coming over and over again, so that the person praying is caught up in the prayer itself. Often litanies are chanted.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (also called the *Litany of Loreto*) took shape over several centuries. It is rooted in images that we find in the Scriptures. It may be said after praying the Rosary.

Kýrie, eléison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Kýrie, eléison.	Christ, have mercy on us.
Christe, eléison.	
Christe, eléison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Kýrie, eléison.	Christ,
Kýrie, eléison.	hear us.
Christe, audi nos.	
Christe, audi nos.	Christ, graciously
Christe, exáudi nos.	hear us.
Christe, exáudi nos.	
Pater de cælis, Deus,	God the Father of heaven,
Miserére nobis.	Have mercy on us.
Fili, Redemptor	God the Son,
mundi, Deus,	Redeemer of the world,
Miserére nobis.	Have mercy on us.
Spíritus Sancte, Deus,	God the Holy Spirit,
Miserére nobis.	Have mercy on us.
Sancta Trínitas,	Holy Trinity, one God,
unus Deus,	
Miserére nobis.	Have mercy on us.

Sancta María,	Holy Mary,
ora pro nobis.	pray for us.
Sancta Dei Génatrix,...	Holy Mother of God,...
Sancta Virgo	Holy Virgin of
vírginum,...	virgins,...
Mater Christi,...	Mother of Christ,...
Mater Ecclesiæ,...	Mother of the Church,...
Mater misericordiæ,...	Mother of mercy,...
Mater divínæ	Mother of divine
gratiæ,...	grace,...
Mater spei,...	Mother of hope,...
Mater puríssima,...	Mother most pure,...
Mater castíssima,...	Mother most chaste,...
Mater invioláta,...	Mother inviolate,...
Mater intemeráta,...	Mother undefiled,...
Mater amábilis,...	Mother most amiable,...
Mater admirábilis,...	Mother most
	admirable,...
Mater boni consílii,...	Mother of good
	counsel,...
Mater Creatóris,...	Mother of our
	Creator,...
Mater Salvatóris,...	Mother of our Savior,...
Virgo prudentíssima,...	Virgin most prudent,...
Virgo veneránda,...	Virgin most
	venerable,...
Virgo prædicánda,...	Virgin most
	renowned,...
Virgo potens,...	Virgin most
	powerful,...

Virgo clemens, ora pro nobis.	Virgin most merciful, pray for us.
Virgo fidélis,...	Virgin most faithful,...
Spéculum iustítiæ,...	Mirror of justice,...
Sedes sapiéntiæ,...	Seat of wisdom,...
Causa nostræ lætítiæ,...	Cause of our joy,...
Vas spirituále,...	Spiritual Vessel,...
Vas honorábile,...	Vessel of honor,...
Vas insígne devotiónis,...	Singular vessel of devotion,...
Rosa mýstica,...	Mystical rose,...
Turris Davídica,...	Tower of David,...
Turris ebúrnea,...	Tower of ivory,...
Domus áurea,...	House of gold,...
Fœderis arca,...	Ark of the covenant,...
Iánua cœli,...	Gate of heaven,...
Stella matutína,...	Morning star,...
Salus infirmórum,...	Health of the sick,...
Refúgium peccatórum,...	Refuge of sinners,...
Solácium migrántium,...	Solace of migrants,...
Consolátrix afflictórum,...	Comforter of the afflicted,...
Auxílium Christianórum,...	Help of Christians,...
Regína Angelórum,...	Queen of angels,...
Regína Patriarchárum,...	Queen of patriarchs,...

Regína Prophetárum,	Queen of prophets,
ora pro nobis.	pray for us.

Regína Apostolórum,...	Queen of apostles,...
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Regína Mártýrum,...	Queen of martyrs,...
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Regína Confessórum,...	Queen of confessors,...
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Regína Vírginum,...	Queen of virgins,...
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Regína Sanctórum	Queen of all
ómnium,...	saints,...

Regína sine labe	Queen conceived
origináli concépta,...	without original sin,...

Regína in cælum	Queen assumed into
assúpta,...	heaven,...

Regína Sacratíssimi	Queen of the most
Rosárii,...	holy Rosary,...

Regina famíliæ,...	Queen of families,...
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Regína pacis,...	Queen of peace,...
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Y. Agnus Dei,	Y. Lamb of God,
qui tóllis	you take away the
peccáta mundi,	sins of the world,

R. Parce nobis, Dómine.	R. Spare us, O Lord.
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Y. Agnus Dei,	Y. Lamb of God,
qui tóllis	you take away the
peccáta mundi,	sins of the world,

R. Exáudi nos,	R. Graciously hear us,
Dómine.	O Lord.

Y. Agnus Dei,	Y. Lamb of God,
qui tóllis	you take away the
peccáta mundi,	sins of the world,

R. Miserére nobis.	R. Have mercy on us.
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V. Ora pro nobis, Sancta
Dei Génatrix,

R. Ut digni efficiámur
promissionibus
Christi.

V. Pray for us, O holy
Mother of God,

R. That we may be
made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, whose Only-Begotten Son,
by his life, death, and resurrection,
has purchased for us the rewards of everlasting life;
grant, we beseech you,
that, we, who meditate on these mysteries
of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
may imitate what they contain,
and obtain what they promise.

Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

There is also a custom of ending the Rosary with prayers for
the intentions of the holy Father, the whole Church, the (arch)
bishop of the (arch)diocese, and the holy souls in purgatory.
The following prayers are suggested:

For the intentions of the Pope
and the needs of the Church and of the nation:

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

For the (arch)bishop of this (arch)diocese and his intentions:

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

For the holy souls in Purgatory:

Our Father. Hail Mary. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

"The Rosary is one of the traditional paths of Christian prayer directed to the contemplation of Christ's face....

"After the announcement of the mystery and the proclamation of the word, it is fitting to pause and focus one's attention for a suitable period of time on the mystery concerned, before moving into vocal prayer. A discovery of the importance of silence is one of the secrets of practicing contemplation and meditation. One drawback of a society dominated by technology and the mass media is the fact that silence becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. Just as moments of silence are recommended in the Liturgy, so too in the recitation of the Rosary it is fitting to pause briefly after listening to the word of God, while the mind focuses on the content of a particular mystery" (St. John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariæ*, October 16, 2002, nos. 18, 31).

The meditations that follow are from *Holy Rosary*, written in 1931 by St. Josemaria Escriva. A meditation on the Luminous Mysteries did not appear in *Holy Rosary*, but throughout his life St. Josemaria lovingly contemplated and preached on these scenes, just as he did with every chapter of the Gospels. Therefore, we have included here some excerpts from among his writings that make reference to the Luminous Mysteries to help readers meditate on the complete Rosary.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES



1. THE ANNUNCIATION

Don't forget, my friend, that we are children. The Lady of the sweet name, Mary, is absorbed in prayer. You, in that house, can be whatever you wish: a friend, a servant, an onlooker, a neighbor.... For the moment I don't dare to be anything. I hide behind you, and, full of awe, I watch what's happening.

The Archangel delivers his message.... *Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco?* "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" (Lk 1:34). Our mother's voice reminds me—by contrast—of all the impurities of men,... mine too.

The first decade is about to end.... I still have time to tell God, before anyone else does, "Jesus, I love you."



2. THE VISITATION

By now, my little friend, you have no doubt learned to manage on your own. Joyfully keep Joseph and Mary company . . . and you will hear the traditions of the House of David. You will hear about Elizabeth and Zechariah, you will be moved by Joseph's pure love, and your heart will pound whenever they mention the Child who will be born in Bethlehem.

We walk in haste towards the mountains to a town of the tribe of Judah (Lk 1:39).

We arrive. It is the house where John the Baptist is to be born. Elizabeth gratefully hails the mother of her Redeemer: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?" (Lk 1:42-43).

The unborn Baptist quivers... (Lk 1:41). Mary's humility pours forth in the *Magnificat*.... And you and I, who are proud — who were proud — promise to be humble.



3. THE NATIVITY

Caesar Augustus has issued a decree for a census to be taken of the whole world. For this purpose, everyone must go to the city of his ancestors. And, since Joseph belongs to the house and line of David, he goes with the Virgin Mary from Nazareth to the town of David, called Bethlehem, in Judea (Lk 2:1–5). And in Bethlehem is born our God: Jesus Christ! There is no room in the inn; he is born in a stable. And his mother wraps him in swaddling clothes and lays him in a manger (Lk 2:7).

Cold. Poverty. . . I am Joseph's little servant. How good Joseph is! He treats me like a son. He even forgives me if I take the Child in my arms and spend hour after hour saying sweet and loving things to him.

And I kiss him—you kiss him, too!—and I rock him in my arms, and I sing to him and call him King, Love, my God, my Only-one, my All! . . . How beautiful is the Child . . . and how short the decade!



4. THE PRESENTATION

When the time has come for the mother's purification, in accordance with the Law of Moses, the Child must be taken to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord (Lk 2:22).

And this time it will be you, my friend, who carries the cage with the doves (Lk 2:24).

Just think: She—Mary Immaculate!—submits to the Law as if she were defiled.

Through this example, foolish child, won't you learn to fulfill the holy law of God regardless of any personal sacrifice?

Purification! You and I certainly do need purification. Atonement and, more than atonement, love. Love as a searing iron to cauterize our soul's uncleanness, and as a fire to kindle with divine flames the wretchedness of our hearts.

An upright and devout man has come to the Temple, led by the Holy Spirit (it has been revealed to him that he would not die until he had set eyes on the Christ). He takes the Messiah into his arms and says: "Now, my Lord, you can let your servant go from this world in peace, just as you promised, because my eyes have seen the Savior" (Lk 2:25–30).



5. THE FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Where is Jesus? The Child, my Lady! Where is he? Mary is crying. In vain you and I have run from group to group, from caravan to caravan: no one has seen him. Joseph, after fruitless attempts to keep from crying, cries too.... And you.... And I.

Being a rough little fellow, I cry my eyes out and wail to heaven and earth,... to make up for the times when I lost him through my own fault and did not cry.

Jesus: may I never lose you again.... Then you and I are united in misfortune and grief, as we were united in sin. And, from the depths of our being come sighs of heartfelt sorrow and burning phrases, which the pen cannot and should not record.

And, as we are consoled by the joy of finding Jesus — three days he was gone! — debating with the teachers of Israel (Lk 2:46), you and I will be left deeply impressed by the duty to leave our home and family to serve our heavenly Father.

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES



1. BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him . . . and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:13, 17).

In Baptism, our Father God has taken possession of our lives. He has made us sharers in Christ's life and sent us the Holy Spirit.

The strength and the power of God light up the face of the earth.

We will set the world ablaze, with the flames of the fire that you came to enkindle on earth! And the light of your truth, our Jesus, will enlighten men's minds in an endless day.

I can hear you crying out, my King, in your strong and ardent voice: *ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* I have come to bring fire to the earth, and would that it were already enkindled! And I answer, with my entire being, with all my senses and faculties: *ecce ego: quia vocasti me!* Here I am, because you have called me!

God has placed an indelible mark on your soul through Baptism: you are a child of God.

Child, are you not aflame with the desire to bring all men to love Him?



2. WEDDING FEAST AT CANA

Our Lady was a guest at one of those noisy country weddings attended by people from many different villages. Mary was the only one who noticed the wine was running out. Don't these scenes from Christ's life seem familiar to us? The greatness of God lives at the level of ordinary things. It is natural for a woman, a homemaker, to notice an oversight, to look after the little things that make life pleasant. And that is how Mary acted.

Do whatever he tells you.

Implete hydrias (Jn 2:7), fill the jars. And the miracle takes place. Everything is so simple and ordinary. The servants carry out their job. The water is easy to find. And this is the first manifestation of our Lord's divinity. What is commonplace becomes something extraordinary, something supernatural, when we have the good will to heed what God is asking of us. Lord, I want to abandon all my concerns into your generous hands. Our Mother — your Mother — will have let you hear those words, now as in Cana: "They have no wine!..."

If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary. Because of the miracle at the marriage feast at Cana, which Christ performed at his Mother's request, *his disciples learned to believe in him* (Jn 2:11). Our Mother is always interceding with her Son so that he may attend to our needs and show himself to us, so that we can cry out, "You are the Son of God."

Grant me, dear Jesus, the faith I truly desire. My Mother, sweet Lady, Mary most holy, make me really believe!



3. PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel (Mk 1:15).

And all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them (Mk 2:13).

Jesus sees the boats on the shore and gets into one of them. How naturally Jesus steps into the boat of each and everyone of us!

When you seek to draw close to our Lord, remember that he is always very close to you, that he is in you: *regnum Dei intra vos est* (Lk 17:21). The kingdom of God is within you. You will find him in your heart.

Christ should reign first and foremost in our soul. But in order for him to reign in me, I need his abundant grace. Only in that way can my every heartbeat and breath, my least intense look, my most ordinary word, my most basic feeling be transformed into a hosanna to Christ my king.

Duc in altum. Put out into deep water! Throw aside the pessimism that makes a coward of you. *Et laxate retia vestra in capturam.* And pay out your nets for a catch!

We have to place our trust in our Lord's words: get into the boat, take the oars, hoist the sails and launch out into this sea of the world which Christ gives us as an inheritance.

Et regni ejus non erit finis. His kingdom will have no end.

Doesn't it fill you with joy to work for such a kingdom?



4. TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light (Mt 17:2).

Jesus, we want to see you, to speak to you! We want to contemplate you, immersed in the immensity of your beauty, in a contemplation that will never cease! It must be wonderful to see you, Jesus! It must be wonderful to see you and be wounded by your love!

And a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:5).

Lord, we are ready to heed whatever you want to tell us. Speak to us: we are attentive to your voice. May your words enkindle our will so that we launch out fervently to obey you.

Vultum tuum, Domine, requiram (Ps 26:8). Lord, I long to see your face. I like to close my eyes and think that, when God wills, the moment will come when I will be able to see him, not as *in a mirror dimly, but . . . face to face* (1 Cor 13:12). Yes, *my heart yearns for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?* (Ps 41:3).



5. INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father,

having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (Jn 13:1).

When our Lord instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper, night had already fallen. The world had fallen into darkness, for the old rites, the old signs of God's infinite mercy to mankind, were going to be brought to fulfillment. The way was opening to a new dawn—the new Passover. The Eucharist was instituted during that night, preparing in advance for the morning of the resurrection.

Jesus has remained in the Eucharist for love... for you.

He has remained, knowing how men would treat him... and how you would treat him.

He has remained so that you could eat him, and visit him and tell him your concerns; and so that, by your prayer beside the tabernacle and by receiving him sacramentally, you could fall more in love each day, and help other souls, many souls, to follow the same path.

Good child: see how lovers on earth kiss the flowers, the letters, the mementos of those they love...

Then you, how could you ever forget that you have him always at your side—yes, *Him*? How could you forget... that you can eat him?

Lord, may I never again flutter along close to the ground. Illumined by the rays of the divine Sun—Christ—in the Eucharist, may my flight never be interrupted until I find repose in your Heart.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES



1. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

"Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And Peter fell asleep. And the other apostles. And you, little friend, fell asleep... and I too was another sleepy-headed Peter.

Jesus, alone and sad, suffers and soaks the earth with his blood.

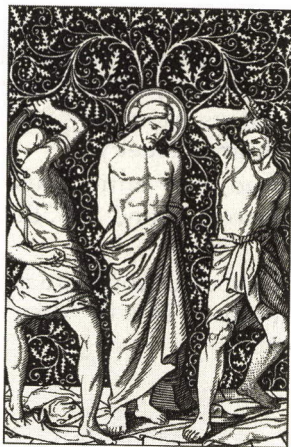
Kneeling on the hard ground, he perseveres in prayer.... He weeps for you... and for me. The weight of the sins of men overwhelms him.

Pater, si vis, transfer calicem istum a me: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.... Yet not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42).

An angel from heaven comforts him. Jesus is in agony. He continues *prolixius*, praying more intensely.... He comes over to us and finds us asleep: "Rise," he says again, "and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Lk 22:46).

Judas the traitor: a kiss. Peter's sword gleams in the night. Jesus speaks: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?" (Mk 14:48).

We are cowards: we follow him from afar — but awake and praying. Prayer.... Prayer....



2. THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Pilate speaks: "It is your custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. Whom shall I set free: Barabbas — a thief jailed with others for murder —

or Jesus?" (Mt 27:17). The crowd, spurred on by their rulers, cry: "Put this man to death and release Barabbas" (Lk 23:18).

Pilate speaks again: "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Mt 27:22). *Crucifige eum*: "Crucify him!" (Mk 15:14).

Pilate, for the third time, says to them: "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death" (Lk 23:22).

The clamor of the mob grows louder: "Crucify him; Crucify him!" (Mk 15:14).

And Pilate, wanting to please the crowd, releases Barabbas to them and orders Jesus to be scourged.

Bound to the pillar. Covered with wounds.

The blows of the lash sound upon his torn flesh, upon his undefiled flesh, which suffers for your sinful flesh. More blows. More fury. Still more.... It is a last extreme of human cruelty.

Finally, exhausted, they untie Jesus. And the body of Christ yields to pain and falls limp, broken and half-dead.

You and I cannot speak. Words are not needed. Look at him, look at him... slowly. After this... can you ever fear penance?



3. THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Our King's eagerness for suffering has been fully satisfied! They lead my Lord to the courtyard of the palace, and there call together the whole troop (Mk 15:16). The brutal soldiers strip his most pure body. They drape a dirty purple rag about Jesus. They place a reed, as a scepter, in his right hand.

The crown of thorns, driven in by blows, makes him a mock king.... *Ave, Rex Iudæorum*: "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mk 15:18). And with their blows they wound his head. And they strike him... and spit on him.

Crowned with thorns and clothed in rags of purple, Jesus is shown to the Jewish crowd. *Ecce Homo*: "Here is the man!" And again the chief priests and their attendants raise the cry, saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Jn 19:5-6).

You and I... haven't we crowned him anew with thorns and struck him and spat on him?

Never again, Jesus, never again.... And a firm and practical resolution marks the end of these ten Hail Marys.



4. THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Carrying his cross, Jesus goes out of the city to the place of the skulls—called Golgotha in Hebrew (Jn 19:17). And they lay hold of a certain Simon from Cyrene, who is coming in from the country; and they make him take the cross and carry it behind Jesus (Lk 23:26).

The prophecy of Isaiah (53:12) is being fulfilled—*cum sceleratis reputatus est* ("he was counted among

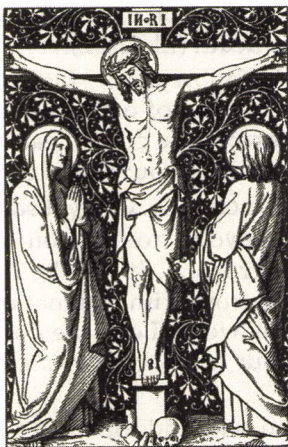
the wicked")—for two others are being led out with him to be put to death (Lk 23:32).

If anyone would follow me.... Little friend, we are sad, living the Passion of our Lord Jesus. See how lovingly he embraces the cross. Learn from him. Jesus carries the cross for you: You... carry it for Jesus. But don't drag the cross.... Carry it squarely on your shoulder, because your cross, if you carry it so, will not be just any cross.... It will be the holy cross. Don't carry your cross with resignation: resignation is not a generous word. Love the cross. When you really love it, your cross will be... a Cross without a cross.

And, surely, you will find Mary on the way, just as Jesus did.

5. THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD

For Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, the throne of triumph is ready. You and I do not see him writhe on being nailed. Suffering all that can be suffered, he spreads his arms in the gesture of an Eternal Priest.... The soldiers take his holy garments and divide them into four parts. In order not to tear the tunic, they cast lots to decide whose it shall be. And so, once more, the words of Scripture are fulfilled: "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothes they cast lots" (Jn 19:23–24).



Now he is on high. . . . And close to her Son, at the foot of the cross, stand Mary . . . and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. And John, the disciple Jesus loved. *Ecce Mater tua*: "Behold your mother": he gives us his mother to be ours.

Earlier, they had offered him wine mixed with vinegar, and, when he had tasted it, he would not drink it (Mt 27:34).

Now, he thirsts . . . for love, for souls. *Consummatum est*: "It is accomplished" (Jn 19:30). Foolish child, look: All this . . . He has suffered it all for you. . . . And for me. Can you keep from crying?

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES



1. THE RESURRECTION

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices with which to anoint the dead body of Jesus. It is very early on the following day; just as the sun is rising, they come to the tomb (Mk 16:1–2). And upon entering it they are dismayed, for they cannot find the body of our Lord. A youth, clothed in white, says to them: “Do not be afraid. I know that you seek Jesus of Nazareth. *Non est hic, surrexit enim sicut dixit*: He is not here; for he has risen, as he said” (Mt 28:5). He has risen! Jesus has risen: he is not in the tomb. Life has overcome death.

He appears to his most holy mother. He appears to Mary Magdalene, who is carried away by love. And to Peter and the rest of the apostles. And to you and me, who are his disciples and more in love than Mary Magdalene. The things we say to him! May we never die through sin; may our spiritual resurrection be eternal. And, before the decade is over, you kiss the wounds in his feet, . . . and I, more daring — because I am more a child — place my lips upon his open side.



2. THE ASCENSION

Now the Master is teaching his disciples: he has opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he appoints them witnesses of his life and his miracles, of his passion and death, and of the glo-

ry of his resurrection (Lk 24:45, 48). Then he brings them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany and blesses them. And as he does so, he withdraws from them and is carried up to heaven (Lk 24:51) until a cloud takes him out of sight (Acts 1:9).

Jesus has gone to the Father. Two angels in white approach us and say, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven?" (Acts 1:11). Peter and the others go back to Jerusalem *cum gaudio magno*: "with great joy" (Lk 24:52). It is fitting that the sacred humanity of Christ should receive the homage, praise, and adoration of all the hierarchies of the angels and of all the legions of the blessed in heaven. But you and I feel like orphans: we are sad, and we go to Mary for consolation.



3. THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our Lord had said: "I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, another Consoler, to be with you for ever" (Jn 14:16). The disciples are gathered together in one room, when suddenly they hear what sounds like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which fills the entire house where they are assembled. At the same time something appears that seems like tongues of fire; these separate and come to rest on the head of each of them (Acts 2:1-3). The apostles are so filled with the Holy Spirit that they seem to be drunk (Acts 2:13).

Then Peter stands up with the Eleven and addresses the people in a loud voice. We, people from a hundred nations, hear him. Each of us hears him in his

own language—you and I in ours. He speaks to us of Christ Jesus and of the Holy Spirit and of the Father. Peter is neither stoned nor thrown into prison. Of those who have heard him, three thousand are converted and baptized.

You and I, after helping the apostles administer Baptism, bless God the Father for his Son Jesus, and we, too, feel drunk with the Holy Spirit.



4. THE ASSUMPTION

Assumpta est Maria in cælum: gaudent angeli. God has taken Mary, body and soul, to heaven; and the angels rejoice!

So sings the Church. And so, with that same cry of joy, we begin our contemplation in this decade of the Holy Rosary.

The Mother of God has fallen asleep. Around her bed are the twelve apostles (Matthias in the place of Judas).

And we also, through a grace respected by all, are at her side.

But Jesus wants to have his mother, body and soul, in heaven. And the heavenly court, arrayed in all its splendor, greets our Lady. You and I—children, after all—take the train of Mary's magnificent blue cloak, and thus we are able to watch the marvelous scene.

The most blessed Trinity receives and showers honors on the Daughter, Mother and Spouse of God.... And so great is the Lady's majesty that the angels exclaim: Who is she?



5. THE CORONATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

You are completely fair, and without blemish. You are a garden enclosed, my sister, my Bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain. "*Veni, coronaberis*": "Come, you shall be crowned" (Sg 4:7, 12, 8).

If you and I had been able, we too would have made her Queen and Lady of all creation.

"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman with a crown of twelve stars upon her head, adorned with the sun and the moon at her feet" (Rev 12:1). Mary, Virgin without stain, has made up for the fall of Eve; she has crushed the head of hell's serpent with her immaculate heel. Daughter of God, Mother of God, Spouse of God.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit crown her as the rightful Empress of the Universe.

And the angels pay her homage as her subjects... and the patriarchs and prophets and apostles... and the martyrs and confessors and virgins and all the saints... and all sinners, including you and me.

SALVE REGINA

Salve, Regína, mater misericórdiæ;
vita, dulcédo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamámus, éxsules fílii Evæ.
Ad te suspirámus, geméntes et flentes
in hac lacrimárum valle.
Eia ergo, advocáta nostra,
illos tuos misericórdes óculos
ad nos convérte.
Et Iesum, benedíctum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsílium osténde.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo María.

V. Ora pro nobis sancta Dei Génatrix.

R. **Ut digni efficiámur
promissionibus Christi.**

Oremus.

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui gloriósæ Vírginis
Matris Mariæ corpus et ánimam, ut dignum Fílii tui
habitáculum effíci mererétur, Spíritu Sancto coope-
ránte, præparásti: da, ut cuius commemoratióne læ-
támur, eius pia intercessióne, ab instántibus malis et
a morte perpétua liberémur. Per eúndem Christum
Dóminum nostrum.

R. **Amen.**

V. Divínium auxílium máneat semper nobíscum.

R. **Amen.**

HAIL HOLY QUEEN

Generally, this prayer is divided into three parts. In the first part, the soul greets the Mother of God, invoking her mercy. In the second, the soul repeats the greeting and, in the name of all people, calls to holy Mary, whom we beg to look upon us with eyes of mercy and to love us with her son, Jesus. In the third, the soul proclaims the greatest and most fundamental title (epithet) of its intercessor — that is, Mother of God.

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

To you do we cry,

poor, banished children of Eve.

To you do we send up our sighs,

mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate,

your eyes of mercy toward us,

and after this exile

show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. **That we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.**

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit you prepared the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of your Son; grant that by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice, we may be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. **Amen.**

V. May the divine assistance remain with us always.

R. **Amen.**

MEMORARE

Memoráre, o piísima Virgo María, non esse audítum a sæculo, quemquam ad tua curréntem præsídia, tua implorántem auxília, tua peténtem suffrágia esse derelíctum. Ego tali animátus confidéntia ad te, Virgo Vírginum, Mater, curro; ad te vénio; coram te gemens peccátor assísto. Noli, Mater Verbi, verba mea despícere, sed audi propítia et exáudi. Amen.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER

HERMANNUS CONTRACTUS

Alma Redemptóris Mater
quæ pérvia cæli porta manes,
et stella maris,
succúrre cadénti.

Súrgere qui curat, pópulo: tu quæ genuísti,
natúra miránte,
tuum sanctum Genitórem,
Virgo prius ac postérius, Gabriélis ab ore
sumens illud ave, peccatórum miserére.

AVE REGINA CÆLORUM

Ave, Regína cælórum,
ave, Dómina angelórum,
salve, radix, salve, porta,
ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Gaude, Virgo gloriósa,
super omnes speciósa;
vale, o valde decóra
et pro nobis Christum exóra.

THE MEMORARE

The Memorare, a prayer attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, is one of the best prayers expressing our confidence in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

LOVING MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER

ATTR. TO HERMANN THE LAME

Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
gate of heaven, star of the sea,
assist your people who have fallen,
as we strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature,
you bore your Creator,
yet remained a virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.

HAIL, O QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned!
Hail, by angels mistress owned,
Root of Jesse! Gate of morn!
Whence the world's true light was born:
Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in heaven they see.
Fairest thou where all are fair!
Plead with Christ our sins to spare.

STABAT MATER DOLOROSA

Stabat Mater dolorósa
Iuxta crucem lacrimósa,
Dum pendébat Fílius.
Cuius ánimam geméntem,
Contristátam et doléntem,
Pertransívit gládus.
O quam tristis et afflícta
Fuit illa Benedícta
Mater Unigéniti!
Quæ mærébat, et dolébat,
Pia Mater, dum vidébat
Nati pœnas ínclyti.
Quis est homo, qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si vidéret
In tanto supplício?
Quis non posset contristári,
Christi Matrem contemplári
Doléntem cum Fílio?
Pro peccátis suæ gentis
Vidit Iesum in torméntis,
Et flagéllis súbditum.
Vidit suum dulcem natum
Moriéndo desolátum,
Dum emísit spíritum.
Eia Mater, fons amóris,
Me sentíre vim dolóris
Fac, ut tecum lúgeam.
Fac, ut árdeat cor meum
In amándo Christum Deum,
Ut sibi compláceam.

AT THE CROSS HER STATION KEEPING

At the cross, her station keeping,
stood the mournful mother weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.

Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword had passed.

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
was that mother highly blessed
of the sole begotten One!

Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying, glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that mother's pain untold?

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
she beheld her tender Child,
all with bloody scourges rent.

For the sins of his own nation
saw him hang in desolation
till his spirit forth he sent.

O sweet mother! font of love,
touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with yours accord.

Make me feel as you have felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ, my Lord.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifíxi fige plagas
Cordi meo válide.
Tui nati vulneráti,
Tam dignáti pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum dívide.
Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifíxo condolére,
Donec ego víxero.
Iuxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociáre
In planctu desídero.
Virgo vírginum præclára,
Mihi iam non sis amára:
Fac me tecum plángere.
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passiõnis fac consórtem,
Et plagas recólere.
Fac me plagis vulnerári,
Fac me cruce inebriári,
Et cruóre Fílii.
Flammis urar ne succénsus,
Per te, Virgo, sim defénsus
In die iudícii.
Christe, cum sit hinc exíre,
Da per Matrem me veníre
Ad palmam victóriæ.
Quando corpus moriétur,
Fac, ut ánimæ donétur
Paradísi glória.
Amen. (T. P. Allelúia.)

Holy mother, pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Savior crucified.

Let me share with you his pain,
who for all our sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with you,
mourning him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live.

By the cross with you to stay,
there with you to weep and pray,
is all I ask of you to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest!
Listen to my fond request:
let me share your grief divine.

Let me to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of yours.

Wounded with his every wound,
steep my soul till it has swooned
in his very blood away.

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in his awful judgment day.

Christ, when you shall call me hence,
be your mother my defense,
be your cross my victory.

While my body here decays,
may my soul your goodness praise,
safe in heaven eternally.

Amen. (Easter Time Alleluia.)

CONSECRATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

My queen and my mother, I give myself entirely to you and, in proof of my affection, I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Since I am your own, keep me and guard me as your property and possession. Amen.

BLESSED BE YOUR PURITY

Purity is an eminently positive virtue, which gains the grace of God for the person who lives it. It is the virtue of the beautiful and spotless soul. It elevates us to things divine. These ten verses praise Mary. Conceived without sin, she was always pure and brighter than snow.

Blessed be your purity,
May it be blessed for ever,
For no less than God takes delight
In such exalted beauty.
To you, heavenly Princess,
Holy Virgin Mary,
I offer on this day
My whole heart, life, and soul.
Look upon me with compassion;
Do not leave me, my mother.



Omnes ad Iesum per Mariam

BLESSING AND IMPOSITION WITH THE SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ⁴

The spirituality of the Carmelite Order is one of the preeminent spiritual traditions of the Catholic Church. It is difficult to reduce this spirituality to a few sentences. One who wears the scapular should certainly reflect upon the teachings of the great Carmelite saints, three of whom are doctors of the Church.

The imposition is done with a scapular of wool; the Scapular medal can be worn in place of the cloth scapular for good reason. A few basic introductory principles of Carmelite spirituality would be:

- Frequent participation in the Mass and reception of Holy Communion.
- Frequent reading of and meditation on the Word of God in Sacred Scripture;
- The regular praying of at least part of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Imitation of and devotion to Mary, the woman of faith who hears the Word of God and puts it into practice.
- The practice of the virtues, notably charity, chastity (according to one's state of life), and obedience to the will of God.

The person who is to receive the scapular kneels, and the priest, vested in surplice and white stole, says:

V. Lord, show us your kindness and mercy.

R. And grant us your salvation.

V. Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to you.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind, by your right hand sanctify this scapular, which your servant will devotedly wear for the love of you and of your mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.

4. Brown Scapular Confraternity; taken from the enrollment in the Brown Scapular Confraternity.

By her intercession, may he (she) be protected from the wickedness of the enemy and persevere in your grace until death. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Then the priest sprinkles the scapular with holy water and imposes it upon the person (or upon each person), saying:

Receive this blessed scapular and ask the most holy Virgin that, by her merits, it may be worn with no stain of sin and may protect you from all harm and bring you into everlasting life.

R. Amen.

After this the priest adds:

By the power granted to me, I admit you to a share in all the spiritual works performed with the merciful help of Jesus Christ by the religious of Mount Carmel. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

May almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, bless you, whom he has been pleased to receive into the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. We beg her to crush the head of the ancient serpent in the hour of your death and to obtain for you the palm and the crown of your everlasting inheritance. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The priest sprinkles the person with holy water. For several persons, the prayers are said in the plural.

If the scapular is to be blessed alone, then the blessing begins with Lord, show us your kindness and mercy (p. 459), and concludes with the prayer O Lord Jesus Christ (p. 459).

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

ST. JOHN PAUL II

In January 1979, His Holiness, Pope St. John Paul II, in the first year of his pontificate, made the first of a long series of pastoral visits. He went to Mexico and presided over the Conference in Puebla. He visited the shrine of our Lady of Guadalupe in the new basilica built in her honor. There, in the presence of all the bishops of America, the holy Father addressed this prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O Immaculate Virgin, mother of the true God and mother of the Church! You, who from this place revealed your clemency and your pity to all those who ask for your protection, hear the prayer that we address to you with filial trust, and present it to your Son Jesus, our sole Redeemer.

Mother of mercy, teacher of hidden and silent sacrifice, to you, who come to meet us sinners, we dedicate on this day all our being and all our love. We also dedicate to you our life, our work, our joys, our infirmities, and our sorrows.

Grant peace, justice, and prosperity to our peoples, for we entrust to your care all that we have and all that we are, our lady and mother.

We wish to be entirely yours and to walk with you along the way of complete faithfulness to Jesus Christ in his Church: hold us always with your loving hand.

Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, we pray to you for all the bishops, that they may lead the faithful along paths of intense Christian life, of love and humble service of God and souls.

Contemplate this immense harvest, and intercede with the Lord that he may instill a hunger for holi-

ness in the whole People of God and grant abundant vocations of priests and religious, strong in the faith and zealous dispensers of God's mysteries.

Gain for our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God. Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Fair Love, protect our families, so that they may always be united, and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with compassion, teach us to go continually to Jesus, and if we fall, help us to rise again, to return to him, by means of the confession of our faults and sins in the sacrament of Penance, which gives peace to the soul. We beg you to grant us a great love for all the holy sacraments, which are, as it were, the signs that your Son left us on earth.

Thus, most holy mother, with the peace of God in our conscience, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all true joy and true peace, which come to us from your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.



MONTH OF MARY

(May Devotions)

*"God wills that all his gifts should come
to us through Mary" (St. Bernard)*

It was in Rome, towards the end of the eighteenth century, one fine evening in May. A child of the poor gathered his companions around him and led them to a statue of Mary, before which a lamp was burning, as is the custom in that holy city. There, these fresh young voices sang the Litany of our Lady. The next day, the little group, followed by other children, again gathered at the feet of the Mother of God. Next came their mothers, to join the little assembly. Soon, other groups were formed, and the devotion rapidly became popular. Holy souls, troubled by the disorderly conduct which always increases and becomes graver at the return of the pleasant springtime, saw in these growing practices the hand of God, and they cooperated with the designs of Providence by approving and promoting this new devotion, as a public and solemn act of reparation. The Month of Mary was founded.⁵

*"This is the month in which, in the churches and individual homes, the most affectionate and fervent homage of prayers and devotions from the hearts of Christians is raised to Mary. It is also the month in which from his throne descend upon us the most generous and abundant gifts of the Divine Mercy."*⁶

In our own times, we Catholics, wanting to be close to her always, offer her special presents in May: pilgrimages, visits to churches dedicated to her, little sacrifices in her honor, periods of study and well-finished work offered up to her, and a more attentive recitation of the rosary.

5. Cf. A Carthusian, *A Month with Mary*, London: Burns and Oates, 1950.

6. St. Paul VI, *The Month of Mary*, 1967.

MARIAN READINGS

May 1

MARY: THE MOTHER OF GOD

"When the Blessed Virgin said yes, freely, to the plans revealed to her by the Creator, the divine Word assumed a human nature — a rational soul and a body — which was formed in the most pure womb of Mary. The divine nature and the human were united in a single Person: Jesus Christ, true God and, thenceforth, true man; the only-begotten and eternal Son of the Father and from that moment on, as man, the true Son of Mary. This is why our Lady is the mother of the Incarnate Word, of the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who has united our human nature to himself for ever, without any confusion of the two natures. The greatest praise we can give to the Blessed Virgin is to address her loudly and clearly by the name that expresses her very highest dignity: 'Mother of God.'"⁷

Let us offer to our Mother today:

Brief but frequent prayers of love, such as:

"Mother of God, your petitions are most powerful."

May 2

MARY: THE MOST PERFECT CREATURE

"She who is full of grace, the object of God's pleasure, exalted above all the angels and the saints, lived an ordinary life.

7. This excerpt and the following thirty excerpts are taken from homilies of St. Josemaria Escriva in *Christ Is Passing By* (=CPB) and *Friends of God*(=FG), Princeton, N.J.: Scepter Publications, 1968 / 1973. This one is from "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 274.

"Mary is as much a creature as we are, with a heart like ours, made for joy and mirth as well as suffering and tears. Before Gabriel communicates to her God's plan, our Lady does not know that she has been chosen from all eternity to be the mother of the Messiah. She sees herself as a lowly creature. That is why she can acknowledge, with full humility, that 'he who is mighty has done great things' for her."⁸

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*Many glances of affection and many words of love,
when we see her image or picture in our home,
in the church, or anywhere.*

May 3

MARY AND THE BLESSED TRINITY

"Through the Incarnation of our Lord in her immaculate womb, Mary, the Daughter of God the Father, is also the Spouse of God the Holy Spirit and the Mother of God the Son."⁹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A "Hail Mary" each time the clock strikes another hour.

May 4

MARY 'S FAMILY: THE TRINITY ON EARTH

"It is only natural that the Church rejoice as it contemplates the modest home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. We read in the hymn from Matins on the feast of the holy Family: 'It is pleasing to recall the humble house of Nazareth and its slender resources. It is pleasing to tell again in song Jesus' hidden life.

8. "Cause of Our Joy," CPB, 172.

9. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 274.

Jesus grows up in hidden seclusion, to be trained in Joseph's unpretentious trade. The loving mother sits beside her dear Son, the good wife by her husband, content if her loving attention can ease and comfort them in their weariness."¹⁰

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*A loving review of her life with Jesus,
as we recite the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.*

May 5

MARY: HER IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"How would we have acted, if we could have chosen our own mother? I'm sure we would have chosen the one we have, adorning her with every possible grace. That is what Christ did. Christ being all-powerful, all-wise, Love itself, his power carried out his Will. . . . This is the clearest reason why our Lord granted his mother, from the very moment of her Immaculate Conception, all possible privileges. She was free from the power of Satan. She is beautiful, spotless and pure in soul and body."¹¹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

The renewal of our baptismal vows.

May 6

THE ANNUNCIATION MARY: THE FIRST TABERNACLE

"If you seek Mary, you will find Jesus. And you will learn a bit more about what is in the heart of God, who humbles himself, discarding all manifestations

10. "Marriage: a Christian Vocation," CPB, 22.

11. "Cause of Our Joy," CPB, 171.

of his power and majesty to take the form of a servant. Speaking in human terms, we could say that God outdoes himself, because he goes much further than he needs to go in order to save us. The only way to measure what he does is to say that it cannot be measured; it comes from a madness of love which leads him to take on our flesh and bear the weight of our sins."¹²

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*The Angelus recited punctually
at noon and with great affection.*

May 7

MARY: OUR MODEL IN ORDINARY LIFE

"We can't forget that Mary spent nearly every day of her life just like millions of other women who look after their families, bring up their children, and take care of their houses. Mary sanctifies the ordinary, everyday things—what some people wrongly regard as unimportant and insignificant: everyday work, looking after those closest to you, visits to friends and relatives. What a blessed ordinariness, that can be so full of love of God."¹³

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*Affectionate details of service
and attention to those closest to us.*

May 8

MARY: MOTHER OF CHRIST

"*Iesus Christus, Deus homo*: Jesus Christ, God-man. This is one of the 'mighty works of God,' which

12. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 144.

13. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 148.

we should reflect upon and thank him for. He has come to bring 'peace on earth to men of good will,' to all who want to unite their wills to the holy will of God—not just the rich, not just the poor, but everyone: all the brethren. We are all brothers in Jesus, children of God, brothers of Christ. His mother is our mother."¹⁴

Let us offer to our Mother today:

Jesus himself, when we receive him in holy Communion.

May 9

MARY: WELCOMING THE SHEPHERDS

"You must look at the Child in the manger. He is our Love. Look at him, realizing that the whole thing is a mystery. We need to accept this mystery on faith and use our faith to explore it very deeply. To do this, we must have the humble attitude of a Christian soul."¹⁵

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*Small hidden sacrifices,
especially those that go against the grain.*

May 10

MARY: PRESENTING JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

"She teaches us to have charity. Remember the scene of the presentation of Jesus in the temple. An old man, Simeon, said to Mary, 'Behold: This child is destined to bring about the fall of many and the rise of many in Israel—and to be a sign, which people will refuse to acknowledge, so that the thoughts of many hearts shall be made manifest. As for your

14. "Christ Triumphs through Humility," CPB, 13.

15. "Christ Triumphs through Humility," CPB, 13.

own soul, it shall have a sword pierce it.' So great is Mary's love for all mankind that she, too, fulfilled Christ's words: 'Greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends.'"¹⁶

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A pilgrimage to one of her shrines.

May 11

MARY: WELCOMING THE MAGI

"'Going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother.' Our Lady is always near her Son. The Magi are not received by a king on a high throne, but by a child in the arms of his mother. Let us ask the Mother of God, who is our mother, to prepare for us the way that leads to the fullness of love.... Her sweet heart knows the surest path for finding Christ."¹⁷

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*A visit to a poor person to communicate
our Lady's concern for that person.*

May 12

MARY: HER FLIGHT TO EGYPT WITH JOSEPH AND THE CHILD JESUS

"The mystery of Mary helps us to see that in order to approach God, we must become little. Christ said to his disciples: 'Believe me, unless you become like little children again, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'

16. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 287.

17. "The Epiphany of Our Lord," CPB, 38.

"To become children, we must renounce our pride and self-sufficiency, recognizing that we can do nothing by ourselves. We must realize that we need grace and the help of God our Father to find our way and keep to it."¹⁸

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*A visit to a lonely person to share
the joy of trusting in God alone.*

May 13

MARY: HER HIDDEN LIFE WITH JESUS

"I like to go back in my imagination to the years Jesus spent close to his mother, years which span almost the whole of his life on earth. I like to picture him as a little child, cared for by Mary, who kisses him and plays with him. I like to see him growing up before the loving eyes of his mother and of Joseph, his father on earth. What tenderness and care Mary and the holy Patriarch must have shown toward Jesus, as they looked after him during his childhood, all the while, silently, learning so much from him. Their souls would become more and more like the soul of that Son, who was both man and God. This is why his mother, and after her St. Joseph, understand better than anyone the feelings of the heart of Christ; and the two of them are thus the best way, I would say the only way, to reach the Savior."¹⁹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*The effort of doing our ordinary work well,
on time, with competence and finesse.*

18. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 143.

19. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 281.

May 14

MARY: LOSING AND FINDING
THE CHILD JESUS

"The Mother of God, who looked for her Son so anxiously when he was lost (through no fault of her own) and experienced such great joy in finding him, will help us retrace our steps and put right whatever may be necessary when, because of our carelessness or our sins, we have been unable to recognize Christ. With her help, we will know the happiness of holding him in our arms once more and telling him we will never lose him again."²⁰

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*A good, sincere, sorrowful confession of our sins
and failures, in the sacrament of Penance.*

May 15

MARY: AT CANA

"In the Gospel, St. John has recorded a wonderful phrase of our Lady. At the wedding of Cana she turned to the waiters and said: 'Do whatever he tells you.' That is what it is all about—getting people to face Jesus and ask him: 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'"²¹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*Prompt obedience, when we are called
or asked to do some errand or some act of service.*

20. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 278.

21. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 149.

May 16

MARY: AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

"We find her on Calvary, at the foot of the cross, praying. This is nothing new for Mary. She has always acted like this, in fulfilling her duties and looking after her home. As she went about the things of this earth, she kept her attention on God."²²

Let us offer to our Mother today:

An act of contrition, said many times, asking her to offer our sorrow for our sins to Jesus crucified.

May 17

MARY: THE SORROWING MOTHER

"Our Lady is there listening to the words of her Son, united to him in his suffering, when he cried out 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' What could she do? She united herself fully with the redemptive love of her Son and offered to the Father her immense sorrow, which pierced her pure heart like a sharp-edged sword."²³

Let us offer to our Mother today:

The mortification of keeping quiet about any pain or discomfort, any inconvenience or disappointment, uniting it with her pain as she stood by her crucified Son.

May 18

MARY: THE CO-REDEMPTRIX

"It is with good reason that the popes have called Mary Co-Redemptrix. 'So fully, in union with her

22. "A Life of Prayer," FG, 241.

23. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 288.

suffering and dying Son, did she suffer and nearly die; so fully, for the sake of the salvation of all souls, did she abdicate the rights of a mother over her Son, and immolate him, insofar as it was in her power, to satisfy the justice of God, that it can rightly be said that she redeemed mankind together with Christ.' This gives us a deeper understanding of that moment in the Passion of our Lord on which we shall never tire of meditating: *Stabat autem iuxta crucem Iesu mater eius*, 'There, standing by the cross of Jesus, was his mother.'"²⁴

Let us offer to our Mother today:
*Five small hidden sacrifices in honor of
 the five major wounds of our Lord.*

May 19

MARY: HER FAITH

"If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary. St. John tells us that it was because of the miracle that Christ performed, at his mother's request, at the marriage feast at Cana, that 'his disciples learned to believe in him.' Our Mother is always interceding with her Son, so that he may attend to our needs and show himself to us in such a way that we can cry out, 'You are the Son of God!'"²⁵

Let us offer to our Mother today:
*The "Memorare" for the person in our family
 who most needs the help of our Lady.*

24. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 287.

25. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 285.

May 20

MARY: OUR HOPE

"Our Lady, a full participant in the work of our salvation, follows in the footsteps of her Son: the poverty of Bethlehem, the everyday work of a hidden life in Nazareth, the manifestation of his divinity in Cana of Galilee, the tortures of his passion, the divine sacrifice on the cross, the eternal blessedness of paradise.

"All of this affects us directly, because this supernatural itinerary is the way we are to follow. Mary shows us that we can walk this path with confidence. She has preceded us on the way of imitating Christ; her glorification is the firm hope of our own salvation. For these reasons we call her 'our hope, cause of our joy.'"²⁶

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A smile when we do not feel like smiling.

May 21

MARY'S PRAYER

"Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to make us contemplatives, to teach us to recognize the constant calls from God at the door of our heart. Let us ask her now: Our Mother, you brought to earth Jesus, who reveals the love of our Father God. Help us to recognize him in the midst of the cares of each day. Stir up our mind and will so that we may listen to the voice of God, to the calls of grace."²⁷

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A visit to Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

26. "Cause of Our Joy," CPB, 176.

27. "Cause of Our Joy," CPB, 174.

May 22

MARY: EVER VIRGIN

"The purity, humility, and generosity of Mary are in sharp contrast to our wretchedness and selfishness. To the extent that we realize this, we should feel moved to imitate her. We too are creatures of God, and if we strive to imitate her fidelity, God will surely do great things in us. Our small worth is no obstacle, because God chooses what is of little value so that the power of his love may be more manifest."²⁸

Let us offer to our Mother today:

The prayer "Blessed be your purity" (p. 458).

May 23

MARY: QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES

"If we take our Lady's hand, she will make us realize more fully that all men are our brothers—because we are all sons of that God whose daughter, spouse, and mother she is. Our neighbors' problems must be our problems. Christian fraternity should be something very deep in the soul, so that we are indifferent to no one. Mary, who brought up Jesus and accompanied him through his life and is now beside him in heaven, will help us recognize Jesus as he crosses our path and makes himself present to us in the needs of others."²⁹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*A kind word, a friendly conversation,
a helping hand to persons with whom we live or work.*

28. "Cause of Our Joy," CPB, 172.

29. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 145.

May 24

MARY: HELP OF CHRISTIANS

"Yes, we are still pilgrims, but our Mother has gone on ahead, where she points to the reward for our efforts. She tells us that we can make it. And if we are faithful, we will reach home. Not only is the Blessed Virgin our model, but she is also the Help of Christians. And as we besiege her with our petitions — 'Show that you are our Mother' — she cannot help but watch over her children with motherly care."³⁰

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*In addition to the mysteries of the day,
one more part (five decades) of the Holy Rosary.*

May 25

MARY: OUR MOTHER

"Find out for yourself by personal experience the meaning of Mary's maternal love. It is not enough just to know that she is *our* Mother, and to think and talk about her as such. She is *your* Mother and you are her child. She loves you as if you were her only child in this world. Treat her accordingly. Tell her about everything that happens to you; honor her and love her. No one will do it for you or as well as you."³¹

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*Many affectionate thoughts and prayers, by saying
"Mary, my mother" each time we pause in our work.*

30. "Cause of our Joy," CPB, 177.

31. "Mother of God and our Mother," FG, 293.

May 26

MARY: THE WAY TO JESUS

"Mary does the immense favor of bringing to the cross, of placing face to face with the example of the Son of God, those who come close to her and contemplate her life. It is in this confrontation that Christian life is decided. And here Mary intercedes for us so that our behavior may lead to a reconciliation of the younger brother—you and me—with the firstborn Son of the Father.

"Many conversions, many decisions to give oneself to the service of God have been preceded by an encounter with Mary. Our Lady has encouraged us to look for God, to desire to change, to lead a new life."³²

Let us offer to our Mother today:

Teaching someone how to say the Holy Rosary.

May 27

MARY: MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE

"This is what explains Mary's life—her love. A complete love, so complete that she forgets herself and is happy just to be there where God wants her, fulfilling with care what God wants her to do. That is why even her slightest action is never routine or vain but, rather, full of meaning. Mary, our Mother, is for us both an example and a way. In the ordinary circumstances in which God wants us to live, we have to try to be like her."³³

Let us offer to our Mother today:

*The resolution to say,
before going to sleep every night, three Hail Marys.*

32. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 149.

33. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 148.

May 28

THE ASSUMPTION
MARY: TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

"Mary has gone to heaven in both body and soul, and the angels rejoice. I can imagine, too, the delight of St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse, who awaited her in paradise. Yet what of us who remain on earth? Our faith tells us that here below, in our present life, we are pilgrims, wayfarers. Our lot is one of suffering, of sacrifices, and privations. Nonetheless, joy must mark the rhythm of our steps. 'Serve the Lord with joy' — there is no other way to serve him."³⁴

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A smile when someone corrects us or misjudges us.

May 29

MARY: THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

"She lives now and is protecting us. She is there [in heaven], body and soul, with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. She is the same person who was born in Palestine, who gave herself to God while still a child, who received the message from St. Gabriel the Archangel, who gave birth to our Savior, and who stood beside him at the foot of the Cross. In her, all ideals become a reality. But we should never think that this sublime greatness of hers makes her inaccessible to us. She is the one who is full of grace and the sum of all perfections... and she is also our Mother."³⁵

Let us offer to our Mother today:

The "Hail Holy Queen" at each hour.

34. "Cause of our Joy," CPB, 177.

35. "Mother of God and our Mother," FG, 292.

May 30

MARY: THE CHANNEL OF GRACE

"Her power before God is such that she can obtain anything that we ask for, and, like any mother, she wants to answer our prayers. Like any mother, also, she knows and understands our weaknesses. She encourages us and makes excuses for us. She makes the way easy for us, and even when we think there is no possible solution for our worry, she always has one ready to offer us."³⁶

Let us offer to our Mother today:

A visit or a conversation with a friend or relative whom we want to encourage to go to Confession.

May 31

THE VISITATION

MARY SINGS OF THE LOVE OF GOD

"God is interested in even the smallest events in the lives of his creatures—in your affairs and mine—and he calls each of us by name. This certainty that the faith gives enables us to look at everything in a new light. And everything, while remaining exactly the same, becomes different, because it is an expression of God's love. Our life is turned into a continuous prayer, we find ourselves with good humor and a peace that never ends, and everything we do is an act of thanksgiving running through all our day. 'My soul magnifies the Lord,' Mary sang, 'and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.'"³⁷

Let us offer to our Mother today:

The Holy Rosary said with concentration and affection.

36. "Mother of God and Our Mother," FG, 292.

37. "To Jesus through Mary," CPB, 144.