

MARY

DEVOTIONS, PRAYERS & REFLECTIONS
FOR THE MARIAN MONTH OF MAY
16 - 31 MAY



THE VIRGIN IN PRAYER BY SASSOFERRATO, 1640-1650

May

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3 Make Your Own Marian Shrine	4 Traditional Hymns to Our Lady	5 Our Lady of the Rosary: Reflecting on the Joyful Mysteries	6 Our Lady of Loreto	7 Our Lady of Guadalupe	8 Floral Reflections on the Hail Mary for Mother's Day	9 Contemporary Songs to Our Lady
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Saturday, 16 May – Family Rosary Relay for the Archbishop's Intentions

From the 1st to the 31st of May, you are invited to participate in the [Archbishop's Rosary Relay](#). Families, couples and individuals are asked to nominate and pray one decade of the rosary on a day of their choice.

Today we pray from a Scriptural Rosary the 4th **Joyful Mystery: The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple** for the intention of Children.

Lord, grant me the grace of purity of mind, body, heart and will.

Our Father...

1. When the day came to purify them according to the law of Moses, the couple brought him up to Jerusalem so that he could be presented to the Lord. (Lk. 2: 22) - Hail Mary...
2. There lived in Jerusalem at the time a certain man named Simeon. He was just and pious....and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (Lk. 2: 25) - Hail Mary...
3. It was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not experience death until he had seen the Anointed of the Lord. (Lk. 2: 26) - Hail Mary...
4. He came to the temple now, inspired by the Spirit, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus...he took him in his arms and blessed God. (Lk. 2: 27-28) - Hail Mary...
5. "Now Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace; you have fulfilled your word." (Lk. 2: 29) - Hail Mary...
6. "For my eyes have witnessed your saving deed, displayed for all the peoples to see." (Lk. 2: 30-31) - Hail Mary...
7. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother; "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed." (Lk. 2: 34) - Hail Mary...
8. "And you yourself shall be pierced with a sword - so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare." (Lk. 2: 35) - Hail Mary...
9. When the pair had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. (Lk. 2: 39) - Hail Mary...
10. The child grew in size and strength, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. (Lk. 2: 40) - Hail Mary...

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

Sunday, 17 May ~ Imitating Mary's Virtues

Click image below for the 'Imitating Mary's Virtues' slideshow presentation.



Monday, 18 May – Mary, Mother of Hope

Pope Benedict XVI from the Vatican, on 22 February 2009 addressed young people on the occasion of the 24th World Youth Day with the focus on hope for the world. Let's look at his words and how Mary can be a shining light for us all.



The challenge for young people is placed here;

Make Christ known, among your own age group and beyond, to those who are in search of “the great hope” that would give meaning to their lives. If Jesus has become your hope, communicate this to others with your joy and your spiritual, apostolic and social engagement. Let Christ dwell within you, and having placed all your faith and trust in him, spread this hope around you. Make choices that demonstrate your faith. Show that you understand the risks of idolizing money, material goods, career and success, and do not allow yourselves to be attracted by these false illusions. Do not yield to the rationale of selfish interests. Cultivate love of neighbour and try to put yourselves and your human talents and professional abilities at the service of the common good and of truth, always prepared to “make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15).

Mary, Mother of hope

May Saint Paul be your example on this path of apostolic life. He nourished his life of constant faith and hope by looking to Abraham, of whom he wrote in the Letter to the Romans: “Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become the father of many nations” (Rom 4:18). Following in the footsteps of the people of hope – composed of prophets and saints of every age – we continue to advance towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom, and on this spiritual path we are accompanied by the Virgin Mary, Mother of **Hope**. She who incarnated the hope of Israel, who gave the world its Saviour, and who remained at the foot of the Cross with steadfast **hope**, is our model and our support. ¹



Pope Benedict XVI

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Message of the Holy Father to the young people of the world on the Occasion of the 24th World Youth Day. 2009.

Tuesday, 19 May – Mother of the Living God

Click image below for the 'Mother of the Living God' slideshow presentation.



Wednesday, 20 May – The Miraculous Medal

Click image below for the 'The Miraculous Medal' slideshow presentation.



Thursday, 21 May – Our Lady and the Holy Rosary (Part 2)

Praying the Holy Rosary as a Family

One of the most traditional and popular ways of saying the Rosary is with the family, whether by parents alone or by parents and children. A favourite way of doing so is for the members of the family to take turns leading the mysteries, suggesting beforehand an intention for which the mystery will be offered. Sometimes a brief text from Scripture or from some other book is read before each mystery to help focus attention.

There is no doubt, given the pace of modern life, that it is not always easy to gather the family together to pray the Rosary, but with good will and a little insistence, the difficulties can generally be overcome. In this regard Pope Paul VI, in his 1974 Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, wrote:

“There is no doubt that... the Rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite... We are well aware that the changed conditions of life today do not make family gathering easy... but it is characteristic of the Christian in his manner of life not to give in to circumstances but to overcome them, not to succumb but to make an effort” (MC 54).

Pope John Paul II wrote in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (paragraph 41) of the value of the Rosary in uniting the members of the family. *“Any family that prays the Rosary together will attest to the truth of these words”*.

It should not be forgotten that a plenary indulgence may be gained whenever the Rosary is recited in family or in a church, under the usual conditions of being in the state of grace, receiving Holy Communion within a few days, going to confession within some 20 days, praying for the intentions of the Holy Father and detesting sin.

And while it may sound trite, there can be no doubting the wisdom of that famous slogan of a great 20th century promoter of the family Rosary, Fr Patrick Peyton: *“The family that prays together stays together”*.



Excerpts from:

Understanding the Rosary, Fr John Flader (2011)

Pope Paul IV, *Marialis cultus* (54)

Pope John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (41)

Friday, 22 May – Titles for Mary

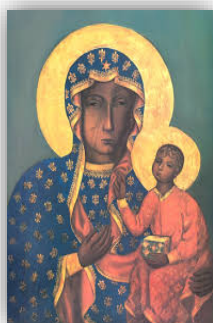
As befitting the Mother of God, Mary has numerous titles and names, these derive from the Church's teachings and dogmas about Mary and her role in salvation. Below you will find a snapshot of eight of these.



Mary Queen of Peace:

Mary officially received this title during World War I in a proclamation by Pope Benedict XV. The Pope added 'Queen of Peace' into the Litany of Loreto in his call for peace among warring nations.

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/litany-of-loreto-246>



Our Lady of Czestochowa or The Black Madonna:

Poland's national shrine to Mary, Legend has it that St Luke painted this icon on a table that Jesus built. Popes and pilgrims alike have recognized the miraculous nature of this image.

<https://www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/top-10-titles-mary>



Mother of Perpetual Help Prayer

Today we face so many difficulties. Your picture tells us so much about you. It reminds us to reach out and help those in need. Help us understand that our lives belong to others as much as they belong to us.

Mary, Model of Christian love, we know we cannot heal every ill or solve every problem. But with God's grace, we intend to do what we can. May we be true witnesses to the world that love for one another really matters. May our daily actions proclaim how fully our lives are modeled after yours, Mother of Perpetual Help.

<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=322>



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe is Mexico's patron saint, Patron of the Americas, and a symbol of love and strength for Latin Americans and believers across the world. The image of the Virgin on Juan Diego's tilma is preserved today at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage site in the world with up to twenty million believers visiting per year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcFaSg4Tlao&feature=share>

Friday, 22 May – Titles for Mary (cont)

Mother of Mercy

Saint Odo, a 10th century abbot, is believed to be the first to call Mary by this name. In the 11th century, this title was incorporated into the Marian prayer the Salve Regina.



Hail Holy Queen, Mother of

Mercy, our life our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy 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.



Blessed Mother

This title derives from Gabriel's greeting to Mary at the Annunciation, where she is called "blessed" among all other women. Soon after her encounter with the angel Mary, full of grace, went to see her relative Elizabeth and was greeted "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb....." Lk 1:41-45

Mary's response was the prayer we now refer to as The Magnificat -Lk 1:46-55

<https://www.catholicstand.com/mary-blessed-mother-full-grace/>



Immaculate Conception

The 1854 dogma issued by Pope Pius IX refers to Mary's sinless nature at the moment of being conceived by her parents. The Immaculate Conception was the first time a pope claimed a dogma to be infallible, even though the idea of papal infallibility would not be officially proclaimed for another 16 years. This is the definitive title of the Blessed Mother.

<https://www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/top-10-titles-mary>



Theotokos –Mother of God

Mary's first and most important title means "God bearer." The title, defined by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., refers to the Virgin Mary as the Mother of the incarnate Son of God. <https://www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/top-10-titles-mary>

Icon of the Mother of God –
Pochaevskaia

Saturday, 23 May – Family Rosary Relay for the Archbishop's Intentions

From the 1st to the 31st of May, you are invited to participate in the [Archbishop's Rosary Relay](#). Families, couples and individuals are asked to nominate and pray one decade of the rosary on a day of their choice.

Today we pray from a Scriptural Rosary the 5th **Luminous Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist** for the intention of Priests and Religious.

Lord, grant me the grace of love of our Eucharistic Lord.
Our Father...

1. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me." (Jn 14:6) - Hail Mary....
2. "...Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9) - Hail Mary....
3. "And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (Jn 14:13) - Hail Mary....
4. "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you." (Jn 14:27) - Hail Mary....
5. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower." (Jn 15:1) - Hail Mary....
6. "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love." (Jn 15:10) - Hail Mary....
7. "This I command you, love one another." (Jn 15:17) - Hail Mary....
8. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat; this is my body." (Mat 26:26) - Hail Mary....
9. Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you." (Mat 26:27) - Hail Mary....
10. "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Mat 26:28) - Hail Mary....

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

Sunday, 24 May – Crowning Mary

Did you know? Various images and statues of Our Lady have been officially “crowned” with a Papal Bull of Canonical Coronation.



The very first Marian image crowned without a direct papal approval was by Cardinal Francesco Sforza Pallavicino with La Madonna della Oropa (Black Virgin of Mount Oropa) on 30 August 1620.



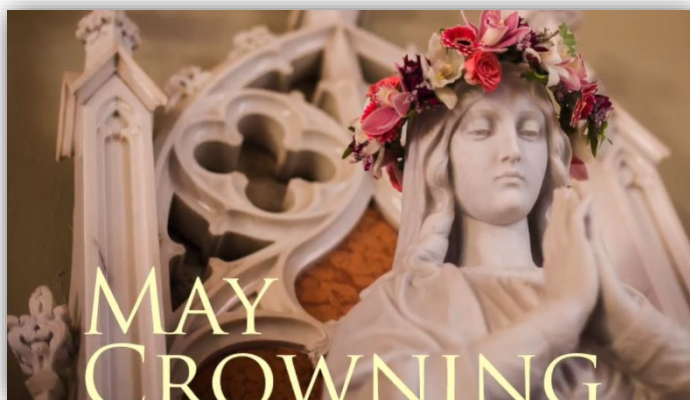
On March 28, 2019, Pope Francis granted the Canonical coronation of the image of La Purisima Concepcion in the Philippines.

The solemn prescription of ritual to crowning images is embedded in Ordo Coronandi Imaginem Beatae Mariae Virginis published by the Holy Office on 25 May 1981. Prior to 1989, papal bulls concerning the authorization of canonical coronations were handwritten on parchment. After 1989, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments began issuing the specific recognition to crown a religious image, spelling out its approved devotional title and authorizing Papal legate. Several venerated images of the Child Jesus and Saint Joseph have also been granted a Pontifical coronation.



The first Marian image pontifically crowned was the painted image of La Madonna della Febbre (Our Lady of the Fever) on 27 May 1631 by Pope Urban VIII through the Vatican Chapter located at the Sacristy of Saint Peter's Basilica.

Click the ‘May Crowning’ image to watch a video reflection.



Click [here](#) to see a complete list and pictures of the 63 officially crowned images/sculptures of Mary from around the world.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_canonically_crowned_images
<https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/malolos-virgin-of-la-purisima-concepcion-receives-episcopal-crown/>

Monday, 25 May – Our Lady Help of Christians Feast Day

Mary has always had a special place in the devotions of Australian Catholics

The Irish Catholics displayed strength during British settlement in Australia. Many turned to Mary's help, as the Church throughout history has always done. While waiting for a priest to settle in the colony, groups of lay Catholics would gather for readings, hymns, the praying of The Rosary, and other devotions.

In September 1844, the first provincial synod of the Church took place in Australia. Archbishop Polding of Sydney and the new bishops of Adelaide and Hobart met with about half of the three-dozen pioneer priests in the country. It was here they decided that the Church in Australia would be placed under the patronage of the Virgin Mary under the title Help of Christians. The Holy See confirmed this in 1852.

In 2011, Paul Newton painted '*Our Lady of the Southern Cross – Help of Christians #2*', which is displayed in the chapel of Domus Australia, Rome, Italy (2011, 200cm x 80cm, oil on Belgian linen). This is a full length portrait of '*Our Lady of the Southern Cross – Help of Christians #1*', which is displayed in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia.

In the same year, Paul Newton painted '*First Catholics of Sydney, circa 1818*', which is also displayed in the chapel of Domus Australia, Rome, Italy (2011, 71" x 61" oil on Belgian lined).



Left: '*Our Lady of the Southern Cross – Help of Christians #1*', Paul Newton, commissioned for World Youth Day 2008, St Mary's Cathedral Sydney (oil on canvas 62" x 48").

Right: '*First Catholics of Sydney, circa 1818*', Paul Newton, displayed in the chapel of Domus Australia, Rome, Italy.

Adapted from:

<http://marianvalley.org.au/our-lady-help-christians/>
<http://marianvalley.org.au/our-lady-help-christians/prayers/>
<http://www.paulnewton.com.au/enlargements/?id=8>
<http://www.paulnewton.com.au/pages/?pageid=14>

Monday, 25 May – Our Lady Help of Christians Feast Day (cont)



Visio Divina

Visio Divina is divine or sacred seeing. Visio Divina is the practice of attentively and receptively gazing upon an image so that the experience leads us to meditation and prayer. While contemplatively looking at the image, we trust that God will illumine our minds and hearts.

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: Close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind.

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image. Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.


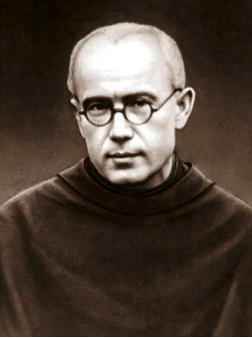


Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?

Let us pray

Lord, you place deep in our hearts the love of Mary, help of Christians. Through her prayers grant wisdom to our leaders and integrity to our citizens. Under her protection may Australia be granted harmony, justice and peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Left: 'Our Lady of the Southern Cross - Help of Christians #2', Paul Newton, which is displayed in the chapel of Domus Australia, Rome, Italy.

Tuesday, 26 May – 9 Saints who had a Great Devotion to Our Lady

Saint	Biography	Thoughts on Mary
 <p>Saint Therese of Lisieux</p>	<p>Born: 2 January 1873 Alencon, France Died: 30 September 1897 Lisieux, France Doctor of the Church, popularly known as ‘The Little Flower of Jesus’. Feast Day: 1 October Patron Saint of: missionaries, florists, the sick</p>	<p>“What a joy to remember that she is our Mother! Since she loves us and knows our weakness, what have we to fear?”</p>
 <p>Saint Maximilian Kolbe</p>	<p>Born: January 8, 1894 Zdunska Wola, Poland Died: August 14, 1941 Oświęcim, Poland Known as the ‘Apostle of Consecration to Mary’. Imprisoned in Auschwitz, he volunteered to take the place of a man with a family, suffering enforced starvation before being given a lethal injection. Feast Day: 14 August Patron Saint of: prisoners, families, the pro-life movement and drug addicts</p>	<p>“Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did.”</p>
 <p>Saint Teresa of Avila</p>	<p>Born: 28 March 1515 Avila, Spain Died: 4 October 1582 Alba de Tormes, Spain</p> <p>Doctor of the Church. Known for her contemplative life and spiritual writings which are among the most widely read.</p> <p>Feast Day: 15 October</p> <p>Patron Saint of: headache sufferers, writers</p>	<p>“The devotions we practice in honour of the glorious Virgin Mary, however trifling they may be, are very pleasing to Her Divine Son and He rewards them with eternal glory.”</p>
 <p>Saint Louis Marie de Montfort</p>	<p>Born: 31 January 1673 Brittany, France Died: 28 April 1716 Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevre, France His greatest contribution to the Church and the world is his ‘Total Consecration to Mary.’ He preached Mary everywhere and to everyone! Feast Day: 28 April Patron Saint of: preachers</p>	<p>“We never give more honour to Jesus than when we honour his mother, and we honour her simply and solely to honour him all the more perfectly.”</p>

 <p>Saint Teresa of Calcutta~</p>	<p>Born: 26 August 1910 Skopje, Macedonia Died: 5 September 1997 Calcutta, India While teaching in schools in India, Mother Teresa was deeply moved by the number of sick and dying people on the streets. She was granted permission to leave her Loreto order and established the Missionaries of Charity to serve the 'poorest of the poor.' Feast Day: 5 September Patron Saint of: Calcutta, India</p>	<p>"If you ever feel distressed during your day, call upon Our Lady. Just say this simple prayer: 'Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me now.' I must admit, this prayer has never failed me."</p>
 <p>Saint Cecilia</p>	<p>Born: 200 AD Rome, Italy Died: 22 November 230 AD Sicily, Italy A martyr of the early Church. From a noble family and known for converting her husband and brother to Christianity. Her body was buried in the Catacomb of Saint Callistus, Rome. In 1599 her body was found to be incorrupt and her relics are now in the Crypt of St Cecilia Trastevere, Rome. Feast Day: 22 November Patron Saint of: music and musicians</p>	<p>"Happy are the faithful slaves of the Queen of Heaven, for they shall enjoy true liberty."</p>
 <p>Saint John Vianney</p>	<p>Born: 8 May 1786 Dardilly, France Died: 4 August 1859 Ars, France Also known as Cure d'Ars, St John Vianney regularly spent 16-18 hours a day in the confessional. People came from all over France to receive his spiritual direction. He had a great devotion to Our Lady and dedicated his parish to her under the title 'Mary Conceived without Sin.' Feast Day: 4 August Patron Saint of: Parish Priests</p>	<p>"If you invoke the Blessed Virgin when you are tempted, she will come at once to your help, and Satan will leave you."</p>
 <p>Saint John Paul II</p>	<p>Born: 18 May 1920 Wadowice, Poland Died: 2 April 2005 Vatican City Italy St John Paul II was Pope from 1979 - 2005. He was the first non-Italian Pope for 455 years! He lost his mother at a young age and had a great devotion to our Blessed Mother adopting <i>Totus Tuus</i> ('all yours') as his personal motto when elected Pope, expressing his Consecration to Mary. In 1985 he inaugurated the very first World Youth Day. Feast Day: 22 October Patron Saint of: World Youth Day</p>	<p>From Mary we learn to surrender to God's Will in all things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ her Son and the Son of God!</p>
 <p>Saint Catherine of Siena</p>	<p>Born: 25 March 1347 Siena, Italy Died: 29 April 1380 Rome, Italy St Catherine was a mystic from a young age and is a Doctor of the Church. She was a prolific writer and influential in the history of the papacy. Her 'Dialogue' describes the entire spiritual life through a series of conversations between God and the soul, represented by Catherine herself. Like many of the Saints, she knew great suffering and died at the age of 33. Feast Day: 29 April Patron Saint of: Rome, Italy and Europe, fire prevention</p>	<p>"Mary is the most sweet bait, chosen, prepared, and ordained by God, to catch the hearts of men."</p>

Wednesday, 27 May – Mary Undoer of Knots

We all have some knots in our lives and Mary can untie them.

The painting depicting Our Lady untying the knots of a white wedding ribbon was commissioned in the year 1700 by Fr. Hieronymus Ambrosius Langenmantel in thanksgiving for her intervention in his family.

We all have some ‘knots’ in our lives and Mary can untie them! The devotion to Mary, Undoer of Knots has become more popular ever since Pope Francis encouraged the devotion in Argentina, and then spoke about it during his first year as pontiff.

The theology of the devotion actually goes back to the second century when Saint Irenaeus of Lyons wrote that: *“The knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary; what the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith.”*

Pope Francis reminds us, “Nothing is impossible for God’s mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by His grace. And Mary, whose ‘yes’ opened the door for God to undo the knot of the ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God so that He can untangle the knots of our soul by His fatherly mercy.”

Pope Francis encourages us to turn to Mary for assistance in unraveling these knots that inhibit or block the divine action of God’s grace in our lives.

A novena is 9 days of prayer for a special intention. We can pray a novena that the Blessed Virgin Mary will intercede, to untie the knots in our lives, so that we may be purified and draw ever closer to God.

[Here](#) you can access a Novena to Mary Undoer of Knots from the Archdiocese of Sydney.

You may also like to reflect on the [hymn](#) which was written specifically for Pope Francis's visit to Philadelphia in 2015 for the World Meeting of Families.



Thursday, 28 May – Mary, Gentle Woman

Click image below for the 'In the Footsteps of Mary of Nazareth' slideshow presentation.

In the Footsteps of Mary of Nazareth

*Adapted from historical and scriptural reflections, religious art, and
modern imagery of the Holy Land from the work of
Sr Danielle Peters, University of Dayton*



Friday, 29 May - 'Mater Ecclesiae'

Pope Francis' decision to create the new memorial of Mary, 'Mater Ecclesiae' on Pentecost Monday is a fulfilment of Pope St Paul VI and Pope St John Paul II devotion to Mary under this title.

A mosaic of Mary as Mother of the Church is seen above St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. The history behind this artwork's positioning is the result of the devotion of two Popes to our Blessed Mother, St Paul VI and St John Paul II. The final elevation was declared by Pope Francis on 3 March 2018 to include the Memorial of Mary, *Mater Ecclesiae*, in the liturgical calendar.



There is a small chapel, located at the very end of the left aisle in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, called the Chapel of Our Lady of the Column, after an ancient icon of the crowned Blessed Virgin holding a crowned baby Jesus. On the left side of the chapel is an altar with the title "*Mater Ecclesiae*." Pope St Paul VI, who honoured Mary with the title "*Mater Ecclesiae*" ("Mother of the Church") in 1964, also created this altar in St. Peter's Basilica. At his general audience of 18 November 1964, as the third session of the Second Vatican Council was taking place, St Paul VI prophetically recognised the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Mater Ecclesiae*, saying, "This will be a title that will help us to celebrate Mary Most Holy, Loving Queen of the World, the motherly centre of unity, the pious hope of our salvation."

The Pope was making explicit what chapter eight of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* said implicitly about Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. Mary as *Theotokos* is mother and heart of Mystical Body of Christ – the Church. The bold proclamation and theological clarifications of Pope Paul VI encountered resistance in some circles, and charges against the collegiality of Vatican II were made against the Pontiff. Nonetheless, in May 1967, St Paul VI re-iterated Mary's role as mother of the Church in his apostolic exhortation to the bishops of the world, *Signum Magnum*. Again in 1974, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, St Paul VI focused his attention on the integral relatedness between Mary and the Church.



Following a general audience with Pope St John Paul II the comment was made that the Piazza San Pietro (St Peter's Square) was lacking in one aspect; an image of Our Lady and therefore the square was incomplete. Pope St John Paul II agreed and steps were undertaken to find a suitable place for an image of Our Lady in the square, adding that it would be dedicated to Mary, *Mater Ecclesiae*, with the inscription '*Totus Tuus*' ('I am all yours').

In his homily on the first celebration of the 21 May Memorial in 2018, Pope Francis said, "The Church is feminine, she is a mother...the Church is a tender mother". St Pope John Paul II expressed his desire "that all who come to St Peter's Square may raise their eyes to Mary, to greet her with filial trust and prayer."

Saturday, 30 May – Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

The story behind this title of the Blessed Mother seems to prove true the maxim, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” Jules Chevalier, an assistant priest at Issoudun, France, had a burden on his heart. He desired to start a new religious order of missionaries who would make known and inspire devotion to the loving compassion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by exhibiting that love through acts of compassion, understanding and respect toward others. John 13:34 was his inspiration. When Jules shared his dream with another priest, they prayed a novena asking God to give them a sign that they should move forward. The novena closed on December 8, 1854, and their prayer was soon answered. They received word that a person of good intention had donated twenty thousand francs for them to begin a charitable work. With this confirmation, Jules and his priest friend sought approval of the new Order from the Archbishop who denied their request. He told the priests he would withhold approval until the priests were able to show they would have a continuing income. Undaunted, the priests sought the intercession of the Blessed Mother whose feast of her Immaculate Heart was nine days away. They promised her they would dedicate the new Order to the Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and make them known throughout the world. Our Lady responded. At the end of the nine days, a charitable person pledged to give the priests one thousand francs per year for them to live on. Once again Jules and his priest friend approached the Archbishop. He was satisfied, but his Council was not. The Council said the two priests were too young to start such an Order and doubted they could make a go of it. Though he was told to drop the idea, Jules continued to seek the intercession of the Blessed Mother. And again, she responded. The Archbishop decided to reject the advice of his Council and authorized the two priests to begin the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In gratitude to Our Lady, Father Jules developed a devotion tying together the Sacred Heart of Jesus and our Blessed Lady under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

For Reflection:

How do I respond to disappointment? Do I demonstrate perseverance and hope or do I give in to discouragement and doubt? Why do you think God sometimes makes us wait for a desire to be fulfilled? Think of a time from your own history when something you felt you were called to do didn’t happen as quickly as you would have liked. What did you learn from the experience? How can this help you in the future?



Taken from <https://www.womenofgrace.com/blog/?p=14115>

Sunday, 31 May ~ The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Click images below for the 'Feast of the Visitation' video reflections.

