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MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Novenas in Preparation for the Principal Feasts of the Blessed Virgin



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Mary, the Help of Christians

Novenas in Preparation for the Principal Feasts of the Blessed Virgin



"Holy Mary, aid the miserable, assist the desponding, strengthen the weak, pray for the people, plead for the clergy, intercede for the devout female sex. Let all who have recourse to thee experience the efficacy of thy help!"—HOLY CHURCH.

Rules for the Proper Observance of Novenas

By St. Alphonsus Liguori

1. THE soul must be in the state of grace; for the devotion of a sinful heart pleases neither God nor the saints.
2. We must persevere, that is, the prayers for each day of the novena must never be omitted.
3. If possible, we should visit a church every day, and there implore the favor we desire.
4. Every day we ought to perform certain specified acts of exterior self-denial and interior mortification, in order to prepare us thereby for the reception of grace.

5. It is most important that we receive holy communion when making a novena. Therefore prepare yourself well for it.

6. After obtaining the desired grace for which the novena was made, do not omit to return thanks to God and to the saint through whose intercession your prayers were heard.

On the Manner of Reading the Meditations and Observing the Practices

HOLY SCRIPTURE says, "Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God" (*Eccles.* xviii. 23). Therefore place yourself in the presence of God, invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and make a most sincere act of contrition for your sins. Offer up to God your will, your intellect, and your memory, so that your prayer may be pleasing to God and serve to promote your spiritual welfare.

Then read the meditation slowly, reflecting on each point of the thought or mystery treated, and consider what you can learn from it, and for what grace you ought to implore God. This is the principal object to be attained by mental prayer.

Never rise from your prayer without having formed some special resolution for practical observance. The practices at the end of each consideration in the following novenas will aid you to do so. Finally, ask for grace to carry out effectively your good purposes, and thank God for enlightening your mind during the meditation.

Introduction

Mary, the Help of Christians

NO CATHOLIC denies that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator through whose merits we became reconciled to God. Nevertheless, it is a doctrine of our faith that God willingly grants us grace if the saints, and especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, the queen of saints, intercede for us. If the saints, during their life on earth, were so potent with God that through their prayers the blind obtained sight, the deaf hearing, and the dumb speech, that the sick of all conditions were healed, the dead restored to life, and the most obstinate sinners converted; if thousands of other miracles in the order of nature and of grace were performed through their intercession; what, then, will not she obtain for us from God, whose virtue and merits transcend those of all the saints, and who did more for the greater honor and glory of God than they all? Mary is the queen of saints not only because she is the Mother of the Most High, but also because her sanctity is more perfect than theirs, and she therefore thrones above them all in heaven. Hence the favor with which God regards her, and consequently the power of her intercession with Him is so much the greater.

If Mary's sanctity thus impressively illustrates the potency of her intercession, the contemplation of her dignity as the Mother of God does still more so. Mary brought forth Him who is the Almighty. She calls Him her Son, who by the word of His omnipotence created from out of nothing the whole world with all its beauties, and who can call into being countless millions of other worlds. She calls Him her Son, whose throne is heaven and whose footstool is the earth, who governs all nature with almighty power and reveals His name to mankind through the most astounding miracles. In a word, Mary calls Him her Son, whose omnipotence fills heaven and earth; and this great, almighty God, who honors her as His Mother and has wrought in her such great things, will He not heed her word of intercession, and hear her pleading for those who have recourse to her? On earth He was subject to her. Her intercession moved Him to exercise His omnipotent power at the wedding feast at Cana; and now, when He has glorified and raised her up so high He would let her invoke Him in vain? No, it is inconceivable that God should not hear the prayers of His Mother!

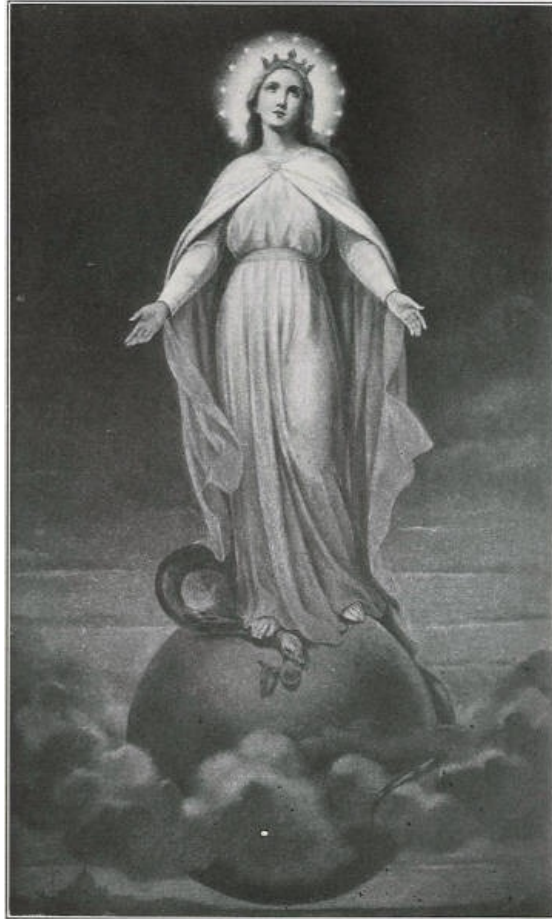
The holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church vie with each other in proclaiming the power of Mary's intercession with the Heart of her divine Son. Some say that having been subject to her on earth, He desires to be so in heaven, inasmuch as to refuse her nothing she asks. Hence St. Bernard calls her the "Intercessory Omnipotence." Indeed, when all the angels and saints in heaven join in supplication to God, their prayers are but those of servants; but when Mary prays her intercession is that of His Mother.

Therefore we can not sufficiently thank God for having given us in Mary so powerful an advocate. St. Bernard aptly says: "The angel announces, 'thou hast found grace before God.' O supreme happiness! Mary shall always find grace. And what else could we wish? If we seek grace, let us seek it through Mary; for what she seeks, she finds. Never can she plead ineffectually."

God, then, who in His infinite mercy has been pleased to provide for all our needs, desires through Mary to console us, to comfort us, to remove all distrust, to strengthen our hope. How consoling to him who calls upon God in sore distress, or implores His pardon for sins committed, is the thought that at the throne of divine Mercy he has in Mary an advocate as mighty as she is gracious, who supplements his great unworthiness by her sublime dignity, and who makes good the defects of his prayer by her intercession! Therefore St. Bonaventure exclaims: "Verily, great is Our Lord's mercy! That we, through fear of our divine Judge, depart not forever from Him, He gave us His own Mother for our advocate and mediatrix of grace."

I.

Novena in Honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



INDULGENCES

TO ALL the faithful who by themselves or with others, in church or at home, with at least contrite heart and devotion, shall make this novena: (1) 300 days indulgence for each of the nine days; (2) a plenary indulgence on one day of the novena or of the eight days following it. (Pius IX, January 5, 1849.) Conditions: Confession, communion, and prayer, according to the intentions of the Holy Father.

Remark.—Whenever, in the following pages, an indulgence is said to be granted "under the usual conditions," these conditions are the same as above.

Note.—The above indulgences may also be gained for making the novena at any other time of the year, and are not attached to any prescribed formula of prayer. The same applies to all other novenas in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

FIRST DAY

Predestination of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

IN THY conception, O Virgin Mary, thou wast immaculate; pray for us to the Father, whose Son Jesus, conceived in thy womb by the Holy Ghost, thou didst bring forth.

Indulgence. 200 days, every time. (Pius VI, November 21, 1793.)

MEDITATION

HOLY Church, our Mother, purposely gathered into the season of Advent everything which might contribute to assist us in preparing for the coming of the Redeemer. Purity of heart is the most necessary and helpful requirement for receiving God worthily, and for participating in the fruits of our Redemption through Christ. To remind us of this, Holy Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this primary feast of purity, in Advent.

The Church, moreover, intends to remind us that the coming of Christ, our promised Redeemer, depended on the consent of the Blessed Virgin. The Redeemer could not appear before she was born of whom He was to be

born. The aurora must precede the rising sun. Thus also Mary, the spiritual aurora, had to be conceived and born before the appearance of the Sun of Justice in this world.

PRACTICE

IN MARY appeared the woman who was to crush the serpent's head, who was to repair by her willing co-operation with God's designs the damage wrought by the disobedience of our first parents, and who was to become our mother and mighty advocate with God.

The designs of God concerning Mary were fully accomplished. God also has designs concerning us. Our life was planned by Him from all eternity, and we were destined to co-operate with Him harmoniously and conscientiously in working out our salvation. Have we corresponded with God's designs? Did we not oppose them by yielding to our evil inclinations and passions? What a disparity between God's intentions concerning us and our own co-operation, between His merciful designs and our cowardly resistance to them!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O GOD, who through the immaculate conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy divine Son; grant that, as in view of Thy Son Thou didst preserve her from all taint, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe unto us that cleansed from all sin by her intercession we too may arrive at Thine eternal glory. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

BEHOLD, Virgin immaculate, at thy sacred feet I bow, while my heart overflows with joy in union with thine own, because from eternity thou wast the Mother-elect of the eternal Word, and was preserved stainless from the taint of Adam's sin. Forever praised, forever blessed be the Most Holy Trinity, who in thy conception poured out upon thy soul the riches of that matchless privilege. I humbly pray thee, most gracious Mother, obtain for me the grace to overcome the bitter results of original sin. Make me victorious over them, that I may never cease to love my God.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

Indulgence. 100 days, once a day. (Leo XIII, March 25, 1884.)

SECOND DAY

Mary's Immaculate Conception

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

ACCORDING to the definition of Pope Pius IX, the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is that privilege by which she was preserved, in view of the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, from original sin in the first moment of her conception.

By solemnly proclaiming the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception, the Church confirmed anew the fundamental principles of Christianity which in our times are so frequently attacked, derided, or forgotten. God reserved the solemn proclamation of this dogma, which seemingly has no practical bearing on the Christian life, for our age, to recall to our mind the doctrines resulting from it.

PRACTICE

THE most important of these doctrines is that of original sin, which to-day is rejected by many as a debasement of human nature, and is forgotten by others as having no practical influence on our moral state. By the promulgation of the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Church solemnly declares and defines as an article of faith, that the Blessed Virgin Mary is conceived without the stain of original sin by a special privilege and grace of God. If, then, Mary's sinlessness is an exception, the general rule remains in force, and all other human beings enter this world in the state of original sin.

Thus, by the proclamation of the dogma of the immaculate conception, the Church combats human pride and sensuality, the foremost vices of the age.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY, unsullied lily of heavenly purity, I rejoice with thee, because at thy conception's earliest dawn thou wast full of grace and endowed with the perfect use of reason. I thank and adore the ever-blessed Trinity, who gave thee such high gifts. I am overwhelmed with shame in thy presence, to see myself so poor in grace. O thou who wast filled with heavenly grace, impart some portion of it to my soul, and make me share the treasures of thy immaculate conception.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

THIRD DAY

Mary, the Victrix of Satan

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary inaugurated the fulfilment of the divine promise made to our first parents in paradise in the words addressed to the serpent: "I shall put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (*Gen.* iii. 15). Mary is the woman in whom Satan never had a part. Her intimate connection with God was announced by the angel: "Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee." Now was fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist, "The Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved: God will help it in the morning early" (*Ps.* xlv. 5-6). Mary was chosen to be the glorious tabernacle of the Son of God "in the morning early," that is, in the first moment of her existence. God called her into being that she might assume the exalted dignity of the Mother of His Son, and therefore granted her the singular privilege of exemption from original sin. In her were fulfilled Solomon's prophetic words of praise, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7). It was in view of her Son's merits applied to her beforehand that God thus produced in her the image of the new man regenerated in the Holy Ghost.

PRACTICE

THE spirit of darkness holds mankind enslaved, but one human being escapes him. A destructive fire lays waste the whole earth, but one tree remains unscathed. A terrible tyrant conquers the whole world, but one fortified city repels his assaults. This human being retaining liberty, this tree escaping destruction, this city repelling the enemy's attack is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Will the almighty and merciful God, who has accomplished such great things in Mary, who has selected her for His Mother, not listen to her prayers when she intercedes for us? St. William of Paris exclaims: "No other created being can obtain for us so many and so great graces from God as His Mother. By the all-powerful might of her intercession He honors her not only as His handmaid, but also as His Mother." Therefore we ought not be surprised when the holy Fathers maintain that a single sigh of Mary is more effective with God than the combined intercession of all the angels and saints. If, then, Mary's power is so great, she will surely hear us when we invoke her help in our combat with Satan. Having conquered him herself, she will also help us to conquer him.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY, thou mystical rose of purity, my heart rejoices with thine at the glorious triumph which thou didst gain over the infernal serpent by thy immaculate conception, and because thou wast conceived without stain of original sin. I thank and praise with my whole heart the ever-blessed Trinity, who granted thee this glorious privilege; and I pray thee to obtain for me strength to overcome all the wiles of the infernal foe, and never to stain my soul with sin. Be thou mine aid; make me, by thy protection, victorious over the common foe of our eternal welfare.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

FOURTH DAY

Mary without Actual Sin

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY conceived without sin is the most blessed daughter of the eternal Father, the real and true Mother of the divine Son, the elect spouse of the Holy Ghost. But in the world, in what condition do we behold her? She

dwells not in a splendid palace; she is not surrounded by a retinue of servants ready at every moment to do her bidding; she is not exempt from trials and suffering. On the contrary, she is poor; she lives in obscurity, and suffered so much on earth that, without shedding her blood, she merits to be styled the queen of martyrs. Her heart was transfixed with the sword of sorrow. Mary is not exempt from tribulations and adversity; but one thing God does not permit to touch her, *i.e.*, sin. Hence Holy Church applies to her the words, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7).

PRACTICE

THOUGH we were not preserved from sin like Mary, yet God in His ineffable goodness and mercy granted us the grace to be cleansed from sin and to be clothed with the garment of sanctifying grace in Baptism. No treasure of the world can be compared with this prerogative. But as we bear this grace in a fragile vase, we must be most careful to protect and preserve it in ourselves and others from all danger. Let the Blessed Virgin Mary be our example. Well knowing the inestimable value of the grace conferred upon her, she guarded it with the greatest care. Although exempt from concupiscence and "full of grace," she was so distrustful of herself as if she were in continual danger. How much more, then, must we use precaution to preserve in ourselves and in others this treasure of grace, since we feel in ourselves constantly the law of the flesh, which resists the law of the spirit, and urges us on to evil, whilst the world and the devil never weary in placing snares for us in order to accomplish our ruin. Therefore let us have recourse to Mary, and invoking her aid bravely resist all temptations.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MIRROR of holy purity, Mary, Virgin immaculate, great is my joy while I consider that, from thy immaculate conception, the most sublime and perfect virtues were infused into thy soul, and with them all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. I thank and praise the Most Holy Trinity, who bestowed on thee these high privileges. I pray thee, gentle Mother, obtain for me grace to practise virtue, and to make me worthy to become partaker of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

FIFTH DAY

Mary, Full of Grace

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

SATAN'S relation to God as His child was severed by sin. The beautiful image of God imprinted on man's soul was disfigured by it. But with the immaculate conception of Mary, a being full of grace, an object of God's supreme complacency entered this world. After the lapse of four thousand years God, in His wisdom, power, and love, for the first time again created a human being in that state in which He had originally created our first parents. Mary, from the first moment of her existence was, in virtue of the sanctifying grace infused into her soul, most intimately united with God, and endowed with the most precious gifts of heaven. Because she was predestined to become the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind, it was befitting that she should unite in herself all the gifts becoming to such an ineffable dignity. Hence she surpassed in grace and holiness all other created beings, and was consecrated a worthy temple of the incarnate Word. Therefore she was saluted by the angel as "full of grace," and the Church, in our behalf, addresses the Almighty: "O God, who through the immaculate conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy divine Son; grant, that, as in view of the death of that Son Thou didst preserve her from all taint, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe unto us that, cleansed from all sin by her intercession, we too may arrive at Thine eternal glory."

PRACTICE

THE world considers men according to their rank and station, their wealth and knowledge. God recognizes in them but one difference, that caused by the presence or absence of sanctifying grace in their soul. A soul in the state of sanctifying grace is God's friend; without it, His enemy. A man dying in the state of sanctifying grace is sure of eternal bliss. Therefore we ought to prize this grace above all else, and do everything in our power to preserve it. St. Leo exhorts us, "Recognize, O man, thy dignity! As thou hast received divine grace, beware of returning to your former sinful condition by a wicked life."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY, bright moon of purity, I rejoice with thee, because the mystery of thy immaculate conception was the beginning of salvation for the race of man and the joy of the whole world. I thank and bless the ever-blessed

Trinity, who thus did magnify and glorify thee; and I beg of thee to obtain for me the grace so to profit by thy dear Son's death and passion, that His precious blood may not have been shed in vain for me upon the cross, but that, after a holy life, I may reach heaven in safety.

Hail Mary, etc.
[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

SIXTH DAY

Mary, Our Refuge

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

WE CARRY the precious treasure of sanctifying grace in a frail vessel. Our inclination to evil remains with us, and continues to impel us to that which is forbidden. On whom shall we call for aid? Call on Mary! She is conceived without sin. She, the lily among thorns, who never lost God's friendship, is our advocate. Let her, who was found worthy to become the Mother of our Redeemer, inspire you with trust and confidence. The Church invokes her as the refuge of sinners, and under no other title does she show her love for us more convincingly and her power with God more efficiently.

PRACTICE

WE MAY trust confidently in Mary's intercession and aid in all temptations and trials, if we but have recourse to her. Therefore St. John Damascene writes: "Come to my aid, O Mother of my Redeemer! Thou art my help, my consolation in life. Come to my aid, and I shall escape unscorched from the fire of temptation; amongst a thousand I shall remain unharmed; I shall brave the storms of assault unwrecked. Thy name is my shield, thy help my armor, thy protection my defense. With thee I boldly attack the enemy and drive him off in confusion; through thee I shall achieve a triumphant victory." In all temptations, therefore, let us have recourse to Mary and through her intercession we shall overcome them.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)
[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY immaculate, most brilliant star of purity, I rejoice with thee because thy immaculate conception has bestowed upon the angels in paradise the greatest joy. I thank and bless the ever-blessed Trinity, who enriched thee with this high privilege. O let me, too, one day enter into this heavenly joy, in the company of angels, that I may praise and bless thee, world without end.

Hail Mary, etc.
[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

SEVENTH DAY

Mary, the Mother of Chastity

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

HOLY Scripture and the Fathers agree in the statement that the Blessed Virgin Mary made the vow of perpetual virginity. For when the Archangel Gabriel brought God's message to the immaculate spouse of St. Joseph, that she was to become the Mother of the Most High, she asked, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (*Luke* i. 34.) Indeed, Mary would not have been, in the full and most excellent sense of the word, the "Virgin of virgins," had she not from her own free choice vowed her virginity to God.

During the whole Christian era there have been heroic souls who made the vow of perpetual chastity, consecrating themselves to God. Trusting in the powerful protection of the immaculate Virgin, they persevered in their resolve to bear this priceless treasure before God's throne despite the dangers of the world, the temptations of concupiscence, and the assaults of hell, and with the help of the queen of virgins they achieved a triumphant victory.

PRACTICE

SINCE the fall of Adam our senses are in rebellion against the law of God. "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin" (*Rom.* vii. 23). Chastity is the virtue which causes us the greatest struggles. St. Augustine says: "The fiercest of all combats is the one for the preservation of chastity, and we must engage in it every day." Fierce as this combat is, the aid which Mary gives her children to achieve victory is all-powerful. She sustains them by her maternal love and protection.

Those who lead a chaste life receive the Divine Spirit, are happy in this life, and will receive a special crown in heaven.

Among the means for the preservation of chastity, the following are specially recommended: The assiduous and constant practice of self-denial; the frequentation of the sacraments; the daily invocation of Mary for her aid and protection; scrupulous avoidance of the occasions of sin. St. Chrysostom writes: "He errs who believes that he can overcome his sensual propensities and preserve chastity by his own efforts. God's mercy must extinguish nature's ardor." Have recourse to the intercession of the immaculate Virgin and rest assured that you will obtain this mercy.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY immaculate, rising morn of purity, I rejoice with thee, gazing in wonder upon thy soul confirmed in grace from the very first moment of thy conception, and rendered inaccessible to sin. I thank and magnify the ever-blessed Trinity, who chose thee from all our race for this special privilege. Holy Virgin, obtain for me utter and constant hatred of all sin above every other evil, and let me rather die than ever again fall into sin.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

EIGHTH DAY

The Image of the Immaculate Conception

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

CHRISTIAN art represents the Immaculate Conception as follows: The Blessed Virgin appears standing on a globe, about which is coiled a serpent holding an apple in its mouth. One of Mary's feet rests upon the serpent, the other is placed on the moon. Her eyes are raised toward heaven; her hands are either joined in prayer, or she holds a lily in her right, and places the left on her breast. Her dress is white; her ample mantle is of blue color. A crown of twelve stars encircles her head. These emblems typify in a most striking manner Mary's power and glory. "And a great sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (*Apoc.* xii. 1).

PRACTICE

THE representation of the Immaculate Conception is very instructive. (1) Mary appears standing on the globe. This signifies that being human, she belongs to the earth, and yet is exalted above the world and sin; also, that she trampled under foot earthly possessions, vanities, and joys. (2) A serpent is coiled about the globe, bearing an apple in its mouth. This reminds us of the fall of our first parents, and of the consequences of their sin. (3) Mary's foot rests on the serpent, indicating that she never was under Satan's dominion, but was preserved from sin in the first moment of her existence. (4) Mary stands on the moon. The moon, on account of its changes, is an emblem of inconstancy. We see it at Mary's feet, to be reminded that we ought to be constant in faith and virtue. (5) Mary wears a crown, to indicate that she is a queen. The crown is composed of twelve stars: she is the queen of heaven. (6) Mary's dress is white, to denote her spotless purity and innocence. (7) She folds her hands in prayer, reminding us to imitate her example. (8) Or she holds a lily in her right hand, to indicate her virginity and chastity, and the sweet odor of her virtues. (9) Mary's mantle is blue, which color is emblematic of humility. Its folds are ample, to remind us that all who have recourse to her find a secure refuge in all dangers and necessities.

Therefore let us invoke her intercession in the words of Holy Church: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions, and deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!"

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O SPOTLESS sun! O Virgin Mary! I congratulate thee. I rejoice with thee because in thy conception God gave thee grace greater and more boundless than He ever shed on all His angels and all the saints, together with all their merits. I am thankful and I marvel at the surpassing beneficence of the ever-blessed Trinity, who conferred on thee this privilege. O make me correspond with the grace of God and never abuse it. Change this heart of mine; make me now begin to amend my life.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

NINTH DAY

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 51\).](#)

MEDITATION

EARLY in the Christian era the feast of Mary's immaculate conception was observed in several countries. St. Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, introduced it in England. A great number of Popes favored the doctrine of Mary's absolute sinlessness, and the adversaries of the Immaculate Conception were bidden to be silent and not publicly assert or defend their view. In 1477, Pope Sixtus IV prescribed the feast of the Immaculate Conception to be observed in the whole Church, and made it obligatory on priests to recite the special canonical office and to use the Mass formula published for the purpose. In 1846, the bishops of the United States assembled in plenary council in Baltimore elected the Blessed Virgin under the title of her immaculate conception Patroness of the Church in their country.

Finally, Pope Pius IX, after consulting with the bishops throughout the world, and having implored the Holy Ghost for His guidance in prayer and fasting, promulgated, on December 8, 1854, the dogma which teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in her conception, by a special grace and through the merits of her divine Son, preserved from the stain of original sin. This doctrine was received throughout the world with ineffable joy; and, indeed, no one who loves the Blessed Virgin can help rejoicing at this her most glorious privilege.

The invocation, "Queen conceived without the stain of original sin," was added to the Litany of Loreto. In 1866, at the Second Plenary Council in Baltimore, the feast of the Immaculate Conception was raised to the rank of a holyday of obligation for the Church of the United States.

PRACTICE

IN THE inscrutable designs of His providence God ordained that the mystery of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary should be proclaimed an article of faith as late as the middle of the nineteenth century. But, then, its proclamation was attended by circumstances that undeniably proved that the Holy Father in pronouncing the dogma had been inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost.

Let us praise God and thank Him for bestowing this glorious privilege on our beloved Mother, and let us often invoke her under her favorite title, the Immaculate Conception. St. Alphonsus Liguori tells us that the devotion to this mystery is especially efficacious in overcoming the temptations of impurity. Therefore he was accustomed to recommend to his penitents thus tempted to recite three times every day the Hail Mary in honor of Mary immaculate. And the Venerable John of Avila assures us that he never found any one who practised a true devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, who did not in a short time obtain the gift of that virtue which renders us so dear to her immaculate heart.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 53\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O LIVING light of holiness, model of purity, Mary immaculate, virgin and mother! As soon as thou wast conceived thou didst profoundly adore thy God, giving Him thanks that in thee the ancient curse was revoked, and blessing came again upon the sinful sons of Adam. O make this blessing kindle in my heart love for God; and do thou fan this flame of love within me, that I may love Him constantly and one day in heaven eternally enjoy Him, there to thank Him more and more fervently for all the wondrous privileges conferred on thee, and to rejoice with thee for thy high crown of glory.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 54\).](#)

II.

Novena in Honor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary



FIRST DAY

The Birth of Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

MARY is born! The dawn announcing the coming salvation of mankind is at hand. The deep significance of Mary's birth is expressed in the words of the Church: "Thy birth, O virgin Mother of God, has brought joy to the world; for from thee is to come forth the Sun of Justice, Christ our Lord, to dispel the curse and bring the blessing, to conquer death and bring us everlasting life. On this day a light broke forth to brighten the paths of men through all time. Let us, then, rejoice in Mary's coming."

Equally expressive and touching are the reflections of that great Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine: "The day has dawned, the long-wished-for day of the blessed and venerable Virgin Mary. Well may this earth of ours rejoice and be glad for having been honored and sanctified by the birth of such a virgin."

PRACTICE

LET us, then, rejoice in Mary's coming. Let us hail the birth of her who attained the dignity of mother without losing the high privilege of a virgin. Let us imitate her holy life, that she may become our intercessor before the throne of her Son, our judge and redeemer. By becoming the Mother of God she became also our Mother. As Mother of the Redeemer she is also the Mother of the redeemed. Richard of St. Lawrence writes: "If we desire grace and help, let us have recourse to Mary and we shall obtain what we desire." For, as St. Alphonsus remarks: "All graces and gifts which God has resolved to bestow upon us He gives us through the hands of Mary."

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MOST lovely child, who by thy birth hast comforted the world, made glad the heavens, struck terror into hell,

brought help to the fallen, consolation to the sad, health to the sick, joy to all; we pray thee with all fervent love, be thou born again in spirit in our souls through thy most holy love. Renew our fervor in thy service, rekindle in our hearts the fire of thy love, and bid all virtues blossom there, which may cause us to find more and more fervor in thy gracious eyes. O Mary, may we feel the saving power of thy sweetest name! Let it ever be our comfort to call on that great name in all our troubles; let it be our hope in dangers, our shield in temptation, and in death our last aspiration.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

Indulgence. 100 days, once a day. (Pius IX, March 27, 1863.)

SECOND DAY

Mary, the Elect of God

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

WE FIND the explanation of the great prerogatives and privileges which God bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin Mary by reflecting on her singular and glorious predestination. From all eternity she was predestined to become the Mother of His divine Son; therefore, says Pope Pius IX, God loved her above all created beings, and in His special predilection made her the object of His divine complacency. With singular appropriateness we may apply to her the words of Holy Scripture, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (*Jer. xxxi. 3*). The eternal Father regarded Mary as His beloved Daughter; the divine Son honored her as His dearest Mother; the Holy Ghost loved her as His spotless Spouse. "And," says St. Anselm, "they loved each other with an affection unsurpassed by any other."

PRACTICE

INSPIRED by the contemplation of Mary's extraordinary privileges, St. Anselm exclaims: "Thou, O Mary, art more exalted than the patriarchs, greater than the martyrs, more glorious than the confessors, purer than the virgins, and therefore thou, alone, canst achieve more than they can without thee." Let us, then, rejoice that we possess such a powerful advocate in heaven, and let us place implicit trust in her. But let us also cooperate with the graces and favors which she obtains for us. Moreover, let us remember that we grievously offend God and Mary if we abuse what we obtain through her intercession to gratify our evil inclinations, and that the graces she obtains for us for our salvation will redound to our ruin if we do not use them for the glory of God and the promotion of our soul's welfare.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, Mary, who, sprung from the royal line of David, didst come forth to the light of heaven with high honor from the womb of holy Anna, thy most happy mother.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

THIRD DAY

Mary, the Child of Royalty

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

ACCORDING to her lineage, as traced in two Gospels, Mary numbers among her paternal and maternal ancestors the holiest and most renowned personages of the Old Testament. We find amongst them Abraham, the friend of God, the father of Israel and of all the faithful; then David, the man after God's own heart, the inspired Royal Prophet; and Solomon, the wise and mighty king, and the whole line of the kings of Juda. On her mother's side she belonged to the tribe of Levi, and was descended from its noblest and most prominent family, that of Aaron the High Priest, and was therefore a relative of the High Priests of the Old Testament. Thus royal and sacerdotal prestige distinguished Mary's lineage.

PRACTICE

THE Blessed Virgin was not proud of her illustrious ancestry, and not depressed because of the downfall of her family, but applied herself diligently to adhere to the faith and follow the example of her ancestors.

Remembering the wicked members of her family, she learned from them that temporal greatness, success, wealth, and glory are more dangerous to virtue than poverty, retirement, and work. Let us imitate Mary's example. Even possessed of the most excellent prestiges of the natural order, of ourselves we are nothing. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" (1 *Cor.* iv. 7.) Therefore do not overestimate yourself; do not be conceited; do not strive for praise, honors, and high station; be not boastful or arrogant; do not presume on your merits; rather be distrustful of yourself and patiently bear affronts, neglect, and humiliations. However poor you may be, be content with your lot, remembering the words of the Apostle: "They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which draw men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils: which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows" (1 *Tim.* vi. 9, 10).

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, O Mary, heavenly babe, white dove of purity, who, despite the infernal serpent, was conceived free from the taint of Adam's sin. With all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to come down again and be born in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

FOURTH DAY

Mary, the Child of Pious Parents

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

TRADITION tells us that Mary's parents were called Joachim and Anna. The holy Fathers rival each other in praising the virtue of this holy couple. St. Epiphanius writes: "Joachim and Anna were pleasing in the sight of God because of the holiness of their lives." St. Andrew of Crete remarks: "Joachim was eminent for the mildness and fortitude of his character. The law of God was his rule of life. He was just, and never relaxed in the fervor of his love of God. Anna was no less noted for her meekness, continence, and chastity." St. Jerome relates: "The life of this holy couple was simple and just before the Lord, edifying and virtuous before men." St. John Damascene exclaims: "O happy, chaste, and immaculate couple, Joachim and Ann! You are known, according to the Lord's word, by your fruit. Your life was pleasing in the sight of God, and worthy of her who was born of you."

PRACTICE

IT is a great blessing, and one to be esteemed more highly than wealth and high station, to have God-fearing, pious parents. For their sake God is gracious to the children and lavishes His gifts on them. It is certainly a great privilege to be offered up to God immediately after birth by the hands of a pious mother. To have, from childhood up, the example and guidance of virtuous parents is certainly of the greatest importance. St. Chrysostom writes: "The parents' example is the book from which the child learns." A pious bishop was wont to say: "The good example of the parents is the best catechism and the truest mirror that a family can have." If Christian parents imitate the example of Joachim and Ann the blessing of God will rest on them and on their children; for because her parents were so dear to Mary, she will not refuse to join them in their prayers for us.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, brightest morn, forerunner of the heavenly Sun of Justice, who didst first bring light to earth. Humbly prostrate, with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

FIFTH DAY

Mary's Supernatural Prerogatives

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY was the masterpiece of God's creation; her soul was the most perfect ever dwelling in a human body. A pious tradition tells us that she possessed the use of reason much earlier than other children. Her intellect was illuminated by supernatural light; her will was exempt from concupiscence. Being preserved from original sin, she surpassed in holiness, from the first moment of her existence, all angels and men. She possessed all virtues in the highest degree, because of her faithful co-operation with sanctifying grace and with the countless actual graces granted to her. She lived in constant communion with God, undisturbed by evil inclinations from within or temptations from without.

PRACTICE

THROUGH the effects of original sin we have lost the supernatural prerogative of original justice, and even after receiving sanctifying grace in holy Baptism we are exposed to many temptations. Our life is a constant warfare. We must, however, not despair in this struggle, for if we are true children of Mary she will come to our aid. In all temptations Mary is the "Help of Christians" if we have recourse to her. But if we wish her to help us, we must not expose ourselves unnecessarily to temptation. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (*Ecclus.* iii. 27). This sad experience has come to many. Let us, therefore, avoid the danger and occasion of sin; and whenever evil approaches us in any shape, let us call upon Mary, and we may rest assured that she will assist us. "I shall certainly triumph over my enemies," exclaims St. Alphonsus, "if I place my trust in thee, O Mary, and if thou art my shield and protection against them."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, O chosen one! who like the untarnished sun didst burst forth into being in the dark night of sin. Humbly prostrate at thy feet, O Mary, we give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

SIXTH DAY

Mary, the Joy of the Most Holy Trinity

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

IN THE child Mary the eternal Father beheld His unsullied glorious image, which image had been defaced in all other human beings by original and actual sin. What a joy to Him to behold this stainless, immaculate child! And how great must have been the joy of the Son of God at the birth of her who was to be His Mother! From her He was to take that sacred body in which He was to dwell on earth, the blood of which He was to shed on the cross for our redemption, and in which He was to return to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. He will call her Mother, and regard her with all the filial tenderness of a child for his mother. She will love Him in return with a true mother's affection and devotion. As the Mother of Sorrows she will weep over His inanimate body taken down from the cross. But like Himself, she will leave the tomb, and reign at His side as the queen of heaven. How great, then, must have been His joy at the birth of this child!

The Holy Ghost, too, rejoiced at Mary's birth. He infused into her the plenitude of His holy love, for she was destined to become the Mother of God. And how Mary will love God, from whom she received so many and so great graces, and whom she is to bear in her arms as her real and true Son! This, her divine Son's love for mankind, will be imparted also to her. Therefore the Holy Ghost rejoices at this child, who received into her heart the fulness of His grace, and shall be the helper of those who have recourse to her.

PRACTICE

RAISE your spirit above time and space; try to contemplate well the mystery of Mary's predestination. To make us realize the great privileges conferred upon her, the Church applies to her the words of Holy Scripture, "He that shall find me, shall find life, and have salvation from the Lord" (*Prov.* viii. 35). Only when we consider Mary as the Mother of God, do we arrive at a right conception of her great dignity. Hence St. Bonaventure exclaims, "God might have created a more beautiful world; He might have made heaven more glorious; but it was impossible for Him to exalt a creature higher than Mary in making her His Mother."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, beauteous moon, O Mary most holy, who didst shed light upon a world wrapped in the densest darkness of sin. Humbly prostrate at thy feet, we give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

SEVENTH DAY

The Angels Rejoice at Mary's Birth

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

DESCRIBING God's power and wisdom as shown in creation, Holy Scripture, according to the explanation of the Fathers, introduces Him as saying, "When the morning stars praised me together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody" (*Job xxxviii. 7*), and by these words intends to convey with what joy the angels praised God's omnipotence on beholding the wonders of creation. What, then, must have been their joy on beholding this new wonder of divine power and wisdom, the child Mary, destined to be their queen. Filled with admiration they exclaimed, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" (*Cant. vi. 9.*) And moreover, if, as Our Lord declares, the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, how great must have been their joy at the birth of her who was to be the refuge of sinners and the mother of Him who was to be the Redeemer of sinners? Again, the angels rejoiced at Mary's birth, because she would fill, through the salvation of mankind by her divine Son, the places made vacant in heaven by the apostate angels.

PRACTICE

GOOD children rejoice on the birthday of their parents and gratefully remember all the benefits they have received from them. Thus should we, also, celebrate the nativity of the Blessed Virgin by a grateful remembrance of the innumerable graces, individual and general, we received through her intercession. In acknowledging Mary's co-operation with our salvation, Holy Church calls her our mediatrix, and greets her as the "Cause of our joy," because, though we receive grace from Christ, it comes to us through her mediation. What cause, then, have we not for rejoicing at her birth! Again, greeting Mary as the cause of our joy, let us remember the protection she extended to the Church in times of adversity and persecution; let us, furthermore, remember all the graces which, according to the holy Fathers, are dispensed to us by Mary's hands. "Of her plenitude," says St. Bonaventure, "we have all received; the captive liberty, the sick health, the sad consolation, the sinner pardon, the just grace." Therefore the Church invokes Mary as the mother of mercy, the health of the sick, the comforter of the afflicted, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians, in a word, as the cause of our joy.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, fair soul of Mary, who from all eternity wast God's, and God's alone; sanctuary and living temple of the Holy Ghost; sun without blemish, because free from original sin. With all our hearts we pray to thee, O Mary, to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

EIGHTH DAY

The Joy of the Just in Limbo at Mary's Birth

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

FOR four thousand years the just in limbo sighed for redemption, and sent up to Heaven the plaintive cry, "O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down!" (*Is. xiv. 1.*) "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (*Is. xlv. 8*). What joy must have filled the souls of the just when they heard the welcome tidings of the birth of Mary, the virgin Mother of the promised Messiah; how great their consolation at the rising of that dawn which preceded the Sun of Justice, whose splendor was to illuminate the darkness of them that sat in the shadow of death!

PRACTICE

A JOY similar to that which filled the captive souls in limbo at Mary's birth now fills the souls in purgatory when we implore her to come to their relief. Contemplating the immense love of the Most Holy Trinity for Mary, we may not doubt but that, by her intercession, she might at once deliver all the suffering souls from their prison, if such were in accordance with God's will. But God's wisdom and providence have decreed otherwise. Therefore Mary does not pray for the release of all souls in purgatory, but recommends them, in conformity with God's will, to His mercy. St. Bernardine of Sienna applies to Mary the words of Holy Scripture, "I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep and have walked in the waves of the sea" (*Ecclus.* xxiv. 8), and says: "She descends into that sea of suffering and soothes the pains of the poor souls." St. Denis the Carthusian remarks, that when the name of Mary is mentioned in purgatory, the souls there imprisoned experience the same relief as when a sick person hears words of consolation on his bed of pain.

Therefore let us entrust our prayers for the souls in purgatory to Mary. She will present our petitions to God, and thus presented, He will speedily hear and graciously grant them.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)
[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, strong child, who didst put to flight all hell and the powers of darkness. We give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.
[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

NINTH DAY

The Holy Name of Mary

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 74\).](#)

MEDITATION

ST. ALPHONSUS writes of the name of Mary: "This name was neither invented on earth, nor imposed by human agency. It came from heaven and was given to the Mother of God by divine command." Just as it is a peculiar glory of our Saviour's name, that "God hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (*Philipp.* ii. 9), thus it also behooves that Mary, the most perfect, the most pure, and most exalted of all created beings, should receive a most holy, lovely, and powerful name. St. Methodius declares that the name of Mary is so rich in grace and blessing, that no one can pronounce it devoutly without at the same time receiving a spiritual favor. Bl. Jordan exclaims: "Let a heart be ever so obdurate, let a man even despair of God's mercy, if he have recourse to thee, O Mary, virgin most clement, he can not fail to be softened and filled with confidence if he invokes thy name; for thou wilt inspire him with hope in God's mercy, pardon, and grace."

PRACTICE

IT IS, then, meet and just that we should devoutly honor and praise the name of Mary. Let us never mention it except in reverence and devotion. Let us invoke Mary by it in all dangers of body and soul, mindful of the words of St. Bernard: "O sinner, when the floods and tempests of this earthly life overwhelm thee so that thou canst not firmly set thy foot, turn not away thy gaze from the light of this guiding star. When the storms of temptation assail thee, and the rocks and quicksands of vexation and trial threaten to shatter thy bark of hope, look up to that bright star in the heavens, and call on the name of Mary. When the billows of pride and of ambition, when the floods of calumny are about to submerge thee, look up to this star and call on the name of Mary. When anger, avarice, and concupiscence convulse the peace of thy soul, look up to this star and call on Mary. When thy sins rise up like hideous monsters before thy troubled vision, when thy conscience stings thee, when the terrors of future judgment fill thee with deadly anguish, when gloom and sadness overpower thee, when thou findest thyself on the brink of hellish despair, take courage; think of Mary, and thou wilt find from thy own inward experience how true are the sayings of those who tell thee that the name of the Blessed Virgin is 'Star of the Sea,' the name of the Virgin is Mary."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 75\).](#)
[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, beloved child Mary, adorned with every virtue, immeasurably above all the saints, and therefore worthy Mother of the Saviour of the world, who by the operation of the Holy Ghost didst bring forth the incarnate Word. We give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live

united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 76\).](#)

III

Novena for the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



FIRST DAY

The Annunciation

PREPARATORY PRAYER

MY QUEEN, my Mother, remember I am thine own. Keep me, guard me, as thy property and possession!

Indulgence. 40 days, every time. (Pius IX, August 5, 1851.)

MEDITATION

AT NAZARETH, a mountain village in Judea, lived poor and in obscurity Mary, the virgin selected by God to become the Mother of His Son. On March 25th she was in prayer in her chamber, and perhaps sent up to heaven the yearning petition, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud a Saviour" (*Is. xlv. 8*). Behold, suddenly the chamber is suffused by a heavenly light. The archangel Gabriel stands reverently before her and says, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. And when Mary heard the angel's words, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be" (*Luke i. 28, 29*).

PRACTICE

THE angel's salutation comprises two titles of ineffable greatness. Mary is called "full of grace," because of her innocence and purity; she is called "blessed among women," because she is the elect Mother of God. Never before was a human being thus greeted. It was God Himself who sent the message to Mary. A good angel now repaired the harm once done by a bad angel. For Lucifer, the fallen angel, seduced Eve to sin and thereby caused the ruin of the whole human race; now another angel, Gabriel, was sent to announce the glad tidings to Mary, that she was to conceive the Redeemer from sin, who was to accomplish the salvation of mankind.

Mary was troubled at the angel's words, and reflected on the meaning of the message. St. Ambrose writes: "Mary was troubled, not because the angel was a heavenly spirit, but because he appeared to her in the form of a youth. Still more was she troubled at the praises spoken to her. She was innocent and humble, and therefore reflected on the meaning of the message. She had always considered herself as a poor and unknown virgin; she deemed herself unworthy of God's grace; therefore she was troubled at the salutation. In that decisive moment she was and remained our model."

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we unto whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His passion and cross, be brought to the glory of the resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

WITH wonder I revere thee, holiest Virgin Mary; for of all God's creatures thou wast the humblest on the very day of thy annunciation, when God Himself exalted Thee to the sublime dignity of His own Mother. O mightiest Virgin, make me, wretched sinner that I am, know the depths of my own nothingness, and make me humble myself at last with all my heart, beneath the feet of all men.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

Indulgence. 50 days, once a day. (Leo XIII, March 20, 1894.)

SECOND DAY

The Import of the Angel's Salutation

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

"HAIL, full of grace!" Mary was greeted as full of grace by the Giver of grace Himself. The angel's salutation meant: "The grace of God has preserved thee from all sin. Neither the stain of original sin, nor the guilt of actual sin, ever obscured the mirror of thy soul. By the special favor of God the most sublime virtues were infused into thy soul."

"The Lord is with thee." From all eternity the Lord was with Mary. He was with her not only as He is with His whole creation, but He was with her in a special manner. The eternal Father was with her from all eternity as with His beloved Daughter. The divine Son was with her from all eternity as with His chosen Mother. The Holy Ghost was with her from all eternity as with His beloved Spouse. This intimate union never was disrupted. Therefore Mary is "Blessed among women," and ever was, and ever shall be the beloved of the Lord.

PRACTICE

CONSIDER how Mary receives the angel's message. She is troubled, she is disturbed at the praise, at the reverence of the angel. What an example of humility! Let us imitate her in this virtue by the acknowledgment before God of our weakness, our unworthiness, our nothingness, and by ordering our whole being accordingly. Humility renders us pleasing in the sight of God and makes us susceptible of His grace. Hence St. Augustine writes: "God resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble. What a terrible punishment for the proud, what a splendid reward for the humble! The proud man resembles a rock, the humble man a beautiful valley. The grace of God descends from heaven like a gentle rain. It can not penetrate the rock of pride, and hence the proud man loses God's grace and love. But in the valley of humility the waters of divine grace can diffuse themselves and fructify the soul of the humble man, so that it may bring forth fruit unto eternal life."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O MARY, holiest Virgin, who, when the archangel Gabriel hailed thee in thy annunciation, and thou wast raised by God above all choirs of the angels, didst confess thyself "the handmaid of the Lord"; do thou obtain for me true humility and a truly angelic purity, and so to live on earth as ever to be worthy of the blessings of God.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

THIRD DAY

The Effect of the Angel's Salutation

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE effect of the angel's salutation on Mary was striking. Imbued with sentiments quite different from ours, she was troubled at the praise addressed to her. Meanwhile she is silent and considers within herself what might be the meaning of these words. And now the angel calls her by name, saying, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (*Luke i. 30-33*).

PRACTICE

LET us admire the prudence shining forth in Mary. After hearing the angel's words of praise she was silent and thought within herself what kind of a salutation this was. She is very careful and prudent. On this her conduct St. Thomas Aquinas remarks: "Mary did not refuse to believe, nor did she receive the message with credulity. She avoided Eve's gullibility and the distrust of Zachary the high priest." And St. Bernard writes: "Mary preferred to remain silent in humility, rather than to speak inconsiderately." Let us strive always to speak and act with deliberation. Our conversation ought always to be judicious; for often a word spoken inconsiderately causes bitter regret. St. Thomas Aquinas observes: "Song was given to a number of creatures, but human beings alone were endowed with the faculty of speech, to indicate that in speaking we should use our reason." And St. Chrysostom says: "Let us always guard our tongue; not that it should always be silent, but that it should speak at the proper time."

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I REJOICE with thee, O Virgin ever blessed, because by thy humble word of consent thou didst draw down from the bosom of the eternal Father the divine Word into thy own pure bosom. O draw, then, ever my heart to God; and with God bring grace into my heart that I may ever sincerely bless thy word of consent, so mighty and so efficacious.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

FOURTH DAY

Mary's Question

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

WELL versed as Mary was in Holy Scripture, she fully understood the words she had heard and knew their great import. She was destined to become the Mother of the Most High, the Son of God. But there is an obstacle which prevents her from giving immediate assent. She has solemnly vowed her virginity to God. Not knowing how the mystery announced to her was to be accomplished, and intent above all on keeping inviolate her vow, she interrupts her silence by the short but comprehensive question, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (*Luke i. 34.*) This is the first word of Mary recorded in the Gospel.

PRACTICE

"HOW shall this be done, because I know not man?" Truly a momentous question, proceeding from her knowledge of the great excellence and value before God of virginity, which, before Mary, was unknown to the world.

Let us follow Mary's example and esteem holy purity and chastity above all things. Let us remember how highly Holy Scripture extols this virtue. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory; for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and with men" (*Wis. iv. 1*). St. Athanasius writes: "O chastity, thou precious pearl, found by few, even hated by some, and sought only by those who are worthy of thee! Thou art the joy of the prophets, the ornament of the apostles, the life of the angels, the crown of the saints." Let us therefore carefully guard this inestimable treasure.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY, mighty Virgin, thou who on the day of thy annunciation wast found by the archangel so prompt and ready to do God's will, and to correspond with the desires of the august Trinity, who wished for thy consent in order to redeem the world; obtain for me that, whatever happens, good or ill, I may turn to my God, and with resignation say, "Be it done unto me according to thy word."

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

FIFTH DAY

The Solution

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE angel explains to Mary how, without detriment to her virginity, she will become a mother. He says, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (*Luke* i. 35). St. Bernard remarks: "Let him who can, comprehend it. Who, but that most happy Virgin who was worthy to experience the influence and effect of the power of the Most High and to penetrate this sublime mystery, can understand how the divine Light was poured into the Virgin's womb? The Most Holy Trinity alone co-operated in the sacred act, and it remains an impenetrable mystery to all, except to her who was called to so sublime a destiny."

PRACTICE

MARY did not entertain a single doubt concerning the wonders which the angel announced to her about the coming Messiah and His kingdom. She believed with simple faith the words of the heavenly messenger. Only about that which concerned her personally she asked a question. When the wonderful mystery was explained to her, she did not ask how this *can* be done, but only how it *shall* be done. And after the angel had declared to her that she shall conceive by the Holy Ghost, she was fully resigned and announced her implicit belief in these humble words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (*Luke* i. 38). Therefore the Holy Ghost Himself praised her by the mouth of Elizabeth: "Blessed art thou that hast believed" (*Luke* i. 45).

Let us remain steadfast in the profession of all articles of faith, and let us oppose, like a strong shield, the words, "Nothing is impossible with God," to all attacks of unbelievers, and to all doubts that may arise in our own minds.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

MARY most holy, I see that thy obedience united thee so closely to God, that all creation never shall know again union so fair and so perfect. I am overwhelmed with confusion in seeing how my sins have separated me from God. Help me, then, gentle Mother, to repent sincerely of my sins, that I may be reunited to thy loving Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

SIXTH DAY

Mary's Consent

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

WE ADMIRE the creative word of God, by which heaven and earth were called into existence. But Mary's word, "Be it done to me according to thy word," is even mightier and more efficacious; for it commands the obedience even of the almighty Creator. Without this word of humility and obedience the incarnation of our divine Saviour would not have been accomplished. Mary does not say, "I accept the proposal, I agree to the proposition," nor does she use other words of similar import. She simply says, "Be it done to me according to thy word." It was not her own choice, nor her own decision, but a voluntary, full, and complete surrender to the will of God that the message found in Mary's soul, which was expressed in these words. What a source of consolation to her in the subsequent sorrowful and afflicted stages of her life was this complete surrender to God's will! It comprised the tranquilizing assurance that He to whose designs she submitted, would endow her with the fortitude and strength necessary to co-operate with them.

PRACTICE

JUST as our divine Lord Himself became obedient unto death, thus also His incarnation and the motherhood of Mary were the result of obedience. Again, in contemplating the works that in the course of time were undertaken in the Church for the glory of God and the salvation of man, we find that only those were really great, effective, and enduring, which had their beginning, continuation, and consummation in obedience.

Rejoice, then, if it is your happy lot to walk in the safe path of obedience. Avail yourself of every opportunity to submit your will to the will of your Superiors. They are the representatives of God. By obeying them we fulfil His will, not the will of men. St. Bonaventure calls obedience the key of heaven.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

HOLIEST Mary, if through thy modesty thou wert troubled at the appearance of the archangel Gabriel in thy dwelling, I am terrified at the sight of my monstrous pride. By thy incomparable humility, which brought forth God for men, reopened paradise and let the captive souls go free from their prison, draw me, I pray thee, out of the deep pit into which my sins have cast me, and make me save my soul.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

SEVENTH DAY

Mary's Fortitude in Suffering

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

ALTHOUGH Mary's consent was free, and freely given, she was clearly convinced and perfectly conscious of the responsibility, the obligations, and the duties involved by that consent, and which she now assumed. Great are the duties and tearful the days of a mother who has to raise her Son, who is also God, to be sacrificed on the cross. Mary assumes with the dignity this responsibility. She consents to conceive the Son of God, to give birth to Him, to nourish Him, to educate Him for the ignominious death of the cross. When she pronounced the words, "Be it done," her eyes were fixed on the distant tragedy of Golgotha, on the cross towering upon its height. Yet she accepts it, together with the dignity of Mother of God.

PRACTICE

MARY, in consenting to become the Mother of Jesus, became not only His Mother, but the Mother of all mankind. She became, for all time, the refuge of sinners, the health of the sick, the intercessor with God for man; she consented to exercise a mother's love for suffering and sinful humanity. But alas, how many of those adopted by Mary as her children under the cross of her dying Son are unworthy of her mother love! How many are rebellious children, who fill her heart with sorrow and anguish! Others, faithless and obdurate, become a reproach to her. Have you, during your past life, always been a good child of this loving Mother? Are you to her an honor or a disgrace, a joy or a sorrow?

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

THOUGH my tongue is unhallowed, yet, purest Virgin, I presume to hail thee every day with the angel's salutation, "Hail Mary, full of grace!" From my heart, I pray thee, pour into my soul a little of that mighty grace wherewith the Holy Spirit, overshadowing thee, filled thee to the full.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

EIGHTH DAY

Mary, the Mother of God

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY'S true greatness consists in her having been chosen the Mother of God. This sublime dignity, pre-eminently her own and shared by no other creature, elevates her to a station inconceivably exalted. Mother of God! St. Peter Damian thus gives expression to his conception of this dignity: "In what words may mortal man

be permitted to pronounce the praises of her who brought forth that divine Word who lives for all eternity? Where can a tongue be found holy and pure enough to eulogize her who bore the author of all created things, whom the elements praise and obey in fear and trembling? When we essay to extol a martyr's constancy, to recount his heroic acts of virtue, to describe his devotion to his Saviour's cause and honor, we are supplied with words by facts and occurrences that belong to the province of human experience. But when we undertake to describe the glories of the Blessed Virgin, we are on unknown ground, on a subject transcending all human effort. We fail to find words suitable to portray her sublime prerogatives, privileges, and mysteries."

PRACTICE

ST. ANSELM, writing on the motherhood of Mary, says: "It was eminently just and proper that the creature chosen to be the Mother of God should shine with a luster of purity far beyond anything conceivable in any other creature under heaven. For it was to her that the eternal Father decreed to give His only-begotten Son, whom He loves as Himself; and to give Him in such a mysterious manner that He should be at the same time the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary. She must indeed be purity itself, whom the Son of God elected as His Mother, and who was the chosen Spouse of the Holy Ghost, to be overshadowed by Him to bring forth the Second Person of that Most Blessed Trinity from whom He Himself proceeds."

Let us honor the virgin Mother with filial devotion, gratefully greeting her often in the words of the angel, "Hail Mary, full of grace!" Let us remember that God alone is above Mary, and beneath her is all that is not God.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I BELIEVE, holiest Mary, that almighty God was ever with thee from thy conception, and is, by His incarnation, still more closely united to thee. Make it thy care, I pray thee, that I may be with that same Lord Jesus ever one heart and soul by means of sanctifying grace.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

NINTH DAY

Mary, Our Mother

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 95\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY could not consent to become the Mother of the Redeemer without including in her consent those to be redeemed. "She bore one man," says St. Antonine, "and thereby has borne all men again. Beneath the cross of her divine Son she has reborne us to life with great pain, just as Eve our first mother, has borne us under the tree of forbidden fruit unto death. That there be no doubt concerning it, her divine Son made this declaration in His last will." "When therefore Jesus had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple, Behold thy Mother" (*John* xix. 26 27). She gave up her Son for the redemption of mankind, and He gave us, in the person of His beloved disciple St. John, to her as her children, declaring her our Mother. From that moment we belong to Mary, and Mary belongs to us: "Behold thy Mother!"

PRACTICE

MARY loves us because she loves God, and because God loves us. She loves us as her brethren who share human nature with her. She loves us as her children, whom she has borne to eternal life. She loves us because we are miserable and helpless. True, we offended her divine Son, but she knows our frailty, our blindness, the assaults of the flesh and the devil to which we are exposed; and by all this she is moved to come to our aid.

Do not, however, imagine that this good and amiable Mother will hear your call for assistance if you continue to offend her divine Son with malice prepense. To obtain her aid you must make yourself in a manner worthy of it. This you do by striving to imitate her virtues. Or is there anything in her example that we are unable to imitate? True, we can not attain to her perfection in virtue, but we can copy it to a certain degree. To follow Mary's example there is no need of performing miracles, of having ecstasies, or of doing any other extraordinary deeds. All that is necessary is to persevere faithfully in the ordinary duties of life, and to perform them to the best of our ability.

"Behold thy Mother!" These words of our dying Lord were addressed to the beloved disciple St. John, but were intended for all mankind. Even as Mary never ceases to be the Mother of God, she never will cease to be our Mother.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 97\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

O HOLIEST Mary, bless me, my heart and my soul, as thou thyself wast ever blessed of God among all women; for I have this sure hope, dear Mother, that if thou bless me while I live, then, when I die, I shall be blessed of God in the everlasting glory of heaven.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 97\).](#)

IV

Novena in Honor of the Seven Sorrows of Mary



NOTE.—Besides the indulgences granted for every novena in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Pius IX, Pope Leo XIII, January 27, 1888, granted that all the faithful may gain, on the *third Sunday in September*, being the second feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary (the other is observed on the Friday before Palm Sunday), a plenary indulgence *as often* as they visit, after confession and communion, a church where the Archconfraternity of the Seven Sorrows is canonically established, and pray there for the intention of the Holy Father. This indulgence is applicable to the souls in purgatory.

FIRST DAY

Devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

BID me bear, O Mother blessed,
On my heart the wounds impressed

Suffered by the Crucified!

Indulgence. 300 days, once a day. A plenary indulgence, on any one day, in each month, to those who shall have practised this devotion for a month, saying besides seven Hail Marys, followed each time by the above invocation. Conditions: Confession, communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. (Pius IX, June 18, 1876.)

MEDITATION

FROM the dolorous way of Our Lord's passion Holy Church selected fourteen incidents to place before us for consideration, which are called the Stations of the Cross. In the same manner the pious devotion of the faithful selected seven events in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and gives itself to their religious contemplation. They are: (1) Simeon's prophecy in the Temple; (2) the flight into Egypt with the divine Child; (3) the loss of the divine Child at Jerusalem; (4) Mary's meeting with her Son bearing the cross; (5) Mary beneath the cross; (6) Mary receives the body of her Son from the cross; (7) the placing of Jesus' body in the tomb.

PRACTICE

"FORGET not the sorrows of thy mother" (*Ecclus.* vii. 29). According to this exhortation of Holy Scripture it is our duty to remember and meditate often on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We ought never to forget that our sins were the cause of the sufferings and death of Jesus, and therefore also of the sorrows of Mary.

Holy Church celebrates two feasts in honor of the sorrows of Mary; she approved of the Rosary and of many other devotions in honor of the Seven Dolours, and enriched them with numerous indulgences. Let us practise these devotions to enkindle in our hearts a true and ardent love for our sorrowful Mother.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that the most blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, may intercede for us before the throne of Thy mercy, now and at the hour of our death, through whose most holy soul, in the hour of Thine own passion, the sword of sorrow passed. Through Thee, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

EVER glorious Blessed Virgin Mary, queen of martyrs, mother of mercy, hope, and comfort of dejected and desolate souls, through the sorrows that pierced thy tender heart I beseech thee take pity on my poverty and necessities, have compassion on my anxieties and miseries. I ask it through the mercy of thy divine Son; I ask it through His immaculate life, bitter passion, and ignominious death on the cross. As I am persuaded that He honors thee as His beloved Mother, to whom He refuses nothing, let me experience the efficacy of thy powerful intercession, according to the tenderness of thy maternal affection, now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

Mother of Sorrows, queen of martyrs, pray for us!

SECOND DAY

Mary's First Sorrow: Simeon's Prophecy in the Temple



[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

FORTY days after the birth of our divine Saviour, Mary His Mother fulfilled the law of Moses by offering Him to His divine Father in the Temple. "And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in Him. And he received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now dost Thou dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. A light to the revelation of the gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. And His father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning Him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His Mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed" (*Luke ii. 25-35*).

PRACTICE

MARY was familiar with the predictions of the prophets and knew that ignominy, sorrow, and suffering would be her divine Son's portion throughout His earthly career. But to have this secret of her anxious soul thus publicly and solemnly declared by Simeon, was a sharp thrust of that seven-edged sword which was to pierce her loving heart. In spirit she viewed that boundless, surging sea of trials, pain, and death on which her Son was to be tossed about, and was willing to be engulfed in its bitter waters. Her affliction would have scarcely been greater had the death sentence of her divine Son been pronounced then and there and put into execution. What a sorrow, what an affliction, what a trial for such a tender Mother! Well might she exclaim with the Royal Prophet: "My life is wasted with grief, and my years in sighs" (*Ps. xxx. 11*). Let us often contemplate this sorrow, and excite our hearts to a tender compassion with the Mother of Sorrows.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, in the grief thy tender heart underwent when the holy old man Simeon prophesied to thee. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of humility and the gift of the holy fear of God.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

THIRD DAY

Mary's Second Sorrow: The Flight into Egypt



[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

FOR the second time the sword of sorrow pierced Mary's heart when she was commanded to fly into Egypt with her divine Child. Without manifesting undue perplexity or discontent, she hastily gathered a few necessaries for the journey, while St. Joseph saddled the beast of burden. Then taking the infant Jesus into her arms and pressing Him to her throbbing heart, the holy pilgrims set forth into the cold, starry night, away to a foreign land, through the trackless desert, and into a heathen country. Arrived in Egypt, the experience of Bethlehem was renewed; no one gave them shelter.

PRACTICE

DURING this second great sorrow, what was Mary's behavior? She was content to fulfil the will of God; she did not ask for reasons, or complain of the fatigues of the journey, but preserved her peace of heart amid all the trials of this severe probation. She is poor, but her poverty does not render her unhappy or querulous. If God sends us trials, we ought not murmur or complain. Following the example of Mary, let us bear them submissively. If we suffer patiently with Mary on earth, we shall enjoy eternal bliss with her in heaven.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the anxiety which thy most tender heart underwent during thy flight into Egypt and thy sojourn there. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so sorrowful, obtain for me the virtue of liberality, especially toward the poor, and the gift of piety.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

FOURTH DAY

Mary's Third Sorrow: Jesus Lost in Jerusalem



[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

WHO can describe Mary's sorrow when, returning from Jerusalem, she missed her divine Son? With St. Joseph she retraced her steps in anxious search of Him whom her soul loved. She went to all her relatives and acquaintances in Jerusalem, but heard no tidings of her lost Child. She passed three long days of anxiety in her search, and this constitutes her third sorrow. Of it, Origen writes: "On account of the ineffable love of Mary for her divine Son, she suffered more by His loss than the martyrs suffered amid the most cruel tortures."

PRACTICE

IN MEDITATING on this sorrow of Mary, we ought to remember how indifferent so many Christians are after having lost God by sin. They feel no compunction, no sorrow at having offended Him, and yet they can weep at the loss of a trifle; they shed copious tears when their will is crossed, or when they receive a deserved reprimand; but for the loss of their God they have not a tear. They have lost Him, perhaps years ago, and never make the least effort to find Him. Pray to the sorrowful Mother that she preserve you from such a deplorable fate!

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the terrors felt by thy anxious heart when thou didst lose thy dear Son, Jesus. Dear Mother, by thy heart, then so agitated, obtain for me the virtue of chastity, and with it the gift of knowledge.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

FIFTH DAY

Mary's Fourth Sorrow: She Meets Jesus Carrying His Cross

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE time was at hand when mankind's redemption was to be accomplished. Already the divine Victim of our sins is bearing the instrument of our salvation. Torn by the cruel scourging, crowned with thorns, and

covered with blood He proceeds on His way to Calvary, and in this pitiful condition meets His blessed Mother. What a spectacle, what a sight for a Mother such as Mary! Anxious to look upon her, and with one fond glance to thank her for her heroic, unselfish love, He made an effort to change His bowed position beneath the cross, feebly raised His head, and directed toward her one loving glance of ineffable anguish, mingled with grateful recognition and humble resignation. Then the sad procession moves on, Mary following her divine Son on His way to death.

PRACTICE

WE, BY our sins, placed into the hands of the Jews and executioners the weapons by which Jesus suffered, and thus we thrust the sword of sorrow into Mary's heart. We repeat this, in a certain sense, as often as we commit a grievous sin, because we thereby number ourselves among those whom the Apostle describes as "crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery" (*Heb. vi. 6*). Cardinal Hugo writes: "Sinners crucify, as far as is in them, Christ our Lord, because they repeat the cause of His crucifixion." Doing this, we thrust anew the sword of sorrow into Mary's heart. Let this consideration fill us with hatred for and fear of sin.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)
[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the shock thy mother heart experienced when Jesus met thee as He carried His cross. Dear Mother, by that heart of thine, then so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of patience and the gift of fortitude.

Hail Mary, etc.
[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

SIXTH DAY

Mary's Fifth Sorrow: Beneath the Cross

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

AT THE crucifixion of Jesus the soul of Mary was plunged into a sea of sorrow when she stood three hours under the cross. Writhing in excruciating pain, the Son of God hung upon the tree of disgrace and infamy, yet Mary continued to stand at its foot, tearful, grieving, yet persevering, filled with anguish because she could do nothing to help Him. Another great sorrow befell the heart of Mary when she slowly withdrew her tearful gaze from the face of Jesus, and cast her weeping eyes upon the cold and indifferent world that lay in darkness around and about Calvary. And yet, "When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold Thy son. After that He saith to the disciple, Behold thy Mother" (*John xix. 26, 27*).

PRACTICE

THESE words, "Behold thy son, behold thy Mother," contain and express the mystery of unbounded love, which Jesus has for all mankind, but more especially for the Church which is appointed and authorized to lead men to salvation. O blessed, O happy bequest! It was not enough for the love of Jesus to have restored heaven to us by His atoning death; He wished also to give us His dearest Mother. And she has always shown herself as such. To each of us individually she was and is a kind and loving Mother. Give thanks to her, bless and praise her for having adopted you as her child, and strive to become worthy of so great a privilege.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)
[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the martyrdom thy generous heart bore so nobly whilst thou didst stand by Jesus agonizing. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so cruelly martyred, obtain for me the virtue of temperance and the gift of counsel.

Hail Mary, etc.
[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

SEVENTH DAY

Mary's Sixth Sorrow: The Taking Down of Jesus' Body from the Cross



[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

WHO can describe the sorrow and anguish of Mary's heart when the body of Jesus was taken from the cross, when her tearful eyes fell upon His disfigured features! The pure and holy and beautiful form of her Son was a mass of clotted blood and unsightly wounds; and yet, disfigured as it was, there shone in His countenance a clear, calm expression of divine majesty. Now Mary views the wounds of that sacred body; she looks at the gap made in His side by the cruel spear, and can almost see the Sacred Heart of Jesus, all bruised and broken for love of man. Before her vision passes in detail His life and her own. Memory presents to her mind every day and hour of their quiet, happy life at Nazareth. Is it to be wondered, then, that at this bitter moment her sorrow was so great that, as St. Anselm observes, she should have died had she not been sustained by a miracle of divine omnipotence?

PRACTICE

SHOULD not the contemplation of the sorrows of our blessed Mother confirm us in patience, in resignation to the will of God in our trials and sufferings? If the Son of God said of Himself: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" (*Luke xxiv. 26*); if the most pure and holy Mother of God, despite her great prerogatives and merits, had to suffer a sorrow so ineffable, do not murmur if the word of Christ is addressed also to you: "And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me" (*Matt. x. 38*).

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the pain thou didst suffer when the body of thy divine Son, taken down all torn and bloody from the cross, was placed in thy arms. Dear Mother, by thy heart pierced through, obtain for me the virtue of fraternal charity and the gift of understanding.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

EIGHTH DAY

Mary's Seventh Sorrow: Jesus is Buried

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE sacrifice for the redemption of the world was accomplished. "And Joseph, taking the body, wrapt it up in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way" (*Matt.* xxvii. 59). Mary also took part in the burial of her beloved Son, though the evangelists do not mention her name amongst those who were present on that mournful occasion. Never, most assuredly, was human soul visited by such woe and desolation, as that which overwhelmed hers as she cast a last glance on the precious remains of her dead Son.

PRACTICE

LET us learn of the sorrowful Mother at the tomb of her divine Son submission to God's holy will in all things, but especially when He takes from us one of our dear ones. Again, the contemplation of the sufferings of Mary should fortify us in patience, whenever God is pleased to visit us with a light and small cross of affliction, or even with a sorrow that causes our heart to bleed. It should inspire us with a filial confidence in Mary, who thus suffered for us and gave her divine Son for our salvation. We can and ought to prove our love for her, not by sentimental feelings of affection, but by a sincere hatred of sin and great fervor in the service of her divine Son.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for the anguish felt by thy loving heart when Jesus' body was laid in the sepulcher. Dear Mother, by all the bitterness of desolation thou didst know, obtain for me the virtue of diligence and the gift of wisdom.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

NINTH DAY

Reasons Why Mary Had to Suffer

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 115\).](#)

MEDITATION

THE reasons why God permitted Mary to suffer so much may be briefly stated as follows: He did so from His love for Mary and from His love for us. He did so from His love for Mary, because by suffering she merited greater glory in heaven. As Mother of the Crucified she persevered beneath the cross, and now she thrones in heaven as the glorious Mother of the risen Redeemer. Because she shared in His suffering, she now shares His glory. Again, God permitted Mary to suffer because He loved us. If she had not experienced such bitter sorrow, we would not have recourse to her, for whosoever has not suffered himself can not have sympathy with the sufferings of others. Mary knows the pangs of sorrow by experience, and therefore knows also how to console and help us.

PRACTICE

BECAUSE she herself drained the most bitter cup of sorrow, Mary is always willing to help those who invoke her aid. But above all she is inclined to help repentant sinners, because she knows how great the price of their redemption was, paid by the blood of her divine Son. She is able to help us, because, after God, she is most powerful; she is most willing to help us, because she loves us, whom God so has loved "as to give His only-begotten Son" (*John* iii. 16). Let us, therefore, have recourse to her in all our needs, and we shall experience the power of her help in life and death.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 117\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

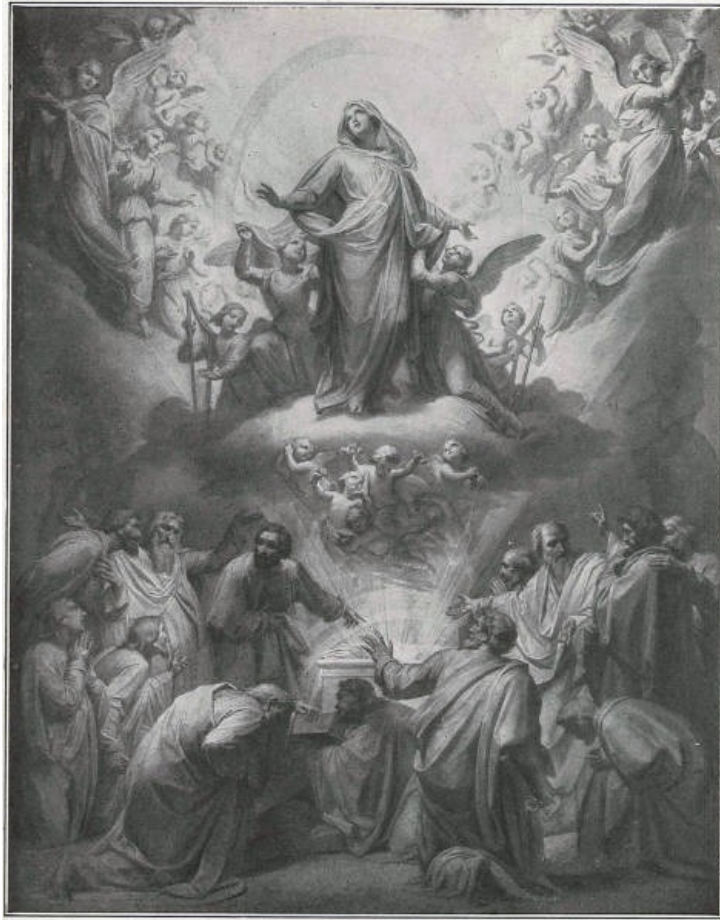
I COMPASSIONATE thee, sorrowing Mary, for all thy sorrows. I beseech thee, dear Mother, by thy heart pierced through by them, obtain for me full abandonment to the will of God in everything and perseverance to the end.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 118\).](#)

V

Novena for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



FIRST DAY

Mary's Death was without Pain



PREPARATORY PRAYER

O MARY, Virgin most blessed and Mother of Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, through thy mercy I beseech thee to come to my aid, and to inspire me with such confidence in thy power, that I may have recourse to thee, pray to thee, and implore thy aid in all needs of soul and body.

MEDITATION

MARY, the virgin Mother of God, was conceived without original sin. She never dimmed the luster of sanctifying grace which beautified her soul by actual sin. Nevertheless she had to pass through the dark portal of death before she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. She had not been endowed with the privilege of immortality with which God had invested our first parents in paradise. It was meet that she should be like unto her divine Son in everything, even in death. But as she had drained the bitter cup of suffering during her whole life, and especially when standing beneath the cross, her death was to be free from pain and suffering. She quietly passed away yielding up her spirit in a yearning desire to be united forever with her divine Son in heaven.

PRACTICE

IF YOU have dispossessed your heart of all unruly attachment to the goods and enjoyments of this earth, you, too, may hope for a happy and tranquil transition from this land of exile to your home in heaven. Therefore, if you are still attached to the transitory things of this life, disengage your heart from them now. The voluntary renouncement of earthly goods alone is meritorious before God. The separation from them enforced by the strong hand of death is of no supernatural value.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

WE BESEECH Thee, O Lord, pardon the shortcomings of Thy servants; that we who, by our own works, are not able to please Thee, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O MOST benign Mother Mary! I rejoice that by thy happy and tranquil death the yearning of thy heart was appeased, and thy life, so rich in merit and sacrifice, received its crown. I rejoice that after passing from this life, thou, O most loving Mother, wast made the glorious and powerful queen of heaven and dost exercise thy influence as such for the benefit of thy frail, exiled children on earth. Obtain for me, I beseech thee, a happy death, that I may praise and glorify thy might and kindness forever in heaven.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

Sweet heart of Mary be my salvation!

Indulgence. (1) 100 days, every time. (2) A plenary indulgence, once a month, on any day, to all who shall have said it every day for a month, under the usual conditions.

SECOND DAY

At Mary's Tomb

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

AN ANCIENT legend relates that, led by Heaven, all the Apostles, except St. Thomas, assembled at the Blessed Virgin's death-bed. After she had breathed forth her pure spirit, her sacred remains were prepared for the grave by wrapping the body in new white linen and decking it with flowers. Meanwhile the apostles, assembled in another room, sang psalms and hymns in praise of their departed Mother. The apostles, all the disciples, and the faithful dwelling in Jerusalem followed the blessed remains to the grave chanting psalms and hymns. Arrived in the valley of Josaphat, the body was gently placed in a sepulcher of stone not far from the Garden of Olives. After the entombment the apostles and crowds of the faithful lingered near the sacred spot in prayer, meditation, and chanting of psalms in which angels' voices were heard to mingle.

PRACTICE

JOIN in spirit with the apostles and faithful in their prayer and meditation at the grave of our blessed Mother. Contemplate and review her whole life. Could a course like hers have terminated more appropriately than with so beautiful, painless, and tranquil a passing away? Prepare yourself even now for your departure from this life. Do not postpone the settlement of your affairs, spiritual and temporal, until the last uncertain hours. Above all, remove now, or as soon as possible, all doubts, anxieties, and irregularities of conscience, because delay is dangerous and leads to impenitence, and because in the last hours the powers of hell usually assail the departing soul with all their might.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

GLORIOUS Virgin, who for thy consolation didst deserve to die comforted by the sight of thy dear Son Jesus, and in the company of the apostles and angels; pray for us, that at that awful moment we, too, may be comforted by receiving Jesus in the most holy Eucharist, and may feel thee nigh when we breathe forth our soul.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

THIRD DAY

The Empty Tomb

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

ST. JOHN DAMASCENE writes: "St. Thomas was not with the other apostles when the Blessed Virgin died, but arrived in Jerusalem on the third day after that event. Ardently desiring to see once more and to venerate the sacred body which had given flesh and blood to his beloved Master, the grave was opened for this purpose. The body could nowhere be seen, and a delicious perfume filled the empty tomb. The apostles then became convinced that as God had preserved the body of Mary free from sin before, in, and after the birth of His Son, He was pleased likewise, after her death, to preserve that same body from corruption, and to glorify it in heaven."

A council held in Jerusalem in the year 1672 declared: "It is beyond all doubt that the Blessed Virgin is not only a great and miraculous sign on earth, because she bore God in the flesh and yet remained a virgin, but she is also a great and miraculous sign in heaven, because she was taken up thither with soul and body. For although her sinless body was enclosed in the tomb, yet, like the body of Our Lord, it arose on the third day and was carried up to heaven."

Although the doctrine of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven was not defined by the Church as an article of faith in the strict sense, yet the learned Pope Benedict XIV remarks, "It would be presumptuous and blameworthy in any one to call into doubt or to question this beautiful and consoling belief of ages."

PRACTICE

LET us rejoice at the thought of the glorious resurrection of our dear Mother. Let us unite ourselves in spirit with the apostles in heaven and with Holy Church to congratulate her on this extraordinary privilege. But let us also rejoice at the thought of our own resurrection. True, it shall not take place immediately after death, but it is therefore not the less certain, and it depends on us to make it glorious and blessed.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary! As thy sacred body after death was preserved from corruption, and united with thy sinless soul was borne to heaven by the angels; obtain for me the grace that my life and death be holy, so that on the Day of Judgment I may arise to glory everlasting.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

FOURTH DAY

Reasons for the Bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

1. THE wages of sin is death. Now, as the Blessed Virgin from the first moment of her existence was preserved from all sin, and even from original sin, it necessarily follows that death could have no permanent dominion over her, and that her body would not be permitted to see corruption.
2. This sinless body had been the medium by which the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the conqueror of death, had been formed. How, then, could such a highly privileged body, a pure and virginal body, be permitted to pass through corruption and decay?
3. As Mary had yielded up her sacred person to be a dwelling-place for the Lord of heaven, it seems fitting that this same Lord, in His turn, should give the kingdom of heaven to her as her resting-place. St. Bernard expresses this sentiment as follows: "When Our Lord came into this world, Mary furnished Him with the noblest dwelling on earth, the temple of her virginal womb. In return, the Lord on this day raises her up to the highest throne in heaven."

PRACTICE

IF YOU desire to look forward to death without fear, and to expect your dissolution with confidence, follow the Apostle's injunction, "Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good" (*Gal.* vi. 10). Avoid sin, perform good works, be patient in affliction, and strive to expiate the punishment due to your sins by voluntary acts of penance, thus reducing your inclination to sin. Therefore offer up to God every morning, in a spirit of penitence, all your labors, trials, and sufferings.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary! I beseech thee through the ineffable glory thou didst make for thy departure from this world by a life of retirement, full of merits and virtue, dedicated to God alone; obtain for me the grace that, following thy example, I may detach my heart from this world, and patiently bear affliction and adversity, carefully avoid sin, and always strive to advance in the love of God.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

FIFTH DAY

Mary's Glorious Entrance into Heaven

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

A JOY greater than human heart can conceive fills the heavenly spirits when a soul enters heaven to receive her reward. What jubilant transports, then, must those have been with which they hailed the entrance into heavenly bliss of the most pure and holy Virgin, the Mother of the Son of God, body and soul, transfigured in glory! And she is, and shall be, for all eternity, their mistress and queen! What an ineffable joy, too, for the Blessed Virgin, to behold the countless numbers of angels, to admire their beauty, their purity, their intense

love of God! But as the feeble light of a candle disappears before the splendor of the sun's rays, thus are these choirs of angels obscured by the ineffable glory of her divine Son coming to welcome His Mother. Who can describe this affecting meeting? What a superabundant reward for affliction and suffering! What an ocean of joy and bliss, when the Son of God presented His Mother before the throne of His heavenly Father, who greeted her as His beloved Daughter! What a joy to behold the Holy Ghost, whose pure Spouse she had been even on earth! These transports of bliss baffle all attempts at description.

PRACTICE

THOUGH we are unable to have an adequate perception of Mary's glory in heaven, by which she is raised above all angels and saints, yet it is in our power to do one thing; we can rejoice at the glory of our blessed Mother, and join the heavenly spirits and the saints in paying homage to her. Let us resolve to do this, and never to forget that Mary attained to the largest share of her divine Son's glory because she was foremost in sharing His sufferings. Let this encourage us to bear our cross, to bear it with our Saviour even to the height of Calvary, there to die with Him.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary! I beseech thee through the preparation with which thou wast glorified by God—by the Father as His most beloved Daughter, by the Son as His immaculate Mother, and by the Holy Ghost as His most pure Spouse—in heaven; obtain for me the grace to share to some extent this thy glory, and therefore to live so that I may deserve it.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

SIXTH DAY

Mary Crowned in Heaven



[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY'S glory received its culmination by her coronation as queen of heaven and earth. It was meet that in her should be fulfilled the words of Holy Scripture: "Come from Libanus, my Spouse, come, thou shalt be crowned" (*Cant.* iv. 8), and that her own prophetic words, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble" (*Luke* i. 52), should be exemplified in her. For it was reasonable and becoming that

she, who once with Jesus wore the crown of shame and contempt, should now share with Him the crown of immortal glory. It was but fair and just that the immaculate being who was chosen, above all inhabitants of heaven and earth, to be the true and worthy Mother of God, should now be solemnly installed over all creatures in heaven and on earth as the queen of angels and men, and that to her should be offered homage, praise, and honor by the blessed spirits and by the souls of the saints. But the crown which she received is not one made of gold and precious stones; it is composed of the virtues with which Mary, in faithful co-operation with divine grace, embellished herself; it consists, too, of all the homage and glory which she receives as queen of heaven. The most precious gem in this crown is the filial love and gratitude Jesus shows toward His Mother in heaven.

PRACTICE

INDEED, "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man," what the heavenly Father has prepared in the mansions of eternal bliss for His beloved Daughter, the Son for His Blessed Mother, and the Holy Ghost for His chosen Spouse. She is now queen of heaven and earth; of heaven, for she is the queen of all angels and saints; of earth, for as Mother of God she is the Mother of all mankind, the mediatrix between the Redeemer and the redeemed.

You, too, may contribute a gem toward the crown of your heavenly Mother by paying her filial homage, imitating her virtues, and preserving, for the love of her, your innocence and purity of heart.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary! I beseech thee through the everlasting crown of glory with which God has crowned thee queen of heaven and earth; obtain for me through thy mighty intercession the grace to persevere in virtue to the end, so that finally I may attain the crown of bliss prepared by God for those that love Him.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

SEVENTH DAY

Mary's Bliss in Heaven

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

ACCORDING to Holy Scripture and the doctrine of the Church, there are in heaven various grades of glory and bliss, according to the rank and merit of the saints. They probably attain this higher grade of glory and bliss by the increase of their ability to enjoy the happiness of heaven. Their intellect is enabled to contemplate more profoundly the incomprehensible essence of God; their power of perception is augmented so that they may more readily recognize and admire the splendor of the angels, saints, and heavenly mansions; their will is enabled to be united, in a higher degree, with God. From this we may conclude that Mary's bliss in heaven transcends all human conception. Her heavenly glory and reward consists in the perfect adaptation of her whole being to the enjoyment of God and of eternal bliss.

PRACTICE

LOOK up, Christian soul, to this great and brilliant queen of heaven. She is your gentle Mother and assures you of her help, and the diadem she wears upon her brow is a proof that she has the power to help you. Do not, therefore, refuse the hand of this mighty friend in heaven, for she will lift you from the depths of your misery, from the rocky shoals of temptation, and lead you strong and victorious into the presence of her divine Son. Thus you will enter into a new and supernatural life in Christ, to share in the grace-laden mysteries of His life, passion, and triumph.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GREAT and glorious queen of heaven, Mary! I beseech thee by that exalted throne upon which God has raised thee above all angels and saints; let me one day appear amongst them to join them in their praise of thee. Obtain for me the grace that I may never cease to honor thee as thou dost deserve to be honored, and thereby to become worthy of thy mighty protection in life and death.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

EIGHTH DAY

Mary, the Queen of Mercy

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY is, then, a queen, but—what a consolation to know it!—a queen always mild and gentle, always willing to confer benefits upon us. Hence the Church teaches us to call her the Mother of mercy. The pious and learned author Gerson says: "God's dominion comprises justice and mercy. He divided it, retaining the administration of justice for Himself, and relinquishing, in a certain sense, the dispensation of mercy to Mary, by conferring through her hands all graces He grants to mankind." How consoling, then, the assurance that our merciful Mother is so mighty and so loving a queen!

PRACTICE

SO GREAT is the tenderness of Mary's maternal heart "that never was it heard that any one who fled to her protection, implored her help, and sought her intercession was left unaided." How many prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings ascend daily to the throne of this our exalted and merciful protectress! There is not a cry of an afflicted, struggling, and suffering soul that she does not graciously hear. Join, therefore, confidently in the prayer of Holy Church, "Hail, holy queen, Mother of mercy!" Approach her with filial trust. Neglect not to honor her yourself, and do all in your power to lead others to do her honor.

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary! Holy Church teaches me that despite the glory to which thou wast exalted, thou didst not forget thy miserable clients, and that in heaven thy mercy is still greater than it was during thy life on earth. Therefore I come to thee and trustingly lay at thy feet all my needs, miseries, and petitions. My queen, my Mother, turn not thy gracious eyes from me. Remember me with thy divine Son; cease not to pray for me and take me under thy protection, so that I may finally have the happiness to see and praise thee in thy glory for ever and ever.

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

NINTH DAY

Mary in Heaven, the Help of Christians on Earth

[Preparatory Prayer \(p. 133\).](#)

MEDITATION

MARY'S help as Mother of mercy is not confined to individuals. She is the protectress and helper of the whole Church. All over the earth, wherever we cast our glance, in the records of the history of times long past and those of recent occurrence, we find testimony of the graces and benefits obtained through her intercession. The feasts celebrated by the Church throughout the year, what are they but evidences of gratitude offered to the queen of heaven for the oftentimes miraculous delivery from war, pestilence, and other great afflictions? Hence she is rightly invoked as the "Help of Christians."

PRACTICE

IN OUR days, too, storms and dangers threaten the Church. Let us, therefore, by calling on Mary for help, do our part toward shortening the days of visitation and trial. Let us not confine our petitions to her within the narrow limits of our own personal needs, but let us join in the cry for help ascending to the Mother of mercy throughout all Christendom. Let us daily, for Holy Church, send up our petition to Mary's heavenly throne: "Help of Christians, pray for us!"

[Prayer of the Church \(p. 134\).](#)

[Litany of Loreto \(p. 322\).](#)

Prayer

O GLORIOUS Virgin and Mother of God, Mary, queen of heaven! Forget us not. Thou art the help of Christians; lighten our tribulations, and help us with motherly intercession at the throne of thy divine Son. With Holy Church I join in the petition to thee: "Holy Mary, aid the miserable, assist the desponding, strengthen the weak, pray for the people, plead for the clergy, intercede for the devout female sex. Let all who have recourse to thee experience the efficacy of thy help!"

Hail Mary, etc.

[Ejaculation \(p. 135\).](#)

The Litany of Loreto

In Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary



LORD, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us,
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of virgins, pray for us.
Mother of Christ, pray for us.
Mother of divine grace, pray for us.
Mother most pure, pray for us.
Mother most chaste, pray for us.
Mother inviolate, pray for us.
Mother undefiled, pray for us.
Mother most amiable, pray for us.
Mother most admirable, pray for us.
Mother of good counsel, pray for us.
Mother of our Creator, pray for us.
Mother of our Redeemer, pray for us.
Virgin most prudent, pray for us.
Virgin most venerable, pray for us.
Virgin most renowned, pray for us.
Virgin most powerful, pray for us.
Virgin most merciful, pray for us.
Virgin most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of justice, pray for us.
Seat of wisdom, pray for us.

Cause of our joy, pray for us.
Spiritual vessel, pray for us.
Vessel of honor, pray for us.
Singular vessel of devotion, pray for us.
Mystical rose, pray for us.
Tower of David, pray for us.
Tower of ivory, pray for us.
House of gold, pray for us.
Ark of the covenant, pray for us.
Gate of heaven, pray for us.
Morning star, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.
Refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.
Help of Christians, pray for us.
Queen of angels, pray for us.
Queen of patriarchs, pray for us.
Queen of prophets, pray for us.
Queen of apostles, pray for us.
Queen of martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of confessors, pray for us.
Queen of virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all saints, pray for us.
Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us.
Queen of the most holy rosary, pray for us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us, O Lord.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God:
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

VOUCHSAFE, O Lord, that we may be helped by the merits of Thy most holy Mother's spouse; that what of ourselves we can not obtain may be given us through his intercession. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Indulgence. (1) 300 days, every time. (2) A plenary indulgence on the following five feasts of the Blessed Virgin: Immaculate Conception, Nativity, Purification, Annunciation, and Assumption; under the usual conditions, to all who shall have said it daily during the year. (Pius VII, September 30, 1817.) These indulgences are granted for the litany alone; hence the prayers following it may be omitted.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MARY, THE HELP OF CHRISTIANS ***

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