

Honouring Mary, Mother of God



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Mary, the Mother of God – her life.

May is the month when we traditionally honour Mary, the Mother of God. From Scripture, we learn that she was a strong woman and a loving mother. In addition, numerous legends and customs contribute to our appreciation of Mary. Here, we will explore some of those Scripture passages, legends and customs.

The story of Mary's early life is in four parts, so one can be read for each week of May.

Week 1

Long, long ago, there lived a woman named Anne. She was a good and holy woman who loved God and loved her husband, Joachim. But Anne had one great sadness: she did not have a child.

One day, she was alone, walking in her garden crying, for she so longed for a baby. Then, right before her, an angel appeared! "Anne, your prayers will be answered," the angel said. "You will soon have a daughter, and she will be especially blessed by God. Now, go to the city gate to meet Joachim there."

While Anne was happily hurrying to the gate, Joachim was in the hills praying. Suddenly, an angel appeared before him, too. "Joachim, God knows your sadness at not having a child," the angel told him. "Your prayers have been answered. You will have a daughter. Hurry to the city gates now, where Anne is waiting for you!"

How excited they were when they met and found that the other had seen an angel, too! And how joyful they were when the angels' message came true and a baby girl was born to them. They named her Mary.

Week 2

When Mary turned three years old, Anne and Joachim brought her to the Temple. There they would "present" her to God.

The Temple was built on a hill, and there were 15 steps to climb to go inside. When the family arrived there, Joachim set his tiny daughter down on the bottom step. Happily, and without help, she climbed up all the steps by herself! There the high priest kissed her and said, "Mary, God loves you, and you shall do great things for all people. And forever after, people will know of you and love you."

And the child danced with joy.

Week 3

Now, time had passed, and Mary was old enough to get married. In those days, parents or a priest chose the person a girl was to marry. The high priest, Zechariah, was to decide on Mary's husband. He knew that Mary had



been sent by God for a special reason, so he prayed, asking God to help him make the right choice for Mary.

An angel came to Zechariah and said, “Call all the men that you can choose from, to come to the Temple. Tell each one to bring his walking stick. God will use the sticks to give you the sign of which man can be the husband of Mary.” So all the men arrived with their walking sticks and left them there.

Among the men was a good person named Joseph, who was a carpenter. In the morning, all the walking sticks were still lined up, but one had blossomed during the night with beautiful flowers! Zechariah the high priest knew then that Joseph was the man God had chosen.

Week 4

Before Mary and Joseph lived together as a married couple, Mary was at her home one day when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Mary! God wants you to be the mother of His Son, Jesus.”

Mary said, “I will do what God asks of me.”

And so, God made Mary a mother, and she was expecting Jesus. Soon Joseph took Mary into his home as his wife.

It was near the time for the baby to be born when Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem. Joseph searched for a good place for them to stay, where Jesus could be born. But the town was so crowded; he could only find a stable. And there, the Son of God was born, celebrated by shepherds, angels, and kings.

Because Mary is Jesus’ mother, she is the Mother of God. And because she loves all of God’s children, she is a mother to us all.



Prayers to Our Lady

The Rosary

The word rosary comes from Latin and means a garland of roses, the rose being one of the flowers used to symbolize the Virgin Mary.

The Rosary is a devotion in honor of the Virgin Mary. It consists of a set number of specific prayers. First are the introductory prayers: one Apostles' Creed (*Credo*), one Our Father (the *Pater Noster* or the Lord's Prayer), three Hail Mary's (*Ave's*), one Glory Be (*Gloria Patri*).

The Rosary consists of fifteen decades. Each decade focuses upon a particular mystery in the life of Christ and his Blessed Mother. It is customary to say five decades at a time, while meditating upon one set of mysteries.

The Rosary is not only a mental prayer, but also a vocal prayer in which we meditate on the virtues of the Life, Death, Passion and Glory of Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary.

The rosary owes its origin to St. Dominic.

1. Hold the cross of the Rosary in your right hand and bless yourself with the Cross, saying, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

2. Still holding the Cross, say, The "Apostles' Creed."

3. On the first large bead after the Cross, say the Our Father; On the next three small beads, say the Hail Mary, for the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; after the third Hail Mary, say "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

4. Then announce the first mysteries.

Recite the "Our Father" on the large bead, followed by 10 "Hail Mary's" on the smaller beads, then say, the "Glory Be" for each decade of the Rosary. There are five decades for each Mystery.

The Joyful Mysteries:

(Said on Mondays and Saturdays, the Sundays of Advent, and Sundays from Epiphany until Lent)

1. The Annunciation (Humility)
2. The Visitation (Fraternal Charity)
3. The Nativity (Love of God)
4. The Presentation (Spirit of sacrifice)
5. Finding in the Temple (Zeal)

The Luminous Mysteries (Mysteries of Light):

(Said on Thursdays)

1. The Baptism of the Lord (Sacrament of Baptism)
2. The Wedding of Cana (Fidelity)
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom (Desire for Holiness)
4. The Transfiguration (Spiritual Courage)
5. The Institution of the Eucharist (Love of Our Eucharistic Lord)

The Sorrowful Mysteries:

(Said on Tuesdays, Fridays throughout the year;
and daily from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday)

1. Agony in the Garden (True Repentance)
2. Scourging at the Pillar (Mortification)
3. Crowning with Thorns (Moral Courage)
4. Carrying the Cross (Patience)
5. The Crucifixion (Final Perseverance)

The Glorious Mysteries:

(Said on Wednesdays and the Sundays from Easter until Advent)

1. The Resurrection (Faith)
2. The Ascension (Hope)
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Zeal)
4. The Assumption (Happy Death)
5. The Coronation of B.V.M. (Love for Mary)

The Hail Holy Queen (said after the completion of the five mysteries)

Hail! Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our Hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, O most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement! O loving! O sweet Virgin

Mary!

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

Let Us Pray

O God, whose only begotten Son,
By His life, death and resurrection has purchased for us
The rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that
Meditating upon these mysteries in the most Holy Rosary of
The Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and
Obtain what they promise: through the same Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

For the intentions of the Holy Father, recite one "Our Father," one "Hail Mary,"
and a "Glory Be."

In the name of The Father, and of The Son and of The Holy Ghost. Amen.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, we turn to thee, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother. To thee we come, before thee we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, do not despise our petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer us. Amen.

The Angelus

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. (Hail Mary . . .) Behold the handmaid of the Lord. R. Be it done unto me according to thy word. (Hail Mary ...) And the Word was made flesh. R. And dwelt among us. (Hail Mary ...) 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.

The Magnificat

+ My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy is his name!
His mercy is from age to age
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons forever.

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

Amen.



Chronological list of Feast Days of Mary

January 1 - Solemnity of Mary Mother of God

January 8 - Our Lady of Prompt Succor

February 2 - Presentation of the Lord

February 11- Our Lady of Lourdes

March 25 - Annunciation

The Month of Mary is May.

The Feast of the Immaculate Heart is the Saturday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost.

May 31 - Visitation

June 27 - Our Mother of Perpetual Help

July 16 - Our Lady of Mount Carmel

August 5 - Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major

August 15 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 22 - The Queenship of Mary

September 8 - The Birth of Mary

September 12 - The Most Holy Name of Mary

September 15 - Our Lady of Sorrows

September 24 - Our Lady of Walsingham

October ~ The Month of the Rosary

October 7 - Our Lady of the Rosary

November 21 - Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 8 - Immaculate Conception

December 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 25 – Christmas

1st Sunday after Christmas - Holy Family

The First Saturday of each Month is also dedicated to Marian Devotions.

