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Marian Confirmation Companion

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Totus Tuus, Maria

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St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)

“Our Purpose is to win the world for the Immaculata, and do it as quickly as possible.”

St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938)

“The soul’s true greatness is in loving God and in humbling oneself in his presence, completely forgetting oneself and believing oneself to be nothing, because the Lord is great, but He is well pleased only with the humble, He always opposes the proud.” Blessed Mother to St. Faustina

St. John Paul II (1920-2005)

“Consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother means returning beneath the cross of the Son. It means consecrating this world to the pierced Heart of the Savior, bringing it back to the very source of its redemption.”

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Introduction

Purpose

It's dark out there! Our society and all of our institutions are rapidly losing Judeo-Christian traditions and morals. The pace of the destruction is rapidly increasing, a clear sign of impending catastrophe. The number of Catholics attending Mass weekly, the number that believe in the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, the number getting married in the Church, the number of babies born and baptized and the number of young adults embracing the true faith are all rapidly decreasing. We must strengthen our Confirmation Programs because this Sacrament is the last chance we have to instruct our youth in the true Catholic faith before they leave home and enter the darkness of modern paganism.

How can we turn these trends around? St. Maximilian Kolbe had the answer: ***“We must consecrate the world to the Immaculata and do it as quickly as possible.”*** (1) This book is an attempt to bring St. Maximilian's words back to life once again.

Catholic Confirmation programs have two stages, one conducted in a classroom and the other conducted in a home setting with a Sponsor. In my 20 years of work with High School Youth Ministry and with helping our four children through this process, I have found that the Sponsor usually receives very little guidance on how to mentor their Candidate to make our Catholic Faith come alive through sound devotional habits. This book guides the Confirmation Candidate and Sponsor in learning how to invite our heavenly Mother into this process to connect us with her Divine Son Jesus. Together, we will learn to pray the Rosary, to understand the scriptural truths found in it and to understand the principles of Marian Consecration. We will learn from Mother Mary, with the help of the Holy

Spirit, how to love God above all and love our neighbor as ourselves. In order for the Catholic Faith to come alive and last a lifetime, Mother Mary must become our personal trainer and companion by first teaching us how to love her the way she loves us; and second, how to imitate the love of her Immaculate Heart, the perfect model of the two great Commandments. In this process, the candidate will receive many Divine Graces to prepare for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.

Consecration to Jesus through Mary

When Jesus was instructing his twelve Apostles on the work of a missionary, he said *“whoever receives you receives me. And whoever receives me, receives the one who sent me.”* (Mt. 10:40) He was teaching them a truth that His mother and stepfather, St. Joseph, first experienced before He was born. When St. Joseph took Mary into his home, as the Archangel Gabriel commanded, he received Jesus into his heart and home as well and thus experienced God in a surprisingly new way. We call this **St. Joseph’s Secret Marian Blessing**. He spent his life keeping this a secret because King Herod was seeking to kill Jesus and he was commanded by Archangel Gabriel to protect Jesus and Mary by hiding in Egypt for three years.

During the next 20 weeks as you prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation with your sponsor, we will study the stories of many New Testament saints who also received Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit after they first received Mary in their hearts and/or homes. You can also experience this truth and receive this great blessing which the Church calls Marian Consecration.

Marian Consecration is a traditional Catholic devotion which allows us to set ourselves apart for a holy purpose: that of becoming an instrument in the hands of Mother Mary. Jesus gave Mary to us as our heavenly Mother from the Cross. Consecration to Mary gives her our daily permission to become our personal trainer in living out our Christian lives each day. We become partners with her, bringing to Jesus our soul and that of others.

Consecration to Jesus through Mary allows her perfect maternal love to help us learn to love her and love God. St. Maximilian Kolbe taught us ***“Love the Immaculata! Confide in her and consecrate yourself to her without reservation. Strive to do everything as she herself would do it in your place, especially by loving God as she loves Him.”***

Keeping Our End in Mind

Let’s start with our “end” in mind. God is love, so to become like Him and be with Him forever, we must continuously learn how to love as He loves. This is a tough challenge; who will teach us?

First, moms will! God has ordained that every soul born on earth is immersed in sacrificial motherly love so it can learn how to pass victoriously into the next world, Heaven. As a child, we are first taught by mom to love her and to imitate her great sacrificial love for us. This teaches us the Second Great Commandment “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Our mom is the expert in loving us as herself because we were formed totally within her. At the same time, she also teaches us the First Great Commandment “Love God above all” because Jesus said: *“Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me.”* (Mt. 25:40) Thus, when Mom loves us, she is also loving Jesus. (2)

As we outgrow our willingness to learn from our earthly mom, we must be humble and meek enough to learn from our Heavenly Mom. Mother Mary’s love is the perfect reflection of the two great commandments: She loves Jesus as herself and Jesus is her Lord and Savior. We are given no better role models to instruct us on how to get into heaven than our mom and Mother Mary. God designed this “way” and insists on it; no one is born without a mom being intimately and sacrificially involved!

Eve, the first mom, was created as a “helpmate” for Adam. Her two most important roles were to help Adam bring forth new life and to help their family hold on to eternal life. A good mom fills the second role while she is filling the first. Maybe that’s why Satan first attacked Eve. This may also

be why Satan fears Mother Mary; he fully understands how God is saving our souls through her perfect sacrificial love, for which our Church names her “Maternal Mediation.” (7)

It was for these two critical roles that both Eve and Mary were created without sin—they were God’s perfect handmaidens. Adam and Eve disobeyed, thus falling into sin. In the fullness of time, God sent His only Son as the new Adam through a young virgin, Mary, His New Eve. Mary freely said yes to this plan and thus became a “helpmate” to us all: ***“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done unto me according to your Word.”*** (Lk. 1:38) Mother Mary wants to become our companion and personal trainer to prepare us for the Sacrament of Confirmation. God gave Mary to us as the model of the perfect Christian, so let’s give her our yes, daily. St. Maximilian Kolbe taught: *“If you want to grow in perfection, you cannot advance by yourselves—you need a guide. Hence, when you go to God, go through Mary and with Mary.”* (3)

The Most Holy Rosary

A child learns love through mom’s repeated gentle examples: her persistent, soft-spoken words of love and her tender actions showing love. The child gains knowledge of how to love others from watching and imitating her: her loving gaze, her smile, her tender words and even her songs. As the child listens, he learns how to communicate with her and eventually say his first words. Such joy! Through these patient, repetitive actions, the child gradually learns to imitate her loving heart. Mom’s repetition is critical to learning. Once her child learns how to communicate better, she can teach him even more about her love for him and for other family members. More than anything, she desires to teach him how to love her as much as she loves him; this is the Golden Rule. ***“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”*** (Mt. 7:12)

In the same way that a mother constantly repeats her loving words, and thus teaching her child to speak them back properly, Mary also teaches us how to speak and listen to God in his language: through the repetitive

prayer of the Rosary. She teaches her children to communicate with God through the words and the meditations of the scriptural mysteries. The Rosary has been called “the compendium of the entire Gospel” by Pope Pius XII. (4) The twenty mysteries take us through the first four books of the New Testament in chronological order, allowing us to contemplate the life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph from the perspective of the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Reciting the Hail Mary (also known in scripture as the angelic salutation) ten times for each mystery keeps us focused in prayer, just as a rhythm carries us along in a song. This succession of Hail Mary prayers has been called an “unceasing praise of Christ.” (4) Mother Mary is teaching us how to love Jesus the way she loves Him through her tender Immaculate Heart. Pondering the Rosary mysteries also teaches us to love Mary the way the Father, Son and Holy Spirit loved her.

Centuries ago, Mary miraculously gave this rosary prayer to St. Dominic and St. Simon Stock in Marian apparitions. She told St. Dominic he could not convert souls without it. She continued to affirm this in many other apparitions throughout time, repeatedly asking us to pray it. The Saints have recited it and taught the Rosary to those they cared for. Once we learn to pray it properly, we will pray it for a lifetime as a loving gift to our Mother Mary. She loves it and she needs our rosaries to convert her many lost children.

St. John Paul II said there is nothing more powerful than combining prayer with sacrifice. *“Prayer joined to sacrifice is the most potent force in Human History.”* (5) This is really the biggest reason why Mary gave us the rosary. After the Mass, which is also prayer combined with Our Lord’s sacrifice, the rosary is the most powerful prayer we can pray.

As we pray the Rosary, we can often be very distracted with random thoughts and find ourselves fighting continuously to bring our minds back to the words we are saying or the mysteries we are pondering. Some liken it to walking the gauntlet. When we are finished with the rosary, we can say, with St. Paul, ***“I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”*** (2 Tim. 4:7)

Over the next 20 weeks, we ask you to make the sacrifice of praying at least one decade of the Rosary aloud each day with your Confirmation Sponsor and/or family. Pray that you will be open to the Holy Spirit as you prepare for Confirmation. Praying it with another strengthens our dedication and faithfulness and keeps us all accountable. If you cannot get together face-to-face with your sponsor, the rosary and meditation can be prayed aloud together using electronic media such as a cell phone or computer. Make it a daily habit as a concrete sign of your love for Mary and you will experience powerful graces from this prayer on your Confirmation day. “What graces will I experience?” you might ask. Read the 15 Promises to Those Who Pray the Rosary in the appendix.

St. Joseph’s Secret Marian Blessing

St. Joseph displayed great confidence and trust in God by his prompt acceptance of God’s will! In a dream, the Archangel Gabriel directed him to take Mary and the unborn Jesus into his home. This act shows great strength, love and character towards God and Mary. Joseph received, in return, a wonderful companion & helpmate in his spiritual journey through life and into heaven. After Mary came into his heart and home, St. Joseph personally met God in a surprisingly new way—as a divine infant son! Emmanuel! God is with us!

What wonder he experienced at the birth of the Son of God! Traveling a hundred miles to Bethlehem, the guidance of a miraculous star, the birth in a cave used for cattle shelter, the welcome party of poor shepherds and the three Magi—heavenly confirmations of who this child truly is. He must have been in such awe of all that transpired. He then showed great courage and strength once again as he obeyed after being told by the Archangel to leave everything and take Jesus and Mary to Egypt because King Herod was seeking to kill their child. In Egypt, he built a new life for his family as an immigrant carpenter. After three years, the angel told him that it was safe to return home. He raised Jesus with love; he guided, protected and provided for him through the years. It is

likely that after hiding the family from Herod for three years, St. Joseph was careful the rest of his life to keep the Divine identity of his child a secret.

Although St. Joseph's story is told in scripture, none of his words are recorded. However, he held this great secret in his heart. He took Mary into his heart and home and was never the same. St. Joseph's Secret Marian Blessing can be expressed in a universal way that applies to each of us: ***After taking Mary into his heart and home, he met God in a surprisingly new way.*** His experience was confirmed later by Jesus himself teaching His apostles: ***“Whoever receives you receives me. And whoever receives me, receives the one who sent me.”*** (Mt. 10:40) Thus, when Joseph received Mary, he received Jesus.

How does this apply to us today? St. Joseph's experience as Mary's husband closely parallels that of new husbands throughout time, even though both he and Mary were sexually chaste their entire lives. A new husband, after taking his new bride into his heart and home, discovers the presence of God when he beholds the face of his newborn child. ***“Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness.”*** (Gn. 1:26) In ancient times, the exact time of birth was always a surprise, as was the gender of the child. The new dad looks into the face of his child and concedes to himself, “I did not fashion this child with my hands.” His wife agrees that this child was not made with her hands either, for he is a miraculous gift to them from God himself, just as Eve declared after her first child: ***“I made a man with the help of God.”*** (Gn. 4:1). God has visited their home and life will never be the same. This child will bring incredible amounts of new experiences, new hope, new joy and new love to the couple for years to come—all because a new husband took his new wife into his heart and home and sincerely loved her with his whole self. Reflect on this scripture passage about the coming Messiah and ponder its universal meaning: ***“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means God-with-us).”*** (Mt. 1:23)

Over these next twenty weeks, we will explore New Testament scriptures that reveal many other examples of those who experienced **St. Joseph's Secret Marian Blessing** after they received Mary into their heart and home. Some of them include St. Elizabeth, her child St. John the Baptist and her husband Zechariah; the shepherds at Bethlehem; the Magi; Simeon and Anna in their Temple home; the wedding party at Cana; Mary of Bethany, her sister Martha and her brother Lazarus; St. Mary Magdalene; Mary the sister of Mother Mary; the two disciples journeying to Emmaus; and the apostles. Jesus appeared to them at the Last Supper as the Eucharistic Bread and wine, on Easter Morning as the Resurrected Lord and on Pentecost Sunday as the wind and flames of the Holy Spirit. Peter, James and John also met God the Father in a cloud on a mountaintop and saw Jesus transformed, shining like the sun during His Transfiguration. Those Apostles who were with John the Baptist at the beginning saw Jesus rise out of the water after His baptism in the Jordan when the heavens opened; a dove appeared, and God's voice was heard. St. Veronica and those gathered with Mary beneath the cross on Good Friday sadly saw Him disfigured beyond recognition. We can truly say that for all these who received Mary into their hearts and homes, ***"The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among them."*** (Jn. 1:14) This is exactly what happened to Mary herself when she welcomed the Archangel Gabriel into her home and heart and said yes to God's messenger.

Saint Joseph would like each of us to experience this great surprise blessing from his spouse, I believe, by asking us to invite her into our heart and home as he did. This great Marian blessing may take various forms, but it is always an unexpected surprise, and always brings new divine life from heaven. It is why her greatest title is "Mary, Mother of God," who through this virtue of domestic hospitality, brings God, whom she bears in her heart, into all her human loving relationships. Universally, mothers always bring new life into the homes and hearts of every loving family—this is what moms do!

We should all look to St. Joseph to help guide us and protect us on our journey to personally know his spouse Mary and his son Jesus.

Finally, when we do experience God in a surprisingly new way, St. Joseph doesn't want us to keep it a secret! If we don't share our personal stories, they will never be told. Share your new experience with your friends and family—it is good news! Emmanuel! As you prepare for Confirmation, pray daily to receive this great surprise blessing:

St. Joseph, at the command of the Archangel Gabriel, you invited Mary into your heart and home. You soon discovered God in a surprisingly new way—as your newborn infant son Jesus. I wish to invite Mary into my heart and home. Show me how to love her as you did so I too will experience God anew in my life. Finally, protect me and my family from all evil as you protected your Holy Family. Amen.

The Natural and Spiritual Logic of Marian Consecration

- A mother is naturally an expert in loving her infant as herself because her child is, in many ways, herself! Her child was totally formed within her. No other person on earth has this unique, personal love relationship with her child. Thus, within the family, a mother is the most expert teacher of the second great commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- A mother is naturally an expert in loving her infant with her whole heart, whole soul and whole mind because her child is not only formed wholly within her but she has developed a unity of hearts with her child for nine long months before birth. Mom's whole body is fully engaged for nine months in developing this child, including her whole mind and whole soul. A careful observer of a mother loving her new infant can discern that she truly loves her child with her whole heart, whole soul, whole mind and whole strength. If you ask a new mother

if she loves her child with her whole being, she will say, “Absolutely!” Jesus taught: ***Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.*** (Mk. 9:37) Thus, within the family, a mother is the most expert teacher of the first great commandment: ***“You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole mind and your whole strength.”*** (Mk. 12:30)

- Jesus taught us the importance of these two great commandments: ***“The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”*** (Mt. 22:40) To the young man who asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” he said, ***“Do this and you will live.”*** (Lk. 10:28) Thus, a mother has a unique gift: being granted the charism to help each member of her family into eternal life. Mom can authentically quote to each child Jesus’ new commandment: ***“I give you a new commandment, love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”*** (Jn. 13:34) Our Catholic Catechism says, “This new commandment summarizes all the others and expresses His entire will.” (6, #2822)
- It follows from this reflection on motherhood that God’s original purpose for creating Eve as a “helpmate” for Adam was at least twofold: to help Adam bring forth new life on earth (teaching the family to love neighbor as self) and to model the love of God above all else. St. John Paul II said that “men need women’s help to be brought back into personal relationships in order to progress toward the union of hearts.” (7) This is confirmed by scripture when Jesus gives us, with His dying breath, His Mother as our mother. In the same way, Mary’s purpose as the New Eve is to teach us the two great commandments so that we may gain eternal life. Thus, God has willed that every person born come through this baptism of sacrificial motherly love, mercy, truth and beauty to teach each soul how to live in grace and make it back into heaven. God wants to ensure that each soul coming into our world

makes it back to their true home and their true Creator. Satan knows this and hates this!

- The evil one knows this plan and thus targets every one of his attacks on motherhood, as pictured by the red dragon of the Book of Revelation waiting to devour her child upon birth. (Rev. 12:1-6) Look at every social evil our Church has denounced and see that each is an attack on motherhood, fatherhood and this process for bringing souls into heaven through the family. It seems that God placed these two great commandments into the hearts of mothers, and most perfectly into the heart of His Mother Mary. Thus, when we invite Mary into our heart and home daily and learn from her how to love God and neighbor, we are ensuring our chances of going to Heaven to live with our Father forever.
- The essence of **Marian Consecration** is to give Mary permission each day to be what God intended her to be: our spiritual mother. This requires great humility and love, a stumbling block to most. Consecration allows us to form a unity of hearts with Mary as any mother naturally does with each of her children. Mom's unity of heart with her child is clearly seen in her holding her child so close to her heart for many years after birth. Mom is imprinting her unity of heart physically to her child's whole self for all of the family to see. Do we not learn how to love tenderly by watching Mom love her children?
- St. Teresa of Calcutta's version of Marian Consecration focuses on this exchange of hearts: we give Mary our heart, and she gives us her Immaculate Heart. Mother Teresa expresses this by two very simple prayers: "Mary, lend me your heart" and "Mary, keep me in your most pure heart." The saint taught us in her **List of Duties** (see appendix) that we all have the right to enter into Mary's heart, to share in her interior life. (1)
- Since the Lord is always "with her", when we join hearts with Mary we experience Our Lord's Divine Sacred Heart. Jesus also promises

us, ***“When two or more are gathered in my name there I am in their midst.”*** (Mt. 18:20) If God the Father chose her to be mother of His son Jesus, and if Jesus offered her to us as our mother from the cross, then we should graciously receive this wonderful gift that leads to more of God’s presence in our life. (9)

Consecration to Jesus through Mary: Our 20 Week Plan

This plan is not meant to take the place of a parish-based Sacramental Confirmation program but to augment it. In this program, you and your Sponsor are asked to spend one week on each of the twenty mysteries of the Rosary, reciting at least one decade each day aloud with your Sponsor and/or family. If you cannot meet face-to-face, meet virtually by phone or computer. You will meditate once each week on one Rosary mystery and one commandment and discuss the suggested question with your Sponsor. In addition, each week we will introduce a Principle of Marian Consecration for reflection. The “First” principle has already been discussed in this introduction; it is ***Emmanuel, God is with us.*** We say it in every Hail Mary when we say, *“The Lord is with you.”* You are also asked to consecrate yourselves to Jesus through Mary daily using four different consecration prayers for each of the four sets of Mysteries. This will immediately give Mary permission to start to develop a personal relationship with you through the Holy Spirit. Mother Mary will fully prepare the sincere Candidate and Sponsor to open up to their Sacramental Confirmation graces and to experience the Holy Spirit in surprising new ways. This will enable you to be successful in living a vibrant and mature Catholic Christian life.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Before we begin this Journey, let us renew our Baptismal Promises and remind ourselves and Jesus that we have contrite and repentant hearts. (See Appendix) This gives permission to Jesus to pour out his great mercy on us. We will do

this with the Bishop at Confirmation; but let's prepare starting today by making this renewal. Mary will be very pleased with us and will help us mean what we promise.

First Pledge

Let each of us make the pledge below to give our whole heart to Mother Mary and to be obedient to the daily sacrificial discipline of this process to prepare for our Confirmation. Sign your book and date it, it is a pledge to Mary and yourself.

I, _____ pledge to you Mother Mary that I will faithfully study each lesson and pray at least one decade of your Most Holy Rosary aloud each day over the next 5 weeks with my Sponsor and/or family members. I ask you, Mother, to teach me how to love you the way you love me. I desire to learn with your help how to love God and neighbor according to His Divine Will. I pray this in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____
and by Sponsor _____**

Notes:

Week 1

Annunciation

The Angel Gabriel Appears to Mary to ask her to be the
Mother of God

Fruit of the Spirit: Humility (10)

Scripture: *In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to*

me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (Lk. 1:26-38)

Reflection: Say yes to God! The Angel asked, and Mary heard and believed the Word of God and freely invited Jesus into her heart and home. Later in life Jesus will teach his apostles: “Whoever receives you, receives me.” (Mt. 10:40) Mary received the visitation of the Archangel into her house and received the Word of God spoken to her. Immediately, Jesus was conceived in her womb! God the Father loves her so much, and she responded to His love by receiving Him into her heart with joy. Mary trusted God to guide her, and God trusted Mary and Joseph with His Son, Jesus. We must trust God as well. When we invite Mary into our heart and home at the start of our Confirmation journey, she brings Jesus with her, for the Lord is always “with her”; they are already united in heart. He is called “Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us”.

Even though Mary was betrothed to Joseph, which is an engagement time before living together, the Church teaches us she had taken a vow to remain a virgin her whole life. We call her Mary, Ever-Virgin. (7) The Church also teaches us that she was free from original sin since the day she was conceived in her mother’s womb. Joseph agreed to receive her as his wife and guard her, her Son and her purity. This was a very chaste and holy marriage and Mary was thus free to give herself totally to her son Jesus and His mission. Mary had no other children. Jesus would not have given Mary to the guardianship of Apostle John at the cross if there had been brothers of Jesus to care for her. (The “Brothers of Jesus” quoted in scripture were actually cousins.) (7) Despite the fact that He is her son, Jesus is still her Savior.

St. John Paul II explains how surprising the choice of Mary was. “God’s action certainly seems surprising. Mary has no human claim to receiving the announcement of the Messiah’s coming. She is not the High Priest, official representative of the Hebrew religion, nor even a man, but a young woman without any influence in the society of her time.” (7) The surprising nature of the Holy Spirit is a clear sign of Divine Love which we will speak about in many of the next nineteen chapters.

Consecration Principle: Invite Mary into your heart and home. Ask the Holy Spirit to send her.

Ask St. Joseph to pray for you to receive your own St. Joseph Secret Marian Blessing. After he invited Mary into his heart and home at the instruction of the Archangel, he soon met God in a surprisingly new way—as an infant son! Not in the Temple nor on a mountain, but in their own home. Love Mary as the Father does and trust in Him to reveal His Son to your heart within your own heart and home. Mary said yes to God’s invitation when she said, “Let it be done to me,” and it started her on an incredible and surprising journey in life. We must say yes to God as well during our Confirmation preparation. Mary will help us say yes and will walk with us as our personal trainer and companion if we ask her to! Keep in mind Jesus’ promise to His Apostles: “Whoever receives you receives me. And whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.” (Mt. 10:40) When we receive Mary, we receive Jesus.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “For it must be recognized that before anyone else it was God himself, the Eternal Father, who entrusted himself to the Virgin of Nazareth, giving her His own Son in the mystery of the incarnation.” (9)
2. **St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622)** “You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working, and just so you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves.” (11)
3. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “The Holy Rosary introduces us into the very heart of faith. With our thought fixed on it, we greet repeatedly, joyfully, the holy Mother of God; declare blessed the Son, the sweet fruit of her womb; and invoke her motherly protection in life and in death.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Mary shows great trust in God; Divine Grace magnified her faith to assist her. God loves her humility, which is the most important virtue after love and trust. His Son will learn it from Mary and St. Joseph.

Commandment of the week: *“He (Jesus) said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment.’”* (Mt. 22:37-38). We will look deeper into this First Commandment in week three. The first three Commandments focus on love of God, the last seven focus on love of neighbor. Jesus teaches us that the whole law, therefore, is based on these two. (13) As a child, we learn love of neighbor first from our parents; later in life, we learn about love of God. Before we seek help from any neighbor, we should first pray for help from God. Then, when our neighbor succeeds in helping us, we might just recognize the hand of God in our neighbor. ***Mary, please teach us how to obey this commandment always.***

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: In Scripture, Jesus teaches us: *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”* (Mt. 7:7) Have you ever experienced this truth after praying for something in your life?

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Pray the traditional Morning Offering below:

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father.” Amen. (44)

Notes:

Week 2

Visitation

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth who is also pregnant

Fruit of the Spirit: Love of Neighbor (10)

Scripture: *Mary Visits Elizabeth.*

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Canticle of Mary.

*And Mary said:**

*"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God, my savior.*

*For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.*

*The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

His mercy is from age to age

*to those who fear him.
He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things;
the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
according to his promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever”.*

Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.” (Lk. 1:39-56)

Reflection: Be proactive in loving your neighbor! Mary began her vocational journey immediately, making her Son known and sharing Him, first to St. Elizabeth. This is the first of four journeys toward Jerusalem described in the Joyful mysteries where she will eventually offer her Son to the Father on His cross. Whenever God calls us, He then sends us toward our destiny and toward our eternal reward. Mary offered her sacrificial love by traveling nearly 100 miles and spending three months performing works of mercy toward her elderly cousin who was in need. The first step to seeing God work miracles in our life is to love our neighbor sacrificially through deeds of mercy. (14) The scripture says she went “in haste.” Mary is eager to serve and do works of mercy. She is eager to be of assistance to an elderly cousin. But she also undoubtedly wants to share her good news, her new love, and allow others to love her child, yet unborn, as much as she loves Him; this is a natural tendency of mothers.

In this scripture, Elizabeth welcomed Mary into her home and heart and suddenly met God in surprisingly new ways. Her unborn son leaped for joy in her womb as the Holy Spirit entered her and John’s heart. She received the secret Marian blessing St. Joseph experienced as described in the Introduction. With much joy, she felt the coming of the Holy Spirit in her heart and used the gifts of the Holy Spirit to proclaim

the unborn Jesus as her Lord. John the Baptist, in turn, confirmed the presence of the unborn Christ by leaping within his mom's womb. Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, a High Priest, also experienced St. Joseph's secret blessing after John the Baptist was born. Zechariah was miraculously healed of his inability to speak while Jesus was still within Mary's womb! We see Mary here acting as a minister of the Holy Spirit, not only for Elizabeth but also for the unborn John the Baptist and her husband Zechariah. ***We might think of John as Mary's disciple as they both have a ministry of preparing the way of the Lord by calling souls to repentance.*** (Is. 40:3) ***Perhaps she gave John his first bath-the first infant baptism? "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!"*** (Ps.51:2)

John the Baptist became a great Saint and Martyr for Jesus. Jesus said of John: ***"Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist."*** (Mt. 11:11) John eventually prepared many of Jesus's apostles to follow Him for the rest of their lives and even to die for Him.

During this three-month visitation, Mary and St. Elizabeth spend time in prayer together pondering these miraculous signs from heaven. When God the Holy Spirit enters your life in a surprising new way, He often gives you a personal prayer partner. He will lead you to one; and of course, your sponsor and parents will pray with you and for you as well. When mothers like Mary and Elizabeth gather together to pray for their children, they are spiritually powerful as they are following Jesus' directions to the weeping women he met on the way to the cross. ***"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children."***

Consecration Principle: First thing in the morning, give each day's prayers, works, joys, and sufferings as a gift to Jesus through Mary. Invite Mary to help you as she helped St. Elizabeth. Example: Pray the Morning Offering below.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)** “Happy are those to whom the Holy Spirit reveals the secret of Mary in order that they may come to know her.” (3)
2. **St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)** “Blessed are they, says the Divine Mother, who pay attention to my charity and in imitation of me, practice it toward others. Our charity toward our neighbor will be the measure of that which God and Mary will show us.” (3)
3. **Pope Benedict XVI (1927-)** “Through the Rosary we allow ourselves to be guided by Mary, the model of faith, in meditating on the mysteries of Christ. Day after day, she helps us assimilate the Gospel, so that it gives a form to our life.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: A three-month act of mercy exemplified Mary’s charity, love and compassion. It also taught her useful knowledge about what to do when giving birth. God is within Mary, and she is giving His Love within her to her neighbor. Jesus appeared to St. Maria Faustina and insisted that we do acts of mercy. *“I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it.”* (42)

Commandment of the week: The second [Great Commandment] is: ***“You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”*** (Mt. 22: 39-40) In the introduction and in week one, we said that Jesus taught the two “great commandments” which summarize the whole Law and the Prophets. The saints and the Church also teach us that Mary is the most perfect model in living out these two great commandments. Thus, the Law and the Prophets of old are a manifestation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This means that our Faith was not made up by men of old, but by God who created both man and woman. It was God the Father who decided that our faith would be based upon the heart of a mother. This

is an incredible revelation, but it is clearly true, as we discussed in the Introduction under the Natural and Spiritual logic of Marian Consecration. This magnificent design is God's way of ensuring that every child born gets a thorough training from Mom's sacrificial love on how to get into heaven for all eternity.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: John's leaping in his mother's womb in response to the unborn Jesus in Mary's womb is a sign to all that life begins at conception and that all the innocent unborn are truly persons and need to be protected from the evil of abortion. What can you do to promote respect for life?

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Pray the Morning Offering below.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Amen. (44)

Notes:

Week 3

The Birth of Jesus

Fruit of the Spirit: Poverty in Spirit (10)

Scripture: So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

The Visit of the Shepherds. *When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. (Lk. 2:3-20)*

**first-born: a legal term linked with a son’s social standing and rights of inheritance. (Dt. 21:15-17) It does not imply that Mary had other children after Jesus, only that she had none before him. (6,#500)*

Reflection: When you invite someone into your home, back up and make a “space” for them to enter (17). God started the Old Covenant with a family; He is now starting a New Covenant with a new family: The Holy Family. This family is the model and the definition of genuine family—one that works together with God’s help to become saints and live with Him eternally. Thus, the family was not only created by God to bring forth new life, but also as a means of salvation for all souls within it. We are to learn within the family how to get into heaven.

This birth was announced by the prophet Isaiah 740 years prior. (Is. 7:14) According to Bishop Fulton Sheen, no other world religious leader was pre-announced. (21) This event didn’t happen in a Temple or on a mountaintop—it happened in a cave in King David’s hometown. (7) The name Bethlehem means “House of Bread,” and so this child sleeping in a cattle feed trough became the bread of life, the new manna from heaven. God is always with us, in the family and in the home—even if this home is a smelly cave with dirt floor. Invite God into your heart and home, as

Joseph did when he took Mary into his home. This was the night Joseph met God in a surprisingly new way, as an infant and a son—and yet, the Lord God! The shepherds were welcomed into Mary’s heart and humble abode, and they also met The Lamb of God in a surprisingly new way after heeding the angels. Later, the wise men were welcomed into her heart and home and they too discovered God in a surprisingly new way: an infant that was a Divine King! Whether you are poor or rich, wise or ignorant, live in a castle or outside on a hillside under the stars, God will come to meet you in a new and unexpected way. Just ask Mary and Joseph!

This town is Bethlehem, King David’s hometown (the king who started as a shepherd boy). He became the King who danced before the Ark of the Covenant (a symbol of Mary) to welcome it into Jerusalem during his reign. How painful it must have been for King David to see the rejection of the Holy Family by his own kinsmen who had no room for them in their hearts and homes. ***“He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.”*** (Jn. 1:11) (41) So God sent His Angels to humble shepherds to send them as ambassadors from King David to welcome the Holy Family. Make a “space” in your heart and home this Advent for Him to fill up with Himself. After all, that is what the Virgin Mary did. She took a vow of virginity, thus making an “empty space” in her womb, and God filled it up with Himself in a surprisingly new way! What Joy!

Consecration Principle: Imitate Mary’s virtue of hospitality. The secret Marian Blessing that St. Joseph experienced daily was actually Mary’s Charism of Hospitality. The Lord is with her and within her and she always gives the Lord away to all her visitors, especially those who welcome or receive her. Hospitality is a virtue as it is a loving human act, performed to benefit a visitor, that is perfected by divine grace. Hospitality is what Abraham gave to the three angels that visited him while he was in his tent at Mamre. (Gn. 18:1-10) In turn, these visitors promised that Sarah—90 years old at the time—would miraculously have a son when they returned a year later, and she did! If we are consecrated to Mary, we should always show

hospitality and let Mary's graces help us. Those to whom we show this hospitality may just see God in an unexpected way because of our good faith efforts. *"Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels."* (Hebrews 13:2) St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us, "We ought to be hospitable because it gives us the opportunity to minister God's Grace to others, to share the Gospel truth, to impart mercies and kindnesses from the heart of God to others, so that they might know that there is a God in Heaven who loves them and longs for their salvation." (18) What a beautiful description of all virtue! Remember, Jesus later taught his apostles: *"Whoever receives you, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives not me, but the one who sent me"* (Mt. 10:40)

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** "Will we also take Mary to our home? In fact, we must give her the full title of the home of our life, of our faith, of our affections, of our work. We should recognize the maternal role that is properly hers, her function as guide, as one who admonishes and exhorts, or even that of a silent presence...to inspire strength and courage." (19)
2. **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)** "O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of Mercy to you." (20)
3. **Pope John Paul I (1912-1978)** "The rosary, a simple and easy prayer, helps me to be a child." (12)

Virtue Highlight: Mary and St. Joseph show great patience and perseverance in seeking shelter. Imagine how uncomfortable she must have been on that donkey! They offered hospitality to the visiting shepherds and the three kings, despite their humble surroundings.

Commandment of the week: The First Commandment given to Moses begins: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the*

land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other (false) gods beside me.” (Ex. 20:1-3) What are false gods? Any person, place or thing that we make more important to us than God. When we turn to our neighbor instead of turning to God, we risk making our neighbor into a false God. Go to God first, then to a friend so you can see how God works through your friend to help you both. St. Thomas Aquinas warns us of the great burden imposed by service to the devil: **“Whosoever sins shall be a slave of sin.”** (Jn. 8:34) "It is, therefore, not easy for one to escape from the habit of sin." (13)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: During Advent or Lent, have you ever given up something you like as a prayer offering to God? This practice goes all the way back to Adam and Eve’s children, Cain and Abel, as they each offered sacrifices to God from the work of their hands. (Gn. 4:3-7) Have you discovered that when you do this, God always fills that “empty space” with something even better? Share with your sponsor or family one such experience and discuss. Jesus and Mary are never outdone in generosity!

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Pray the Morning Offering:

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen. (44)

Notes:

Week 4

Presentation in the Temple

Fruit of the Spirit: Obedience (10)

Scripture: When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and

you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. (Lk. 2:22-38)

Reflection: To be consecrated to the Lord is to be set aside for God’s sacred purpose. While Mary and Joseph each had already consecrated themselves to God prior to being visited by an angel, now they consecrate Jesus to God in the Temple. In the Gospel of John, Jesus consecrates himself for each of us so we may be consecrated in the truth. **“And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in the truth.”** (Jn. 17:9) As a result of our Baptism and Confirmation, we are consecrated to God in the truth through the Holy Spirit. Give Mary permission to prepare you properly for this great new day as she is our personal trainer and perpetual helper.

Following the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus into Simeon and Anna’s “home”: the Temple in Jerusalem. Simeon is a prophet who has been seeking the Messiah in his own life and today he suddenly found Him in a surprising new way: as an infant in the Temple! He proclaims prophetically that Jesus is the Messiah Israel is awaiting and praises God for Him. He also prophesies that Mary will share in the sufferings of her son. How many mothers were present on Calvary watching their sons be crucified? Every mother willingly suffers with and for their children, yet this universal truth is, on this day, acknowledged and proclaimed in the Temple of God. In the past, suffering was considered useless and a sign of God’s wrath for personal or familial sin. By joining her own suffering to her Son’s sacrifice on the cross, Mary made suffering a salvific and pleasing sacrificial gift to God; Simeon acknowledged Mary’s cooperation in the

work of salvation and proclaimed that “the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (7)

Anna was a prophetess, who had also spent every moment of her old age in her Temple “home,” and along with Simeon, she confirms this child’s great destiny. Imagine her surprise upon meeting God as a tiny infant! As a woman, she was not permitted to get as close to the Holy of Holies section of the Temple as the men could. This day, she goes from worshipping God in the cold stone Temple from a distance with hundreds of other worshippers to delighting in God up close and in person as a tiny baby in His mother’s arms. From worshipping a God she has been taught to fear, to playing with a God she has absolutely no fear of; who is afraid of an infant? This is truly a paradigm shift! She is so moved by this experience that she tells everyone she meets about the Savior’s arrival. What an Evangelist!

God uses prophets, our Confirmation sponsors, and our parents to teach us and to alert us to our eternal dignity and destiny with Him. Simeon and Anna both welcomed Mary into their heart and temple “home” and on this day they each meet God in an unexpected way. Both had to wait for it for many years. The longer one waits, the more joyous the fulfillment. They both received the blessing St. Joseph received. Anna’s behavior is a reminder of the Samaritan woman at the well giving our Lord a drink of water. (Jn. 4:4-42) Their charism was one of social conversation focused toward spreading the good news of God’s blessings within their lives. They received Jesus in their heart and immediately shared what they received with everyone they met. This brought about many conversions and moved others to follow Christ. These women are actually imitating Mary as she brought the good news to St. Elizabeth. This is the beginning of a worldwide evangelical tradition that billions of Christian women have practiced throughout history: bringing the good news of the Gospel to their families, communities and churches.

A natural tendency grandparents can discern in the mothers of their grandchildren is the desire to tell the world about their new child and show him or her off to all. They truly desire that all would love their child as

much as they do. They are natural evangelists! This is exactly what Mary desired to do with baby Jesus. However, as St. Joseph was warned by an Angel of those who wished to kill their child, he would have balanced Mary's zeal with prudence, especially when they lived undercover in Egypt. It is reasonable to conclude that he would have kept very quiet about who this child truly was. *St. Joseph, protect our families!*

Consecration Principle: Consecrate yourself and your family totally to God in imitation of Mary and Joseph's presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Simeon and Anna received Mary and so received the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It is clear that the Holy Spirit led Simeon to that meeting: "He came in the Spirit into the temple," and the same with Anna: "And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." Both had been waiting on the Lord. Both were led to that chance meeting. Both met Jesus and experienced the Holy Spirit. Both spread the good news that their long wait finally has ended joyfully. *"They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles' wings. They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint."* (Is. 40:31)

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Bernadette** (1844-1879) "O my Mother let it be done to me! Let Life be done to me! Let suffering be done to me! Let even death be done to me, O Mother, as long as I remain united with your Immaculate Heart! (3)
2. **St. John Paul II** (1920-2005) "How could one possibly contemplate the mystery of the Child in Bethlehem, in the Joyful mysteries, without experiencing the desire to welcome, defend and promote life, and to shoulder the burdens of suffering children all over the world?" (22)
3. **St. Maximilian Kolbe** (1894-1941) "I renounce all the distractions I may have during this rosary which I wish to say

with modesty, attention and devotion just as if it were to be the last of my life.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Obedience to this tradition of purification, despite the 100 mile distance, required great faith and faithfulness. We must offer our family up to God.

Commandment of the week: The Second Commandment: *“You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.”* (Dt. 5:11) “The Second commandment forbids the abuse of God’s name, i.e. every improper use of the names of God, Jesus Christ, but also of the Virgin Mary and all the saints. (6,#2146) The speaking and writing of God’s name must always be done with humility, love and respect.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: How often do you hear others take the Lord’s name in vain? How often do you to take God’s name in vain? Ask St. Joseph for help to obey this commandment, for we will be held accountable at our judgement.

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Pray the Morning Offering:

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen. (44)

Notes:

Week 5

Finding Jesus in the Temple

Fruit of the Spirit: Joy (10)

Scripture: *“Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting amid the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.’ And he said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house? But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.” (Lk. 2:41-52)*

Reflection: When we lose Jesus’s presence, we should seek him until we find him, retracing our steps to discover where we lost him. Jesus wants to follow us home, not to be left in the Temple. *“He returned to Nazareth*

with them and continued to grow in stature and wisdom". Emmanuel, God is with us. The scripture says: ***"When his parents saw Him, they were astonished."*** Do you think they saw Him in a surprisingly new way?

Jesus was inspired by the Holy Spirit to stay in the Temple for three days and he obeyed. He was of the age when young men who felt called to the work of a Jewish scribe or a priest left home and lived in the Temple to study under the religious teachers. Jesus may have been too poor to join the priestly class, but clearly he was wise enough based on the amazement of the teachers in response to his questions and answers. He was being tested by them to see if he measured up. The priestly leaders were meeting God in a surprisingly new way, but they did not see it, so they missed the hour of their visitation! They will regret that in eternity. Stay Awake!

God the Father had a different plan. Jesus chose to come home and live in His domestic home with Mary and Joseph, not in a Temple. Never again would seekers of God have to climb a mountain or travel days in a caravan to find Him. No, God is with us, even in our homes and hearts just as He lived in a tent with the Israelites and Moses. He wants to live among His people, and in our hearts.

God also wanted Mary to walk this pilgrimage of life alongside Jesus to give him spiritual support and to be of motherly help to Him and all members of his disciples in the young Christian community. Thus, they would do this mission of salvation together, rather than have Jesus separate from Mary and carry on without her at the Temple School. These three days without Jesus is a prophetic sign of his future death and resurrection. His Mother, after losing the son she knew so well, re-discovered God in an unexpected way. God chose to come back home with her, to live at home in the Domestic Church. We must imitate the Holy Family within our own family.

A new chapter opens for Mary, a new journey. God is still with her and within her as the Holy Spirit. She will soon lose Joseph and will need Jesus more than ever. For St. Joseph, this is the last we will hear of him in the Gospels, but his "Secret Marian Blessing" lives on forever. St. Joseph and

Mary had to keep Jesus' identity a secret until he was old enough to go into ministry. Remember, King Herod tried to kill him as an infant and his sons were still in power!

The boy Jesus is learning a key Marian consecration principle: Mary wants to walk with Him and be an intimate part of His entire life journey. The same is true for us—is our mom ever done with us? Likewise, our Heavenly mother is never done with us! ***“I have chosen and consecrated this house, says the Lord, that my name may be there forever.”*** (2 Chr. 7:16)

Consecration Principle: Mothers are never finished with us! Mary and Jesus are always united in Heart, so if we join our heart with Mary, we are automatically one with Jesus. *Emmanuel, God is with us!* (23)

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)** “The Blessed Virgin Mary was the nearest possible to Christ, for it was from her that He received His human nature. Therefore, she must have obtained a greater plenitude of grace from Him than all others. (3)
2. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “Prayer, joined to sacrifice is the most potent force in Human History.” (5)
3. **St. Joseph Maria Escriva (1902-1975)** “Pause for a few seconds, three or four, in silent meditation to consider each mystery of the rosary before you recite the Our Fathers and the Hail Marys of that decade. I am sure this practice will increase your recollection and the fruits of your prayer.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus's obedience to His Father is a higher priority than his parents' fears. This required trust and courage, especially at His age. As Jesus matures, His parents must, with humility, prophesy the words of St. John the Baptist: ***“He must increase while I must decrease.”*** (Jn. 1:29)

Commandment of the week: The Third Commandment: ***“Observe the Sabbath day—keep it holy, as the LORD, your God,***

commanded you. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord, your God.” (Dt. 5:12-14) St. Thomas Aquinas would have us consider things to do and things to avoid on Sundays. Things we can do are celebrate the sacrifice of the Mass, listen to God’s word and do works of mercy for those less fortunate. (13) We should avoid servile or bodily work, and avoid causing others to have to work by unnecessary shopping on Sundays. Unnecessary means it can wait another day. (6, #2187-8)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Are you faithful to attending Mass each weekend? When you leave home for school or work, will you continue to be faithful? Mary will help if you ask her.

Assignment: The rosary is powerful because it is not only a prayer, but also a sacrifice and based upon scripture—the Word of God. Mary will pray it with us. Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Pray the Morning Offering:

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen. (44)

Second Pledge

I, _____ pledge to you, Mother Mary that I will faithfully study each lesson and pray at least a decade of your Most Holy Rosary aloud each day over the next 5 weeks with my Sponsor and/or family members.

I ask you, Mother, to teach me how to love you the way you love me. I desire to learn with your help how to love God and Neighbor according to His Divine Will. I pray this in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____

Sponsor _____

Notes:

Week 6

Baptism of Jesus

Fruit of the Spirit: Openness to the Spirit (10)

Scripture: *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God].*

The Preaching of John the Baptist. *As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:*

“Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.

A voice of one crying out in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’”

John [the] Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mk. 1:1-8)

The Baptism of Jesus. *It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens*

being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mk. 1:9-11)

John the Baptist's Testimony to Jesus.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God." The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. (Jn. 1:29-37)

Reflection: Ask Mary to help you examine your conscience daily.

It is essential that we understand the importance of repentance and of those who minister repentance and the incredible fruit of their ministry. Contrite hearts open the floodgates of Divine Mercy and forgiveness. In Baptism, we are washed clean of original sin and all personal sins to prepare for the Holy Spirit to anoint us with new life. Descending into water symbolizes our voluntary death to our old way of life; rising out of the water to breathe symbolizes our choosing a new way of life in the Spirit. John the Baptist is the second greatest example of one who ministers or "prepares the way" for Jesus to come into souls and thus Jesus speaks so highly of John. *"I tell you among those born of women there is no one greater than John the Baptist; yet the one least in the*

kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Lk.7:28) John called souls away from home and into the desert to fast, pray and repent. He washed them in the waters of the river Jordan and afterward pointed them to Jesus saying *“He must increase and I must decrease.”* (Jn. 3:30) Both John the Baptist and Mother Mary share in this ministry of reconciliation and so should we. Recall that John was anointed by the Holy Spirit in the womb through the ministry of Mary when she visited Elizabeth. All of us in the Kingdom of God are called to “prepare the way of the Lord” for souls. Why is this ministry of reconciliation so important? Forgiveness is an essential first step in the salvation of every soul. Consider: How long does it take for Jesus to forgive souls who are sincerely sorry for their sins? Seconds! Well, how long does it take a soul to be sincerely sorry for their sins? Sometimes a lifetime, unfortunately! This is why Our Lord needs ministers, including each one of us, to call souls to sincere repentance. We must all begin to repent today and not wait until the end of our lives, we may run out of time sooner than we think!

John testifies that Jesus is the Son of God. So why does the sinless Son of God need Baptism? Jesus is setting an example for us by asking John for Baptism. The repentance adult Baptism requires is an absolute requirement for God’s forgiveness. Each of Jesus’ apostles baptized even more souls than John, who was martyred because of his ministry. We all need Baptism and we need continual examination of our consciences to live out our Baptismal Promises each day. St. Ignatius of Loyola emphasized this need for daily repentance by teaching his brothers to do their daily examination of conscience each day, no matter how busy they were.

Here is an easy bedtime examination of conscience. We call it **Raise The “BAR.”**

1. First, **B** stands for Blessings: Review your day with Mary and the Holy Spirit and thank God for every blessing and every cross.

2. Second, **A** stands for Ask: Ask Mary’s help to identify faults and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

3. Third, **R** stands for Resolve: Resolve to do better tomorrow, say a good **Act of Contrition** and go to Sacramental Confession monthly.

Spend five minutes every day asking Mary to help you do this examine well and do it faithfully. This habit keeps us humble, cleansed, and completely bathed in Divine Mercy. Mary loves it!

Consecration Principle: Make a sincere daily Examination of Conscience before retiring for the night. Ask Mary to help you prepare the way for her Son to come into your heart in a surprisingly new way.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Peter (First Century)** “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)
2. **St. Bonaventure (1221-1274)** “We go to Jesus through Mary, and through Jesus we find the grace of the Holy Spirit.” (3)
3. **Blessed Alan de la Roche (1428-1475)** Mary says, “To all those who recite my Rosary devoutly, I promise my special protection and very great graces” (First of 15 Rosary promises given by Mary to Blessed Alan, see appendix)

Virtue Highlight: John shows great simplicity and poverty in his desert lifestyle. This enables him to have great faith that God provides because He always does.

Commandment of the week: The Fourth Commandment: “*Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD, your God, has commanded you, that you may have a long life and that you may prosper in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*” (Dt. 5:16) This is one of the few commandments tied to a promise of blessings! Honoring our parents includes respecting their authority when we are young, supporting them as they get older, and even becoming a caregiver to them as they age. When we honor our parents, we honor Our Lord who gave them to us. St Thomas Aquinas writes “...since we receive

nourishment from our parents in our childhood, we must support them in their old age: ‘Son, support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him...’ (13)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Are you faithful to the daily examination of Conscience and to frequent Sacramental Reconciliation? John the Baptist was Jesus’ cousin, yet he declares twice in scripture “I did not know him.” Perhaps it was because when Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water in a surprisingly new way, in a transfigured form!

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over the next seven days. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning. Review your Baptismal promises (Introduction), which you will repeat at your Confirmation.

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Luminous Mysteries

*My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to
you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being
without reserve.
Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and
possession. Amen. (24)*

Notes:

Week 7

Wedding Feast at Cana

Fruit of the Spirit: To Jesus Through Mary (10)

Scripture: *“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.” (Jn. 2:1-11)*

Reflection: Be proactive in acts of love and God will back you up. God is never outdone in generosity, especially when He affirms marriage. Remember in the Introduction we discussed how marriage and family are key to learning the two great commandments, which are, in turn, necessary for salvation.

This is Jesus' first public miracle; for this reason, we should carefully examine this scripture to learn the spiritual secrets found within. When we see our neighbor in need, how do we help them? First, we ask God for help as Mary does. Then, we must trust in Him to tell us how to respond in His timing, which often requires waiting. As we study the key characters in this story, we see that they are all waiting on the Lord! Mary is waiting on the Lord, her Son, to act. She is trusting in Him to act and she is telling the waiters to trust in Him as well: "Do whatever He tells you." The Servants in turn are waiting on the Lord in obedience to Mary's instruction. In addition, Jesus himself is waiting on His Father as he tells us in Scripture: ***"Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also.*** (Jn. 5:19) Why is waiting on the Lord so critical to miracles? Because to wait is to trust and that is the virtue most needed in seeing God's miracles in our life. Jesus told St. Maria Faustina many times to pray, *"Jesus, I trust in you."*

After waiting for some time (wedding feasts could last a week), the Father and Jesus acted, and we know the rest of the story—literally gallons of new wine! The wedding couple invited Mary into their home and heart, and they saw God in a surprising new way, just as St. Joseph did. At this event, we can also see the power of the **United Hearts** of Jesus and Mary; their hearts are joined. When you need help growing in the virtue of Trust, ask Mary and Jesus for help, and you will be joining your heart to their two hearts—there is a lot of spiritual power in those hearts. (23)

It is significant that this first miracle involved waiters or servants. When Mary responds to the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation, she uses the language of a waitress: "I am the handmaid of the Lord." A handmaid is trained to watch (wait on) the Master's hands and respond only when the master signals a need. Why does Mary see the need before Jesus is aware of it? It could be that God the Father wants to turn this joyful wedding event into a double celebration, a banquet for both the couple and for Jesus as He starts His public ministry with all his disciples present. Just

as it is the mother and father who give their son away to his bride at a wedding, Mother Mary and God the Father are doing the very same thing here; giving Him away to the Bride of Christ, the Church. So, this is also a celebration for Jesus, and, just maybe he was surprised by Mom and Dad! We can also see the Father giving Mother Mary yet another chance to say yes to the ministry and to the sacrifice of her Son for His Church at this event. This is the day she gives Him away to His vocation, which she knows will lead to the Cross.

Consecration Principle: When we take our needs to Mary, she always brings them to Jesus because their hearts are one. The saints called this principle To Jesus through Mary. We pray this every morning in our Morning Offering. The spiritual power of Consecrating ourselves to Jesus through Mary flows directly from the United Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The perfection and power of their United Hearts flows from several sources: first, from the natural perfection of love between a mother and the child she carried next to her heart for nine months and raised for 30 years. Second, it flows from the perfection of love between the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is without any sin and the Sacred Heart of Jesus who is God Himself! Finally, it flows from the words of Jesus who promised, “*where two or more are gathered in my name there am I.*” (Mt. 18:20) Thus, when you join hearts with Mary, Jesus joins in to make it three. *Emmanuel, God is with her and within her.*

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Bernadine (1380-1444)** “Mary’s sole object in this world was to keep her eyes constantly focused on God so as to discover His will. Then, when she found out what God wanted, she did it.” (3)
2. **St. Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)** “We must accomplish all our actions through Mary, with Mary, and in Mary. In that way, we will also accomplish them all through Jesus, with Jesus and in Jesus.” (3)

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) “We honor Mary by praying the Rosary with love and devotion and by radiating her humility, kindness, and thoughtfulness toward others.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Mary, the servants and Jesus all exhibit the patience needed to wait upon God’s Will in this time of need. God always makes us wait upon Him, which strengthens our faith and trust. If He gave us everything we asked for instantly, we would become filled with pride and lose our salvation. He loves us far too much to enable that behavior, so He always makes us wait & trust. Besides, God loves surprises!!!

Commandment of the week: The Fifth Commandment. “***You shall not kill.***” (Ex. 20:13) God gives human life and no one can take it. This commandment also prohibits suicide, abortion and euthanasia. Our Catechism teaches us “...no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.” (6, #2258) Our Lord also speaks against anger, which is frequently associated with killing. “***You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.***” (Mt. 5:21-24)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Share the wonder of receiving a surprise gift or surprise party. How does God affirm both the Vocation of Marriage and the Vocation of the single Consecrated Religious life at this wedding in Cana?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Luminous Mysteries

*My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to
you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole
being without reserve.*

*Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and
possession. Amen. (24)*

Week 8

Proclamation of the Kingdom

Fruit of the Spirit: Repentance and Trust in God (10)

Scripture: *From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* (Mt. 4:17)

The Judgment of the Nations. *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’*

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his

angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Mt. 25:31-46)

Reflection: Seek the Kingdom and then proclaim that the Kingdom of God is in our midst, for the King and Queen are in our midst, united in heart.

What is a kingdom? It is a walled city full of life where souls can love God above all and neighbor as oneself and be protected from their enemies on all sides. It has a King and Queen, united in heart, who rule with mercy and justice. It is a paradise of eternal peace that never ends. This kingdom of God on earth is a foretaste of the room Jesus promised he would build for each of us in Heaven. (1 Chr. 17:10, Jn. 14:2)

We must “see the Kingdom” in our midst first before we can proclaim it. To see the Kingdom, we must “seek” it; search for it in every present moment. Expect to see it; look with faith and you will start to see many heavenly “coincidences” and small miracles happening in your life. When you see these, tell others; give God glory by encouraging others to seek the Kingdom in their own lives. Praise God continuously.

Jesus outlined in a few short words the way to Proclaim the Kingdom: **“Repent, and believe the good news.”** (Mk. 1:15) We need to first come to believe this Kingdom is real, then as we experience life within its gates, we joyfully tell the world all about it. When we consecrate ourselves to Mary, we join our hearts to hers. This joins our hearts to His as “the two hearts” are united. She teaches us how to repent and advance in our faith journey so we may experience the Kingdom of God in our midst.

How do we proclaim the Kingdom? Jesus sent His disciples out two by two; proclaiming the Kingdom together with others makes this much easier than to do so alone. Remember the women we discussed earlier: Anna, the prophetess in the Temple, and the Samaritan woman who gave Jesus a drink of water at the well. Scripture tells us they both told everyone who would listen about Jesus. This is also what Mary Magdalene did after she met the Resurrected Lord Jesus at the tomb, and it is what the two walking to Emmaus did after they met the Resurrected Lord Jesus at the breaking of the bread. This is how we proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven: first we experience Him, then we proclaim Him with joy. Praise God continuously.

In The Judgement of the Nations scripture above (Mt. 25:31-46), Jesus is honoring his Mother and all mothers and grandmothers for their never-ending works of mercy toward their children. Who, on a daily basis, does these things? Who gives food and drink to the hungry and thirsty? Who welcomes the stranger, especially the newborn who is suddenly thrust into a new world of strangers? Who clothes the naked, nurses the ill and visits those imprisoned? Moms do! If you have ever visited a prison, you will see how many moms, grandmothers, wives and little children fill the waiting room, waiting to visit their sons, grandsons, husbands or dads. Jesus is saying that those who do what mothers do or provide help for mothers to do these acts of mercy will be welcomed into heaven. This is also a tribute to all caregivers, especially in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, churches and multi-family households.

Do you notice how Jesus is speaking in this scripture to all peoples in the specific language of doing what mothers do daily? He is talking about the final judgement and salvation of all, yet he is pointing to what mothers do day in and day out. This shows, once again, God's plan to use mothers to train up all souls on how to obey the Commandments and enter eternal life. This is why we see the two great commandments, which summarize all the Law and the Prophets, written in the hearts of mothers and in particular, the Immaculate Heart of Our Blessed Mother. This is why Satan targets motherhood and children with all his power. (Rev. 12:4)

Consecration Principle: Mary’s heart is a “Refuge for Sinners”. On the way into the Kingdom of Heaven, we travel through an entryway, a vestibule, which the Saints call Mary’s heart—a Refuge of Mercy. A “Refuge” in the Old Testament was a town to where those who had committed serious crimes, such as manslaughter, could flee and be legally protected from being killed as revenge for their crime. Mary’s heart is a refuge for sinners. It is there that those caught in habitual mortal sin can find peace and assistance in learning how to become free of the bondage that sin always brings. This is a process that takes much time and effort, fasting, prayer, especially the rosary, and frequent Sacramental Reconciliation! When a soul turns to Mother Mary, it is welcomed into a safe space—a home and a heart of mercy. She pours out her heart of love and mercy on us and teaches us to love her in return, just as every mom does with her children. This exchange of love sets up a flood of Divine love and mercy from Jesus into our hearts. “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am.” (Mt. 18:20) Mary is a spiritual refuge for all mankind. *“Mary, Refuge of Sinners, Pray for us.”* (Litany of Loreto, 1587)

1. **St. Augustine (354-430)** “Through Mary, the miserable obtain **Witness of the Saints:**

mercy, the graceless find grace, and sinners receive pardon. The weak gain strength, earthlings acquire heavenly things, mortals win life, and pilgrims find their country!” (3)

2. **St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231)** “Now the Lord has established a Refuge of mercy, Mary, even for those who deliberately commit evil. Mary provides shelter and strength for the sinner.” (3)

3. **St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)** “Have recourse to that dear Mary who is the Mother of Mercy. She will take you into her Son’s presence and use her Motherly intercession with Him on your behalf, so that He will be merciful toward you.” (3)

Virtue Highlight: Purity, Meekness Humility and Patience are the virtues required of mothers when they minister to Jesus as they minister to their little ones.

Commandment of the week: This is a new commandment from Jesus that is not given in the original ten: “***A new Commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.***” (Jn. 13:34) The Catechism says this new commandment summarizes all the others and expresses His Divine Will. (6, #2822) This also comes from the heart of every mother and grandmother. In other words, they can authentically quote Jesus’ new command to every member of their family. We see once again, all the commandments are summarized in the heart of a mother, most especially Our Blessed Mother.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Share how sin can trap souls in bondage. Where do we see this happening in the world?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning.

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Luminous Mysteries

***My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to
you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole
being without reserve.
Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and
possession. Amen. (24)***

Week 9

Transfiguration

Fruit of the Spirit: Desire for Holiness (10)

Scripture: The Transfiguration of Jesus. “After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.” (Mt. 17:1-9)

Reflection: Believe and trust that Jesus is who God the Father says He is—the Divine Son of God and far more important than the two greatest prophets, Moses and Elijah.

The Transfiguration miracle happened in order to strengthen Jesus before He faced his passion and death, and to assure the three leading apostles that He was truly the Son of God. Jesus had revealed Himself to them through words and deeds. They followed Him, lived with Him and He worked

signs and wonders in their midst—even raising the dead. They had a close personal relationship with Him; however, it wasn't enough. They still had little faith in Him. Thus, as Jesus came closer to His final sacrifice on the Cross, He took them up a mountain to strengthen their Faith in Him. His Heavenly Father appeared to them with Moses and Elijah and made it clear that Jesus was His Divine Son with whom He was well pleased and that they should listen to Him. Just like the “mountaintop” spiritual experience that the three leading apostles had, as Christians we can also experience God in the peace and safety of our own home. These same three apostles met God again in surprisingly new ways such as the Eucharistic bread and wine on Holy Thursday, the Resurrected Lord on Easter morning and as the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday. These later events didn't take place on a mountaintop nor in a church or temple but in the upper room of a home in Jerusalem. We can experience God at home because He is always with us. “Emmanuel”.

Fear of the Lord. This is one of the seven Confirmation gifts of the Holy Spirit and it is very important. Fear of the Lord is mentioned twice in the list of seven gifts and it is said to be the Lord's delight. (Is. 11:1-3) It can also be confusing.

How do young men and women get motivated to grow into mature Christians? This journey must be traveled with a combination of external motivation, internal motivation and prayerful union with the United Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Christian maturity should grow over a lifetime but so many never advance in holiness and miss out on an intimate personal relationship with Jesus and Mary. Some also miss out on heaven forever; this is a terrible waste of a life! We learned in childhood that the journey to maturity begins with motivation from others (such as parents) as fear of the consequences and matures into an authentic desire to love God and neighbor. Jesus' three leading apostles needed to grow in maturity to lead the Church successfully as Jesus was soon to be taken from them. So, through this event, God the Father and His Son Jesus brought these three through a “rite of passage” on a mountaintop. First, they are frightened to death by experiencing the glory of God the Father in the form of a cloud.

Then, they are consoled by Jesus who says to them “Rise and do not be afraid.” So, which is necessary, to be afraid or not to be afraid? They meet Jesus in a surprising new way: a transfigured form, shining like the sun. They also meet God the Father in a surprising new way: in a mysterious cloud. They went from being motivated by holy fear to being motivated by holy love. How can we better understand this important (but much misunderstood) gift of the Fear of the Lord? Indeed, it is praised over 300 times in Sacred Scripture, even by Mary in her Magnificat. (Lk. 1:39-56)

Consider the humble stop sign. If you asked automobile drivers if they are afraid of stop signs, all would say no! However, if you asked if any are afraid of simply ignoring stop signs, all would say yes! We obey stop signs out of fear of the consequences, tragic consequences, which we see and hear about often in the news. However, if we love the law because we love the giver of the law, we will be obedient to stop signs out of love, not fear. We will trust that stop signs are there for our own good and thus we are thankful for them; after all, they save billions of accidents daily! Imagine how terrifying it would be to drive through every stop sign without any regard? Here is the key point: those who obey stop signs are not afraid of them! In the same way, those who obey the commandments of God are not afraid of God. The difference between immaturity and Christian maturity is the degree of proactive love we have for God and neighbor over and above ourselves. Scripture says, *“Perfect love casts out fear.”* (1 Jn. 4:18) This is our Christian rite of passage, which gives us freedom and purpose in life. Jesus, the one who tells his apostles not to be afraid, is himself not afraid precisely because he is always obedient to the Father. Likewise, Mary was not afraid of the Archangel Gabriel because she was perfectly obedient to God.

Consecration Principle: Do whatever He tells you. God’s command, “Listen to Him,” and Mary’s instruction at Cana, “Do whatever He tells you,” are similar. This is excellent scriptural wisdom from both of Jesus’ parents. If we follow and obey Jesus, the Son of God, we will not be afraid of God but we will fear the consequences of sin. *“If you love me, you will keep my Commandments. And I will*

ask the Father, and He will give you another counselor, to be with you forever.” (Jn. 14:15-16) This “counselor” is the Holy Spirit from which you will get a fresh outpouring on the day of your Confirmation.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **Blessed Mother Mary** And Mary said “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear Him...” (Lk. 1:46-50)
2. **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)** “Our gifts become immaculate in the Immaculata. In Jesus Christ they become Divine, infinite, worthy of the majesty of God the Father. Jesus is the only Mediator to the Father, the Immaculata, the only Mediatrix to Jesus.” (20, pg.16)
3. **St. Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)** “Since the Holy Rosary is composed, principally and in substance, of the Prayer of Christ and the Angelic Salutation, that is the Our Father and the Hail Mary, it was without doubt the first prayer and the first devotion of the faithful and has been used all through the centuries, from the time of the Apostles and disciples down to the present.” (25)

Virtue Highlight: The Transfiguration was intended to strengthen the virtues of Faith & Trust in Peter, James and John. After this mountaintop experience, these three had no reason to doubt who Jesus truly was.

Commandment of the Week: The Sixth Commandment: ***“You shall not commit adultery.”*** (Ex. 20:14) Do not make the serious mistake of assuming this command only applies to adultery and does not also refer to all acts of sexual impurity in heart, mind and action. Consider Jesus’ stern words in scripture: ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘You***

shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna. (Mt. 5:27-30) This commandment applies to all forms of sexual impurity, for both men and women. Do not imitate the world; it is lacking in the virtue of chastity.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Who is Jesus to you? Who is Mary to you?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Luminous Mysteries

*My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate
to you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole
being without reserve.
Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and
possession. Amen. (24)*

Notes:

Week 10

Last Supper

Fruit of the Spirit: Adoration (10)

Scripture: When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you. (Lk. 22:14-20)

So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ... Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life

of the world.” ... Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.” (Jn. 6:32-58)

Reflection: If you wish to taste Divine Love, receive the Eucharist! You may even see God in a surprisingly new way!

The very first Mass took place not in a church but in a home. The Feast of Passover was a mandatory yearly celebration of the Jewish people. Over 1300 years prior, God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through the leadership of Moses. God commanded the Israelites to celebrate this yearly feast within the home in gratitude for His deliverance. At each of these yearly ritual meals, the parents sacrifice a lamb to be eaten at the family table and tell the children the story of how God delivered them from slavery “with a mighty hand and outstretched arm,” showing that His “loving devotion endures forever.” (Ps.136:12)

At this meal, Jesus, our new Moses, will celebrate with his disciples, and change the entire meaning of this historic celebration of gratitude. He is putting His whole body and soul into this liturgical meal and in a few short hours he will Himself become the sacrificial lamb; He will become the sacrifice whose blood will be shed to set us free. In the Gospel of John (above), Jesus tells his disciples, **“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.”** (Jn. 6:53) Many walked away in disbelief. He is making a sacrificial gift of himself to save us from slavery and bring us to heaven. Do we participate in Mass with our whole selves? Do we believe Our Lord’s

words? When we receive the Eucharist, do we realize we are meeting God in a surprising new way? A mother gives up a part of her body to give the new life of a child to her husband and family. Jesus is doing the same, bringing forth new life in a surprising new way—eternal life!

Before he gave himself to His apostles as Divine Eucharistic bread and wine at the last supper, he cleansed them first by washing their feet, perhaps even hearing their confessions, as he did with Peter. He also dismissed Judas. It is vital that each of us prepare well for the reception of the Divine Eucharist by giving up food and drink for a little while, cleaning up our bodies, our clothing and our souls—and never receiving the Eucharist if we are in serious sin. We must always prepare to receive the Divine by reconciling with God to show Him our intent to repent. Jesus said, ***“If I do not wash your feet, Peter, you will have no part of me.”*** Also, “to receive” the Eucharist does not mean “to take” the Eucharist. Rather, wait upon the minister and then humbly receive the gift.

Jesus wants to give us 100% of Himself, just as a mother desires to give her infant 100% of herself. She desires to give her infant milk, made within her out of her body and her blood. The infant was totally formed from Mom’s body and blood. Jesus desires to give his followers all of himself: and just as His Father fed the Israelites in the desert with water from a rock and manna bread from the sky, so Jesus desires to feed and spiritually nourish his followers for all time. Thus, He gave them Himself as the bread and wine traditionally eaten in the Passover meal: ***“Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”*** (Lk. 22:19-20). We Christians must believe the Eucharist is truly Jesus’ body and blood and personally receive His gift with the same unconditional love that it is given. Then, we will look at the Eucharist and meet God in surprisingly new ways.

Consecration Principle: Learn to love Mary as she loves us. One of the most powerful statements about true love was attributed

to St. John Paul II in his teaching on the Theology of the Body: *“The opposite of love is not hate but lust; the use of another person.”* (46) When we reciprocate a sincere gift of love by using the other person for our own selfish purposes, we are using, not loving. Because moms have a God-given charism to teach the meaning of true love to their children, they have also been given a spiritual intuition that tells them the difference between being loved and being used. When we seek to love Mary, we need to learn to love her as she loves us—sacrificially and selflessly. During Our Lord’s public ministry, there is no doubt that some sought friendship with Mary as a means to get closer to her famous Son. A mother is given to each of us as God’s perfect plan to teach us how to love her sacrificially in the same spirit as she loves us. Mom and Child have a unity of hearts. Just watch a mother loving her infant and teaching him how to love her back. This is how we are designed by God to learn the second great commandment and make it into heaven. We must proactively seek to love Mary with humility and meekness and let her teach us how to love her as Jesus loves her. As Jesus gives away His Body and Blood at the Last Supper—and still today at every Mass—He is loving us sacrificially and with humility and meekness. As we Consecrate ourselves to Mary and learn to love her sincerely, our hearts are joining their United Hearts. Therein lies the secret power of Marian Consecration.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Cajetan (1480-1547)** “Ask the Virgin Mary constantly to come to you with her glorious Son. Be Bold. Ask her to give you her Son, who in the Blessed Sacrament is truly the Food of your soul. She will give Him to you readily.” (3)
2. **St. Mother Teresa (1910-1997)** “Mary’s role is to bring us face-to-face, as John and Mary Magdalene, with the love in the Heart of Jesus Crucified...Because Our Lady was there on Cavalry, she

knows how real, how deep is His longing for you and for the poor.” (1)

3. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “The repetition of the Hail Mary in the Rosary gives us a share in God’s own wonder and pleasure: in jubilant amazement, we acknowledge the greatest miracle in history.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus shows great humility in washing the apostles’ feet. He asks them to trust Him in what he is about to proclaim: to experience God in a surprisingly new way. Eucharistic Bread and Wine!

Commandment of the Week: The Seventh Commandment: **“You shall not steal.”** (Ex. 20:15) How can we love our neighbor if we take what is his, what does not belong to us? “The Seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one’s neighbor and wronging him in any way with respect to his goods...it also requires respect for the right to private property.” (6, #2410) Whether we take another’s property or injure another’s good reputation by gossip or slander, it is stealing. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that stealing is most dangerous because “even if one repents of this sin, one does not easily make the necessary satisfaction for it. This is owing to the obligation of restitution and the duty to make up for what loss is incurred by the rightful owner. And all this is above and beyond the obligation to repent for the sin itself.” (13, 6 #2412)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Do we remember our roots in thanksgiving to God each year for the ways He has saved us and set us free? Do we put 100% of ourselves into our liturgical celebration of the Mass, which is a remembrance of the Last Supper? Do we recognize that when we eat this bread and drink this wine, we are consuming the true Body and Blood of Jesus?

Assignment: Read this chapter together and pray at least one decade every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it! Pray the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Luminous Mysteries

*My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to
you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole
being without reserve.
Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and
possession. Amen. (24)*

Notes:

Third Pledge

I, _____ pledge to you Mother Mary that I will faithfully study each lesson and pray at least one decade of your Most Holy Rosary aloud each day over the next 5 weeks with my Sponsor and/or family members.

I ask you, Mother, to teach me how to love you the way you love me. I desire to learn with your help how to love God and Neighbor according to His Divine Will. I pray this in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____
Sponsor _____

Week 11

Agony in the Garden

Fruit of the Spirit: Sorrow for Sin (10)

Scripture: *The Agony in the Garden.*

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch."

He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will."

When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him.

He returned a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand."

(Mt. 26:36-46)

Reflection: Stay awake, watch and pray so that you will not be put to the test. The next set of five Rosary meditations, the Sorrowful Mysteries, are about the mystery of suffering. In everyone's life, there are joyful moments and sorrowful ones. In Jesus' day, the Jewish people thought all those who suffered in life were being punished by God, but Jesus showed us this is not true! He who was without sin and who was the Chosen One of the Father suffered very much and so did His Immaculate Mother. During the Way of the Cross, Jesus showed us how we should turn suffering into a beautiful and creative work of sacrificial love and mercy, just as a mother can do, suffering for her beloved child as she is laboring to give birth. We see in the Stations of the Cross how Jesus stopped to minister to a number of people during His journey to His death. All people experience suffering, but Jesus teaches us how to trust Him to turn our sorrows into a powerful gift to God for others.

Jesus was to become the Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed for the sins of mankind. Adam was tested in the Garden of Eden by Satan, and he failed to shield Eve from Satan and sin even though God warned him to "guard the garden." (26) Jesus is being tempted in the garden by Satan, but he is going to succeed in shielding His "Bride," the Church. Why did Satan go after Eve first? Perhaps he knew God had created Eve to help the whole family learn the two great commandments, which are the keys to God's heart and eternal life with Him.

Can you imagine a prisoner scheduled to die in the morning? Could he sleep the night before? The apostles are asleep; they really are not prepared for what is about to take place. If we think Satan isn't real, he can surprise us. But, if we are awake and vigilant, we can be ready and prepared for the trials in life. Jesus tells them to be awake and pray so they do not lose this battle with evil. We must be men and women of daily prayer and daily watching and waiting for the movement of the Holy Spirit. How can we do this in a practical way?

A great goal is to try to give 10% of our waking hours to some form of prayer throughout the day. This is about six minutes per hour. Start

your day with the Morning Offering and Marian Consecration, spending some quiet time with the Lord. Pray a portion of the Most Holy Rosary each day as Our Mother Mary asks us. We can pray it when we walk or exercise, or when we commute to work or school. Weekly Mass is required by the Church. Daily Mass is a wonderful discipline if our schedule permits it, but so is paying the Eucharistic Lord a visit for a few minutes in church during the week. Spending an hour in Adoration in front of the Exposed Eucharist is an outstanding devotion, any time of the day or night. Noon is a good time to pray the Angelus and three o'clock in the afternoon is perfect for the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Finally, evening is best for our Daily Examination of Conscience and a prayer to our Guardian Angel. (appendix) Monthly reconciliation or confession is recommended.

This prayer gift to Jesus through Mary will strengthen your faith, help you grow in virtue and open you up to so many blessings you will never be able to count them. This prayer discipline will help you turn all your sufferings into a sweet sacrifice to God for your sins and others' simply by giving all of your prayers, works, joys and sufferings to Jesus through Mary. Work at being a better pray-er all through your life. Start simply and let Mary help you grow it over time. Never stop praying!!!

Consecration Principle: Become an “Instrument” of Mary’s love. Many of the saints, especially St. Maximilian Kolbe, desired to become an instrument in the hands of Mary for the salvation of souls. (20) This is not the same as “being used” by another against your will as we discussed in the last Mystery. To become an instrument of Mary is a free will gift we offer to her daily and one she gladly welcomes. She knows what we need and our prayer intentions and she knows we want to help her save poor souls, her lost children. This is a most beautiful gift and one that is highly recommended by many Saints. It magnifies our own prayer intentions; however, we need to give Mary this permission daily, with our morning Consecration prayer, for example.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Albert the Great (1193-1280)** “After Jesus Christ, the Divine Mother was the most perfect in prayer of all who have ever been or ever will be. Mary’s prayer was continual and persevering!” (3)
2. **St. Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716)** “During her earthly life, Mary lived in continual prayer. Therefore, all who are devoted to her must pray—and pray continually.” (3)
3. **St. Joseph Maria Escriva (1902-1975)** “Do you want to love Our Lady? Well then, get to know her. How? By praying her Rosary.” (27)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus, the Son of God, shows great humility and mercy by washing his disciples’ feet. We, His disciples, must imitate His virtue, which we can only do with His graces.

Commandment of the Week: The Eighth Commandment: “***You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.***” (Ex. 20:16) “The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth.” (6, #2464) If we are charitable in our thoughts, we will not be uncharitable in our words or deeds; this way, it all flows from within our hearts. St. James tells us in scripture, “***No human being can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brethren, this ought not to be so.***” (Jm. 3:7-10) Many of the sins against this commandment are passed from generation to generation, so when we fight against them in our own hearts, our children and grandchildren benefit as well.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: How can we plan to increase our prayer time so we give 10% of our waking hours to the Lord in prayer?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.” (Fr. Charles G. Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R) (3)

Notes:

Week 12

Scourging at the Pillar

Fruit of the Spirit: Purity (10)

Scripture: Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what [do you want] me to do with [the man you call] the king of the Jews?" They shouted again, "Crucify him."

Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him."

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. (Mk. 15:12-15)

Reflection: Stay in the present moment; there is where you will find the grace to endure suffering.

The first thing the Jews did after offering their Passover lamb to the priests for sacrifice was to skin it and give the skin to the high priest as a payment for his ministry. (28) Jesus was essentially "skinned" with 40 lashes of whips that had sharp pieces of bone attached; designed by the Romans to tear skin and inflict great pain. This was carried out in public according to Roman Law with the number of lashes carefully regulated. Some men died during scourging; the pain was unbearable, and Jesus had to undergo it publically naked and stripped of all dignity. The Passover lamb was dead when it was skinned; Jesus was alive. He endured this for you and I. Sin has very serious consequences because it is very serious.

Are we willing to stand up for Jesus? He was scorned and whipped in public humiliation for us. He said in Scripture, ***"Everyone who***

acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.” (Mt. 10: 32,33)

By imagining this scene with our minds as we pray this decade, we can think of a few lessons. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us to ask ourselves what Jesus is doing and what he is not doing in each scene. He is not running away or striking back. He *is* thanking His Father, forgiving His enemies and patiently trusting His Father to save Him. Jesus is offering this sacrifice to God as a total gift of Himself for all of us. (29)

Mary was watching His scourging and joined her suffering with His in each present moment. She also had to continually forgive His murderers, a much more difficult task. As we join our hearts with the United Hearts of Jesus and Mary, we might experience a little of their pain when we pray this mystery or see it reenacted in the movies.

Consecration Principle: Live in the present moment. Ask Mary to keep us in the present moment while we pray the Rosary. When we are in pain or in an uncomfortable situation, we tend to escape from the present moment by either going into the future or into the past in our minds. Also, we tend to use substances such as food, alcohol or drugs to attempt to escape from the present painful reality. When we do this, we are missing out on the Divine graces specially intended to help us endure this present moment. Bishop Fulton Sheen once said on video, “The demonic is the avoidance of the cross.” Jesus is resisting this human tendency during his scourging. He is accepting each stroke of the whip from the Father as a gift. He is in the present moment and not wasting the gift of the moment and the divine graces offered by Heaven to endure each moment. He is saying yes to each present moment and showing us an example we should follow.

When we are at Mass or saying our prayers, do we let our minds wander? Do we fight against these distractions or let ourselves miss out on God’s gift? Each present moment is totally unique and will never be repeated. Our well-lived present moments will add

up to make up our eternity. Ask the United Hearts for the grace to appreciate each one. Humble gratitude is always the proper response to each present moment.

As an example of the present moment, think of Mary spending time with baby Jesus. There is something about a new baby in the home that demands us to focus 100% of ourselves on the needs of these noisy, but defenseless, infants. If we start to daydream, focusing on the future or the past, the child might get into something that could harm him. Mary is paying 100% attention to baby Jesus in every present moment. Nothing is more important to her. Every moment is given over to the needs of Jesus and she is given every grace of discernment to know exactly what He needs moment by moment. In this scene, Mother Mary is giving a total gift of herself to Jesus. She is also actively interceding before God to keep us receiving what we need. Mary is mother of all, so in heaven, she is able to spend time with each one of us all at once because there are no time or space limitations in heaven.

We say “Glory Be to God” at the end of each decade whether they are Joyful or Sorrowful mysteries. This prayer calls us to be thankful for all the moments in our life. By joining our hearts with the United Hearts in Marian Consecration, we will receive the necessary graces to endure the present moment and we will be given the wisdom to see the reason for each cross we embrace.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)** “Have recourse to that dear Mary who is the Mother of Mercy. She will take you into her Son’s presence and use her Motherly intercession with Him on your behalf, so that He will be merciful toward you.” (3)
2. **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)** “First of all we must give ourselves for the Immaculata, so in us and through us she may operate in others. Let us draw near to her and imitate her virtues, that we might merit to behold her throughout eternity.” (20)

- 3. St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “The family that prays together, stays together. The Holy Rosary, by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer that brings the family together. Individual family members, in turning their eyes toward Jesus, also gain the ability to look one another in the eye, to communicate, to show solidarity, to forgive one another and to see their covenant of love renewed in the Spirit of God.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus practices the virtues of meekness, perseverance and compassion as He freely endures His scourging at the pillar.

Commandment of the Week: The Ninth Commandment: “***You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.***” ***Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***” (Ex. 20:17, Mt. 5:28, 6, #2514) Lust always starts in the heart and flows to our actions. In order to tame our sins of impurity, we must convert our hearts. Our Immaculate Mother will help us if we ask her. Modern media wages total war against our hearts with respect to sins against this commandment. We must control our eyes first, especially when they are focused on impure online images. Those who do not marry but live together without the spiritual benefits of marriage are depriving themselves of the graces to defend against sins that violate this commandment.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: When we drive, we are required to focus on the road immediately in front of us, and not be occupied thinking of the road that just passed or the road that is still to come. Do you get distracted from the present moment in saying your prayers or attending Mass? Was Jesus distracted during his most powerful prayer, His crucifixion? Absolutely! How do you combat these distractions and yet stay in the present moment, tapping into the graces provided by Heaven?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning.

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.” (Fr. Charles G. Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R) (3)

Notes:

Week 13

Crowning with Thorns

Fruit of the Spirit: Courage (10)

***Scripture:** Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.*

Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, "Behold, the man!"

When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." (Jn. 19:1-6)

Reflection: Offer up all pain* as a gift to Jesus and Mary for sinners while remaining thankful for every present moment. *(All intentional abuse should be reported to parents or legitimate authority)

The act of scourging Our Lord was a form of Roman punishment, which was done according to strict rules and in public where all could witness. Thus, Jesus received a predetermined number of blows using rods and whips in public. However, the crowning with thorns and the mocking by the soldiers was done in a different and less public location such as a barrack or bathhouse where the soldiers were cleaning him up after the scourging

for another public meeting with Pilate. This event may not have been supervised and was most likely a free-for-all where the soldiers tormented and mocked Jesus without any oversight. Roman soldiers would have had no love for the Jewish people. This crowning with thorns must have been “excruciating,” a word derived from the Latin word for cross. Imagine the cruelty and hatred that was unleashed on Our Lord. He suffered all of this for all of us. We deserved it, while He did not.

Besides the physical pain, we must also remember mental pain, which is experienced by people everywhere, caused by mental illnesses, unhealthy relationships or by the loss of loved ones. What is the best way to console Our Lord and thank him for suffering all this for us? Crown Him the King of your heart so that you may live your life with Him as your Lord and Savior. Mother Mary, who taught the child Jesus how to love, will also teach us to love as Jesus did; if we ask them to teach us, they will keep us in God’s favor. Let’s ask them today.

Consecration Principle: Surrender to all pain, whether physical, spiritual or emotional. Do not complain but offer it up as a gift to Jesus through Mother Mary who will magnify your sacrifices and save poor souls. We may take medicines when we are ill or in pain and still offer it all up as a gift. We say this in our daily Marian Consecration prayers. We try to live this principle, as we understand this is what Christ did as the soldiers crowned and mocked Him. We imitate Jesus who gave all of his sufferings without complaining for each of us, including for His mother. Scripture tells us, “*The way we came to know love was that He laid down His life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*” (1 Jn. 3:16) Mary is our example to follow this scripture; this is what she did as she walked the way of the cross with her Son, living the scripture: “*Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...*”.(Rm. 12:1)

Witness of the Saints:

1. **Pope Benedict XV (1854-1922)** “Mary offered her son generously, in sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God. Hence we

can truly say that she cooperated in the salvation of the human race along with Christ.” (3)

2. **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)** “The Cross is the school of love. Let us remember that love lives on and is nourished by sacrifices...The shortest way of saving a soul is to inspire it to accomplish or suffer at least something, if even the slightest for the Immaculata, the most gracious queen of heaven and earth by the will of Almighty God.” (20, pgs. 108, 69)
3. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “To pray the rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful Hearts of Christ and His Mother.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus prays for His enemies even as they are crowning him with thorns and mocking Him.

Commandment of the Week: The Tenth Commandment: *“Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s goods. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* (Ex. 20:17, Mt. 6:21) The tenth commandment unfolds and completes the ninth, which is concerned with concupiscence of the flesh. It forbids coveting the goods of another, as the root of theft, robbery, and fraud, which the seventh commandment forbids. “Lust of the eyes” leads to the violence and injustice forbidden by the fifth commandment. Avarice, like fornication, originates in the idolatry prohibited by the first three prescriptions of the Law. The tenth commandment concerns the intentions of the heart; with the ninth, it summarizes all the precepts of the Law. (6,#2534, 1 Jn. 2:16, Mic. 2:2, Wis. 14:12) Some earlier Catechisms group the Ninth and Tenth Commandments together and note that “what is commanded in these two precepts amounts to this: to observe the preceding Commandments, we must be particularly careful not to covet. For he who does not covet, being content with what he has, will not desire what belongs to others, but will rejoice in their prosperity, giving glory to God.” (13)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: What value have you personally experienced in offering up an injury, inconvenience or insult as a gift to Jesus or Mary? How does this sacrificial gift offering magnify our prayers? Be thankful for every moment of your day as you do your daily Examination of Conscience.

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.” (Fr. Charles G.

Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R) (3)

Notes:

Week 14

Carrying the Cross

Fruit of the Spirit: Patience (10)

Scripture: So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (Jn. 19:17)

So Pilot released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus.

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him.

Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.'

At that time people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'

for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed. (Lk. 25-31)

Reflection: *“Then he said to all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’”* (Mt. 16:24 & Lk. 9:23) Jesus carries His burden on a journey toward His death. Along the way, he meets many and blesses friend and foe alike, despite his agony. ***“A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him.”*** Some followers bless Him, one by helping Him with his cross, others by blessing him with their mercy and compassionate tears. Some are now saints or remembered by their faith: St. Veronica, St. John, St. Mary Magdalene, the Good Thief, and the Centurion Longinus. His advice to the weeping mothers has been the vocation of moms throughout the centuries—to pray for their children and to offer their crosses to God for their families. The efforts of the reluctant Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry His cross, had a positive effect on his two sons, Alexander and Rufus, who became Christians in the first century and gave firsthand testimony to the truth of the Crucifixion.

Jesus falls three times. These falls give us encouragement that when we fall, He knows our pain and will always be there to help us back up again, no matter how often we fall. We are on this same journey through life toward our eternal resting place. How we courageously embrace our crosses, how we bless God and the people we meet along the way, and how we are blessed by some and insulted by others are all a part of our journey. Our lives are not meant to be easy; we are climbing a mountain together with the saints and we need to look for help and meaning at every turn in the road.

The most moving encounter is with His Mother Mary, the one who gave Him life at birth and gave Him away to the world at age 30. This scene shows the power of the United Hearts, which is the Divine power behind the Marian Consecration. Mary follows Jesus and walks this journey with him, consoling Him, supporting Him, and she is always united in heart

with Him. *Emmanuel, God with her.* When two, united in heart, pray together, The Divine joins them together bringing power and grace. When Jesus falls, she wants to catch him; when they nail Him to the cross, she feels every nail. When He is hanging naked on the cross, she covers him with her veil. When they take His body down and hand Him to her, she embraces Him and weeps. Her child, given to her by God as Savior of the world, has been ripped from her heart. She suffered along with Him as any mother would, watching her child die a brutal and unjust death. But she also knows He has won a great victory for her children, a great freedom and new life—eternal life. Through death comes new life. Allow Mary to walk beside you on your life journey, invite her into your heart and home daily and watch how she works and loves. Give her permission today! A mother is never done with us!

Our Lord Jesus appeared to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and taught him about His shoulder wound which was a significant source of pain for Him as he carried His cross. (30) Our Lord desires that we venerate and honor this wound in our prayers; He told St. Bernard that doing so will gain us forgiveness for our sins.

Prayer Tip: The Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary can be prayed in a unique way when you walk the Stations of the Cross. As you visit each station, say four of the prayers of the rosary as you reflect on that station's mystery. For example, on the first station, you pray an Our Father and three Hail Marys. On the second, pray four Hail Marys and on the third, pray three Hail Marys and one Glory Be. Then, after the 14th station, simply add one more reflection for the 15th Station, The Resurrection. This brings new insight into the sorrowful mysteries and makes praying the Stations a more frequent habit.

Consecration Principle: Follow Jesus in good times and bad. We see Mary following Our Lord up Mt. Cavalry. She suffers with Him, and He suffers for her and with her—United in Heart. Ask her to teach you how to follow Jesus as she does. She brought St. John and St. Mary Magdalene, and her sister Mary, wife of Clopas, to the side

of Christ crucified when none of the other disciples would come. If you ask her to, she will lead you there as well. St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said of Mary, “Her role is to bring you face-to-face, as John and Magdalene, with the love in the heart of Jesus crucified.” (1)

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. John Bosco (1815-1888)** “Carry your cross on your back and take it as it comes, small or large, whether from friends or enemies and of whatever wood it be made. The most intelligent and happiest of souls is he who, knowing that he is doomed to carry the cross throughout life, willingly and resignedly accepts the one God sends him.” (31)
2. **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)** “Our Lady desires that we not only work for her but also suffer for her. We must calmly bear the little crosses of each day and even desire that they exist!” (3)
3. **Pope Pius XI (1857-1939)** “If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labors.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus passes many on the way to Calvary. He ministers to them in love as he journeys toward his crucifixion. He must focus on each present moment lest he think ahead too much to his death and thus become distracted.

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from Our Lord) “*Then Jesus said to all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up your cross daily and follow me.’*” (Mt. 16:24 & Lk. 9:23) We assume each cross is His will for us and cheerfully carry on, trusting He will get us through.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Which person that Jesus met on the road to Calvary do you most identify with?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade aloud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.” (Fr. Charles G.

Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R) (3)

Notes:

Week 15

Crucifixion

Fruit of the Spirit: Perseverance (10)

Scripture: The Crucifixion of Jesus.

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews." Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled: "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." This is what the soldiers did.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When

Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son. Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.
(Jn. 19:17-30)

Reflection: Forgive!

Death from crucifixion occurs by suffocation. Thus, the Son of God, who breathed life into this world in the beginning, has no breath left. Yet, despite great pain, Jesus got a few very important words out, referred to as His seven last words. Consider two of these seven: ***"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,"*** and ***"John, behold your mother; Woman, behold your son."*** The first is very easy to understand but difficult to do; nevertheless, we are commanded by Christ to forgive. ***"When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions.*** (Mk. 11:25)

John, the youngest apostle, took Mary into his home and heart and cared for her the rest of her life. John learned **St. Joseph's Secret Marian Blessing** as after he took her in, he soon encountered God several times in new ways. After 3 days, he started seeing Jesus as the resurrected Lord in a glorified body that could walk through closed doors. After 50 days, he met God as the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday in the Upper Room. Finally, much later in life, he met God in a dream that was so real and insightful that it is included in our Christian scriptures as the book of Revelation. If we make a daily habit of inviting Mary into our home and heart, we will also learn Joseph's Secret Marian Blessing personally; we will

be surprised and delighted in what manner God will show up in our homes and hearts. ***Emmanuel, God with us!***

As we said earlier, St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us to study Jesus' posture on the cross and learn from Him. Ask yourself, "What is Jesus doing up there and what is He not doing? He is not fighting back; His hands are nailed. He is not running away; His feet are nailed. He is not cursing or calling down angels to destroy his enemies; His throat is parched and he has little breath left. He is not despairing. So, what is he actually doing up there? He is praying a triumphant Psalm 22, glorifying His Father during this moment of suffering. He is forgiving his enemies and waiting on the Lord to save Him. Full of love, hope, trust, humility, patience, and perseverance, He is waiting in trustful surrender on His Father to save Him. St. Thomas Aquinas says, "*The passion of Christ completely suffices to fashion our lives. Whoever wishes to live perfectly should do nothing but disdain what Christ disdained on the cross and desire what He desired, for the cross exemplifies every virtue.*" (29) Jesus died for us; now we must carry our cross, and follow Him by following His example up on the cross. This is the virtuous and victorious life.

The Son of God came down from heaven to earth to save us from hate and sin and we crucified Him in a tragic act of hatred and violence! Is this good news, or is it the greatest tragedy that has ever occurred? It is both! There is a hidden victory here; a devout Jew might know what it is upon seeing Christ crucified. Jesus appears as a sacrificed lamb, like the kind faithful Jews sacrifice each year at Passover for the forgiveness of their sins. They roasted their lambs over the fire on a cross-shaped spit. Also, Jesus' hands are raised above his head, a reminder of the story of Moses raising his hands over the Israelites in battle with the Amalekites. As long as his hands were raised, the Israelites were winning. Aaron and Hur helped Moses by holding his arms up until the end. (Ex. 17:8-16) Mary, John and the women are at the foot of the cross doing the same—holding Him up. We can do the same every time we meditate on the cross. More hidden good news is about to be revealed as we start the final set of Rosary Mysteries: the Glorious.

Consecration Principle: Wait on the Lord. We spoke of this powerful spiritual principle as we discussed the Second Luminous Mystery: The Wedding Feast at Cana. At this wedding we see Mary, the servants and Jesus all waiting on the Lord. After a short wait, a great miracle occurred in the changing of water into wine. The wedding couple who invited Mary and her Son into their home met God that day in a surprisingly new way: as a miracle worker! Now at the Cross, we see Mary and John and a few women praying, watching and waiting as their Lord and Savior Jesus does the very same thing upon the Cross; they are truly all one in heart. They do not see Him transfigured, but totally disfigured and unrecognizable. Sadly, they are seeing God in a completely new way. All prayer to God entails trustful waiting. Always! Sometimes we have to wait minutes, sometimes days and sometimes years. So what do we do while we wait? We do all the things Jesus is doing up there—practicing His virtues: Faith, Hope, Patience, Perseverance, Trust, Meekness, Humility, Love, Obedience, and especially Forgiveness. Each of these virtues build upon one another. Practice makes perfect! Remember, virtue always requires Divine assistance!

Witness of the Saints:

1. **Pope St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “On Calvary the sufferings of Mary most Holy reached their height. Mary’s presence at the foot of the Cross constituted a most special participation in the redemptive death of her Son.” (3)
2. **St. Bernard (1090-1153)** “It is your heart, O Mary, that is pierced with the steel of the lance. Much more so than the Heart of your Son, who has already breathed His last.” (3)
3. **St. Paul** “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.” (Rm. 12:1)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus accepts his crucifixion patiently as an act of love for His Father, mother and all of us, his brothers and sisters. He is showing us the way and we must follow Him!

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from Our Lord)

“If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.” (Mt. 6:14-15)

Reflect on Mary forgiving Jesus’ enemies and the Roman soldiers as she watches her Son’s terrifying crucifixion. She will show us how—she was there! ***“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, ‘I am sorry,’ you should forgive him.”*** (Lk. 17:3-4)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Who do you need to forgive today? Do you have a crucifix in your home? If not, get one you can meditate upon, especially while saying the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Assignment: Read the above and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.” (Fr. Charles G.

Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R) (3)

Notes:

Fourth Pledge

I, _____ pledge to you, Mother Mary, that I will faithfully study each lesson and pray at least one decade of your Most Holy Rosary aloud each day over the next 5 weeks with my Sponsor and/or family members. Your Son taught us a new commandment: *“Love one another as I have loved you.”* I ask you, Mother, to teach me how to love you the way you love me. I desire to learn with your help how to love God and Neighbor according to His Divine Will. I pray this in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____

Sponsor: _____

Week 16

Resurrection

Fruit of the Spirit: Faith (10)

Scripture: The Resurrection of Jesus.

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men.

Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you."

Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

(Mt. 28 1-10)

Reflection: Before His last breath on the cross, Jesus patiently suffered, trusting and waiting on the Father to save Him. Upon his resurrection three days later, the disciples saw firsthand that indeed ***“those who wait on the Lord will be raised up on wings of eagles.”*** (Isa. 40:31) Jesus had earlier promised that he would be raised from the dead but few, except His Mother, truly believed him—until he showed himself to them on Easter morning! Death has been overcome for those who believe that He is truly God and truly alive. Alleluia! This is great news! Do you believe in Him and this good news? If yes, trust in Him by seeking Him and waiting on Him each day and you too will be raised up and will see Him! **Come, Lord Jesus; come into my home and heart. We have been cleansed ahead of time by your own Mother working in us and through us.** Jesus said to His apostles ***“Whoever receives you, receives me.”*** (Mt. 10:40) Whoever receives Mary, receives Jesus!

Jesus was born in a cave, was buried in a cave and rose from the dead to new life in a cave. (7) This symbolism reminds us of a seed in the ground being born into a new life, seeking to see the sunshine and grow to become all it was created to be. It also reminds us that when God comes into our world, He comes to us from within us, ***Emmanuel, God is with us!***

Mary Magdalene and Mary, sister of Mother Mary and wife of Clopas, had taken Our Blessed Mother into their hearts—they were together at the foot of the cross grieving His suffering and death just hours before. It is likely they stayed together while in Jerusalem for the Passover. This Easter morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the sister of Mother Mary, encountered Jesus in his astonishing new form before any of His apostles did. Though they already knew Our Lord personally, in John’s version of the Resurrection account Mary Magdalene didn’t recognize Him in his resurrected body! She thought He was the gardener. (Jn. 20:11-18) When we take Mary into our heart and home like St. Joseph did, we may not recognize Our Lord’s presence right away. However, if we stop and wait and reflect in prayer, we may suddenly see Him in our lives—at a time and in a form we least expect! God loves surprises!

Mother Mary would have been the first to see her resurrected Son on Easter Morning, but heaven has hidden that sweet reunion from us for now. Instead, the Gospel writers focus on the reunion of a grieving Mary Magdalene and Mary, the sister of Mother Mary. They loved the Lord and sought Him out, for which they were rewarded. All of us can find Him if we seek him and wait and watch for Him with Mother Mary's help. Trust that He will reveal Himself.

Another scripture tells us of a couple of disciples from the community leaving Jerusalem for Emmaus on Easter Morning who were downhearted because they thought Jesus was gone for good. (Lk. 24:13-35) As they walked on the road, they met a stranger whom they did not recognize. It was Jesus in disguise, and as he walked with them, He explained the scriptures, showing how the Messiah had to suffer and die. As they stopped for the night and broke bread together at Emmaus, He vanished from their sight, and only then did they know that it was Jesus. They were so excited that they hurried all the way back to Jerusalem to tell the apostles and disciples this good news. Here is yet another scripture showing disciples who knew Mary and the Upper Room community experiencing God in a surprisingly new way: as the resurrected Lord who was an unrecognizable traveler. They instantly became evangelists, spreading this good news to all they met. No doubt, the first person they would have been seeking to tell would have been His grieving mother, Mary.

Even St. Ann and St. Joachim, Mary's deceased parents, may have met their grandson, Jesus, in a surprisingly new way on Easter morning when He rose from the dead in His glorified body. Matthew's Gospel reports that many previously departed saints rose from the dead and were seen walking around Jerusalem that morning and perhaps Mary's parents would have been among them. (Mt. 27:51-53) St. Paul also tells us that 500 people in one group witnessed the resurrected Jesus after he was raised from the dead. (1 Cor. 15:3-8) **Have hope in your heart that you will meet Him in a surprisingly new way.**

Consecration Principle: Guard your heart! One of the most profound principles of Marian Consecration is the discovery that the human

heart is the doorway to the Divine. Whatever we hold dearest in our hearts will not remain there but appear in the world around us and to those closest to us through our good works and Divine Graces. When God came to earth to save us, He purposely chose a sinless woman's motherly heart to enter our world. The Lord is with her. He desired to be in the Blessed Virgin Mary's heart where He knew He would be received in the most loving way. From her childhood, Mary held God in her heart with a most ardent love. Through Mary's heart and womb, Jesus physically appeared in the world as Mary shared her precious gift to all whom she loved, starting with St. Joseph. When we give our hearts to Mary, not only do we spread her virtues to our world, but we also spread Jesus' love to those around us. St. Teresa of Calcutta would pray "Mary, lend me your heart," and "Mary, keep me in your most pure heart." (1) We must, however, carefully guard our hearts, as evil can enter our world through the same doorway! If we harbor hate, unforgiveness or revenge in our hearts, it will also manifest itself in the world around us in tragic ways. This is how evils such as terrorism start and spread. We will discuss this in more detail in Week 18. *St. Joseph, help us Guard our hearts!*

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390)** "The most powerful means we have for drawing down the benevolence of Mary toward us is a virtue. That virtue is love for our neighbor." (3)
2. **St. John Eudes (1601-1680)** "Live in Mary's heart, love what she loves, and desire what she desires. Then you are sure to have peace, joy and holiness." (3)
3. **St. John Vianney (1786-1859)** "Humility is to the various virtues what the chain is to the rosary: take away the chain and the beads are scattered. Remove humility and all the virtues vanish." (12)

Virtue Highlight: The women are practicing the virtues of diligence, obedience and persistence in seeking to prepare the Lord's body properly as the Law required, and there was no time to do this on Good Friday

evening. They are also doing a Corporal Work of Mercy, burying the dead. (appendix)

Commandment of the Week: Jesus' new commandment: ***“My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*** (Jn. 13:33-35) Our Catechism teaches us “this commandment summarizes all the others and expresses His entire will.” (6, #2822)

The new commandment, ***“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another,”*** also happens to express the desire of every mother’s heart for her immediate family, but most especially, the desire of Our Blessed Mother’s Immaculate Heart for all of us in the family of God.

Be merciful to others in imitation of Mary, Mother of Mercy. Indeed, a mother spends her day doing sacrificial acts of mercy for all members of her family. As we said earlier in week two, Our Lord Himself emphatically spoke to St. Faustina: ***“I demand from you deeds of mercy which are to arise out of love for me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse yourself from it.”*** (42) Mary “proceeded in haste” to the house of St. Elizabeth to do a three-month long act of mercy immediately upon learning that both she and Elizabeth were with child. We all should be as quick to serve our neighbors; it doesn’t take long to discern the need for us to be merciful and it is always the Will of God. This truth is nicely summed up in the traditional hymn: “Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.” (32) (The author’s third grade music teacher translated those lyrics from the original Latin—they are timeless wisdom!)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: What good things or bad things do you find yourself holding in your heart?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade aloud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Glorious Mysteries

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children. / Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the promise of our baptism. We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to you, / that we may love God better, / and live not for ourselves, / but for Christ, your Son, / and that we may see Him and serve Him in others.

By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of Perpetual Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, / the perfect Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life and in death, / we may belong to your Divine Son for all eternity. (33)

Notes:

Week 17

The Ascension into Heaven

Fruit of the Spirit: Hope (10)

Scripture: *The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven.*

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. (Acts 1:6-12)

The Ascension of Jesus.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs. (Mk. 16:19-20)

The Commissioning of the Disciples.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt. 28:16-20)

Reflection: **Go!** Jesus was sent from the Father and must return home to the Father. We are also sent here by the Father and must also return home to His loving arms. We are only here for a while and so we must start each day with our final destination in mind. How do we keep our focus on our most important objective? The Church teaches us to order our day with a prayer routine so we can keep Heaven in focus. In the morning, start with a Morning Offering of your entire day to Jesus through Mary. The traditional Morning Offering prayer or one of the daily Marian Consecration prayers in this book are great examples. In the evening, the daily examination of conscience is very critical. Before you fall asleep, go through your day with Mary and the Holy Spirit asking how to improve your Christian life. Ask for forgiveness from Jesus for any sins and thank God the Father for all of your day—the good and the bad. It is all a gift from your Father in heaven and you can trust Him that it is designed to help you get home to heaven safely. The third essential prayer component is the Rosary; start with a decade each day and let Mary grow it. This can be done anytime in your day, and can be combined with exercise, driving or many other daily duties, which allow a time of quiet prayer. The Rosary is what Mary asks of us and through it we will maintain our growth in the Holy Spirit all of our life. We will then become so much more knowledgeable about the New Testament Scriptures. Refer to the 12 Promises of those who pray the Rosary in the appendix of this book. Remember: prayer combined with sacrifice is most powerful!

Why did Jesus leave us? Since His ascension into heaven, He has not been visible to us. But, His power and presence has been made available to us by means of the Holy Spirit through others ***“while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with accompanying signs.”*** (Mk. 16:19-20) We can say that as he arose into heaven, Jesus didn’t just leave the community in the hands of Peter, James and John, but also in Mary’s. We must be proactive in sacrificially loving our neighbor in order to show God that we love him, and in order to receive His Divine love. He is camouflaged! So how do we follow Jesus when we can’t see Him? We discuss this more in our next three Mysteries.

Consecration Principle: Give Mary everything! As a perfect mother, Mary will make sure you have all that you need through the hand of God. In all our Principles of Consecration, we always go back to family life and lessons. God created the family to model heaven and to help us get to heaven. A husband gives all his resources to provide for his wife who, in turn, provides all for their family. The children likewise bring all their gifts to Mom for safekeeping. Family members trust Mom; they know that she loves every person in the family and knows what each one needs. We do the same for Mary. We who are consecrated to her give her every thought, word and deed each day. She accepts each gift from us, adds her prayer to it, and offers both gifts to Jesus. In this exchange, she magnifies our gift. Jesus gave all of himself for Mary on the cross and in the Eucharist, so when we give Mary all, we are imitating Jesus. Just as the mother is the center of the newborn child’s life, so too she desires to be in the middle of every aspect of our lifelong journey. Are mothers ever done with us? Never!

Many ask if giving all to Mary hinders us from giving all to God? No! Jesus gave everything, even his life, to Mary and to each of us and simultaneously, to God His Father. When we love Mary as our spiritual Mother and “Perpetual Helper,” God receives that love. ***“Whatever you do for the least of these you do for me.”*** (Mt. 25:35-40) Mothers give all of themselves to their families; they do

not shortchange anyone in the family. *“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”* (Rom. 8:28) God wants us to have a spiritual mother and to learn how to love her and how to pray to her—just as our mom taught us how to love her as she loved us. God has ordained that no one gets into this life without the intimate, sacrificial love of a mother and so it follows that He also desires that no one enters eternal life without the intimate, sacrificial love of our heavenly Mother. Pope John Paul II adopted the Papal motto, *“Totus Tuus, Maria,”* which is Latin for “Totally Yours, Mary.”

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. Methodius (815-885)** “Jesus said: Honor your Father and your Mother. Therefore, in order that He might observe His own decree, He gave all grace and honor to His Mother!” (3)
2. **St. Marie de Montfort (1673-1716)** “The most Holy Virgin... who never lets herself to be outdone in love and liberality, seeing that we give ourselves entirely to her, meets us in the same spirit. She also gives her whole self, and gives it in an unspeakable manner, to him who gives all to her.” (15)
3. **St. John Vianney (1786-1859)** “It is impossible to meditate with devotion upon the mysteries of the Rosary and live in a state of sin.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Jesus is practicing the virtue of Union with God’s Will as He ascends into God’s holy presence in heaven and says goodbye to his beloved disciples. He will send the Holy Spirit to them—and to us soon!

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from Our Lord) *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who*

seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Mt. 7:7-12)

With Jesus ascended into heaven, how do we connect with Him when we need Him? Seek Him and you will find Him! He is still present to us and within us through the Holy Spirit. He still presents Himself to us in surprisingly new ways—and at unexpected times. We do not need to worry about how to seek Him in just the right way. Just call to Him, seek His presence and wisdom and patiently wait for Him to respond. ***Jesus, I Trust in You!*** He will not make you wait long. Those of us who have invited Mary into our heart and home can expect to discover His presence in new and unexpected ways. He is new every morning and loves to surprise us, especially when He sees us trusting in Him and waiting on Him. ***“The LORD’s acts of mercy are not exhausted, His compassion is not spent; They are renewed each morning—great is your faithfulness!”*** (Lam. 3:22-23)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: When have you sought the Lord and found him unexpectedly?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Glorious Mysteries

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children./ Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the promise of our baptism.

We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to you, / that we may love God better, / and live

*not for ourselves, / but for Christ, your Son, / and that we
may see Him and serve Him in others.*

*By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of
Perpetual Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, /
the perfect Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life
and in death, / we may belong to your Divine Son for all
eternity. (33)*

Notes:

Week 18

Descent of the Holy Spirit

Fruit of the Spirit: Love of God (10)

Scripture: Acts

The Coming of the Spirit.

When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:13-14)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are

speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? (Acts 2:1-8)

Reflection: *As you prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, invite the Holy Spirit into your heart and wait for Him to come in a surprisingly new way.* As Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, ***“for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*** (Acts 1:5) On Pentecost Sunday, 50 days after Easter Sunday, the eleven apostles and a number of disciples, both men and women, were gathered around Mother Mary in the upper room of a home. This was the same room in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with them (the first Mass), and it was where He had appeared to them many times since He rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, came down upon them all, in tongues of flames and wind, giving them a new zeal and a multitude of spiritual gifts. This imparted on them the passion to go to the ends of the earth proclaiming the Good News of Jesus’ resurrection. Every person in the upper room had taken Mary into their heart and in this moment, each received **St. Joseph’s Secret Marian Blessing**. They each met God in a very personal and intimate way. The Spirit confirmed to all that Jesus was still truly with each of them as He had promised. ***God is with us, Emmanuel!***

This happened with people gathered together in a home, in the large upper room. As the Christian community grew, they became too numerous to meet in a home and eventually built churches. We gather as Catholics in our churches to celebrate Mass weekly and give thanks to God the Father by offering the Eucharistic sacrifice Jesus taught us at the Last Supper. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church, and now it explodes with new growth. Jesus taught His apostles: ***“Whoever receives you, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives the one who sent me.”*** (Mt. 10:40) Everyone in this room had received Mary as Mother, and were thus prepared to receive the Holy Spirit.

This church was formed upon the two great commandments which are a perfect description of the Immaculate Heart of Mother Mary. Thus, Mary loves Jesus as herself in a perfect way because He was totally formed within her by the power of the Holy Spirit without any contribution by man. In addition, she loves the Lord her God with her whole heart, whole soul, whole mind and whole strength because her Son, whom she has united her heart with, is her Lord and Savior and her God. Importantly, there is no contradiction or competition between these two commandments within her heart because her neighbor Jesus and her Lord Jesus are one and the same person. So, when Mary heard Jesus teach, ***“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”*** (Mk. 9:37) her motherly heart understood perfectly. Pentecost also allows us to highlight the unique person that is Mother Mary. She is daughter of God the Father, mother of God the Son and spouse of God the Holy Spirit. (7) She is not divine but a human with a unique and intimate personal relationship with each member of the Holy Trinity. Mary is surrounded by God and united in heart with God! We could summarize this more concisely by saying that **Mary loves Jesus, the Son of God, as herself and with her whole self.** This is a mother’s love for her child, and it is the foundation of our Christian faith and a reflection of the two great commandments.

Each of you will receive the Holy Spirit in a surprisingly new way at your Confirmation. If you are open, you will also receive unique spiritual gifts (appendix) and experience spiritual fruits (appendix) of the Spirit, which will grow and mature over the course of your life. The Spirit comes upon us first at Baptism to form us in the image of Christ. At Confirmation, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit is given to empower us to mature spiritually so we can minister to others to help the Body of Christ (the Church) make disciples. Prepare for your Confirmation Day with your daily decade and give everything over to Mary as a sincere gift of yourself. Give her permission daily and she will unite you with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Jewish tradition, men and women could not pray together in the Temple. Now, in the Upper Room, they are all praying

together in the same Spirit with Mother Mary. Men are inspired by the sincere and heartfelt devotion of women who truly love the Lord, especially those women who know and model sacrificial love and suffering. Likewise, many women are inspired by the passion and zeal of men who love the Lord ardently and who will travel to the ends of the earth and even die for Him. Each of us express our love for God differently. As you eventually leave home, you will experience these significant graces of Pentecost with others who gather weekly to praise, worship and thank the Lord together in prayer and song. Invite Mary and the Holy Spirit to be with you in all your Christian gatherings and get ready to be surprised!

Consecration Principle: Whatever we hold in our hearts will spill out into the world around us. The Pentecost Mystery is very much like the Annunciation Mystery. At the Annunciation, Mary invited God into her heart and home, and He came to her through the Holy Spirit in a surprising way—as a fetus in her womb, which she fully experienced after waiting for Him nine long months! Now, the early Christian community are in prayer together with Mary inviting the Holy Spirit into their hearts and homes and they are each receiving God in surprising and new ways. This gift from heaven is coming down in a similar way but with surprisingly different manifestations, giving each different spiritual gifts. There is both a unity of hearts as well as a diversity of gifts. They all had to wait 50 days for this promise of Jesus to be fulfilled but it was worth the wait. This is the grace and spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit. *God is with us, Emmanuel!*

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “Mary brings to the Upper Room at Pentecost the ‘new motherhood’ which became her ‘part’ at the foot of the Cross. This motherhood is to remain in her, and at the same time it is to be transferred from her as a ‘model’ to the whole Church, which will be revealed to the world on the day of the descent of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit).” (34)

2. **Vatican Document *Lumen Gentium* (1964)** “We see the apostles before the day of Pentecost ‘persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren,’ and Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation.” (16)
3. **St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716)** “When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in a soul, He flies to it. He enters therein and communicates Himself to that soul in abundance.” (3)

Virtue Highlight: The apostles and disciples are practicing obedience to Jesus’ command by gathering in prayer in the Upper Room and thus experiencing the Holy Spirit upon them and within them. ***Emmanuel, God is with us!***

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from Our Lord) “...***you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.***” (Acts 1:8) When we suddenly meet God in a new way, we must respond like the woman at the well, like Mary Magdalene after the resurrection and like the two who were walking to Emmaus: “They exclaimed to their friends, ***“I have seen the Lord!”*** This is true evangelization as it is making the good news known. Whether they believe you or not, say, ***“I have met the Lord in a surprisingly new way.”*** Some will believe, and they just might discover Him in their own way. Share the good news! Perhaps that’s why the Angel says to the disciples after Jesus’ Ascension: “... ***why are you standing there looking up to heaven?”***” (Acts 1:11) Your personal and unique experience of meeting God is yours alone to share and unless you share it no one will ever know your personal miracle story or His love and mercy for you.

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Question: What special gifts would you wish to be given at Confirmation that could be used to build up the faith of your community? Ask God for those gifts now

together with your Sponsor. Many times, but not always, these will magnify your natural talents.

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the latest Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Glorious Mysteries

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children./ Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the promise of our baptism.

We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to you, / that we may love God better, / and live not for ourselves, / but for Christ, your Son, / and that we may see Him and serve Him in others.

By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of Perpetual Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, / the perfect Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life and in death, / we may belong to your Divine Son for all eternity. (33)

Notes

Week 19

Assumption of Mary into Heaven

Fruit of the Spirit: Grace of a Happy Death (10)

Catholic Catechism: “Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death.” (6,#966; 16,35)

(Byzantine Liturgy) The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son’s Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: *In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death.* (Feast of the Dormition*, August 15th)

*dormition means the “falling asleep” of Mary

Reflection: Strive to love your Heavenly Mother as she loves you and she will teach you how to love God and neighbor. Mary lived with St. John the Evangelist the rest of her earthly life, probably in Ephesus. Each person at Pentecost was given unique gifts with which to build up the Kingdom of God. Those who learned a new language went off to that country, typically two by two. Mary and John were led by the Spirit to build up the Christian community in Ephesus. While John would most likely have been the pastor, we wonder what Mary’s role would have been.

Every mom likes to tell stories about their child so we imagine she was constantly speaking to others, especially new Christians, about her Jesus and, of course, she would be doing many works of mercy with others in the community. It is thought that St. Luke the Evangelist learned the details of the early life of Jesus from both Mary and St. John at Ephesus. ***“Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us...”*** (Lk. 1:1-2)

All men and women need to learn how to love from the sacrificial loving heart of a mother in order to clearly see God, love God and know God. This is why God gave each of us a mother; it is His Will for us to learn the second great commandment from mom before we learn the first great commandment. While our own mothers may have done a great job in teaching us how to love sacrificially, God considers this basic training in His School of Love to be so critical to our salvation that He also gave us His own mother to help us continue to learn all throughout our lives in humility. Our spiritual and emotional maturity depends on this training, most especially as youth prepare to leave home to go out into the world as adults.

Mary, after she died, or fell asleep, was taken from her grave into heaven. How do we know? The earliest Christian Pilgrims wanted to see her body immediately upon her death and went to visit her tomb, but when her tomb was opened, she was not there—just as Jesus’ body was not there on Easter morning. It was necessary for Mary, who was without any stain of sin, to be raised into Heaven because Jesus Our Lord is always with Her. Mary was also taken to heaven so she can be a true mother to all. From heaven, she can minister to every person on earth, personally and simultaneously! She also needs her physical body in heaven; she has appeared very many times in her body since then in every country of the world, as a mother, prophetess, teacher, mentor and personal trainer to all who will humbly listen to her and love her tenderly. Even today, she is appearing to many—will we listen to her? She wants to help us become all that God wants us to

become, that is, to become a saint. All she needs is our permission, our yes, daily. Like any good mother, she loves us totally and wants our total love in return. Also, she is never finished with us! Being united in love with her will bring God into our life in surprisingly new ways. Say yes to Mary today, and every morning when you awake—you will never regret it! Whoever receives Mary, receives Jesus—He promised!

Consecration Principle: *“It is only through love of neighbor that we can know the love of God.”* (Pope Benedict XVI) The Second Great Commandment is a required prerequisite training to learn the First Great Commandment. A mother’s earliest responsibility for her infant is to sacrificially love her child and teach him or her how to reciprocate that sacrificial love. In this way, she is loving her neighbor as herself and mentoring her child in how to imitate the second great commandment. She is very proactive in providing all that her infant needs, and she desires that her child be just as proactive in loving her in return. How often do you see young moms asking their child for kisses, smiles and songs and other acts of affection? As we love Mary proactively, she reciprocates that love and our united hearts grow closer and closer together. She teaches us to speak to God and to pray her rosary. We learn the second great commandment first in order to learn the first great commandment well: To Love God above all. We know that what we do in love to the least of these we do to Our Lord. Eventually we will become great lovers of Jesus Christ because Mary mentored us in the virtues of Love, Humility, Obedience and Trust.

Witness of the Saints:

1. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “Mary is on the road that goes from the Father to humanity, as the mother who gives everyone her Savior Son. At the same time, she is on the road that men must take to go to the Father through Christ in the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:18) (36)
2. **St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716)** “True devotion to the Blessed Virgin is *holy*. It leads us to avoid sin and imitate the

virtues of Mary: her deep humility, lively faith, ready obedience, continuous prayer, universal mortification, divine purity, ardent charity, heroic patience, angelic sweetness and heavenly wisdom.” (3)

3. **St. John Paul II (1920-2005)** “You show your devotion to Mary by celebrating her Feasts, by daily prayer in her honor and especially the rosary, and by imitating her life. May that devotion grow stronger every day.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: Mary was taken, body and soul, into Heaven. From there, she is a mother and personal trainer to each and all, without taking anything away from any other soul. She is, at the same time, Queen of Heaven and Earth, reigning together with her son Jesus. They are united in heart always. This unity of their hearts is the power source of Marian Consecration and of all virtue. Let us unite our hearts with theirs!

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from Our Lord) “*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*” (Mt. 28:19-20)

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Have you shared anything about what you have been learning these last 18 weeks with a friend? How was it received, were you affirmed or persecuted?

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Repeat the Daily Consecration Prayer every morning.

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Glorious Mysteries

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With

hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children. / Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the promise of our baptism.

We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to you, / that we may love God better, / and live not for ourselves, / but for Christ, your Son, / and that we may see Him and serve Him in others.

By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of Perpetual Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, / the perfect Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life and in death, / we may belong to your Divine Son for all eternity. (33)

Notes:

Week 20

Crowning of Mary Queen of Heaven

Fruit of the Spirit: Trust in Mary's Intercession (10)

***Scripture:** "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.*

She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth.

Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems.

Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth.

She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne." (Rev. 11:19-12:5)

***Reflection:** So why does St. John the Evangelist mention the Ark of the Covenant in this passage about Mary? The historical Ark was a consecrated tabernacle that contained three highly revered items: the Staff of Aaron the High Priest; a container of manna bread that fed the Israelites in the*

desert; and the tablets of the Ten Commandments, given to Moses by God. Theologians see Mary as the new Ark, because when she was pregnant, she contained within herself Jesus the Messiah and New High Priest who is the Eternal Bread of Life and the Eternal Word of God. We have been noting that the great commandments, which summarize the law and the prophets can be seen in the heart of mothers, most perfectly in the heart of Mother Mary. This is also consistent with the symbolism of Mary as the new Ark since the Ten Commandments were in the Ark. ***“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us.”*** (Is. 7:14)

Historically, the Ark traveled with the Israelites and was always with them except when it was taken into battle to win victory over Israel’s enemies. In a similar way, we carry Mary in our hearts and homes to triumph over the enemies of Christianity, such as 16th Century Christians did at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

All of her life, Mary was being prepared for her eternal destiny: to become the new and eternal Eve, Queen of Heaven and Earth. You are also being prepared for your eternal destiny. Only God knows the great things He has in store for you and the only way you will reach that glorious destiny is to continually seek to love God and neighbor and obey His commandments. Mother Mary, who is sinless and the perfect Christian, will help you; turn to her and she will lead you. By consecrating yourself to Mary you will also be set aside for a divine purpose, just as she was. Love Mary proactively and she will love you and do the rest with her graces. She will become your personal trainer and companion in helping you become a Saint and you will have her as your loving mother for all eternity.

Consecration Principle: Be Faithful to Prayer and Praise. Mother Teresa gave her Sisters of Mercy a list of duties each soul has to do for Mother Mary and a corresponding list of duties Mary does for us. One of our duties is “Faithfulness to Prayer.” (8) One of Mary’s primary duties is to share her experience of prayer and praise with us. The rest of these duties are listed in the appendix

of this book. If you are Consecrated to Mary and endowed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, you will learn how to pray, especially the Rosary, from Mary. This is very pleasing to her. Every mother teaches her child how to speak her language and when we pray the Rosary, we are learning from her how to speak heaven's language. Be proactive in praying her Rosary!

Witness of the Saints:

1. **Pope St. John XXIII (1881-1963)** “The Immaculate Conception also entails sacrifice on the part of Mary. Therefore, we cannot consider ourselves favored children of the Lord and His Mother if our lives know nothing of sacrifice.” (3)
2. **St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231)** “The Blessed Virgin once said to me, ‘You think that I obtained grace and virtues without effort. Know that I received no graces from God without great labor, constant prayer, ardent desires, and many tears and mortifications.’” (3)
3. **St. Teresa of Lisieux (1873-1897)** “I feel that I say the rosary so poorly! I make a concentrated effort to meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary, but I am unable to focus my concentration. For a long time, I was disconsolate about my lack of devotion, which astonished me since I so much love the Blessed Virgin that it ought to have been easy to recite the prayers in her honor that so much pleased her. But now I am less sad, for I think that the Queen of Heaven, who is also my Mother, ought to see my good intentions and that she is pleased with them.” (12)

Virtue Highlight: As Queen of Heaven and Earth, Mary dispenses all graces from God to souls. She is the Mother of all virtue and she is waiting for your yes, your invitation for Her to come as a handmaid into your heart. She will teach you everything you need, at every stage of your life. She is Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Learn from her how to love her and love God.

Commandment of the Week: (This is not a formal Commandment, but an instruction from The Lord) ***“Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy; for I am the LORD, your God. Keep my statutes, and do them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”*** (Lv. 20:7-8) Two commands are given here, the second being to obey the commandments which we have been discussing on our journey toward Confirmation. The first is a call to Consecrate yourself, which in this context means to set yourself aside for a holy purpose. Consecrate means to make holy or to dedicate to a higher purpose. The “secr” part of the word consecrate comes from the Latin sacer “sacred.” Our Lord spoke of our being Consecrated during the Last Supper:

“Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth. I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” (Jn. 17: 17-21)

St. Paul spoke of the meaning of being consecrated in his letter to St. Timothy: ***“If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work. So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart.”*** (2 Tim. 2:21-22)

Those of us who consecrate ourselves to Jesus through the hands of Mary re-consecrate ourselves daily using a short consecration prayer like you will find in the appendix. Memorize it! This serves as a hug for Mother Mary each morning and a reminder to ourselves that we are giving her permission to continue to raise the BAR and bring us to her Son Jesus. We are also offering all of our day to Jesus through her hands. We also re-consecrate ourselves yearly, usually on our anniversary date as a way to rededicate ourselves to her service. Our Mother is never done with us—mothers never are!

Sharing our faith with sponsor and/or parent: Question: What special natural gifts do you have that you can use to do deeds of mercy for your family or neighbors? Thank God for your gifts and ask him to show you how to offer them to others. Plan together how you will celebrate your Confirmation and Consecration to Mary (See appendix for ideas).

Assignment: Read the chapter together and pray at least one decade out loud every day with sponsor or family over each of the next seven days. Offer your daily rosary as a proactive and sacrificial gift from you to Mary--she loves it and will bless you. Repeat the latest Daily Consecration Prayer every morning:

Daily Consecration Prayer for the Five Glorious Mysteries

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children. / Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the promise of our baptism.

We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to you, / that we may love God better, / and live not for ourselves, / but for Christ, your Son, / and that we may see Him and serve Him in others.

By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of Perpetual Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, / the perfect Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life and in death, / we may belong to your Divine Son for all eternity. (33)

Final Pledge

I, _____ pledge to you, Mother Mary, that I will faithfully invite you into my heart each morning and pray a portion of your Most Holy Rosary each day.

Your Son taught us a new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” I ask you, Mother, to teach me how to love you the way you love me. I desire to learn, with your help, how to love God and Neighbor according to His Divine Will and fully obey His commandments. Thank you for being my personal trainer all during my life.

I pray this in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____

Signed by Sponsor: _____

His Amazing Love

At Pentecost, the apostles were “*astounded, and in amazement*” (*Acts 2:7*)

When we experience God in a surprisingly new way our response is **amazement**. St. John Paul II wrote: “In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say the Good News. It is also called Christianity.” (*Redemptor Hominus, 1979*)

Consecration Day

Once you have journeyed through these twenty weeks of preparation, set aside a day to formally Consecrate yourself to Our Blessed Mother. This can be done with family and Sponsor, or together with your Confirmation class. This ceremony doesn't need to be long. Do it right after your Confirmation or on any other day that is special to Our Blessed Mother. Mary's feast days are always good candidates and are listed in the appendix.

Bring some flowers for her and recite the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Consecration prayer above for Week 20 together with your sponsor or family or classmates. All can say this prayer together. Put the date of your consecration in your book and sign it. Keep this book as a prayer book for life. In it, you can record all the future special graces that you will experience from Mother Mary. This book will become a keepsake your whole life.

Signed and Dated by Candidate: _____

Signed by Sponsor: _____

After Consecration Day

The Saints chose the habit of offering to Mary a short Consecration Prayer each morning to remind themselves of their decision to give Mary permission daily. It is similar to giving Mother Mary a hug each day. You can pick one of the several Consecration prayers found in the appendix.

In addition, the Saints would re-consecrate themselves to Mary on the same anniversary each year by going through a 33-Day Consecration Program such as the excellent one offered by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC. "33 Days to Morning Glory." (1)

Farewell

Thank you, Candidate and Sponsor, for taking the time to draw close to Mother Mary and the Holy Spirit during your Confirmation journey. I wish to share with you some farewell moments by Moses, St. Paul, Our Lord and St. Maximilian Kolbe. These are reminiscent of commencement speeches, typically given to groups graduating from high school or college. Enjoy and ponder these as you continue to live your Marian Consecration daily. Farewell. I hope we will all meet in Heaven.

Yours in Christ, Paul Cranley

Moses' Farewell

“See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil.

If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

If, however, your heart turns away and you do not obey, but are led astray and bow down to other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.

Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.” (Dt. 30:15-20)

Jesus’ Farewell to His Disciples (St. John)

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

This I command you: love one another.” (Jn.15:9-17)

Jesus’ Farewell from St. Luke in Acts

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.” (Acts 1:1-11)

St. Paul’s Farewell in Ephesians 4:1-6

“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love,

striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call;

one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

St. Maximilian Kolbe’s Farewell to each of us

“In Mary’s name, I say this to each one of you. She loves you, each and every one of you. She loves you very much. She loves you at every moment and without any exceptions”. (1)

Appendix

Prayer to St. Joseph To Receive Marian Blessing

St. Joseph, at the command of the Archangel Gabriel, you invited Mary into your heart and home. You soon discovered God in a surprisingly new way—as your newborn infant son Jesus. I wish to ask Mary into my heart and home. Show me how to love her as you did so I too will experience God anew in my life. Finally, protect me and my family from all evil as you protected your Holy Family. Amen.

Bring Mary Flowers

Every mother is delighted when those she loves give the proactive gift of flowers, especially on special occasions such as Mother's Day, Valentine's Day or her birthday. Mary also loves this thoughtful gift, no matter how plain and simple the flowers are—even flowering weeds! She delights in this gift and will let you know that she loves it. Flowers are especially significant in that they don't last very long and soon wilt. This is a reminder to her children that devotion to her Heart requires frequent refreshing, a reminder to pray to her and give her permission daily.

Honor Pictures and Statues of Mary

Honoring a picture or statue of Mary or of the Holy Family in your home is a daily reminder of your Heavenly Family. Place flowers before the image frequently to remind you to keep your relationship with Jesus, Mary and Joseph fresh! In our home we circulate a statue of Mary among each of our four children's families for 12 months.

Each Christmas we give the statue to the next family and share the many blessings experienced during the previous year.

The Special Value of Group Rosaries

Praying the Rosary is the most powerful prayer after the Holy Mass. Praying it within a group can add to its importance and effect. Traditionally this is done by dividing the first half of each prayer, recited by one person or group, and the second half being recited by another person or group.

This discipline can help us better focus on the Mysteries and can also spread devotion to the Holy Rosary.

Prayer to Our Mother of Perpetual Help (45)

Mother of Perpetual Help, you have been blessed and favored by God. You became not only the Mother of the Redeemer, but Mother of the redeemed as well. We come to you today as your loving children. Watch over us and take care of us. As you held the child Jesus in your loving arms, so take us in your arms. Be a mother ready at every moment to help us. For God who is mighty has done great things for you, and God's mercy is from age to age on those who love God. Intercede for us, dear Mother, in obtaining pardon for our sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace always to call upon you, Mother of Perpetual Help. (45)

Traditional Daily Consecration Prayer (24)

My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you;
and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this
day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve.

Since I am yours, my good mother,
keep me, guard me, as your property and possession. Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Consecration Prayer (33)

Immaculate Virgin Mary, / Mother of God and Mother of the
Church, / you are also our Mother of Perpetual Help. / With
hearts full of Love for you, / we consecrate ourselves to your
Immaculate Heart, / so that we may be your devoted children. /
Obtain for us true sorrow for our sins, / and fidelity to the
promise of our baptism.

We consecrate our minds and hearts to you, / that we may always
do the will of our Heavenly Father. / We consecrate our lives to
you, / that we may love God better, / and live not for ourselves,
/ but for Christ, your Son, / and that we may see Him and
serve Him in others.

By this humble act of consecration, / dear Mother of Perpetual
Help, / we pledge to model our lives on you, / the perfect
Christian, / so that consecrated to you in life and in death, / we
may belong to your Divine Son for all eternity.

Morning Offering Consecration Prayer (44)

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my
prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions
of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions
of all our associates, and in particular, for the intentions of the
Holy Father. Amen.

Fr. Fehrenbach Consecration Prayer (3)

“O Mary, I entrust myself into your hands. I give you my body and
my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. Help

me to love Jesus above all things. O Mary, I offer myself entirely to God through your hands and after your example. I accept whatever He Wills for me and ask you to keep me faithful to this resolve.”

(Fr. Charles G. Fehrenbach, C.S.S.R)

St. Don Bosco's Prayer to Mary (37)

Most Holy Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, how sweet it is to
come to your feet

imploing your perpetual help. If earthly mothers cease not to
remember their children,

How can you, the most loving of all mothers forget me?
Grant then to me, I implore you, your perpetual help in all my
necessities,

in every sorrow, and especially in all my temptations.
I ask for your unceasing help for all who are now suffering.

Help the weak, cure the sick, convert sinners.

Grant through your intercessions many vocations to the
religious life.

Obtain for us, O Mary, Help of Christians,
That having invoked you on earth we may love and eternally thank
you in heaven.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange
gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Act of Contrition (37)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I
detest all my sins,
because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of
hell, but most of all
because they offend you, my God, Who are all good
and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess
my sins, to do penance,
and amend my life. Amen.

Corporal Works of Mercy (6)

Feed the Hungry

Give Drink to the Thirsty

Shelter the Homeless

Visit the Sick

Visit the Prisoners

Bury the Dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy (6)

Counseling the Doubtful

Instructing the Ignorant

Admonishing the Sinner

Comforting the Sorrowful
Forgiving Injuries
Bearing Wrongs Patiently
Praying for the Living and the Dead

Celebrating Mary's Feast Days (1)

Mary has many Feast days throughout the year. For those who are consecrated to her, remember to celebrate these days in various special ways. Here is a list of her most well-known Feasts:

Mother of God, Jan. 1
Presentation of the Lord, Feb. 2
Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11
The Annunciation, March 25
Our Lady of Fatima, May 13
The Visitation, May 31
Immaculate Heart, Sat. after Corpus Christi
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, July 16
The Assumption, Aug. 15
Queenship of Mary, Aug. 22
Nativity of Mary, Sept. 8
Holy Name of Mary, Sept. 12
Our Lady of Sorrows, Sept. 15
Our Lady of the Rosary, Oct. 7
Presentation of Mary, Nov. 21

Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12

Christmas Day, Dec. 25

“You show your devotion to Mary by celebrating her feasts, by daily prayer in her honor, especially the rosary, and by imitating her life. May that devotion grow stronger every day.” (St. John Paul II) (12)

Memorare (44)

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

Magnificat (44)

My soul magnifies the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid;
for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;
Because He who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His name;
and for generation upon generation is His mercy,
to those who fear Him.
He has shown might with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and has exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent away empty.
He has given help to Israel, His servant, mindful of His mercy
Even as he spoke to our father, to Abraham and to his posterity
forever.

Angelus (1)

The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary,
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done to me according to Your word. Hail Mary.

And the Word was made flesh.
And dwelt among us. Hail Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

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

Let us pray:
Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord, Your Grace into our hearts.
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ,
Your 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. (St. Bonaventure)

“The Angelus prayer, like the rosary, should be for every Christian, and even more for Christian families, a spiritual oasis in the course of the day, to find courage and confidence.” (JP II)(12)

Guardian Angel Prayer (37)

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom
God's love commits me here,
ever this day (night), be at my side, to light
and guard, rule and guide. Amen.

St. Michael the Archangel Prayer (37)

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection
against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke
him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host,
by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who
prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

“Raise the BAR” Examination of Conscience

1. First, **B** stands for **Blessings**: Review your day with Mary and the Holy Spirit and thank God for every blessing and every cross.
2. Second, **A** stands for **Ask**: Ask Mary's help to identify faults and ask Jesus for forgiveness.
3. Third, **R** stands for **Resolve**: Resolve to do better tomorrow and say a good Act of Contrition. Go to Sacramental Confession monthly.

Spend five minutes every day asking Mary to help you do this examine well and do it faithfully. This habit keeps us humble, cleansed, and completely bathed in Divine Mercy.

Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit (39)

1) Charity. The Holy Spirit is Love and gives us the infused theological virtue of charity to prefer God over everyone and

everything. We desire this loving union with God. And it overflows in our love for ourselves and our neighbors for God's sake.

2) Joy. Happiness is realized when we live for God and know someday we will be with Him now and forever in heaven.

3) Peace. The Holy Spirit gives us order in our souls and a clean conscience. He also gives us order to our family, friendships and duties of life.

4) Patience. When one is close to God, everything else falls into its place so that one can have patience and tranquility. Love is patient.

5) Benignity. This is the virtue of kindness to others.

6) Goodness. We renounce evil and seek what is good. We repent of our sins and strive to do God's will.

7) Longanimity. Perseverance in the mission God has given us and the ability to stay faithful over the long time.

8) Mildness. This gives us the moral virtue temperance that helps us overcome our natural tendency to be rough or angry.

9) Faith. This is a theological virtue given to us in Baptism. It gives us the Divine grace to be able to ascent to the revealed truth of God. We put God as the absolute authority.

10) Modesty. This includes how we act and dress. These are external signs of our interior modesty. It gives us the preference of purity of mind and heart in sexual matters.

11) Continency. This is the virtue to control sexual and other appetites in a holy manner like in marriage when one spouse because of sickness cannot have relations.

12) Chastity. This is the self-giving oneself to God completely as a priest, religious or consecrated layman. All vocations are called to have chastity in their way of living. This includes married people

being faithful to their spouses. It also gives the grace to be sexually pure for all those waiting to get married.

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (39)

- 1) **Wisdom.** This enables us to know God and esteem divine things above worldly things.
- 2) **Understanding.** Helps us to understand our Catholic Faith, the Bible and Saints.
- 3) **Counsel.** This is the knowledge necessary to guide ourselves and others to do God's will. It helps us help others get through spiritual and temporal problems.
- 4) **Fortitude.** This is the strength we need to endure and have courage. It helps us suffer persecution and adversities for the sake of good.
- 5) **Knowledge.** This helps us to know God, ourselves and others as God knows.
- 6) **Piety.** This gift infuses us with love for serving God and seeing Him in all events through a holy life of prayer.
- 7) **Fear of the Lord.** "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We fear his just punishment of our sins forever, but we more so fear even displeasing or offending Him.

15 Promises To Those Who Pray the Rosary (38)

1. **Whosoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary shall receive signal graces.**
2. **I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.**

3. The Rosary shall be a powerful armor against Hell; it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
 4. It will cause good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant Mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men [and women] from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire for Eternal Things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
5. The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary shall not perish.
6. Whosoever shall recite the Rosary devoutly, applying himself [herself] to the consideration of its Sacred Mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovoked death; if he be just he shall remain in the Grace of God, and become worthy of Eternal Life.
7. Whoever shall have a true devotion for the Rosary shall not die without the Sacraments of the Church.
8. Those who are faithful to recite the Rosary shall have during their life and at their death the Light of God and the plenitude of His Graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the Merits of the Saints in Paradise.
9. I shall deliver from Purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.
10. The faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of Glory in Heaven.
11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by recitation of the Rosary.
12. All those who propagate the Holy Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.

13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the Rosary shall have for intercessors the entire Celestial Court during their life and at the hour of death.

14. All who recite the Rosary are my sons, and brothers of my only Son, Jesus Christ.

15. Devotion to my Rosary is a great sign of predestination.

St. Mother Teresa's List of Duties (8)

Mary's Duties	My Duties
1. To give of her spirit and heart.	1. Total gift of all I have and am.
2. To possess, protect and transform me.	2. Total dependence on her.
3. To inspire, guide and enlighten me.	3. Responsiveness to her spirit.
4. To share her experience of prayer and praise.	4. Faithfulness to prayer.
5. Responsibility for my sanctification.	5. Trust in her intercession.
6. Responsibility for all that befalls me.	6. Imitate her spirit.
7. To provide for my spiritual and material needs.	7. Constant recourse to her.
8. To purify me and my actions.	8. Purity of intention; self-denial.
9. Right to dispose of me, of my prayers and intercessions and graces.	9. Right to avail myself of her and her energies for the sake of the kingdom.
10. Total freedom in and around me, as she pleases in all things.	10. Right to enter into her heart, to share in her interior life.

20 Mysteries of the Rosary

Mysteries	Joyful	Luminous	Sorrowful	Glorious
First	Annunciation	Baptism of Jesus	Agony in the Garden	Resurrection
Second	Visitation	Wedding Feast at Cana	Scourging at the Pillar	Ascension into Heaven
Third	Birth of Jesus	Proclamation of the Kingdom	Crowning with Thorns	Descent of the Holy Spirit
Fourth	Presentation in the Temple	Transfiguration	Carrying His Cross	Assumption of Mary
Fifth	Finding Jesus in the Temple	Institution of the Eucharist	Crucifixion	Crowning of Mary Queen of Heaven

Consecration of the World?

St. Maximilian Kolbe taught that we must consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart and do it as fast as possible! So how fast could it be done? It could be accomplished in only 33 years!

If we assume this year one Confirmation Candidate and one Sponsor Consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart and both promise to guide one other person each year through this process, in 33 years, 8.5 billion souls would be consecrated. That's everyone!

So, in the same number of years that Jesus walked this earth we could be finished. Let's start today. Each one of you, bring one soul each year through this process. If we all do it, we will achieve this wonderful goal. Mary would love it and so would her son, Jesus!

(One can calculate this answer yourself by entering the number 2 into a calculator and doubling the number 33 times.) Come, Lord Jesus!

Renewal Of Baptismal Promises

Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidate: I do.

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidate: I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidate: I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation?

Candidate: I do.

Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidate: I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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I also dedicate this to three great Polish Saints who have deeply inspired me:
St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Maria Faustina and St. John Paul II

United Hearts of Jesus and Mary, triumph and reign!

About The Author

Paul E. Cranley

Paul graduated from Xavier University in 1971 with a B.S. in Chemistry and from the University of Kentucky in 1974 with a Master's in Chemistry and Business. He has been a volunteer teacher for over 40 years in many aspects of Parish Religious Education, including Boy Scouts, First Communion, Confirmation, High School CCD, RCIA, Young Adult Ministry and Adult Retreat ministries such as Life in the Spirit, Christ Renews His Parish, ACTS, and Kairos Prison Ministry. Paul served as a Confirmation Sponsor seven times during these years. Paul has personally consecrated himself to Our Blessed Mother yearly for each of the last 27 years and has led over 300 others through 33 Day Consecration programs. Paul and Nancy have been married 46 years and have four children and six grandchildren.

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Rosary Prayers

Apostles' Creed

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

R. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the
communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of
the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy
kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

R. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as
we forgive those
who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou
among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Fatima Prayer

Oh, my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy. Ave, Ave, Ave Maria. Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

Concluding Prayers

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope, to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears; turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Pray for us, O most holy Mother of God,

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

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 while meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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



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