



MARY — BEARER OF GOD

Today we honor Mary under her oldest and most ancient title—*Theotokos*—*Bearer of God*. Mary, the mother of the Child of Bethlehem, is the perfect symbol of our own salvation. She is the first disciple of her Son, the first to embrace his Gospel of compassion and reconciliation; she is the promise of what the Church is called to be and will be; she is the hope and comfort of a pilgrim people walking on the road of faith. Mary the “bearer of God,” is a genuine and fitting example for us of what it means to be a disciple of the Servant Redeemer, “bearers of God” in our homes and communities.

To help us to be God-bearers or Christ bearers, we would do well to often pray the following beautiful prayer by John Henry Cardinal Newman.

*Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance
everywhere I go;
Flood my soul with your spirit and life;
Penetrate and possess my whole being
so utterly that all my life
may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul
let them look up and see no longer me,
But only Jesus! Amen*

Pondering Mary

Today or any day, we want to spend time with Mary, we can ponder what it was like for this woman.

- To be asked in her teenage years to be the mother of the Messiah.
- To be pregnant and unmarried and dealing with that in her village, which probably had its share of gossip.
- To travel a long distance on a donkey when she was ready to give birth.
- To give birth in an animal shelter.
- To flee for her life and the life of her child from the murderous Herod.
- To be an immigrant in a foreign country—not knowing the language or anyone.
- Watching her most unusual child grow up.
- Being told by Simeon that because of Jesus, ‘a sword of sorrow’ would pierce her heart one day.
- Loosing her child in the Temple
- Coming to terms with her Son’s counter cultural mission. What the neighbors said about him.
- Being a widow at a young age and long before there was any widow’s pension.

- Watching the reaction of people to her Son
- Watching her Son being hunted down by the authorities
- The journey to Calvary
- Witnessing the cruel execution of her innocent Son. Holding her bloody, deceased Son in her arms.
- Hearing the news of his resurrection. One wonders if he ever appeared to Mary. How she must have longed for that.
- Being in the Upper Room, with the disciples prior to Pentecost preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit.
- The rest of her life—what was it like? What kind of role did she play in the early Christian community.

Other Tidbits on our Blessed Mother

All of the following quotes/stories are from *101 Inspirational Stories about the Rosary*. To order telephone 1-800-873-7375. www.rosary101.com.

Of Mary, St. Peter Damien writes:

*Having confidence in you, O Mother of God,
I shall be saved;
being under your protection, I shall fear nothing;
With your help I shall give battle to my enemies
and put them to flight;
for devotion to you is an arm of salvation.*

St. Bernard writes:

*We are tossed on the tempest of the sea,
The sea which threatens to swallow us up.
Amid the winds of temptation
And the waves of tribulation, we dread judgment
And fear because of our sins.
And sometimes we are plunged
into the gulf sadness
As the anguish of doubt assails us.
Then, let the name of Mary, Star of the Sea,
be on your lips and in your heart.
She will sustain you and give you hope,
And by her help you will reach the port of safety.*

St. Thomas Aquinas writes:

*As mariners are guided into port
by the shining of a star,
so Christians are guided
to heaven by Mary.*

The Rosary: Mary’s Gift to Us

The late Pope John Paul II wrote:

In the recitation of the rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary.

St. Louis de Montfort promoted devotion to Mary more than any other saint. Of the rosary he said:

*The holy rosary is a gift
come down from heaven;
a great present that God gives
to His most faithful servants.
God is the Author of the prayers
of which it is composed
and of the mysteries it contains.*

Two stories about the power of the rosary when prayed as a prayer of intercession.

Mary Lou Schuster writes:

As a little girl, I would watch my grandmother go into the living room every afternoon and say her rosary with the deepest devotion. I would just stand there watching her in awe. Never once did she compel me to join her. However, I adored this simple woman and out of admiration learned a deep love for our Holy Mother Mary through her rosary.

I can still remember at age four receiving a small blue crystal rosary for my birthday. Although I stumbled a bit at the recitation of the Hail Mary, I tried ever so piously to imitate my sainted grandmother. The daily rosary is now a part of the fabric of my life. I believe children learn much more by what is caught than what is taught.

Mary Rigani writes:

It was a cold day in a Chicago suburb, and I was pregnant with our fifth child. I was at my doctor's office and he had just informed me he had found a lump in my breast. He also informed me that I would have to wait until I delivered the baby before I could have surgery.

It was eight weeks of tension for everyone in the family. My husband, our four other children and I decided we would prayer the rosary every night, asking that the lump would be benign.

The day came for surgery and we prayed very hard to Mary, asking that she ask her son to spare me to raise my children. Our prayers were answered and today, may years later, we have five beautiful children, and I have been able to see them grow up. I will forever be thankful to our Blessed Mother and the rosary.

In the past several months, I have started to begin my day by praying the rosary. In doing so, I often

experience many distractions. Nevertheless, I find the decades of the rosary a very practical way to pray for a wide variety of intentions. The following are the names of the 20 decades of the rosary and the days that they are prayed. Also listed are some intentions that you could pray for as you pray each decade.

Joyful Mysteries, (Mondays/Saturdays)

Annunciation: For the grace to en flesh the ways of Jesus in our lives. For couples having a difficult time conceiving a child. For crisis or difficult pregnancies. That the Angel Gabriel will move every woman considering abortion this day to choose life.

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth: For all who visit the sick and homebound, that our elderly may know that God can make them productive members of our communities, even in their old age.

Birth of Jesus: For a safe delivery for all who are expecting a child at this time. For midwives. For adoptive parents and foster parents.

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple: For parents that they may dedicate their children to God and raise them in the ways of Christ and his church.

Finding of Jesus in the Temple. For all missing persons, especially for missing children and for their loved ones. For the conversion of all who kidnap or harm children or the elderly.

Mysteries of Light (Thursday)

The Baptism of Jesus: For all who are preparing for baptism and entry into our church. For us who are baptized that we will live as faithful disciples of Jesus.

The Wedding Feast of Cana: For all preparing for marriage at this time, for married couples especially those in hurting relationships. For all who work with the engaged and in marriage counseling. For all whose 'wine has run out' - who have lost the joy of living.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God: For all who are engaged in spreading the Good News. For all who teach our Catholic faith to children, teenagers and adults.

The Transfiguration: That we, like the Apostles may listen to Jesus and be transfigured into his likeness. For all who work in Houses of Prayer.

The Institution of the Eucharist. That the Holy Spirit may move Catholics who no longer come to Mass to return. That all of us who do come may be eucharist for

others. For priests, deacons and ministers of the Eucharist. That more and more parishioners will be led to spend an hour a week with Jesus in our Adoration Chapel.

Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesdays/Fridays)

Agony in the Garden: For all who are dying at this time that they may have a peaceful death. For all who are in physical or mental agony. For caregivers.

Scourging at the Pillar: For the victims of domestic violence, street violence, and victims of war and terrorism.

Crowning with Thorns: For all who suffer from migraine headaches and mental illness, for the blind and the deaf.

Jesus Carries His Cross: For all who are carrying a big cross at this time and for their loved ones and caregivers.

Jesus Dies on the Cross. For a peaceful death for all who are dying. For all who are on death row (especially the innocent). For all who will be executed today or this week. For an end to capital punishment.

Glorious Mysteries (Wednesdays/Sundays)

The Resurrection: For a spiritual awakening for those whose faith and emotional life is dormant or dead. For all who will preach the Gospel this Sunday in our churches.

The Ascension of the Lord: For living and deceased members of our parish family. For God's special blessing on those who share with our parish a generous portion of their time, treasure and talents.

Descent of the Holy Spirit: For our worldwide Catholic community, for the leaders of our church. For God's blessing on all who labor to bring about Christian unity. That all of us may grow in our ability to hear and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Assumption of Mary into Heaven: For the souls in Purgatory. For all who have asked us to pray for them. For all who will get bad news today.

Crowning of Mary Queen of Heaven. For an increase of true devotion to Mary. That we will see in Mary the model of faithful discipleship and come to know and love her.

A Prayer to our Blessed Mother

Prayer to the Mother of Jesus

*O Mother of Jesus, and my Mother,
let me dwell with you, cling to you
and love you with ever increasing love.
I promise the honor, love and trust of a child.
Give me a mother's protection,
for I need your watchful care.
You know better than any other
the thoughts and desires of the Sacred Heart.
Keep constantly before my mind
the same thoughts,
the same desires,
that my heart may be filled with zeal
for the interests of the Sacred Heart
of your Divine Son.
Instill in me a love of all that is noble,
that I may no longer be easily
turned to selfishness.*

John Henry Cardinal Newman

The angel said to Joseph:

Do not be afraid to take Mary into your home.

None of us should be afraid to take Mary into our hearts and prayer life.

In Jesus and Mary,

