



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 29

May 2020

Alone with Our Lady

The lockdown continues ...

These are trying times for all of us. In addition to the difficulties of a secular nature that try our patience, we are also deprived of the sacraments.

If we miss Holy Mass and Communion, it is a good sign. It shows that we take Our Lord seriously. Grace is a hidden reality that manifests itself in these sorts of times. The spiritual hunger we may experience, of the sort that makes us unsettled and uncomfortable inside, is the ache of a soul accustomed to God's presence, but momentarily deprived of Him in the Sacred Eucharist.

We are reminded of the Cantic of Canticles. Although these words apply more fully to the soul that is close to the summit of divine union, we may also make it our own: *"I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him and found him not. I will rise, and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, and I found him not. The watchmen who keep the city, found me: Have you seen him, whom my soul loveth?" (3:1-3)*

May is dedicated to Our Lady. She knows all about missing our Lord. Prior to finding Him in the Temple, she sought him out for three days. Spiritual writers say that Our Lady experienced the dark night of the soul as she searched for her Son and Saviour amidst the busy streets of Jerusalem. Mary would have experienced the usual emotional distress attached to such an occurrence, but she also suffered at a deeper level. She was deprived not only of the joy of her Son's physical presence but more importantly, of her Son's divine presence. A light seemed to be extinguished in the very depths of her soul. The episode of the loss of Jesus for three days was a foretaste and preparation for Calvary. Our Lady knows only too well what it is like to miss Jesus.

As long as our chapels and churches remain closed, we can only watch, wait and pray. Streamed masses offer a little solace, but only a little. However, when

we assist at a live-streamed mass, we are spiritually present in the person of the priest and server, and the dogma of the Communion of Saints assures us that grace is not confined to space and location, or even time! Calvary continues to redeem our souls two thousand years on.

There is hope that the lockdown will lift soon. In France, despite relaxation of measures scheduled later this month, churches will remain closed. The Bishops' Conference has expressed its disapproval and anger at such treatment, but they forget that after decades of collusion with the world, their importance as societal leaders and representatives is negligible. They preside over too many empty churches to count in the public debate.

The impossibility of receiving the sacraments and the servile homage paid by our own Episcopal Conference to the idea that church attendance is an unnecessary danger to public health brings home to us just how much of a spiritual desert the world has become. We have been living off the spiritual residue of better times, but there is little of it left today. The Catholic Church is no longer the salt of the earth.

Our children are growing up in a world in which the sacraments will probably be hard to come by. Priests will be few. Our spiritual health will depend largely on the seriousness of our spiritual life. In the absence of regular sacraments, God's grace will need prayer and sacrifice to flow freely.

It will be good to take advantage of this month of May to deepen our family devotion to Mary. I once heard the first and only confession of a young woman in the final stages of cancer. She was baptised but had never been to church in her life. But she did know of Our Lady thanks to her grandmother who had taught her the Hail Mary many years before. Those Hail Mary's were enough to carry the young woman all the way to heaven. God bless the grandmother!

Fr. John Brucciani, Prior

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin was originally approved in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V. It is also known as the Litany of Loreto from the famous Italian Shrine where its use is attested in the year 1558 (but its existence far antedates this year). There seems little doubt that the Litany dates from between 1150 and 1200 and was probably of French origin.

The 1587 version of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin was subsequently enriched with new invocations. Thus, in 1675, “Queen of the most Holy Rosary” was added for the Confraternities of the Holy Rosary. In 1883, “Queen Conceived without Original Sin” was added by Pope Leo XIII. In 1950, Pope Pius XII added “Queen Assumed into Heaven”. Subsequent popes have added the titles of “Mother of the Church” and “Queen of Families”.

We give here 13 symbolic titles of Our Lady that probably leave Catholics wondering about their meanings when they recite the Litany.

Mirror of Justice: In biblical language justice is the perfect observance of God’s commandments. Mary was perfectly responsive to the will of God; thus, she is the reflection (mirror) of God’s own holiness. She mirrors the holiness of God. She is the “mirror of justice”. When our Lady is called the “Mirror of Justice”, it is meant to say that she is the Mirror of sanctity, holiness and supernatural goodness.

Seat of Wisdom: Mary is called the “Seat of Wisdom” because wisdom became incarnate in her Son Jesus whom she carried in her womb. And she herself possessed and practiced true wisdom in the highest degree.

Mary has this title in her Litany because the Son of God, called in Scripture the Word and Wisdom of God, once dwelt in her, and then, after His birth, He was carried in her arms and seated in her lap during His first years. Thus being, as it were, the human throne of Him who reigns in heaven, she is called the “Seat of Wisdom”.

Cause of Our Joy: The moment Mary’s greeting sounded in Elizabeth’s ear, the baby leapt in her womb for joy (Luke 1:44). Mary is cause of our joy because, under God, she gives us Jesus, the Source of all joy. Mary is also cause of our ever increasing joy, because she always unites us—if we pray her Rosary—to the Heart of Jesus.

Spiritual Vessel: The noun “vessel” as used in this title imperfectly expresses the intended meaning of this invocation. The Latin “vas” (vessel) is used to translate the Greek term “skeuos” which does not only mean vessel but also instrument or tool. Thus, the expression “spiritual vessel” should be rendered as “instrument of the Holy Spirit”. Mary is both the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and dwelling place of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation. Mary received this title because she is the

perfect vessel of the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in her by the fullness of His grace.

Vessel of Honour: This title was given to Mary because she, more than any other human person, deserves to be honoured as the one who conceived and gave birth to the Son of God. The meaning of the title can be best understood from the following excerpt from Cardinal Newman’s praise of Mary:

“MARY, we praise thee as the Vessel of Honour because thou art the Mother of God. If everything in any way connected with Christ our Savior is venerable, what an object of honour thou must be to us! As Mother of Christ thou standest in closer relationship to Him than any other creature in heaven or on earth. Thou art a living tabernacle of God, in whom the only-begotten Son of God dwelt for nine months. He rested in thy arms and received nourishment from thy hands.

“But Jesus not only dwelt in thee; He even assumed human flesh of thee, thou art His Mother. Thou art more worthy of honour than any creature because thou art the Mother of Him who created and governs the world and who is thy Creator. Thou hast nourished Him by whom all living creatures are sustained.

“All the angels and saints of heaven pay thee homage because of thy exalted dignity and unsurpassed glory; all Christians place their confidence in thee; and the souls in purgatory look to thee for help. Thou art the brightest adornment of the heavenly kingdom, the delight of the faithful, the honor of mankind. Thy prophecy is truly fulfilled: “Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” (Luke 1:48).”



Singular Vessel of Devotion: The word devotion as used in this title exceeds the narrow meaning of devotional practice and refers to total dedication and fidelity in the service of God. Mary's profession of faith, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord..." most adequately expresses the meaning of this invocation. She was totally dedicated to her Son. Total dedication has not only the meaning of service, it refers primarily to openness and receptivity of God's will and grace. Devotion in its true sense means a cheerful promptness and alacrity in all that relates to God's service, in all the duties of religion, and in all the duties of life, considered as the expression of God's Will in our regard. In Mary, we at once see devotion in its true light. God, Her Divine Son, was the one end and aim of her life. She lived simply and wholly for His service. Her heart was a burning thurible from which there ever ascended as an incense of sweetest fragrance, holy desires, acts of love, and praise and thanksgiving.

Mystical Rose: The rose is regarded as the queen of flowers. Goodness and holiness flower in the saints. Mary, the queen of saints, can be called then the "Mystical Rose." As the rose is considered the queen of flowers, so Mary is invoked as Queen of All Saints. As described by sacred writers, she is the "mystical rose without thorn", the "rose of paradise", and the "rose bringing salvation to all who call upon her".

Tower of David: This is a biblical phrase from the Canticle of Canticles 4:4 "Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks: a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men". It speaks of the love of the king towards a woman which is an analogy of God's love for the human soul. The verse is not only praising the woman's physical beauty but also the inner beauty of her heart. She is likened to a Tower of David on which hang the trophies of war and the different shields of the soldiers and generals. The tower is the manifestation of the virtues and glories of the Lord found among the saints who are the soldiers of Christ. Mary is the Tower of David because, being full of grace and highly favoured by God, the beloved of God [cf. Lk 1:28] she is also blessed with manifold virtues.

Tower of Ivory: This is a symbol of purity. It means Mary is pure in body and soul, and because of that, she is most beloved by God: "Your neck is like an ivory tower". (Canticle of Canticles 7:4). Ivory is known for being precious and pearly white. It signifies God's love for Mary as the highly favored one and the grace of being immaculate as She is protected by God the Father from the poison of Satan (cf. Gen 3:15).

Mary is called the Tower of Ivory, to suggest to us, by the brightness, purity, and exquisiteness of that material, how transcendent is the loveliness and the gentleness of the Mother of God.

House of Gold: This is an ancient biblical symbol related to the temple of God in Jerusalem, which God Himself commanded to be covered with gold so that it would be worthy to be His dwelling place on earth.

The Third Book of Kings describes the temple that Solomon built. The author writes that the entire temple was overlaid with gold! (6:22) So, too, the altar and many of the furnishings were of gold (7:48-50). Mary was the temple of God; her womb "housed" the Lord. She is the "House of Gold."

The title denotes Mary's personal perfection and her privilege of divine motherhood. She was the house wherein God dwelt during nine months in her womb, and for his sake she was a house of gold, adorned by the Creator with the most precious virtues.

Ark of the Covenant: In the book of Exodus there is a description of the Ark of the Covenant. It was a symbol of God's presence to Israel. In the ark were placed the Commandments of the Law - God's covenant with Israel. Mary was the "Ark of the Covenant" in the sense that her womb contained the maker of the Law; she made God present to mankind in the incarnation of the Son.

The Marian interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant has been known since the Council of Ephesus. Several analogies can be established between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant: the Ark was the throne of God, Mary is the true "Christophora"; the Ark contained the tables of the law, Mary's womb bore the one who is the law of the new covenant; the Ark was precious and beautiful, made in gold, Mary's soul is adorned with the beauty of her virtues; the Ark found a place in the inner "sanctum" of the Temple, Mary was assumed into heaven.

Gate of Heaven: This refers to the fact that Jesus passed through the womb of Mary. So, Mary is like the Gate of Heaven that gives us the Messiah and the King of all. Mary is thus called the Gate of Heaven, because it was through her that our Lord passed from heaven to earth. The Prophet Ezekiel, prophesying of Mary, says, "This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it. And it shall be shut for the Prince. The Prince Himself shall sit in it..." (Ezekiel 44, 2-3).

Morning Star: This is the star which precedes the rising of the Sun just as Mary preceded the coming of the Son of God. And just as the Morning Star precedes the sun, announcing the dawn of day, so the Blessed Virgin Mary preceded Christ the Son of Justice, announcing the day of salvation. Through Her coming, the whole world was enlightened. Mary was truly the bright Morning Star of that blissful day when the world saw the divine sun of its redemption arise upon it.

We can see, therefore, that the titles given to Our Lady in her Litany are not mere conventional pieties, but possess deep biblical and symbolic meaning. By meditating on them we can deepen our knowledge and love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.



In 1865, Newman's former colleague at Oxford, E.B. Pusey, published a paper in which he affirmed that exaggerated Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin was one of the chief obstacles to church unity. Newman considered Pusey's case unfair and responded with his *Letter to Pusey on the occasion of his Eirenicon*. Newman's purpose was to demonstrate that the current devotion to our Lady was essentially identical to that of the patristic period. He tells Pusey that he cannot condemn the Catholic doctrine on Our Lady without condemning also the doctrine of the Early Fathers.

Newman is categorical about the authority he grants to the Fathers: "I am not ashamed still to take my stand upon the Fathers, and do not mean to budge... The Fathers made me a Catholic... Though I hold, as you know, a process of development in Apostolic truth as time goes on, such development does not supercede the Fathers, but explains and completes them. And, in particular, as regards our teaching concerning the Blessed Virgin, with the Fathers I am content."

For Newman, Catholic devotion to Our Lady is a logical consequence of Catholic Mariology which comes down to us from the early Church Fathers. It is because of what we believe Mary to be that we are devoted to her.

Mary as the Second Eve

Newman's point of departure is the Fathers' teaching on Our Lady as the Second Eve. The first Eve was "*mother of all the living*" and as such she played an important role in the fall of the human race. She was an "*active cause*" of it and, in the sentence pronounced on her, is recognised "*as a real agent in the temptation and its issue*". The text of Genesis, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed*" (3:15) has always been interpreted as the promise of a future Redeemer. The seed of the woman is the Word Incarnate and the Woman whose seed or son He is, is the Virgin Mary.

Newman draws on the witness of three of the early Fathers - St. Justin, St Irenaeus and Tertullian - to illustrate the parallel between Eve and Mary. He points out that these writers do not speak of the Blessed Virgin merely as the physical instrument of Our Lord's incarnation, "*but as an intelligent and responsible cause of it*". As a consequence of faith and obedience Mary became the Mother of the Redeemer; Eve by her failure in these two virtues brought about the fall of the human race. As Eve was a cause of ruin for all, so Mary was a cause of salvation for all; just as Eve freely co-operated in bringing about a great evil, Mary co-operated with grace in achieving a much greater good. Newman makes a very convincing case to show that this was the received doctrine of these second century Fathers in both the East and the West, and that its origin is the Johannine (St. John the Apostle) tradition about Our Lady.

Our Lady's Dignity

From this patristic teaching on the role of the Blessed Virgin in salvation history, Newman draws a particular inference. Mary's dignity, he affirms, arises from her association with the mysteries of the Redemption and her present state of blessedness in heaven. She anticipated that veneration which future generations would show her when, in response to Elizabeth's greeting, she exclaimed in her hymn of thanksgiving to God, "*all generations shall call me blessed*".

Newman finds the scriptural basis for the dignity of the Blessed Virgin in the vision of the Woman and Child in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse: "*And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars*" (12:1-2).

Newman notes that representations of the Virgin with the Child occur again and again in the catacombs: "*Mary is there drawn with the Divine Infant in her lap, and she with hands extended in prayer, He with His hand in the attitude of blessing. No representation can more forcibly convey the doctrine of the high dignity of the Mother, and, I will add, of her influence with the Son.*"

Theotokos

Our Lady's divine maternity is for Newman the highest of all her prerogatives: "*The Blessed Virgin is Theotokos, Deipara, or Mother of God; and this word, when thus used, carries with it no admixture of rhetoric, no taint of extravagant affection - it has nothing else but a well-weighed, grave, dogmatic sense, which corresponds and is adequate to its sound. It intends to express that God is her Son, as truly as any one of us is the son of his own mother*".

Newman reminds us that we first come across this title of Theotokos in the writings of Origen (185-254 AD), who witnesses that it was in use before his time. The idea, if not the term, is explicit in writers of the apostolic and sub-apostolic age. Thus Ignatius of Antioch who was martyred in 106 AD: "*Our God was carried in the womb of Mary*". It was not long before the doctrine was transmitted into devotion. Each successive insult offered her by individual heretics drew out more fully the deep individual affection with which Mary was regarded by the Christian faithful.

In his response to Pusey, Newman offers us clear insight into the ancient and continued love of the Church for Our Lady. Through her mediation we received the author of grace and union with God: Jesus Christ. Far from being an obstacle to unity, Mary is its principle because she is the Mediatrix of all graces.



The Loneliest of Men

Nazi Germany, 9 August 1943, 4:00 p.m.—a simple farmer from Austria is executed by guillotine. What is Franz Jaegerstaetter’s crime? “Undermining military morale”, according to the supreme court-martial of the Reich. The defendant had categorically refused to fight for the Nazi war machine and his religious dissent was “not recognized as a valid basis for his conduct.” (Erna Putz, *Franz Jägerstätter—Martyr*)

Today, both within Germany and abroad, Franz is rightly regarded as a hero, even a saint (beatified in 2007). The passage of time assured his exaltation; a collective reappraisal was bound to happen. No longer could anyone mistake his principled objection to National Socialism for reckless abandon. That said, this newfound celebration of the martyr, while laudable in itself, does *not* demonstrate a sweeping change of heart. Even with the benefit of hindsight, the multitude is a slow learner and will remain so until the end of time. Instead of conscience, conformity dictates its every move. The martyr, on the contrary, challenges this unthinking herd instinct. He is remarkable precisely for his Christlike *nonconformity*.

In its original sense, the Greek word *martus* signified “a witness who testifies to what he knows to be true from personal observation.” (“Martyr”, Catholic Encyclopedia) The early Church quickly assumed this neutral term and charged it with an additional meaning: the witness of Christ “is a person who, though he has never seen nor heard the Divine Founder of the Church, is yet so firmly convinced of the truths of the Christian religion, that he gladly suffers death rather than deny it.” (“Ibid.”) In giving his testimony, then, the witness of Christ steps into a new setting of intimidation. He anticipates persecution; and murder, if infrequent, is a predictable feature of persecution. But why such backlash?

The martyr proclaims a message of foreboding originality. His testimony implicates his entire audience. While he imposes nothing, the facts to which he bears witness indeed impose themselves. The facts of the Incarnation pertain to all peoples—past, present, and future—for all have been “bought with a great price” (1 Cor. 6:20) and are thereby indebted

Fr. R. Hennick

to Christ. The Redeemer now awaits His rightful reimbursement. The martyr thus calls the multitude to this duty of charity, a duty which compels even unto death.

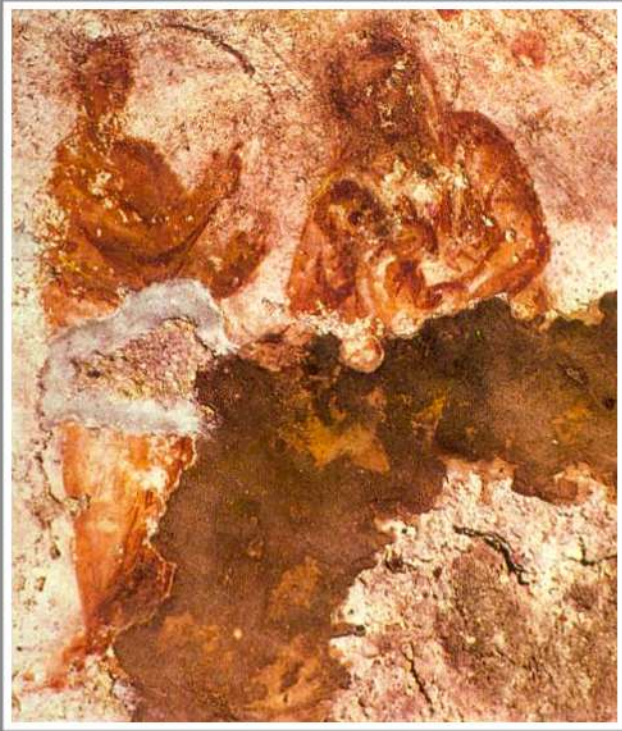


Fallen men neglect this duty easily enough by themselves. When gathered together, they effortlessly reinforce one another’s infidelity. The cumulative effect is a society in open revolt against God. And this society’s defence mechanism is to dispose of the martyr. The objective is to obliterate his beliefs, or their open manifestation at least, because their proliferation would seriously threaten the “common good” of idolatry. In this way, the martyr undermines morale indeed.

“History does not repeat itself but it often rhymes.” That is to say: the martyr will never again die at the hands of the Third Reich. That time has passed. Modern sensibilities preclude the overt re-appearance of another Hitler. But these sensibilities nonetheless have their religious blindspots, which the martyr will dutifully correct. So it is assured: the martyr will die, as ever, at the hands of other, newer faithless regimes.

The martyr quite naturally venerates his heroic forerunners, for he is but a variation on their theme. Throughout his time in prison, Franz kept himself occupied with biographies of a saint whose religious dissent got him in trouble as well, St. Thomas More. Franz’s devotion to this beheaded martyr, isolated as he was in the Tower of London, consoled him in the lonely days before his own decapitation.

At whatever point in history, the martyr is the loneliest of men. Because of his inflexible allegiance to the true King, he is a sign of contradiction to the spirit of the age. He is an ambassador asserting the universal rights of his Lord and will not be coerced to deny this in word or deed, come what may. But his urgency is rarely appreciated, even in more sober future times. The 21st century is no exception. Do we Catholics of today dare become witnesses possessed of this same urgency? ✱



Madonna and Child in the Catacombs – 2nd century

Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, Mary appears to be nursing the infant Jesus on her lap. Circa A.D. 150.

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET YOUR SUNDAY COLLECTION!

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Holy Mass continues to be offered for the members of the parish every Sunday and Holy Day

✠ Holy Mass ✠

LIVE STREAMED @ [SSPX GREAT BRITAIN](#)

**SUNDAYS AT 9:00 AM
WEEKDAYS AT 7:15 AM**

**WHEN LOCKDOWN COMES TO AN END,
SUNDAY MASS TIMES REVERT TO
7:30AM AND 9:00AM**

Liturgical Calendar May 2020		SMS
All masses live-streamed @ SSPX Great Britain		
1	St. Joseph the Workman	7:15
2	St. Athanasius, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
3	Third Sunday after Easter	9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
4	St. Monica, Widow	7:15
5	St. Pius V, Pope & Confessor	7:15
6	St. John Before the Latin Gate	7:15
7	St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr	7:15
8	Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces	7:15
9	St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop, Conf. & Doct.	7:15
10	Fourth Sunday after Easter	9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
11	Ss Philip & James, Apostles	7:15
12	Ss Nereus, Achileus, Domitilla, Virgin, & Pancras, Martyrs	7:15
13	St. Robert Bellarmine, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
14	Feria of Paschaltide	7:15
15	St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Confessor	7:15
16	St. Ubaldus, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
17	Fifth Sunday after Easter	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
18	St. Venantius, Martyr	7:15
19	St. Peter Celestine, Pope & Confessor	7:15
20	Vigil of the Ascension	7:15
21	The Ascension of the Lord	7:15
22	Feria after the Ascension	7:15
23	Saturday of Our Lady	7:15
24	Sunday after the Ascension	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
25	St. Gregory VII, Pope & Confessor	7:15
26	St. Philip Neri, Confessor	7:15
27	St. Bede the Venerable, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
28	St. Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
29	St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, Virgin	7:15
30	Vigil Mass of Pentecost	7:15
31	Pentecost Sunday	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction

May Procession - 8th May

Sadly, this is cancelled, due to the lockdown.