

WEDITATING WITH MARY IN THE MONTH OF MAY



MY SOUL PROCLAIMS THE
GREATNESS OF MY GOD!

WELCOME!

'From Mary we learn to surrender to God's will in things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ, her Son and the Son of God...Learn from her to be always faithful, to trust that God's Word to you will be fulfilled, and that nothing is impossible with God.'

- St. John Paul II



Since the 13th century, the month of May has traditionally been dedicated to Mary, our Blessed Mother.

The beauty of the season itself, in which Spring reaches its peak, reminds us of the Easter message of hope and joy, renewal and growth, as we observe the beauty of creation around us.

As we look forward to the brighter days ahead, and continue on our journey through the Easter season to Pentecost, we are reminded of the joy of the Resurrection and the newness of life offered by the saving events of Christ's life.

Meditating with Mary in the month of May, will help us to rediscover the beauty of God's message of hope and love as we contemplate the wonders God worked in Mary's life.

Mary, full of God's grace, opened her heart so fully to God that His Word became incarnate in her womb, in the person of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit in the greatest event in human history; the Incarnation.

Meditating with Mary in the month of May, is a 3 week programme which provides an opportunity to come together as a parish community to meditate on three joyful moments in the life of Mary; the Annunciation and the Visitation which culminate in Mary's song of praise to God, the *Magnificat*.

The *Magnificat* is a well known prayer, also known as the *Song or Canticle of Mary*, which captures Mary praising and glorifying God for the wonders He has worked in Her life.

Together we will reflect on these moments of encounter in her life as we meditate on the Gospel of Luke. As we read through a selected number of texts, we will have an opportunity to understand more deeply Mary as the model of discipleship for the Church.

This programme will also give us an opportunity to reflect on the Scriptures, share our insights, pray together and learn about the ways in which Sacred Art can inspire our understanding of these aspects of Mary's life. As we gather together each week, let it be an opportunity for us to follow the example of Mary so that God's Word can become a life giving encounter for each one of us.

"DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY, FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD" (LUKE 1:26–38)



Annunciation, Fr Angelico.; Copyright © Museo Nacional Del Prado

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "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 holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

REFLECTION

As the Gospel passage is read aloud notice any word or phrase that stands out for you.

As the Gospel passage is read aloud a second time look closely at the image. Notice the details painted by the artist to capture the scripture passage.

In what ways can Mary be an inspiration and model for our lives today?

SPACE FOR NOTES



REFLECTION AND CLOSING PRAYER

Let us reflect with Pope Francis on the words of the angel Gabriel and how the message proclaimed can speak into our lives today. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God" (Lk 1:30)

The Angel's words descend upon our human fears, dissolving them with the power of the Good News of which we are heralds: our life is not pure chance or a mere struggle for survival, rather each of us is a cherished story loved by God. That we have "found favour with God" means that the Creator sees a unique beauty in our being and that he has a magnificent plan for our lives. The awareness of this certainty, of course, does not resolve all our problems nor does it take away life's uncertainties. But it does have the power to transform our life deeply. The unknown that tomorrow holds for us is not a dark threat we need to overcome, but a favourable time given to us for living out the uniqueness of our personal vocation, and for sharing it with our brothers and sisters in the Church and in the world.

From the certainty that God's grace is with us comes the strength to take courage in the present moment: the courage to carry forward what God asks of us here and now, in every area of our lives; courage to embrace the vocation which God reveals to us; courage to live out our faith without hiding or diminishing it.

(Pope Francis for the 33rd world youth day 2018 - vatican.va)

PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION DURING THE WEEK AHEAD.

During your personal prayer this week, take time to notice the uncertainties and fears that exist in your own life at this time. It might be helpful to contemplate the image of the Annunciation again asking for the the graces that you specifically need so that you might too have the trust that Mary possessed; for nothing will be impossible to God.

'Let it Be done unto me according to your Word', these words spoken by Mary reflect her openness to God's word in her life. Mary is an example of the perfect Christian response to God's invitation. Let us, like Mary, open our hearts to God's will in our lives. Let His word take root in each one of us directing us towards the vocation to which we are called by name.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Litany of Loreto

The Litany of Loreto was composed during the middle ages and particularly recommended by Pope Clement VII and Sixtus V. In recent times, the Church included the titles, Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of Mercy. It has continued to be used as one of the many praises of Mary. Over the centuries it has been recited at the shrine of the Holy House of Loreto and continues to be recited by the faithful worldwide today.

Prayer:

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of Heaven, **have mercy on us.**
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**
God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**
Holy Trinity, One God, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
Holy Mother of God, **pray for us.**
Holy Virgin of Virgins, **pray for us.**
Mother of Christ, **pray for us.**
Mother of the Church, **pray for us.**
Mother of Mercy, **pray for us.**
Mother of Divine Grace, **pray for us.**
Mother of Hope, **pray for us.**
Mother Most Pure, **pray for us.**
Mother Most Chaste, **pray for us.**
Mother Inviolable, **pray for us.**
Mother Undeiled, **pray for us.**
Mother Most Amiable, **pray for us.**
Mother Most Admirable, **pray for us.**
Mother of Good Counsel, **pray for us.**
Mother of our Creator, **pray for us.**
Mother of our Saviour, **pray for us.**

Virgin Most Prudent, **pray for us.**
Virgin Most Venerable, **pray for us.**
Virgin Most Renowned, **pray for us.**
Virgin Most Powerful, **pray for us.**
Virgin Most Merciful, **pray for us.**
Virgin Most Faithful, **pray for us.**

Mirror of Justice, **pray for us.**
Seat of Wisdom, **pray for us.**
Cause of Our Joy, **pray for us.**
Spiritual Vessel, **pray for us.**
Vessel of Honor, **pray for us.**
Singular Vessel of Devotion, **pray for us.**
Mystical Rose, **pray for us.**
Tower of David, **pray for us.**
Tower of Ivory, **pray for us.**
House of Gold, **pray for us.**
Ark of the Covenant, **pray for us.**
Gate of Heaven, **pray for us.**
Morning Star, **pray for us.**

Health of the Sick, **pray for us.**
Refuge of Sinners, **pray for us.**
Solace of Migrants, **pray for us.**
Comforter of the Afflicted, **pray for us.**
Help of Christians, **pray for us.**

Queen of Angels, **pray for us.**
Queen of Patriarchs, **pray for us.**
Queen of Prophets, **pray for us.**
Queen of Apostles, **pray for us.**
Queen of Martyrs, **pray for us.**
Queen of Confessors, **pray for us.**
Queen of Virgins, **pray for us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **spare us, O Lord!**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **graciously hear us, O Lord!**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us.**

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

Let us pray.
Grant, we beseech you, O Lord God, that we your servants, may enjoy lasting health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, be delivered from present sorrow and enter into the joy of eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

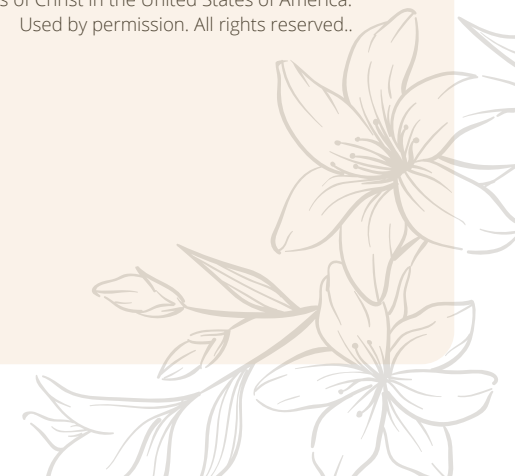
"MARY WENT WITH HASTE TO A JUDEAN TOWN IN THE HILL COUNTRY." (LUKE 1:39–45)



The Visitation of the Virgin to Saint Elizabeth, Goossen van der Weyden: National Gallery, London

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

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REFLECTION

As the Gospel passage is read aloud notice any word or phrase that stands out for you.

As the Gospel passage is read aloud a second time look closely at the image. Notice the details painted by the artist to capture the scripture passage.

Mary went with “haste” to visit Elizabeth. Mary was determined to see her cousin who was also pregnant and advanced in age. Despite her own pregnancy , Mary embarked on the long and arduous journey that lay head as she sets out to support Elizabeth in her time of need. What might this tell us about Mary’s character?

SPACE FOR NOTES



REFLECTION AND CLOSING PRAYER

Let us reflect with Pope Francis on the challenges presented to Mary as she sets out on her journey. We are reminded of how God continues to be present with each one of us during the events and experiences that make up our own journey of life. "The Mighty One has done great things for me" (Luke 1:49)

According to Luke's Gospel, once Mary has received the message of the angel and said "yes" to the call to become the Mother of the Saviour, she sets out in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy (cf. 1:36, 39). Mary is very young; what she was told is a great gift, but it also entails great challenges. The Lord assured her of his presence and support, yet many things remain obscure in her mind and heart.

Yet Mary does not shut herself up at home or let herself be paralyzed by fear or pride. Mary is not the type that, to be comfortable, needs a good sofa where she can feel safe and sound. She is no couch potato! If her elderly cousin needs a hand, she does not hesitate, but immediately sets off.

It was a long way to the house of Elizabeth, about 150 kilometres. But the young woman from Nazareth, led by the Holy Spirit, knows no obstacles. Surely, those days of journeying helped her to meditate on the marvellous event of which she was a part. So it is with us, whenever we set out on pilgrimage. Along the way, the events of our own lives come to mind, we learn to appreciate their meaning and we discern our vocation, which then becomes clear in the encounter with God and in service to others.

Pope Francis for the 32nd World Youth Day 2017 - (vatican.va)

PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION DURING THE WEEK AHEAD.

During your personal prayer this week, take time to reflect on the moments of your life when you too were called to go that extra mile. Perhaps it was a time when you were needed to support a family member or friend in their moment of need. At this time you might have felt overwhelmed, tired and afraid of the commitment that lay ahead.

Dear God, help us to recognise the immense value of the contributions that we can make to the lives of others, even through the smallest acts of love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen

This prayer to Our Lady of Knock was composed to celebrate the apparition which took place in a small town in County Mayo, Ireland on the 21st August, 1879. The image appeared on the gable wall outside the Church of St John the Baptist and was witnessed by many of the residents who lived there.

Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland,
you gave hope to your people in a time of distress,
and comforted them in sorrow.
You have inspired countless pilgrims to pray with confidence
to your divine Son, remembering His promise,
"Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find."

Help me to remember that we are all pilgrims on the road to heaven.
Fill me with love and concern for my brothers and sisters in Christ,
especially those who live with me.
Comfort me when I am sick, lonely or depressed.

Teach me how to take part ever more reverently in the Holy Mass.
Give me a greater love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.
Pray for me now, and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world;
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy of us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Grant us peace.

St. Joseph,
chosen by God to be the husband of Mary, the Protector of the Holy Family,
the Guardian of the Church.
Protect our families
In their work and recreation
And guard us on our journey through life. (Repeat - Lamb of God, etc.)

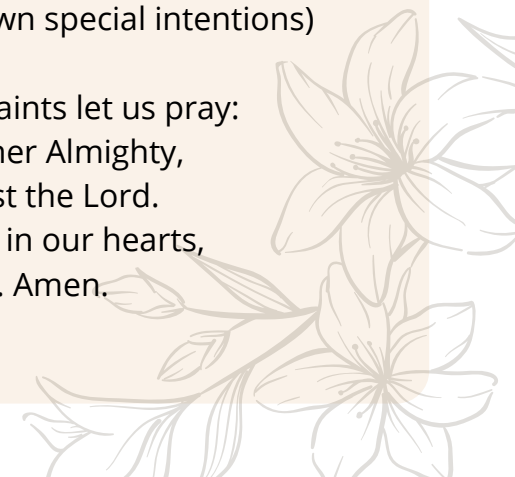
St. John,
Beloved Disciple of the Lord,
Faithful Priest, Teacher of the Word of God.
Help us to hunger for the Word.
To be loyal to the Mass, And to love one
another.

(Repeat - Lamb of God, etc.)

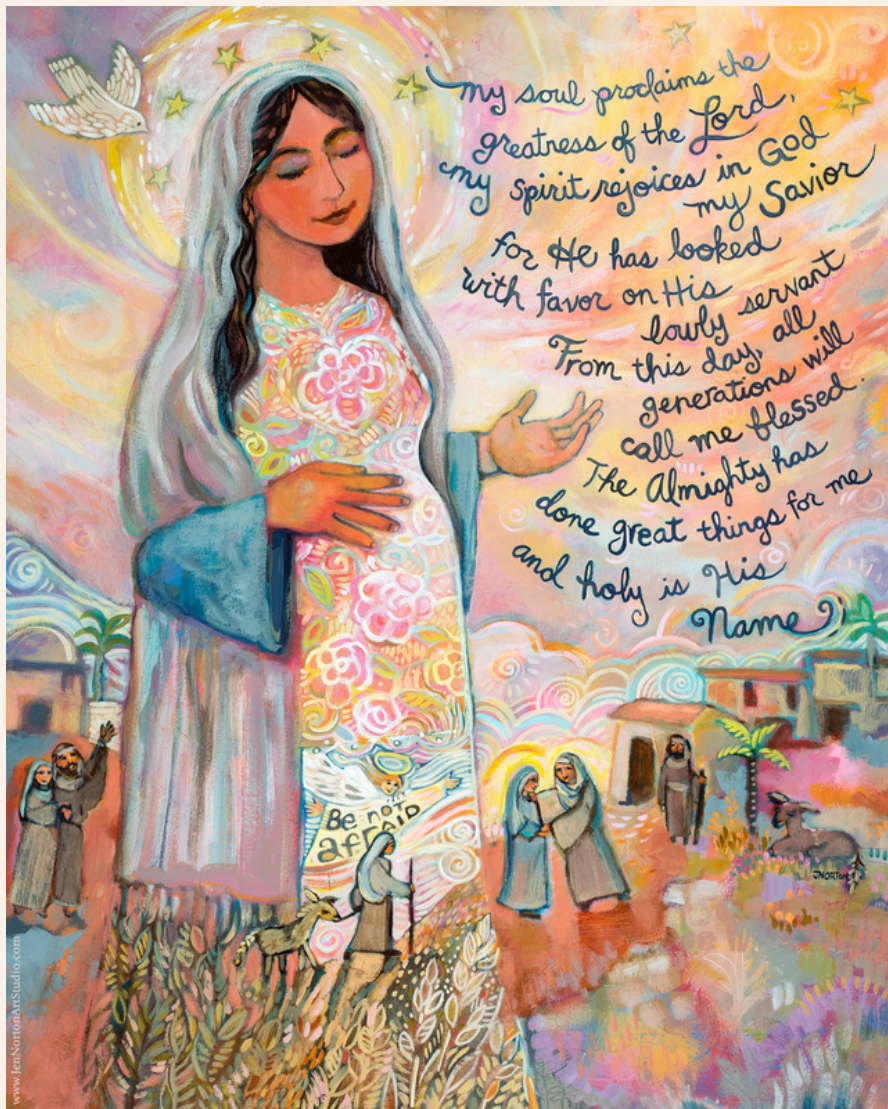
Our Lady of Knock **Pray for us**
Refuge of Sinners **Pray for us**
Queen Assumed into Heaven **Pray for us**
Mother of Nazareth **Pray for us**
Queen of Virgins **Pray for us**
Help of Christians **Pray for us**
Health of the Sick **Pray for us**
Queen of Peace **Pray for us**
Our Lady, Queen and Mother **Pray for us**
Our Lady, Mother of the Church **Pray for us**

(Here mention your own special intentions)

With the Angels and Saints let us pray:
Give praise to the Father Almighty,
To His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.
To the Spirit who lives in our hearts,
Both now and forever. Amen.



"MY SOUL PROCLAIMS THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD." (LUKE 1:46–56)



The Canticle of Mary (Magnificat) Use with Permission. Copyright 2019 Jen Norton

And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him.

He has used the power of his arm, he has routed the arrogant of heart.

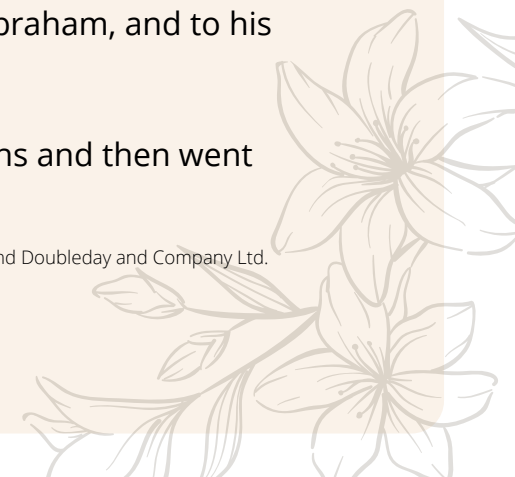
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly.

He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty;

He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his faithful love-according to the promise he made to our ancestors-of his mercy to Abraham, and to his descendants forever.

Mary stayed with her some three months and then went home.

The Jerusalem Bible © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd.



REFLECTION

As the Gospel passage is read aloud notice any word or phrase that stands out for you.

As the Gospel passage is read aloud a second time look closely at the image. Notice the details painted by the artist to capture the scripture passage.

The prayer of the Magnificat captures Mary's faith expressed in the reality of God's love. It captures the power of God working in the lives of those in which the world considers to be lowly. It reminds us of the reality in our world that there will always be the poor, the needy, the suffering. What are the injustices that you notice in our world today? How are you being prompted to respond?

SPACE FOR NOTES



REFLECTION AND CLOSING PRAYER

As we listen to the words of Pope Francis, we are reminded of the gift of our faith and our call to respond so that we too can experience the hope and joy that God's presence brings to our own lives and those around us.

The meeting of the two women, one young and the other elderly, is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit and charged with joy and wonder (cf. Lk 1:40-45). The two mothers, like the children they bear, practically dance for joy. Elizabeth, impressed by Mary's faith, cries out: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (v. 45). One of the great gifts that the Virgin received was certainly that of faith. Belief in God is a priceless gift, but one that has to be received. Elizabeth blesses Mary for this, and she in turn responds with the song of the Magnificat (cf. Lk 1:46-55), in which we find the words: "The Mighty One has done great things for me" (v. 49).

Mary's is a revolutionary prayer, the song of a faith-filled young woman conscious of her limits, yet confident in God's mercy. She gives thanks to God for looking upon her lowliness and for the work of salvation that he has brought about for the people, the poor and the humble. Faith is at the heart of Mary's entire story. Her song helps us to understand the mercy of the Lord as the driving force of history, the history of each of us and of all humanity.

(Pope Francis for the 32nd World Youth Day 2017 - vatican.va)

PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION DURING THE WEEK AHEAD.

During your personal prayer this week, reflect again on the Magnificat. Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, praises and glorifies God. She recognises her own limitations, but remains steadfast in trusting in God's mercy.

Lord Jesus, help us to recognise those areas in our lives where we need to trust in you more. Fill us with your love and peace. Led by Mary's example of faith and humility give me the strength and courage to approach you with confidence and entrust to you an area of my life in which I am currently struggling. Amen

Prayer of Consecration for Ireland

This prayer of consecration to Mary was recited during the consecration of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the 15th August 2013 during the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The consecration took place at Knock Shrine during the annual Novena to Our Lady of Knock.



Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Refuge of Sinners, we entrust and consecrate ourselves, our family, our home and our Dioceses to Jesus through your Immaculate Heart. As your children, we promise to follow your example in our lives by doing at all times the will of God.

O Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, we renew today the promises of our Baptism and Confirmation. Intercede for us with the Holy Spirit that we may be always faithful to your Divine Son, to his Mystical Body, the Catholic Church, and to the teachings of his Vicar on earth, our Holy Father the Pope.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Queen and our Mother, we promise to uphold the sanctity of marriage and the welfare of the family. Watch over our minds and hearts and preserve our youth from dangers to the faith and the many temptations that threaten them in the world today.

We ask you, Mary our Advocate to intercede with your divine Son. Obtain for our country the grace to uphold the uniqueness of every human life, from the first moment of conception to natural death.

O Blessed Mother, Our Life, Our Sweetness and Our Hope, we wish that this Consecration be for the great glory of God and that it lead us safely to Jesus your Son.

A Naomh-Mhuire, a Mháthair Dé, guigh orainn na peacaigh, anois agus ar uair ár mbáis.

Amen.

