

IMPRINT

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The mother who is always with you.



THE ANNUNCIATION

With Mary's Yes, God entered our world.



Dear Friends,

Forever etched in my memory is an experience I had some years back in Rome. I was standing in the piazza of St. Peter's watching the bustling crowds, and noticed a little 4-year-old girl running and skipping across the cobblestones with her arms out wide, and her sparkling eyes meeting mine. Completely caught off guard, I stretched out my arms just in time to catch her. And then, moved by her confidence and trust, spontaneously lifted her up and twirled her around as she squealed with joy. I looked up to see her mother moving slowly toward us — watching and smiling. I knew neither of them, but it didn't seem to matter. It was one of those delightfully singular moments that needed no words.

When I think back, I continue to marvel at the childlike trust and freedom of that young girl. She reminds me of how I am meant to approach Our Lady. With our Blessed Mother, we need have no reservations. We can run to her in all simplicity and cast ourselves into her arms — for she wants nothing more than to lift us up and hold us — for she is our tender mother.

In Christ, Our Life,

M. Agnes

Mother Agnes Mary, SV
Superior General of the Sisters of Life

Who are you, Mary?



God became man. This is the most astounding moment in human history. How did He choose to come into the world? He came through a human

mother. This is Mary. Our love and reverence for Christ leads us to honor His mother whom we call the Mother of God, Theotokos, Mother of all the Living, Help of Christians, Our Lady Queen of the Angels, Star of the Sea, Cause of Our Joy, and hundreds of other titles. But there is one title which she herself proclaimed at the Annunciation: *"I am the handmaid of the Lord"* (Luke 1:38).

It's all Mary ever wanted to be.

She takes us to Him.

We cannot think of Mary and of her extraordinary life without being drawn immediately to Christ. Her "yes" brought Him into the world. From that moment forward, Mary's heart and life were wholly bound up in Christ. She herself said, *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord"* (Luke 1:46).

She wants to show us the true greatness and beauty of Jesus, the Son of God and her Son. The more we draw close to Mary, the more she draws us to Christ.

THE COMPASS

Mary always leads us to Jesus.

Mary never seeks to proclaim anything but Jesus Christ. In the darkness, she points out the Light. In our wandering, she guides us to the Way. In our every need, she shows herself a mother, leading us to her Son.



Mary is with us today.

When you call on her, she is there.



My niece longing for a child: **The rose and the baby**

My niece was struggling with infertility. She was so distraught. I encouraged her to ask for Mary's prayers — and my family began praying too. Then one day in November, my husband walked into the kitchen and said, "I don't know what you have going on, but your statue of Mary is growing a rose." I looked out the window and there it was — the most perfect rose. "Oh my goodness. Trisha's expecting." I can't explain it, but I knew. I kept thanking Jesus — and thanking Mary for interceding.

Later that day, my niece texted me. It was confirmed. She included a sonogram picture of her unborn child. Trisha gave birth to a beautiful baby boy nine months later. -Cindy

Praying for our loved ones who are dying: **Mary was there**



My ma was dying of cancer at Calvary Hospital. I really loved her, and the thought of her leaving of us was so hard. Then one day while I was visiting her, I thought of how in the *Hail Mary* we say, "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." I told the Blessed Mother, "I can't let her go. So you take her by the hand and lead her to your Son." The next thing I knew my ma took her last breath right then, and the room was filled with peace. Mary was in that room. She takes our prayers seriously. -Richard



Healing painful memories: **The sorrowful mother changing my heart**

A few years ago I pulled out a holy card with

meditations and prayers I had gotten in the mail on Our Lady of Sorrows, and I started praying with this on a daily basis. Painful memories would pop up in my mind. As I meditated on the Seven Sorrows of Mary, I began to understand my own mother's suffering, and instead of blaming her for not being what I wanted her to be for me, I felt empathy. Mary is changing my heart, and she's helping me to see myself and others more clearly. -Jeannie



Fearful: **The Rosary**

During the Rwandan genocide, Immaculée Ilibagiza hid in the bathroom of a pastor's house with seven other women. For 91 days, they huddled in silence in this 3x4 foot room. Immaculée prayed the rosary 27 times a day. In her book *The Rosary: The Prayer that Saved my Life* she wrote, "While enduring unbearable suffering, I received the most beautiful gift I've ever gotten: I discovered how to pray the rosary, find the Blessed Mother, and talk to the Lord." -Immaculée Ilibagiza



A school with Mary's presence: **"Rosary and Cannoli"**

Our first "Rosary and Cannoli" began with 12 guys and Fr. Justin. Every month more guys came, and we've had as many as 200! We never imagined this little idea we had with Father would explode into this. Praying to God our Father and Mary to intercede for us and our world is a focal point at Iona Prep. We don't need to say anything now, and the guys just show up without thinking twice. It's just impacted the whole Iona Prep community. Now, it's one of the staples that everyone talks about. And when you walk into the chapel with all of these Iona men, some teachers, and Fr. Justin praying the rosary, you feel Mary's presence. She is here. And I think she is interceding. -John Capozzoli, President of the Italian Club, Iona Preparatory School, New Rochelle, NY

"IN TRIAL OR DIFFICULTY I HAVE RECOURSE TO MOTHER MARY, WHOSE GLANCE ALONE IS ENOUGH TO DISSIPATE EVERY FEAR."

- St. Thérèse of Lisieux

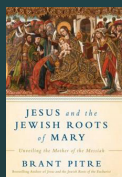
Who I am: **Meeting Mary I suddenly knew myself**

I came to a place where I said, "I don't know what it means to be a man." And it was there, as a Protestant, that I had a sense that Jesus was asking me to go to His mother. And so I made a very careful prayer, "Mary, if you are there, then I want to know what you are all about." All I can say is this: It was like an instant flash, and suddenly I experienced the full presence of Mary, as woman and as mother. I came to see that truly God had not made a mistake, that I was called to fully enter into manhood. If I didn't have that openness, that invitation to step towards the person of Mary and to honor her as Jesus honored His father and mother, then I wonder what my life would have looked like today. -James



The Real Mary

“The image of Mary in the New Testament is woven entirely of Old Testament threads.” - Pope Benedict XVI



To learn more:
Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary
by Brant Pitre

Dr. Brant Pitre is a Research Professor of Scripture at the Augustine Institute. He earned his Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame, where he specialized in the study of the New Testament and ancient Judaism.

Where do Catholics get their beliefs about Mary?

Q. Where in the Bible does it say things like Mary was a perpetual virgin, sinless, Mother of God, the new Eve, or the Queen of heaven?

A. You won't find your answer if you are **ONLY** looking at the New Testament apart from the Old Testament. As Dr. Brant Pitre explains, “All of the first Christians were Jews. Joseph was Jewish, Mary was Jewish, Jesus was Jewish. All Twelve Apostles were Jewish. If you really want to understand Jesus and the New Testament, you've got to understand the historical context in which Christianity was born. And that context was first-century Judaism.” **This same logic, should then be applied to Mary as well.**

Q. So, what's the key to understanding what the Bible teaches about Mary?

A. The key to understanding Mary is by studying the Old Testament foreshadowings and their New Testament fulfillments. **This is called: Typology.**

Let's step back into ancient Jerusalem in the 1st century and place ourselves on a grassy hill overlooking the city, with scripture in hand.

Let's pray and see what we find.

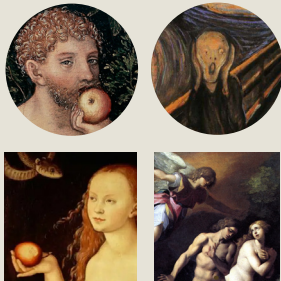


OUR STORY BACK TO GOD: DEATH TO LIFE

Original Creation

Adam and Eve:

Our first parents were created without sin. Through Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, they lost the perfect harmony they enjoyed, and sin and death entered our world.



The New Creation

The **NEW** Adam:

Jesus, the Eternal God, came down from heaven and was conceived in the womb of Mary. Through His obedience to His Father, He offered up His life, paid the debt of sin of our first parents — restoring our friendship with God, and making possible eternal life.



The **NEW** Eve:

Mary, was conceived without sin. Through her obedience, she undid the disobedience of Eve and became the Mother of God — the pure, sinless virgin through whom Jesus entered and redeemed the world.

Fearful of the woman who reversed the disobedience of Eve, demons flee at the name of Mary.

Setting up a kingdom

The concept of a kingdom or monarchy in the Old Testament is essential to understanding God's plan to restore our relationship back to Him and the promise of eternal life.

The Kingdom of God

New Testament: The Annunciation

“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 the 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’ (Luke 1:30-33).

The Davidic Kingdom

King David:

In the Old Testament the prophets foretold the coming of a Messiah. God then made a promise to King David that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever (cf. 2 Samuel 7:13).



God establishes the Everlasting Kingdom

The **NEW** King, Jesus Christ

In the New Testament Jesus is clearly the long-awaited Davidic king who came to establish an everlasting kingdom.



He now sits on His throne in heaven

Jesus is a heavenly King Who reigns over a everlasting heavenly Kingdom.



Her child was caught up to God and to His throne” (Revelation 12:5).

Do Catholics worship Mary?

No, Catholics honor Mary

So, what's the difference between worship and honor?

Let's take a look:

A Ancient Israel

• Worship and Honor

Kneeling, beseeching, and the singing of hymns were common ways of worshipping God. They were also common ways to honor someone of importance (e.g., kings and queens).

• However, temple sacrifices were for worship to God alone

The sacrificial offerings were reserved for worship to God alone (e.g., the sacrifice of the Passover lambs).

B Catholicism

• Worship and Honor

Kneeling, beseeching in prayer, and the singing of hymns have always been common ways of worshipping God. However, just as in ancient Judaism, they have also been expressions of honor. Since the early Church, honor has been given to Mary, the Mother of God, and the saints who followed after Christ.

Note: Early Church Fathers and the first century images of Mary in catacombs reveal Mary was not simply seen by early Christians as a historical figure, but the Mother of God and Mother of the Church, who protected, taught, and prayed for her children.

• Worship, which is due to God alone, most essentially involves Sacrifice.

The Sacrifice of the Mass, which has always been the center of Catholic worship, is what differentiates us from other faiths. As the first Christians understood, *the Mass is not merely a memorial: it is making present what happened on Calvary* — when, Jesus, the once slain Lamb, offered Himself to God the Father. At every Mass, then, the bread and wine are miraculously transformed into Christ's Body and Blood. And we participate in that Sacrifice — offered once for all time — when we attend Mass and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. **This, Catholics believe, is the ultimate form of worship.**



What differentiates Catholic worship from other faiths? Catholic worship includes SACRIFICE.



→ The Queen: *The King's Mother*

The Queen: In ancient Israel, the Davidic kingdom was ruled by both a king and a queen. The queen was the king's mother, not his wife. Her position was second only to the king himself. She was called the "queen mother." And she wore a crown and sat on a royal throne.

▶ The mother of the king

"Then Bathsheba went to King Solomon ... and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king's mother, who sat on his right" (1 Kings 2:19).

▶ The Queen intercedes

In the Old Testament, the queen mother was a powerful intercessor. If you had a request for the king, you would often go to his mother who could intercede and be an advocate for you.

▶ I will speak for you to the king.

"Adonijah, the son of Haggith, came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. ... He said, 'Please ask King Solomon, who will not refuse you, to give me Abishag the Shunamite to be my wife.' Bathsheba replied, 'Very well, I will speak to the king for you'" (1 Kings 2:13, 17-18).

→ If Jesus is the New King *Who is the New Queen?*



The NEW Queen, Mary is the Mother of God. Therefore, she is also queen Mother of Jesus' Kingdom in heaven.



Mary, Queen of Heaven

"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" (Revelation 12:1).

The Magnificat:

Note the royal language

"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 ... He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly'" (Luke 1:46-49, 52).

Mary, Our Queen intercedes

In the New Testament, Christ's public life begins when Mary intercedes for the wedding couple at Cana. She asks Jesus to perform His first miracle. With her request, He turns water into wine.

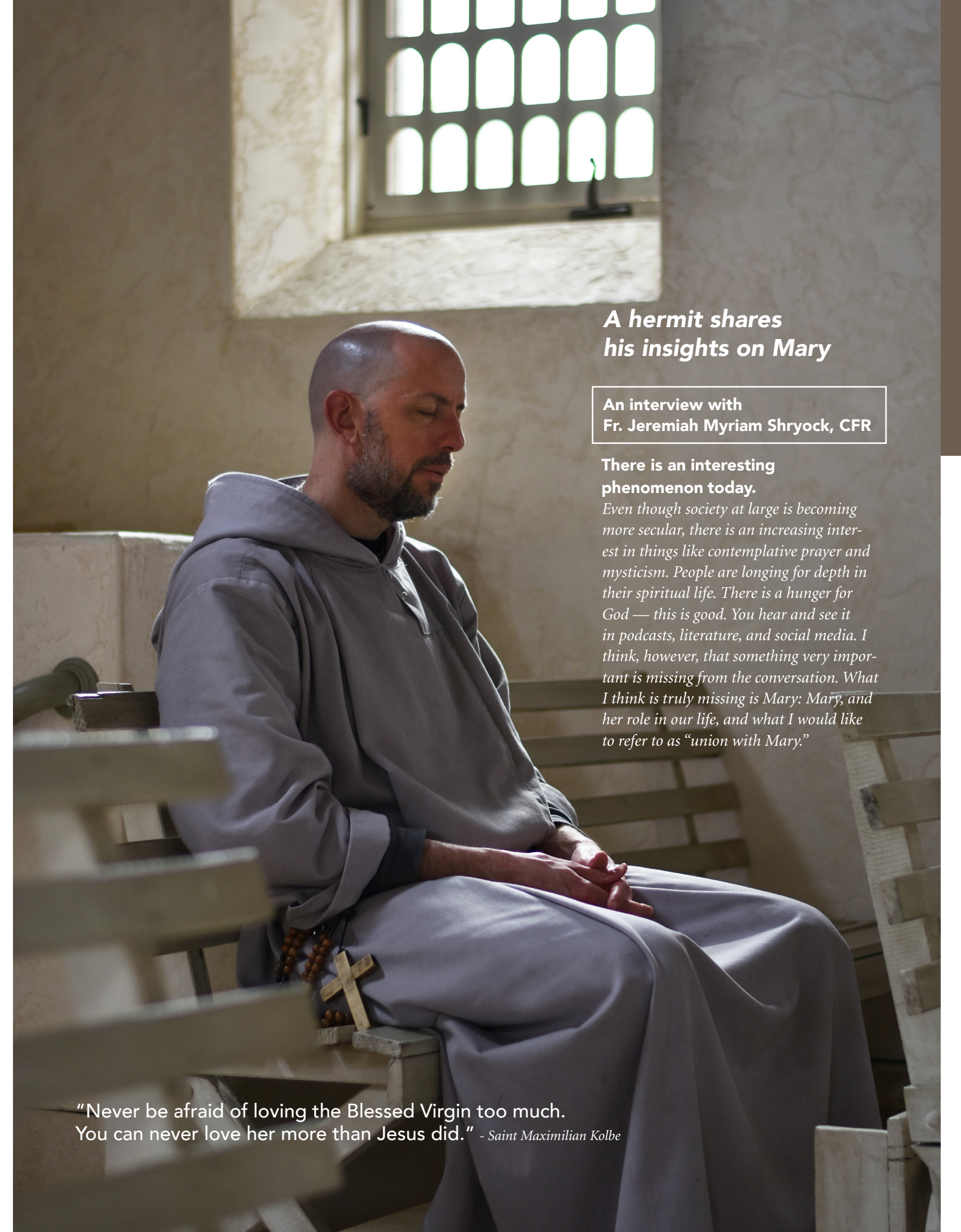
Mary goes to Jesus

"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.' ... His mother said to the servers, 'Do whatever he tells you'" (John 2:2-3, 5).

Mary, Queen of heaven and earth and Mother of Mercy

"Be not discouraged, but have recourse to Mary in all your necessities. Call her to your assistance, for such is the divine Will that she should help in every kind of necessity."

- Saint Basil the Great



A hermit shares his insights on Mary

An interview with
Fr. Jeremiah Myriam Shryock, CFR

There is an interesting phenomenon today.

Even though society at large is becoming more secular, there is an increasing interest in things like contemplative prayer and mysticism. People are longing for depth in their spiritual life. There is a hunger for God — this is good. You hear and see it in podcasts, literature, and social media. I think, however, that something very important is missing from the conversation. What I think is truly missing is Mary: Mary, and her role in our life, and what I would like to refer to as “union with Mary.”

“Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did.” - Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Is Mary Missing in Your life?

A discussion with a friend:

In college I would often have theological discussions with my roommate who wasn't Catholic. And it would often times come around to Mary. Then one day he said, "Well, I don't need Mary." I paused, and after a few minutes found myself responding, "Well, maybe you don't. But Jesus did. And aren't we supposed to imitate Him?"

The reason we want Mary in our life is to imitate Jesus. Jesus gave Himself to Mary. He put Himself in her arms to be cared for and to be nurtured by her. And so if we are to be true Christians, we want to follow Him. We should love what God loves. What does God love? Certainly His mother.

Why is a relationship with Mary important for a life of intimacy with God?

It's important because wherever Mary is, Jesus is there. No one knows a son better than His mother. Mary carried Jesus in her womb for nine months, and she was by His side for 33 years. She heard Jesus say things that no one else heard. She watched Jesus do things that no one else saw. She lived her entire life with Him, in Him, and through Him. Mary had the greatest intimacy with Jesus. There is no one who knows or loves Him more than His mother.

As a spiritual director, what do you see with those you direct who have found peace in difficult times?

If somebody were to ask me what happened to each one of these people, I would simply say, "Mary is what happened to them." Amid their confusion, pain, and brokenness, by turning more deeply to her, they found in her that loving, accepting, and nurturing mother whose presence, in a very real way, dried their tears. Once those tears were dry, Mary did what she always does. She took them by the hand in the darkness and led them back to the presence of her Son, "the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Isn't it true that we often want to hide our neediness? What does Mary's way reveal?

There is nothing that repulses us more than our neediness and poverty. Over the years I have been blessed to accompany a few people who are in AA. I have nothing but respect and admiration both for the program itself and the people who are part of it. I once attended an AA meeting with a friend of mine who was too afraid to go by himself. After the meeting, my friend asked me what I thought, and I responded enthusiastically, "It was so refreshing." Throughout the meeting someone would stand up and

basically say, "Hello, I'm Bob, and my life is a mess ..." then he would sit down and a few moments later someone else would stand up and say, "Hello, I'm Kelly, and my life is a mess ..." After hearing this for an hour, I remember thinking to myself that this is the most honest conversation I have heard in a very long time. I thought it was so refreshing because these people were not trying to hide their poverty and neediness. And in this honesty, they encounter God, the only One that can fulfill that neediness.

Unfortunately, most of us do not speak like this. Rather we are like, "Hello, I'm Bob, and I'm amazing. I make this much money; I have this many degrees, and I drive this kind of car. And, by the way, my family is perfect, and the school where my children go is perfect." We feel the need to impress others and to prove to others that we are in control of our lives. In short, we want people to believe that we are not in need of anything. However, being "needy" is a part of who we are, regardless of how organized our psychological and emotional life is and no matter how much we may have convinced others that we are different. The truth never changes: we are in need.

But it is in Mary's Magnificat that she rejoices in her neediness.

"I rejoice in God my Savior, for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant" (Luke 1:47-48). Mary sees her need for God as one of the reasons for God's grace in her life. She sees her need for God as a bridge in which God comes to her. We see our neediness as a sign that God doesn't love us. But in Mary it's the opposite. She sees her poverty as the greatest gift because it's what attracts God to her.

How can Mary help us through anxiety?

Most of us do not live in reality most of the time. What do we live in? We live in our daydreams; we live in our fears, anxieties, memories, hurts, wounds, the tragedies in our life. Most of us are not tuned into reality as it is right now. And we are always asking the *what-if's*. What if I get sick? What if I lose my job? What if this person rejects me? *What-if's* are possible, but most of the time they are not. They are most often based in fear or are coming out of anxiety, or doubt, or lack of trust. These are all normal human experiences, but we have to place them in the right perspective.

Jesus reminds us, *"Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on"* (Matthew 6:25). Why? Because *"Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all"* (Matthew 6:32). Despite all the *what-if's* that could have occurred in Mary's life, she always rooted herself in the truth that the presence of God is reality. Even if all of these *what-if's* came true (and the vast majority of them do not), they could not take away God's presence. He is with us, and He infinitely loves each one of us. With such confidence and assurance in God's love and presence, Mary can listen deeply to her life and not get swept away in an emotional frenzy as to what could happen.

We often are never satisfied with our life. What did life with Jesus, Who was God, look like?

When I graduated high school, I spent two years traveling throughout the country, because I believed that truth and the meaning of my life was somewhere “out there.” I was convinced that by traveling I would discover what I was desperately looking for. Even though I enjoyed that time and considered it a great blessing, it wasn’t until I returned home and began to live a more interior life with God that I discovered more deeply truth and the meaning of life.

In those two years of traveling, I drove approximately ten thousand miles in my car, and when I returned home I was basically the same person, with the same unanswered questions and the same deep yearning in my heart. After three months of being at home and beginning to pray daily, attend Mass, and read the Bible, I received more insight to my questions in that time than during my two previous years on the road. The truth, I discovered, was not “out there,” but interior. As Jesus says, “*The kingdom of God is within you*” (Luke 17:21).

For many people, ordinary life is very difficult to accept. We expect life to be like a movie — filled with excitement. When we begin to discover that life is nothing like the way it is portrayed in movies, books, and even social media, this can and often does challenge our faith. It can make us question who God is and cause us to doubt God’s presence in our life. Also, it can force us to reexamine our ideas about who we think we are and what the meaning of our life is. Because ordinary life does this, it is so good for us.

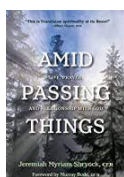
This ordinary life will be, in fact, how Mary and Jesus will spend most of their life. Many biblical scholars suggest that the Holy Family spent about three years in Egypt, which would make Jesus three or four years old as they return to Nazareth. His public ministry lasted only three years, and having died at the age of 33, Jesus then spent about 25 years of his life living an ordinary life with Mary.

What would Mary say if she was our spiritual director?

What would that be like? This is the way I imagine it for myself: I am sitting with Mary in a room overlooking a lake. On the wall is a simple crucifix, and we are seated on two simple wooden chairs. I begin by expressing to her all my fears, my desires, my hopes, my wounds, my weaknesses, etc. All the while she is listening very attentively and with deep compassion in her eyes.

When I am finished, we sit there together in silence and gaze out the window at the lake. After a few moments she looks me in the eye and says, “My son, God is trustworthy. Don’t be afraid to say yes to Him. Don’t wait for consolation; don’t wait for understanding. Don’t wait for everyone to agree with you, and don’t wait until everything in your life is ‘perfect,’ because it never will be. Say yes to Him today, and then tomorrow, and again every day, because He is trustworthy, and He is faithful.”

I think that is what she would say to each one of us. ■



*Fr. Jeremiah Myriam Shryock, CFR is a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal. He is a spiritual director for the Sisters of Life. Currently he is living as a hermit at the Monastery of Bethlehem in Livingston Manor, NY where he serves as a chaplain to the Monastic Sisters there. He is the author of the book: **Amid Passing Things: Life, prayer, and relationship with God**, and he has just finished writing a book on Mary called **Mary and the Interior Life**, which will be released in May 2024.*

What’s in a name?

God created each of our hearts to love Him in a way that no one else can. By reflecting on the ways Mary cared for Jesus and loved Him, she can help us see the ways Jesus wants to live His life in us and the ways we are drawn to love Him, and every person made in His image and likeness.

Sr. Mariam Caritas of the Lamb of God, SV

My name essentially translates to Mary’s love of the Lamb of God.



Mary’s love of the Lamb of God has captivated my own heart. Her immense love and tenderness is revealed during those hidden years at the home in Nazareth. This tender love is poured out in even the simple tasks

a mother performs for her child. I imagine her maternal heart being ever so attentive to preparing His favorite meals, the gentle care she took in weaving His clothes, and the joy she experienced as He learned the carpenters’ trade from Joseph.

That sacred relationship has been and will continue to be a deep source of contemplation for the rest of my life, something I pray will continue to be enhanced until the day I meet Our Lady in heaven.

Sr. Marie Noel Bethlehem, SV



Mary became a living tabernacle — a “house of bread” or “Bethlehem” — in which God revealed His loving Presence to the world. As the first and perfect home for Christ, Mary draws near the poor manger of my own

heart, and, resting the gift of her Son there, proclaims with such joy the truth that I, too, can be a home — a living tabernacle — for Him. She will show me how.

Christ comes to us at every Mass and remains with us in every tabernacle, re-presenting His infinite desire to make each of our hearts His dwelling place, if we will only give Him room.



*"When I am anxious I like to just sit and look at images of Mary. She brings me peace."
- A pregnant woman we are blessed to walk with.*



THE PATH TO THE WAY

A Conversation with Michelle Ascher Dunn

A psychotherapist in Manhattan raised in a Jewish family, Michelle strikes one immediately as poised and professional. As you talk to her you are also disarmed by her gentleness. She speaks to you as if you were the only one in the room. This begins to make sense as you learn where her passion lies: motherhood.

We came to know Michelle several years ago as a resource for the women we serve in our Visitation Mission. The friendship grew into a richly blessed weekly lunchdate where Michelle shares her insights of mother-child bonding, and the Sisters join in with their thoughts on spiritual motherhood. Now when spending time at our Visitation Mission, it's common to hear Sisters begin their sentences with, "Michelle says ..."

In these discussions on motherhood, the Blessed Mother has often come up. Michelle explains, "I didn't always know Mary, but later I realized that she had always been there with me." In her work, Michelle emphasizes the importance of a mother's gaze on her child in the early years of life. She reflects on the stunning reality that, "Mary never stopped gazing on Jesus — she gazed on Him as a baby, when He was carrying the

Mary never stopped gazing on Jesus — she gazed on Him as a baby, when He was carrying the cross, when He was on the cross, all the way through His passion — she never stopped gazing.

cross, when He was on the cross, all the way through His passion. She never stopped gazing." Eventually, Michelle found herself gazing upon this same Jesus: As she gently adds, "Mary is the path to the Way."

Longing for Jesus in the Eucharist: A moment of grace

Michelle described a pivotal moment when her life was transformed. "Sr. Magdalene would invite me to Mass, and so I started attending. When the Sisters would go up to Communion, I would go up, cross my arms, and receive a blessing. And this went on for about a year. It started to become quite powerful for me. It would bring me to tears. One day I was so filled with emotion, I turned to Sister and said, "I need the Eucharist. What can I do? How do I make it happen?"

Beginning with Mary's fiat: One continuous line of grace

On December 17, 2021, I was baptized and made my First Communion. Before my Confirmation, Easter Vigil 2022, I spontaneously face-timed my sister, Amy, for less than a full minute to say hello to Sr. Magdalene and the priest. Soon after Amy told me that she might seek out classes to learn more about the Catholic Church. Last fall she joined RCIA. And, Amy, my Jewish sister, was baptized into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil this year. I think it to be one continuous line of grace. ■



BEHOLD
YOUR MOTHER.
*At the cross, Jesus
gives us His mother.*

*The tender maternal gaze
that Jesus knew throughout
His lifetime is now given
to us. Mary stands at the
foot of our crosses and looks
upon us with love. In her
presence, we are safe.*

About Michelle: Michelle Ascher Dunn, MA, LCSW is a life-long New Yorker and psychoanalyst specializing in child development and mother-child bonding. Over the last several years she has become a dear friend of the Sisters of Life and an invaluable support to the Sisters serving pregnant women, mothers, and children.



The prayer that has the power
to change *everything*.

Prayer for peace in the midst of fear and anxiety

*“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.”* – Pope Pius XI



*“When I’m praying the rosary, I really feel
Mary’s presence. The rosary is like a sword
battling against the evil one. I feel protected.
It keeps me focused, calm, and at peace in the
midst of difficulties.”* -Cleveland, Coworker



"You saved my life."

The Power of One Hail Mary

- by Fr. Joe Freedy

A buddy of mine John Petrovich was running around his neighborhood, and he saw an ambulance in somebody's driveway. John's a really good guy so he wondered, "Should I stop ... check if everything's okay?" But he thought, "I don't know the lady ... I'm not a doctor." So he just kept running. And he prayed one Hail Mary. *One Hail Mary*. He didn't stop and fold his hands; he didn't kneel. He just prayed one Hail Mary as he was jogging. He didn't think anything of it.

A week later he was jogging around the same neighborhood, and he heard this woman call out from her front porch. He kept running. He didn't know anyone from that neighborhood. She said, "No, you, the runner." He stopped, turned around and said, "Me?" She said, "Yeah, you ... You saved my life." He said, "I'm sorry, ma'am, I don't think we know each other." She said, "No, I recognize your face. Last week, I was sick, and I was rushed to the hospital. And I was in the hospital dying. And I knew I was dying. Jesus appeared to me, and He held out His hand ... and your face was on the palm of His hand. And He said to me, 'You were going to die, but because of the prayer of this man you're going to live.'"



The Petrovich Family:

"What a jolt that was, not only for my prayer life, but for my family's prayer life, and our outlook on prayer itself. To have something that dramatic and profound happen was more than enough to draw me even that much closer to praying to the Blessed Mother. Because, as we all know, she is the direct line of intercession to her Son, Jesus Christ." - John

That's the power of praying one Hail Mary.

I want to encourage you. If you have never prayed the rosary, get a rosary, pray the rosary. It's such a powerful prayer that was given to us by God through the hands of Our Lady. St. Pius said, "If you want to save the world, say the rosary." ■

To watch this story go to:

The Rosary Series: The Power of One Hail Mary
youtube.com/watch?v=utFFt0qiYtU

(Written with permission.)



5 ROSARY TIPS:

1. One Hail Mary:

If you have never prayed the rosary, or find it difficult to pray at all, just start with one Hail Mary in the morning. Ask Mary to be with you throughout the day.

2. Give Mary your worries:

Imagine placing all your worries and distractions in Mary's hands. Then let her cover you with her mantle. Be still and rest there with her as you pray.

3. Ask Mary to give you her heart:

She wants to share with you the profound depths of God's love for you. Allow her to help you see Jesus with her eyes and heart.

4. Trust Jesus is pleased:

Don't get discouraged if you are distracted. Jesus is so pleased by your efforts. And so is His mother. Keep going!

5. You are not alone:

Know that the Sisters are united with you.

Join the Sisters of Life for the Rosary

Meditations by Sr. Maris Stella:

youtube.com/sistersoflifechannel

Mary's victory over evil

Fr. Amorth, an exorcist: Mary is a creature like us, but, having been elevated to be the Mother of God, she has extraordinary power. ... This prayer [the rosary] has, in fact, a strong power of protection and liberation from evil. One day Sister Lucia, a seer of Fátima, revealed that God has conferred a power so great on the Rosary that there is no evil — personal, family, or social — that cannot be defeated by its recitation with faith." - Excerpt from An Exorcist Explains the Demonic

"Satan told me, through the possessed person, 'Every Hail Mary of the Rosary is a blow to the head for me; if Christians knew the power of the Rosary, it would be the end of me.'" - The Last Exorcist, Fr. Armoth

Fr. Gabriele Amorth S.S.P. (1925 – 2016) was an Italian Catholic priest and exorcist of Rome.



I found myself

In the immediate presence of God.

The Story of Roy Schoeman

I was born and raised Jewish. As a child I had a tremendous hunger for God and felt that there had to be real meaning and purpose to life, thinking that I would come into it when I was older. I thought it would happen through entering a personal relationship with God at my Bar Mitzvah. When it didn't, that was one of the saddest days of my childhood. But pretty soon I decided the real meaning of life would come from the world. But, when I became a Harvard professor at the age of 29, I gave up that hope, since at that point there was no greater future success that might give my life meaning. Having long since lost any belief in God, I fell into the darkest despair of my life – that there is no pattern or purpose to anything; we live for 70 or 80 years and then die, and that's it.

It was in that despair, that I received the greatest grace of my life. Early one morning, I was walking in nature, lost in my thoughts. I had long given up any hope of belief in the existence of God. From one moment to the next, I found myself in the immediate presence of God, in a state of very intimate communion and communication with Him. I saw my life as I would after I died, looking back over

*I saw that when I died
I would regret all the
time and energy I wasted
worrying about not be-
ing loved, when at every
moment of my existence
I was held in an ocean of
love greater than I could
have ever imagined.*

it in the presence of God. I saw that we live forever, that every action in this life has a moral content that is observed and recorded for all eternity (except for sins which can be erased by sacramental confession and absolution, but I did not know about that at the time). Every moment of our lives has the potential for an infinite depth of meaning, since each time we take advantage of an opportunity to do something of value in the eyes of heaven we will, very literally, be rewarded for it for all eternity. I saw how foolish I had been, thinking that if only this hadn't happened or that had happened, then I would be happy, when absolutely everything that had ever happened to me had been the most perfect thing that could be arranged coming from the hands of an all knowing and loving God – not only including, but especially, those things that caused the most suffering at the time.

But by far the most transformative aspect of this experience was coming into the full knowledge and awareness that God Himself, the God that created all that exists, not only knew me by name, but loved me and cared about how I felt at every moment of my existence, as though I were the only creature He had ever created – that everything that made me happy,

made Him happy, and everything that made me sad, made Him sad. I saw that when I died I would regret all the time and energy I wasted worrying about not being loved, when at every moment of my existence I was held in an ocean of love greater than I could have ever imagined. I saw that the meaning and purpose of my life was to worship and serve my Lord and God and Master who was revealing Himself to me, but I did not know who He was. I could not think of Him as the God of Judaism, of the Old Testament, who was far more distant and severe than this God. So I prayed on the spot to know His name and what religion to follow – with the proviso, “as long as You’re not Christ, and I have to become Christian!”

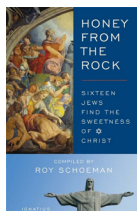
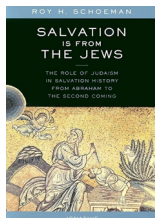
After this, all I wanted to do was to pursue this experience. So every night before going to sleep, I would say a short prayer to know the name of the God who had revealed Himself in that experience. A year after the initial experience, I went to sleep and thought I was awakened by a gentle hand on my shoulder and taken to a room to be left alone with the most beautiful young woman I could ever imagine. She offered to answer any questions I might have for her. One was more of an exclamation than a question: “How can it be? How can you be so glorious, so magnificent, so exalted?” Her reply was to look down at me almost with pity and say, “Oh, you don’t understand. I am nothing. I am a creature, a created thing. He is everything.”

When I awoke, I knew who the Blessed Virgin was, that the God in the previous experience was Christ, and that I wanted to be as fully and completely a Christian as possible.

After that experience I spent as much time as I could at a Marian Shrine near my home, just to feel her presence and commune with her. Whenever there was a Mass going on, I had a desire to receive Communion, although I didn’t know what it was at that time. It was those two things — my love for Mary and my desire to receive the Eucharist, that led me pretty directly into the fullness of Christianity in the Catholic Church. ■



“This same perception, that a Jew in becoming Catholic is not changing his religion at all, but rather coming into the fullness of its truth, is shared by virtually all Jews who have entered the Church.” - Roy



Consider these books:

- *Salvation is from the Jews*
- by Roy Schoeman
- *Honey from the Rock:*
Sixteen Jews Find the Sweetness of Christ
- by Roy Schoeman

For more information: salvationisfromthejews.com
youtube.com/c/JewishCatholic/



“MARY, GIVE ME YOUR
HEART: SO BEAUTIFUL,
SO PURE, SO IMMACULATE;
YOUR HEART SO FULL OF
LOVE AND HUMILITY THAT
I MAY BE ABLE TO RECEIVE
JESUS IN THE BREAD OF
LIFE AND LOVE HIM AS
YOU LOVE HIM ...”

-St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Jesus in the Eucharist.

This is the same Jesus
Who was conceived in Mary’s womb,
held her hand as a child,
cut wood with Joseph,
ate with His friends,
gave up His life for you and me,
and rose from the dead.
He is alive. And He waits for you to come
so He can heal you with His love
and mercy in the Eucharist.



In our Hope & Healing

mission, we see God work miracles of grace in the lives of those carrying the painful wound of abortion, as Jesus's tender mercy reaches out to heal and restore their broken hearts.

- Sr. Mariana Benedicta

Healing after abortion



Mary is holding me.

When I learned about the Sisters of Life, my heart was heavy and deeply wounded. I didn't know I needed healing. It felt like I was in a corner with my head down and arms crossed, not knowing what to do.

I lost my own mother when I was five. After she died, I didn't receive that maternal love I needed. The Sisters of Life encouraged me to do a Consecration to Our Lady, and my heart began opening to receive her love.

Most of my life, Our Lady always felt too high up for me. I couldn't relate to her. Her purity and beauty was the opposite of how I felt. I was on a Hope & Healing retreat after abortion with the Sisters, and they made a special dinner for us. One Sister tried to pour water in my glass, and I couldn't receive it. I started to cry, and I think that was a turning point to receive Our Lady's love. I saw her love present in the Sisters. It became tangible.

My heart was broken. I had put a shield around my heart to survive. But I needed to be open and vulnerable to allow Jesus to see my brokenness and misery, so that I could receive His mercy.

**Name changed for anonymity.*

I no longer see Our Lady as a high and unreachable woman, but as my mother.

When a child is hurt, they run into their mother's arms. Even though there is a wound, the hurt is not felt because the mother's reassurance and love surpasses that. So the Blessed Mother was there, holding me, like a child in her arms. If I close my eyes, I see her embracing me. In that security, my heart became ready to encounter Christ. He shed light on all my brokenness and wounds. To be healed in these places is painful. God knows each one of us. That's why He gave us His mother to take our hand and walk us to Him without fear, to be restored and healed.

I no longer see Our Lady as a high and unreachable woman, but as my mother. Nothing is unforgivable to a mother. She's there without judgment, without any reservation. And there is nothing that can change her love. Mary knows the suffering heart of a mother. In my suffering, I unite myself to her. She sees me. She sees my suffering, and she embraces me with love. ■

Jenny is a beautiful woman who has been served by our Hope & Healing Mission to those suffering after abortion. She shares her experience of encountering Our Lady's maternal love in her journey of healing.*

To learn more call us: 866.575.0075 or <https://sistersoflife.org/healing-after-abortion/>

Words from St. John Paul to Women who are suffering after abortion:

"The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To the same Father and his mercy you can with sure hope entrust your child. With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life." - Gospel of Life, #99

"I entrust my children lost to abortion to Our Lady, asking her to protect them and guide them until I can one day meet them. I feel that my children are with her. I see her hands on their shoulders, protecting them, like when a parent puts their arms around their children and holds them."

*- Felicia**

How can I protect my family?



Today, families are experiencing real challenges. What is a powerful antidote?

Enthroned Jesus in your Home.

What does that mean?

It means when you place, or “enthroned” an image or statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in your home and have it blessed by a priest, you are saying: “Jesus, You are King of this house. Come reign here. Fill this house with Your presence, Jesus. Calm the storms. Cast out the darkness

and the confusion. And bring Your purity, Your love, mercy, goodness, and Your truth. Bring unity, forgiveness, and healing to our family.” What you are saying when you enthrone Jesus is that you trust and have confidence that He will watch over and protect your family. He will take over.

Let Jesus bring His mother. If Jesus is our King, Mary is our queen. By placing an image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in your home as well, you are asking Our Lady, Queen of Peace, to be a presence with her maternal heart. You are saying to Mary, “Mary, ask Jesus to turn water into wine. Let there be miraculous healings in our family.” Let Mary be your greatest advocate.

Above: Fr. Carolan and the McDermott Family from Annunciation/Our Lady of Fatima Parish, enthroning the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the Immaculate Heart of Mary image in their home.

Below: Kenisha, and her children, Michai and Glory with Sisters and Fr. Carolan after the enthronement — and a couple weeks before Kenisha and Michai were baptized and received other Sacraments at the Easter Vigil! (Glory was baptized at her birth.)



Jesus in our home and in our hearts

- Sr. Pia Jude, SV

Growing up, my mom didn’t know Jesus. She was baptized, received her First Holy Communion at 12 years old, head and shoulders above the 2nd graders, and made her Confirmation as part of marriage prep. When I was little, Mass was my dad’s duty and mom’s hour “break” each week. Confession wasn’t on her radar.

When my twin sister and I received our First Holy Communion, my mom wanted to know what it was all about, so we started going to Mass together as a family. One Sunday a young priest in our parish asked if anyone wanted to welcome Jesus into their home and heart. Intrigued, my mom thought, “YES!” The priest announced that he would enthrone the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the homes of any family interested. My mom signed us up. I think she really wanted our home filled with peace and under God’s protection. So she went out and bought a statue of the Sacred Heart before the enthronement.

On December 1st, Father arrived with a team from the parish. We had a beautiful, powerful enthronement and a reception following. When it was over, my mom placed the statue on a special shelf in our living room.

We call it the “Sparkle day.”

Three days later, on December 4th, my mom was praying in front of the statue and asked Jesus, “So what now?” Then, she suddenly saw a light emanating from the statue and had a profound experience of God’s presence. In an instant, she knew that the Eucharist was Jesus. She said, “If Jesus can be found in the Eucharist, why am I not going to His home every day and receiving Him?” So my mom went from barely going to Sunday Mass, to attending daily Mass — overnight. She was filled with joy in the certainty that God was very real, and He was with us. This anchored our whole family.

And this was the beginning of many graces to come! ■



Mr. and Mrs. Furka, Sr. Pia Jude, SV and Sr. Luca, SV

To learn how to enthrone your home go to:

<https://welcomehisheart.com/home-enthronement>

THE SISTERS OF LIFE
Annunciation Motherhouse
38 Montebello Road
Suffern, NY 10901

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One of our most treasured customs as Sisters of Life is our nightly procession with singing and candles to the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Each evening before retiring for the night, the Sisters bring all of their joys and sorrows of the day before the gaze of our Merciful Mother.

The Power of Motherhood and Mary's Maternal Love

The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe is astonishing. In 1531, the Aztec's in Mexico were practicing human sacrifice to such a degree that the Bishop said that if God Himself did not intervene with a miracle, the entire continent would be lost. How did God respond to this plea? He didn't send an army or a natural disaster. Instead, He responded with a different type of power: **maternal love.**

IMPRINT TEAM

Sr. Elizabeth Ann, SV,
Editor, Layout, and Design
Sr. Charity, SV, Assistant Editor
Sr. Maris Stella, SV, Writer
Sr. Mary Casey O'Connor, SV, Writer
Sr. Mary Grace, SV, Writer
Sr. Lumen Glorior, SV, Writer
Sr. Beata Victoria, SV, Writer
Sr. Eden Marie, SV, Writer
Sr. Mercy Marie, SV, Copy Editor

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a humble peasant man, leaving her miraculous image on his tilma. In the ten years following the apparition, the brutal pagan practices ceased, and over ten million people were baptized and converted to Christ. Her miraculous image hangs in the Basilica in Mexico City and is visited by more than six million pilgrims a year.

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Call: (267) 831-3100 / Text: (914) 907-8570

Canada

659 Markham Street, Toronto, ON M6G 2M1 Canada
Call: (416) 463-2722 / Text: (647) 794-9414

HOPE & HEALING after abortion

(U.S. and worldwide) Toll free: (866) 575-0075
hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org
(Canada) (416) 463-2722 • toronto@sistersoflife.org