

THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

ST. JOHN EUDES

(1601 – 1680)

BACKGROUND

Born in Normandy, France (after his parents had made a pilgrimage to conceive a child), John entered the Congregation of the Oratory founded by Cardinal Bérulle and was ordained in 1625.

In his first ten years, he preached missions, (over 110 missions in his lifetime). He went quickly from the pulpit to the confessional, saying “the preacher beats the bushes but the confessor catches the birds.”

A devout woman who cared for wayward girls got John to establish a special home which the Visitation Sisters cared for. In 1666, this group was accepted by the bishop as a separate congregation. (Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge).

In 1643, he decided to form his own priest congregation (called the Congregation of Jesus and Mary) because he saw the need for seminaries to provide seminary training for the secular clergy. These priests were distinguished by a badge showing the hearts of Jesus and Mary as mystically one. He established his first seminaries in 1650, 1653, 1659, 1666 and 1670.

St. John was a prolific writer (twenty volumes were found and published in 1905). His most important books are devotion to the Admirable Heart of Jesus (1670) and this work, the Admirable Heart of Mary (completed a few months before his death).

St. John and St. Margaret Mary (1647 – 1690) were contemporaries in France but never met each other. St. John’s preaching, writing and establishing feasts to honor Jesus’ Sacred Heart smoothed the way for the great Sacred Heart revelations (1674) given to Margaret Mary.

John’s last great act, like his first, was to preach a mission in the open for nine weeks. He never recovered from this ordeal.

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PART ONE

OBJECT OF THIS DEVOTION

1.1 REASONS FOR THE NAME “ADMIRABLE”

From among all creatures, Jesus Christ chose the Virgin Mary to be His Mother and gave her to us as our Queen and Mother. He wants us to honor and love her just as he does. Being members of His Body, we must be animated by His Spirit and practice His virtues. Our devotion to His Mother must be filled with His sentiments towards her.

Mary always held first place in His Sacred Heart. After God, Jesus wants Mary to be the principal object of our devotion. Therefore, after honoring God, our greatest service to Jesus Christ is to honor His Mother. In order to love, we must see the creature as worthy of our esteem. Therefore, the Lord reveals to us the perfections that He has given to her.

The Woman Clothed with the Sun

Scripture says, “A great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.” (Rev 12:1). St. Augustine and St. Bernard, agree that this woman is Mary. Mary is heaven’s masterpiece. Even when she lived on earth, her desires were in heaven. She is clothed with the sun, a symbol of God’s perfections. These penetrate her so deeply that she is transformed into the very holiness of God. The moon under her feet means the entire world is beneath her. She holds sway over all things. The twelve stars represent the mysteries of her life, (the privileges and prerogatives which God has given to her). Mary is God’s “a great sign” and her marvels must be proclaimed to all in heaven and on earth.

Most Admirable

The Holy Spirit has everyone call her “O Mother Most Admirable”. A holy Jesuit asked Mary which title in her litany pleased her most. She mentioned “Admirable Mother”. Her most admirable part is her virginal heart, a world of marvels and an abyss of wonders. By this heart’s purity, she merited to become God’s mother, to receive all her virtues, and to be worthy of heavenly glory. Mary’s virginal heart is admirable as the source of all the wondrous mysteries.

In this book, I will try to write worthily of Mary’s holy heart. Even with the intellect of a cherubim and the flaming love of a seraphim, I would fail. In truth, I need the mind and tongue of Jesus Christ himself to write about the holiness of Mary’s heart. Certainly, these few pages can never contain the treasures and wonders of a heart which the saints contemplate in ecstasy.

Mary’s Virtues

At the moment of her Immaculate Conception, the angels saw Mary and proclaimed, “Who is she who comes forth as the morning rising and as an army in battle array?” (Song 6:9) In heaven, the angels now see all her perfections, from the first to the last moment of her life.

Even God proclaims, “How beautiful are your steps, O prince’s daughter.” (Song 7:1) If God proclaims that she has ravished his heart by a single hair of her head (Song 4:9), how great are all the burning acts of love that came from her virginal heart. Her heart deserves endless praise for all the acts of love that she offered to God on earth.

What mind can understand her heart’s richness? Is not her heart a measureless ocean and an immense furnace of love? May I be consumed like straw in that furnace! O Mary, only Jesus knows the treasures he has hidden in your heart. He lit the fire but no one can measure the flames.

This Book

May Jesus Christ be the author of this book. May He annihilate me and inspire the thoughts and words of this book. May His blessing come upon the readers to inflame their hearts with His sacred fire so they be numbered among the children of Mary’s heart.

1.2 THE HEART OF MARY IN GENERAL

I want to point out the various meanings of heart in Sacred Scripture.

1. It means the material heart, the first organ to begin to live and the last to stop. It is considered the place of love, hatred, joy, etc. “With all watchfulness, keep your heart because life comes from it.” (Pr 4:23)
2. Heart also means memory. Jesus said, “Place it in your heart, not to think ahead of time what you are to say.” (Lk 21:14). In this saying, it means “to remember”.
3. It also means the intellect which we use to meditate so God can convince us of truths. “The meditation of my heart.” (Ps 18:15) shows a person occupied with God’s mysteries.
4. It expresses the free will (the queen of the faculties and the mother of good or evil). “A good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good.” (Lk 6:45) A good heart is the righteous will of a just man. An evil heart is the bad will of the wicked.
5. It means the highest part of the soul, “the point of the spirit”, the seat of contemplation by which the soul sees God in all simplicity. Scripture says “I sleep but my heart watches” (Song 5:2) St. Bernadine said that sleep did not prevent Mary’s heart (the highest point of her mind) from being united to God in contemplation.
6. At times, it means the interior spiritual life of man. “Put me as a seal upon your heart.” (Song 8:6) God wants to stamp his image upon my interior and exterior life.
7. It can mean the Holy Spirit, the heart of the Father. “I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit in you.” (Ez 36:26)
8. The Son of God is called the heart of the eternal Father, who speaks of this when He says to the Blessed Virgin, “You have ravished my heart.” (Song 4:9)

All of these meanings form one heart in Mary because they are all harmoniously united. Jesus (the heart of the Father) and the Holy Spirit (the heart of the Father and the Son) were given to Mary to be the heart of her heart. In the Trinity, we adore three hearts which form one heart. In the Mother of God, we honor three hearts made one.

The Hearts of the Trinity

In the Trinity, the first heart is the Son of God (heart of the Father). The second heart is the Holy Spirit (heart of the Father and the Son). The third heart is divine love which can be considered the heart of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. These three hearts are one heart by which the Divine Persons love one another.

The first heart in Jesus Christ is his heart of flesh, which has been deified by union with the Divine Word. The second heart is His intellect and will, also deified by union with the Divine Word. The third is His divine heart, the Holy Spirit which animates His human nature. In Jesus Christ, these three hearts form one heart which constitutes the life of both His spirit and His body. By God's unity, they form but one heart.

The Hearts of Mary

The first heart of Mary is her material heart, completely spiritualized by grace. The second is her spiritual heart, made God-like by her participation in God's perfections. "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." (Ps 44:14), flowing from her heart. Her third heart is God himself, the love of God. Several holy Doctors say that Jesus is her heart, always watching over her. These three hearts form one heart by the most intimate union. Of this heart, the Spirit said, "Mary pondered all these words in her heart." (Lk 2:19 and 2:51).

Mary's Acts

Mary cherished the mysteries of her Son in her material heart, i.e. in her love and physical emotions. All her feelings existed for Jesus. Every emotion of her heart was united with His emotions. She loved what He loved and hated what He hated.

Second, she kept these things in her spiritual heart, i.e. the inmost recesses of her mind. All her faculties adored everything about her Son, even to the smallest detail.

Third, she kept them in her divine heart (i.e. in Jesus) who was the mind of her mind. He recalled them to her mind. They fed contemplation and helped her teach the apostles.

The Following Chapters

The next three chapters treat of these three hearts of Mary. Other parts of the book will describe the characteristics unique to each heart or common to all three. My words will affect the reader the most if they constantly lift up their own hearts in thanksgiving for what God has done in Mary's heart.

O Jesus, my task is great. Help me to show forth the wonders of Mary's heart so I can make a return for Your countless graces. O Jesus, I surrender my mind and my pen so the readers can gain a lively devotion to the Admirable Heart of Your Mother.

1.3 **THE CORPOREAL HEART OF MARY**

All that concerns Mary is filled with marvels. The humanity that she gave to Jesus was raised to infinite dignity. Every part of Mary is sanctified by her divine maternity. Every part of Jesus' sacred body is worthy of eternal admiration. Everything in Mary's virginal body is worthy of eternal praise.

The Five Prerogatives

Certainly, her blessed heart is the worthiest part of her body and has five marvelous prerogatives which demand our veneration.

1. Her heart is the principle of her life and of all her functions. This heart gives life to the woman who gave life to all of Adam's children when they were sunk in eternal death. This heart is the source of a life more precious than all angels and saints.
2. The heart produced the virginal blood which formed the sacred body of the God-Man.
3. Her heart was the source of Jesus' life for nine months while He was in her womb. During that time, both the mother and the baby depended on her heart for their existence. It is kept safe for the two most precious lives.
4. How many times did the infant Jesus rest on Mary's heart? She welcomed every blessing and light which He poured into her heart. He loved her heart more than any other and her heart loved him more than all the angels. What union took place between these two hearts! What fires the Holy Spirit breathed into her heart.
5. Her heart is the altar on which all the natural passions are immolated. Human hearts contain irascible and concupiscible passions. These two sets of desires command all of our varied emotions. The irascible contains hope, despair, daring, fear and anger. The concupiscible include love, hatred, desire, abhorrence, delight and sadness.

Due to sin, these passions fell into disorder. Instead of obeying the will, they often enslave it. They do not guard the heart in peace but torment it with war. However, in Mary's heart all these passions were subject to the divine will.

The Passion in Mary's Heart

In Our Lord's heart, these passions became divine. In Our Mother's heart, divine love transformed these passions so they had only God as their object. God's love possessed Mary's heart and made these passions a perpetual sacrifice to the Trinity. Mary's body was a sacred

temple and her virginal heart is its altar. In her heart, divine love is the priest offering God uninterrupted sacrifices.

These passions are sacrificial victims placed on her heart. They are transformed into heavenly fire and immolated as a sacrifice of praise. Divine love itself sacrificed these passions on Mary's heart. This sacrifice began the first instant her heart began to beat and continued until her last breath.

O Blessed heart on which the divine sacrifice took place, you desired only Him who is most desirable and who alone can satisfy man's desires. O Blessed heart that hated nothing except what could injure the interests of your Son, you knew anger only to those who opposed his glory. O Blessed heart, shut tight to the vanities of this world and fired with holy generosity, you allowed nothing to prevent your advancing along the path of sacred love.

These are some of her heart's marvelous prerogatives. Certainly, this material heart of our Mother is worthy of all veneration. Blessed are those who live in conformity with this heart and give the honor due to this noble heart. May every heart praise you forever.

4.1 **THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF MARY**

The Holy Spirit praises Mary by saying, "That which is hidden within" (Song 4:1 and 3). Mary is a treasure hidden from the most enlightened eyes and filled with riches that only God knows.

The Spiritual Heart

What is the "Spiritual heart?" The soul is one but it has a threefold life. The first life keeps the body alive. The second life is the physical senses that we share with the animals. The third is the intellectual life that we share with angels (including the intellectual memory, the free will and the highest part of the mind called the point of the spirit.) This point of the spirit uses a clear intuition and a simple movement of the will. It does not need complex reasoning.

This point of the spirit makes us into the image of God. "Let us make man in our own image and likeness." (Gen 1:26) It is the noblest part of the soul, able to obtain knowledge of God and a natural love of His goodness. When moved by faith and grace, it becomes the principle of supernatural life, loving God supernaturally and sharing in the divine nature.

Where Divine Love Resides

The Point of the Spirit is centered in the will and can love much more than any love coming from the senses. When moved only by natural reason, the will can produce only natural love. When enlightened by the intellect and faith, the will is the principle of divine love. When moved by grace, it is the source of divine love, and makes the soul worthy of God.

Although grace and faith spread their divine influence to all the lower faculties, they reside in this superior part, where divine love also resides. “The charity of God which is poured out in our hearts.” (Rom 5:5)

Paul writes, “Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.” (Gal 4:6) He prays that “Christ might dwell in your hearts.” (Eph 3:17) This “heart” is the mental and superior part of the soul, which is properly called spirit. The spiritual heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary comprises her memory, intellect, will and the supreme part of her spirit. She said, “My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.” (Lk 1:47)

The Marvels of This Heart

If Mary’s corporeal heart is so excellent, what are the marvels of her spiritual heart? The soul surpasses the body and the spiritual heart surpasses the corporeal heart. I will put forth a summary of the marvels of that heart.

1. God preserved this heart from all stain of sin and clothed it with a purity that is next to God’s. Because He possessed her heart from the very beginning, it always belonged to him, loving God more than all other hearts united together.
2. God has filled this heart with the greatest natural and supernatural illumination. Mary’s natural intellect was clearer and more lively than any other, an intellect worthy of the Mother of God, worthy of lofty functions and sublime contemplations. Concerning her supernatural light, Albert the Great says that Mary knew all mysteries because she enjoyed infused knowledge of all sciences.

The Virgin Mary dedicated her vast knowledge to a holy use, always to love God, to save souls, to humble herself and to embrace poverty and sufferings. She never became attached to these favors but always returned them to God as their source.

Mary’s Two-Fold Love

Two loves inflamed her heart – love for God and charity to mankind. First, her love attracted the Word, the heart of the Father to be the heart of her heart. Secondly, Mary’s heart is an inexhaustible source of blessings for all who love her. “I love those who love me.” (Pr 8:17) By loving God more than all angels and men, Mary can never be adequately honored.

What praises are due to this heart! What glory is given to her memory, intellect, will and spirit which were used only to praise God. Her memory remembered all the divine favors. Her intellect always meditated on God’s mysteries. Her will was always plunged in divine love. Her spirit always contemplated the divine majesty. This heart never displeased God and brought forth all virtues. Even if all the angels and saints exalted this admirable heart with all possible strength, their thanksgiving would still be inadequate.

1.5 THE DIVINE HEART OF MARY

Jesus Christ, the heart of the Father, is also the heart of His mother, the heart of her heart, the soul of her soul and the spirit of her spirit. Our Lord is the life of all Christians, and by an incomparable union, he is the life of her life. Our Lady told St. Brigid, “My Son was truly my heart. When he left my womb to be born it seemed like half my heart left. When he suffered, it was as if my heart suffered the identical sorrows. When he saw my sorrows, he suffered violent anguish. Adam and Eve betrayed the world as one and my Son wanted me to cooperate with him in saving the world.”

Perfect Conceivable Union

St. Paul wanted the life of Jesus to be manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor 4:11) If Jesus is the life of his Mother by the most perfect union conceivable, who can conceive the divine life which he communicates to her? Whoever is in Jesus is in Mary because Jesus lives in her entirely. The memory, will and intellect of Jesus are alive in her memory, intellect and will. His passions, virtues and divine attributes hold dominion over her, and produce in her a living image.

Mary told St. Brigid, “Every homage given to my Son is likewise given to me. Whoever dishonors him, dishonors me. We have such perfect mutual love that we seem to have one heart for both of us.” Honoring Mary’s heart honors all the functions of her corporeal heart and all the acts of her memory, intellect, will and spirit.

How to Honor Her Heart

Honoring Mary’s heart means honoring her corporeal heart, her spiritual heart and the divine heart of Jesus. It also means honoring the effects of the sanctity of Mary’s divine heart, Jesus Christ himself. What tongue can proclaim or mind conceive these wonders of grace?

How great a feast does the heart of Mary deserve! The church celebrates the feast of Mary’s name. How much more we need a feast honoring her heart. Every heart and tongue and pen should be used in loving, speaking and writing about this heart. The universe should celebrate the Feast of Mary’s Immaculate Heart. (Ed Note: At the time of St. John Eudes this feast was not yet established.)

I want you, dear reader, to know that Jesus Christ is the heart of the eternal Father and was the heart of Mary’s life. He also wants to be the heart of your life. He made you a member of his Mystical Body so you can say, “Christ lives in me.” (Gal 2:20). Jesus Christ wants His Spirit to become your spirit just as his heart was completely the heart of Mary.

Our Cooperation

For God’s will to become your will and for the faculties of Jesus’ sacred humanity to animate your faculties, you must cooperate.

Seek the death of every activity that displeases God. Surrender yourself frequently so the Son of God can destroy whatever is contrary to God's will. Use St. Augustine's prayer, "Soul of Christ, sanctify me", particularly after Holy Communion.

O Mother, I acclaim that in you everything is accomplished most perfectly. May God be blessed forever because of the graces he has given to you.

PART TWO

FIRST FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION:

THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

(SIX SYMBOLIC PICTURES)

2.1 GOD THE FATHER – DELINEATOR OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

To strengthen and to spread devotion to Mary's admirable heart, I want to show that this devotion has foundations which hell itself cannot destroy.

Creation and Revelation

The first foundation is the eternal Father's unfathomable love for Mary which has led Him to give us many images of her heart. The Father fashioned the works of creation and revealed the Old Testament mysteries. In both, he prefigured His Son. In creating the visible world and in forming the Jewish religion, the Father also prefigured Mary, the woman chosen from all eternity. "It was she whom the Patriarchs described and whom the evangelists announced." (St. Jerome). "Towards her all the prophecies converge." "The Holy Spirit announced her by divine oracles, promised her by signs before her birth and fulfilled all that followed." (St. Ildephonsus).

Old Testament Images

"Noah's ark, the burning bush, the Ark of the Covenant and other Old Testament images are figures of the Virgin Mary." (St. John Damascene).

God prefigured Jesus by many persons (like Isaac, Moses, David, etc.) and gave Old Testament prophecies for Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. He also gave images of Mary – the "lily among thorns" (Immaculate Conception), the "Rising dawn" (Nativity), the "Cedar of Lebanon" (her dignity), and the "Ark of the Covenant" (Assumption).

The Father also created many representations of her Admirable Heart to show how innumerable are its perfections. The following are six creations that reveal her dignity: the heavens, the sun, the center of the earth, the fountains of Genesis, the sea and the Garden of Eden. He also gave six Old Testament images: the burning bush, the harp of David, the throne of Solomon, the temple of Jerusalem, the furnace of Babylon and the mount of Calvary. In this part we will consider the six manifestations in creation and praise the Father who gave us these images.

2.2 THE HEAVENS

We know that Mary's heart is a heaven because the Holy Spirit says that our savior "came forth from the highest heaven". (Ps 19:7) Our Saviour went forth from the Father but never left His side. So, Mary's heart is a heaven, where Jesus will remain forever, "Your word, O Lord, stands forever in heaven." (Ps 119:89)

The Psalm says, "The heavens are the works of your hands." (Ps 102:26). The psalm also says, "The Lord prepared his throne in heaven." (Ps 103:19). Mary's heart is God's masterpiece. She is "elevated above the heavens." (Ps 8:2)

Three Reasons

Her heart is a heaven of fire and always burns with celestial love that is holier than the angels. It is the "heaven of heavens" for three reasons.

1. "In Christ dwells the fullness of divinity." (Col 2:9) This same Jesus dwells forever in His mother's heart because the Saviour has no earthly dwelling so glorious as Mary's heart. He is truly a heaven within her heaven and her heart is the heaven of heaven.
2. Mary is really a heaven in her own person. Dwelling in Our Lady, the Saviour looks down upon us sinners. "From heaven, the Lord has looked down on earth." (Ps 102:210). All living things receive life because of heaven's influence. The Blessed Virgin is our heaven in this world of grace because, next to God, she is the source of all graces.
3. Her heart is the heaven of heavens because it contains the entire Church, the Kingdom of Heaven. (St. Bernard). All receive grace through Mary. St. Paul wrote that his converts were in his heart. "Does not Mary carry all her children in her heart?" (St. Bernardine). Eternally, Our Lady will carry all those who live in heaven in her heart (a true paradise for the elect). Her heart has become like a great city, filled with joys for her children, who will live there forever.

God's Throne

O Mary, your heart is a heaven which encloses even God Himself whom the heavens cannot contain. In your heart, the King of heaven reigns, the Trinity accomplishes its wonders and God has established his throne.

O reader, approach this throne of grace with confidence. Through Mary's intercession, you will gain all the graces you need. Rejoice to be numbered among her true children. Lift up your eyes. In Mary's heart, you will find strength for life's battle and help to love your Creator.

2.3 THE SUN

Besides creating the sun to give light to the world, God also made it a symbol of the perfections which shine from Our Lady's heart.

The universe has three states – the state of nature, of grace and of glory. Among these three, God has established a perfect bond and relationship among these three states. The order of nature is an image of the order of grace and the orders of nature and grace are an image of glory.

An Incomparable Masterpiece

The sun is an admirable work of God but Mary's heart is God's incomparable masterpiece and a compendium of all his marvels. In Mary's heart, God's magnificence is clearer than in any other work of nature, grace or glory. The sun is entirely luminous, but Mary's heart is more radiant than all celestial lights. After God, her heart is the first source of unending light for the Church.

Three Lives

Although the sun is the source of the vegetative and animal life, Mary's heart is the source of three lives, the human life that animated her body, the spiritual life possessed by her soul, and the eternal life which she enjoys in heaven.

Secondly, Mary's Immaculate Heart is the source of life for the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, she is the origin of a third world, composed of the children of God. Next to God, these children derive their life of grace and of glory from the Mother of God. They are indebted to her, because her virtues made her worthy to be God's mother and their mother. Hers is the heart of the entire Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant. All ye nations, you were condemned to hell and Mary's Son set you free.

Some Comparisons

Since it was created, the sun has been in perpetual motion. Mary's heart has also been kept in motion by her charity to mankind. While on earth, Mary raced along the path of sanctity, making incomprehensible progress in the mystical way.

St. Ambrose said that God dwells more in Mary's heart than in the sun of any universe. Psalm 89 says, "His throne is as the sun before me." (V38) This throne is the heart of Mary, the most brilliant of the Father's lights.

The material sun influences all living things by its heat. So, Mary's heart makes its warmth felt in heaven and earth. The earthly sun gladdens men by its rays. Mary's mystical sun enriches all by charity. She consoles the souls in Purgatory, and gives joy on earth. Mary's heart is "the happiness of the whole world." (St. Germanus) and "an ocean of inexhaustible delight" (St. John Chrysostom).

Some Praises

“Take away the sun and what becomes of the earth? Take away Mary’s heart and nothing is left but the frightful night of the grave.” (St. Bernard). O Excellent heart, happy the minds that think of you and the tongues that preach you. Blessed are the eyes that see you.

O Beautiful sun, melt our frigidity and dispel our clouds. Help us to lead a heavenly life on earth, seeking only to please our heavenly Father. O Radiant sun, let our hearts be polished mirrors that beam a perfect image of you.

2.4 **THE CENTER OF THE EARTH**

The third image of Mary is the center of the earth. Ps 74:2 says, “God has brought about salvation in the center of the earth.” Scripture says, “He has given the earth to the children of men.” (Ps 114:16). Because man sinned, the earth has received God’s wrath. This fallen earth is a land of disorder and death, “a land of misery and darkness.” (Job 10:22)

Scripture also says, “Lord, you have blessed your earth.” (PS 85:2) This is a renewed earth, a land of blessing and eternal life, holier than the heavens. This renewed earth is the Blessed Virgin Mary. God “wrought salvation in the middle of the earth.” (Ps 73:12) “In the middle of the earth”, means in the heart of the Virgin. Into this “good and perfect heart”, came the Divine Word.

The Holy Spirit said, “Wheat shall flourish, even on the mountain tops.” (Ps 72:16) This overflowing wheat is the Son of God, the living bread, who comes daily in the Eucharist. The lofty mountain tops are the prerogatives and perfections of our Blessed Mother.

Wheat Planted on the Mountain

God planted this wheat of redemption in the excellent soil of these lofty summits. This wheat was scattered by the Apostles’ preaching and by the word of the Spirit.

The virtues that made Mary worthy to be God’s mother also made her the mother of all God’s children. The eternal Father clothed her with His power so she could conceive His Son and give Him birth in every human being.

As Mary eternally conceives Jesus in her heart, she eternally holds all of God’s children. Mary made fruitful the grain of wheat she received. This seed, her Son, was annihilated so it would not remain alone. He saves us in her holy heart which is the center of the earth.

“She received this fullness of grace so she could cooperate with her Son in His work.”(St. Thomas Aquinas) “All salvation springs from Mary’s heart.” (St. Bonaventure) What, then, are our obligations to her heart? What feast can be worthy of all the favors granted by her intercession?

Three Reasons

Mary is the center of this renewed Christian world for three reasons:

First, since our salvation takes place in Mary's heart, she must be the center of God's plan. "With good reason, Mary is called the center of the earth because all that came before us and all that will follow, look to her as the Ark of God, the masterpiece of all ages. The angels look to her to restore their numbers. The souls in purgatory look to her for deliverance. She is the fulfillment of all the prophecies." (St. Bernard) She is the refuge of every creature (past, present and future) because her heart is the center of the Christian earth.

Second, her heart is the center of the world of tenderness and charity. All divine charity of the angels and saints is united in her heart. Mary's heart is a gigantic mirror, large enough to reflect all the rays of divine love.

Third, this humble heart attracted Jesus Christ himself. Because He is the true heart of Mary, everyone must make her heart the object of their desires. In Mary's heart there is perfect rest. Outside of it, there is only fear, death and hell itself.

O Jesus, take possession of our hearts. Inspire them to seek only you and to remain forever in that ardent furnace.

2.5 THE INEXHAUSTIBLE FOUNTAIN

Four Miraculous Streams

At the beginning of the world, God caused a fountain to spring from the ground. (Gen. 2:6) This spring represents her heart, which irrigates everything on earth and in heaven. "Mary was prefigured in that fountain." (St. Bonaventure). She is "the sealed fountain." (Song 4:12), sealed against the world, the devil and all sin, sealed even to the Seraphim and Cherubim who cannot comprehend her treasures. Mary is so enclosed that only God knows the quality and quantity of her graces. From this spring comes four miraculous streams.

Of Light

Mary's heart is a fountain of light. Queen Esther prefigures Mary, "the tiny spring which turns into a river, the light of the sun." (Esther 10:6-7) Mary is a "fountain of the sun". (Jos. C 15) The Church honors her as "the door of true light" and hails her as the door through which Jesus, the light of the world, came. O incredible wonder! Who could have thought that a fountain could be the source of a light?

Of Water

Mary's heart is a fountain of water. These are her tears which were joined to the Redeemer's. O Mary, how many tears flowed from your merciful heart! How often your love for Jesus caused you to shed these tears! Your burning charity caused you to weep because you saw that millions of precious souls would be lost, even though your Son died to save them. Your

tears flowed as you were absorbed in Holy Communion after Pentecost. Did not the saints have the gift of tears? You possessed this favor to its fullest.

O Mary, you shed tears of consolation when you visited Elizabeth, when you found Jesus Who had been lost for three days, when He visited you after the Resurrection and when you saw Him ascend into heaven.

The sorrows of Jesus' passion and death, fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy, "Let your tears flow like a torrent day and night." (Lam. 3:18) These tears are a fountain flowing from Mary's Immaculate Heart, a constant source of holy water.

Of Grace

Mary's heart is also a fountain of grace. The Church calls her the "Mother of Divine grace." The Angel Gabriel declared that she was full of grace. "Our Lady is so full of grace that from her abundance, she can dispense grace to all men." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

From her generous heart, grace pours over the wicked and the just. Mary is "the fountain of gardens" (Song 4:15). These gardens are all the parts of the Church, which give fruit to the Son of God, "Compass me about with apples because I languish with love" says the Bridegroom (Song 2:5). These gardens are holy souls where the Bridegroom finds delight. Mary is this "fountain of the gardens."

Mary waters even the unjust, "A fountain shall water the torrent of thorns." (Joe 3:18) The thorns are the wicked. The torrent is the world, dragging evildoers into the abyss of perdition. Mary's heart touches these poor souls being swept away into hell. When these dead thorns (fit only for eternal fire) experience Mary's waters, they awaken to new life and are transformed into good fruit for the King's table.

Of Milk and Honey

The divine spouse says, "Your lips are as honey and milk under my tongue." (Song 4:11). They are "under her tongue" because they are in her heart, which is always full of sweetness.

Her heart is a fountain of milk and honey. Scripture says, "You shall be carried at the breasts" (Is 66:12) and "My spirit is sweeter than honey." (Sir 24:27). St. Peter writes, "As newborn babes, you must long for pure spiritual milk to grow into salvation." (1 P 2:2) Mary says, "Come, beloved soul, eat of my honey and drink of my milk so you can have great delight in serving him who made me so amiable."

Of Oil and of Wine

Her heart is also a fountain of oil which gives the mercy for sinners, and of wine which gives comfort to the sorrowful. "Give strong drink to the sad and wine to the grieved." (Prov 31:6) Mary cries out, "Drink, and be inebriated." (Song 5:1) This is the "new wine which makes virgins." (Zach 9:17) Mary says to all apostles, "Drink this wine so you can forget the

world's pleasures and exert all your efforts to establish the Kingdom of love. Then, you will be children of my heart." Oh, I want to cry out to all, "Come, buy wine and milk without any price." (Is 55:1)

You who thirst for worldly honors, come to Mary's heart and you will thirst only for God's glory. Every other honor is smoke and illusion. You who thirst for earthly treasures, come to her heart and you will find true riches, the contentment of angels and the power of God's children.

Emerge from the filth of the world's torrents and enter the rivers of peace. Give yourself in holy ecstasy to the torrents of delight. Hasten. Why do you wait?

Fountain of Grace

Jesus made Mary's heart a fountain of every possible grace for those who have recourse to her because Jesus resides perpetually in her heart. To invoke her heart is to invoke Jesus.

To experience the potency of her wine, you must renounce all drinking of the wine of demons. You cannot drink the chalice of Satan and the chalice of Jesus. You must choose. How easy a choice it should be!

How strange! The world offers crumbs of empty fame and of fleeting pleasures, but sells these at a great price – your very life. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread?" (Is 55:2) Their drinks are bitter and their poison brings eternal death. "What satisfaction can you gain from the bitter waters of Egypt?" (Jer 2:18)

In contrast, Mary offers you waters which you can drink forever. What folly to drink the goblet of sin instead of the chalice of Our Savior! Jeremiah wrote, "Be astonished, O heavens, for my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug broken cisterns that hold no water." (2:12-13)

O Lord, grant us living water. Stifle our dangerous thirsts for worldly things so we find our refreshment in your holy will.

2.6 THE SEA

The Holy Spirit says that Mary is the sea. She is a sea of purity, vast in extent and usefulness. The sea does not allow the adjoining land to be sterile. So, the souls which come to Mary's heart bring forth abundant fruits.

The sea is one of God's marvels, "Wonderful are the surges of the sea." (Ps 93:4) Mary's heart is an ocean of wonders and miracles, God's masterpiece where His infinite power shines so brilliantly.

Gathering the Waters

The sea is the gathering of waters. God said, "Let the waters that are under heaven, be gathered together in one place." and "Let this gathering be called the seas." (Gen 1:9-10). Into Mary's heart, God gathers the living water of all graces. "Graces are divided among the saints. Mary possesses the fullness." (St. Jerome) "Mary is the place where all holiness is assembled." (St. Peter Chrysologus) "Mary is a prodigious sea of graces." (St. Bernard)

"All the rivers run into the sea, but the sea does not overflow." (Sir 1:7) So, all God's graces flow into Mary's heart, remain there and merge into the great sea. "In me is all grace of the way." (Sir 24:25) In her, are all the graces of angels and men. They do not overflow. She is not overwhelmed. Her heart contains of all God's liberalities and she uses all graces for God's glory.

"All the gifts of the Holy Spirit descended on Mary when she conceived the Son of God. Her heart formed an incomprehensible abyss of grace." (St. Bernardine of Sienna) Only the mind of God and of Mary can understand this abundance.

Dispensing the Waters

The sea does not hoard its waters but dispenses them by rivers which water the whole earth. "To the place from where the rivers come, they return to flow again." Mary does not withhold any grace that she receives. All graces return to the barren earth and make us fruitful for God. (Rom 7:4)

"Desiring to be everything to everyone, Mary denies no one a claim on her heart." (St. Bernard) To the captive, she brings redemption; to the sick, healing; to the sinner, forgiveness. She even increases the graces of angels. To the Trinity, she gives endless praise. Her charity is felt by Creator and creature.

A Sea of Glass

Mary's heart is a sea which sustains the Christian world. This sea is as solid as the water which Peter walked on. St. John writes, "In the sight of the throne, there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal, mingled with fire." (Rev 4:6) Glass owes its shape and perfection to being molded in intense fire. Mary's heart was formed in the consuming fire of the Holy Spirit. During her life, her heart was further formed in the furnace of intense suffering.

Crystal is transparent and absorbs and radiates clean light, which is a symbol of purity. Glass is dark when in darkness. When held in the sun's brightness, glass reflects that light. So, Mary's Admirable Heart marvelously reflects the eternal sun's radiance. She is always directly before God, "In sight of the throne". Her entire existence is to reflect God's image as a shining mirror.

Mingled With Fire

Revelation describes Mary as a "sea mingled with fire." (4:6) Song of Songs says, "Many waters cannot quench love." (8:7) These floods are the sorrows that engulfed Mary's heart

during the passion. “O virgin daughter, great as the sea is your destruction.” (Lam. 2:13) Yet, even this ocean did not quench her fire but caused the flames to burn more brightly.

The saints stand on this sea of crystal because their salvation is founded upon Mary. Because of her, they can chant the canticle of the Lamb and stand upon her heart, bearing harps. (Rev 15:2)

O Mary, look at my little heart, a drop of water seeking union with your vast ocean. Look upon this little drop which hopes to merge forever with your sea. Mother of Mercy, you see us here below in a stormy sea. Be our guiding star leading us to the crystal sea where we will sing without fear. Why should I fear? Your goodness is our firm support. Nothing can trouble us.

2.7 THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The Garden of Eden also symbolizes Mary’s heart. This earthly paradise perfectly represents the paradise of Jesus Christ. Scripture calls it “a garden of delight” (Gen 2:8 and 10), a name properly applied to Mary’s Admirable Heart. The Holy Spirit gives three names to this garden, a Garden of the Beloved (Song 5:1), a sealed garden (Song 4:12), and a garden of delights. (Gen 2:8 and 10).

The Beloved in the Garden

Mary says, “Let my beloved come into his garden.” (Song 5:1) This beloved is her Son, the only object of her love. She invites him into her virginal heart, to which he was attracted by her humility.

The Spirit says, “My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed and a fountain sealed up.” (Song 4:12) This heart shut twice, against sin (which never entered there), and against everything that is not God. He alone occupies the garden. Nothing else holds any place.

The Spirit calls her “a garden of delights” (Gen 2:8 & 10). Her spotless heart is a garden of rapture where the Son of God experienced joys, second only to his experiences in the bosom of the Father.

Oh Jesus, You “delight to be with the children of men.” (Pr 8:31), even though men are sinful. What was your delight in Mary’s heart where nothing displeased you and where you were praised more perfectly than by the angels in heaven? No created place was so holy or so filled with glory.

After Jesus hears Mary’s invitation, “Let my beloved come into his garden”, He says, “I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse, with my myrrh, my wine and my milk.” (Song 5:1) The myrrh is the sorrow of His heart and the acts of His virtues. The wine and the milk are all the delights which He experiences.

The First and the Second Garden

God's infinite goodness created the first garden. "The Lord God planted a paradise of pleasure." (Gen 2:8) If Adam and Eve had been faithful, they would have gone directly from this earthly paradise to the heavenly one.

The Father's unfathomable love led him to create a second garden for his Son, Jesus Christ, and for all His true children. This is Mary's heart where Jesus Christ invites His children, "Eat and drink and be inebriated." (Song 5:1)

The Tree of Life

The first Garden had three objects – the tree of life, the tree of knowledge and many other fruit-bearing trees.

The second Garden has the real Tree of Life, Jesus Christ, whom the Father planted in Mary's womb. Augustine writes, "O Mary, the Lord lives first in your heart and then in your womb." This Tree of Life restored our eternal life.

By Mary's celestial hands we receive the fruit of everlasting life. Compare Adam and Mary. Adam exclaimed, "The woman that you gave me, gave me the fruit and I did eat. These words only increased his guilt. Concerning Mary, we say "Lord, the woman you gave us, gave us fruit from the tree of Life. By this fruit, you restored us to life." St. Bernard writes, "O woman, to whom the highest veneration is due, you have repaid your parents' fault and have given life to all who come after you."

The Tree of Knowledge

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is a symbol of Mary's luminous heart, filled with the science of the saints. In her Son, all God's treasures of knowledge are stored. Mary has known perfectly the sovereign good (God) and the supreme evil (sin). She knows sin (and hates it) as God knows it. The fruit of this Tree of knowledge never hurt her. By eating, Adam and Eve acted against God's will. Mary sanctified herself by eating of Jesus, the Tree planted in her heart. God wanted her to eat so she could love God as God does and hate sin as God hates it. God says of her, "Mary has become one of us, knowing good and evil as we know them."

Other Trees

Many other trees exist in Mary's heart. She says, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apple trees." (Song 5:1) Her virtues are trees which bear an infinite variety of fruits.

Her virginal purity bore Jesus Christ, the King of virgins and, later, thousands of other virgins. Mary's zeal brings forth the fruit of all who have been saved. Mary says "Strengthen me with raisin cakes and refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love." (Song 2:5) The raisin cakes are beginning souls. The apples are those more steadfast in virtue.

Flowers

Scripture does not mention any flowers in these gardens. Certainly, Mary's heart is a heavenly bed of flowers which never fades. These flowers are also fruits, "My flowers are the fruit of honor and riches." (Sir 24:23)

By these flowers, the eternal King attracts many souls and by these fruits, He nourishes them. He even rests there, "This is my rest. This is my refreshing." (Is 28:12) He feasts on the virtues of every heart, especially the perfect heart of His Mother.

God comes to His garden. "I come to my garden. I eat my honey and drink my wine and my milk." (Song 5:1) Then, he invites his children to eat and drink. "Eat friends; drink. Drink freely of love." (Song 5:1)

"You are an enclosed garden, O Mary, a violet of humility, a lily of chastity and a rose of charity." (St. Bernard) You are also mercy for our physical illnesses and compassion for our spiritual sins. Oh pity those who are unaware of their need for you.

The Animals and Birds

In this garden, God brought man to the animals and the birds to man to give them names. These symbolize the qualities of Mary's heart. The animals represent the earthly passions, of anger, hatred, distrust, etc. The birds represent the spiritual emotions of love, hope and joy.

Although these passions existed in Mary's heart, they were completely subjected to her reason, just as the beasts were under Adam's control. She used her passions only for God's glory, seeking only what pleased him. Her only joy was to fulfill her difficult tasks. Her hatred turned only against what offended God. Her emotions were totally uplifted, never seeking her own enjoyment, but existing only for what was pleasing to God.

The heart of the Blessed Virgin was the earthly paradise where no war or disorder existed. She always praised God who had established His throne in her heart. All her passions blended together perfectly to glorify the divine majesty.

The Gardeners

Let us study the gardeners. Adam was told "to cultivate and care for the garden." (Gen 2:15) However, he sold the garden to God's arch-enemy. As a wicked gardener, he filled it with thorns and thistles.

In the enclosed garden of her Immaculate Heart, Mary has three assistants. Love prepares the soil. Grace sows the seed. Patience brings it to fruition. Her flowers delight God and her fruits multiply.

The Marriage

In that garden, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a holy union, a symbol of the joining of the humanity and divinity in Jesus. The contract for this wedding of Jesus' human and divine natures was drawn up in Mary's heart. Secret negotiations took place between the Father and Mary. She surrendered herself to the divine will and gave her consent to the divine espousals.

In Adam's garden, God had to ask, "Where are you?" because Adam hid. In Mary's garden, God hides Himself, concealing His kingly glory.

Crushing the Serpent

In Adam's garden, God condemned the serpent, "He shall crush your head and you shall wait for his heal." (Gen 3:15) In Mary's garden, that promise was fulfilled. Her Immaculate Conception routed the powers of evil and brought us the Saviour of the World.

After man rebelled, God banished him and his posterity from the garden. A cherubim with a flaming sword guarded its gate. Therefore, to enter Mary's garden, we must cease being Adam's children and become children of Jesus Christ.

Dear reader, your heart is either a hell of torment or a paradise of delights. If you open yourself to grace, the King of Virtue will enter. If you let sin grow, then demons will enter and make it a hell. If you imitate your Queen, you will enjoy a place of deep refreshment and peace.

PART THREE

SIX ADDITIONAL SYMBOLIC PICTURES

3.1 THE BURNING BUSH OF MOSES

Moses' burning bush prefigured Mary's heart because it blazed but was not consumed. This bush was on the "mountain of God" (Ex 3:1) which is "holy ground" (3:5). "The Virgin Mary is the mountain of holiness" (Gregory the Great). She is the "mountain on top of the mountains" (Is 2:2), because God has raised her above the Seraphim.

Exalting the Lowly

God honored this lowly bush more than the Cedars of Lebanon. Why? God is infinitely above us and He delights to look upon the lowly. He draws near to the lowly but looks upon the great only from afar. He looked upon "the lowliness of his handmaid." (Lk 1:48) God made Mary first because she was least in her own mind. The lowly bush represents Mary's humility.

The Thorns

Do not be frightened by the sharp thorns that surround this bush. God had a special love for this bush and took pleasure in it. This bush was His throne upon which He would disclose divine secrets to deliver His chosen people.

The fire upon the bush was the divine fire in Mary's heart. The thorns represent her bitter sorrows which she accepted to love God and to save mankind.

To release the Israelites through Moses, God descended "in the flame of fire" and spoke from the bush. Likewise, Jesus descended into Mary's heart to bring about our redemption and to associate her with His work. God remained only a short time upon the bush but he stayed forever in Mary's heart. "God is in the innermost heart and shall never depart." (Ps 46:6)

Not Consumed

Seeing that the bush was not harmed by the glowing fire, Moses said, "I will go and see why the bush is not consumed." (Ex 3:3) This is a symbol of a greater marvel. When Mary's heart was inflamed by God's sacred love, her body should have been consumed. The heavenly fire preserved Our Lady so she was not annihilated.

Dear reader, your heart must burn with that same fire. The Son of God came to cast His fire upon the earth so the world does not burn in the terrible conflagration reserved for the devil and his followers. What a difference between these two fires – the eternal torments of hell and the delightful flames of heaven.

Rejoice, you who read these words. You are alive and you have the power to choose which fire enkindles your heart. Extinguish the flames of self-love and give your heart to Jesus Christ. St. Augustine prayed, "O divine fire that burns always, enkindle my being so I may become a glowing flame of love for you."

3.2 MARY'S HEART, THE HARP OF KING DAVID

The harp of David is an excellent representation of Mary's pure heart. Jesus Christ fashioned and possessed Mary's heart because it vibrated with the Holy Spirit's impulses. The harp's strings are Mary's virtues, especially love of God and of neighbor. On these strings, the Holy Spirit charmed the ears of the Father, who forgot His anger and set aside His thunderbolts.

Four Achievements

King David used his harp on four occasions which are symbols of Jesus' four achievements.

First, by his harp, David put to flight the evil spirit which possessed King Saul. So, Jesus uses the His mother's heart to free the human race from Satan's dominion.

Second, David used his harp to sing many psalms for God's glory. Jesus sang canticles of love, the most perfect that ever existed; canticles of thanksgiving which used Mary's heart to thank God; canticles of sorrow which told of her bereavement at His death; canticles of triumph which heralded all her victories; and canticles of prophecy, which announced God's great plans for the future.

Third, David used his harp to praise God with joy. So, Christ attuned his Mother's heart to seek her joy only in His praises.

Fourth, David used his harp to attract others to praise God. So, by the sweet sound of Mary's heart, Christ attracts many souls to praise the Father. Her extraordinary virtues resound harmoniously throughout the Church.

Other Harps

The Father has given Christ many other harps. His first harp is His own Sacred Heart. He says, "I will sing to you with the harp, O holy One of Israel" (Ps 71:22) While on earth, Christ sang on this harp continually. In heaven, He will sing a thousand canticles.

His second harp is the heart of Mary. These two harps are so closely attuned that, in a sense, they constitute one heart. What the first harp sounds, the second echoes. If Jesus' heart loves the Father, Mary unites in that love. Her heart loves and hates whatever Jesus' heart loves and hates. "Jesus and Mary were two mystical harps. What sounded in the one, sounded in the other, even when no one touched it." (St. Augustine)

Angels and Saints

Jesus also has the harps of the angels and saints which will praise God for all eternity. The Book of Revelation often mentions these harps of the saints. However, they are far different than Mary's harp. On earth, the saints' harps were often discordant and sometimes grew tired of praising God. From time to time, God had to urge them to fulfill their duty. Mary's harp never weakened or interrupted its song. Her soul always magnified the Lord.

Your Heart

Jesus also has a third harp – your heart. Do not allow this harp to be stolen from Christ's hands. Your heart is either played by God or by the devil. It will sing the divine canticles of Our Lady or the unhappy songs of the world (which will end with the horrid dirges of hell.) Pluck out the strings of your vices and replace them with virtues. Be tuned according to Mary's sublime heart and sing with one voice, "Holy, holy, holy."

3.3 THE THRONE OF KING SOLOMON

Mary is the holy city of Jerusalem built by the King of Kings with his own hands. "Glorious things are said of you, O City of God." (PS 83:3) God enriched this city with treasures and revealed the marvels of His power. O Mary, you are the King's royal palace. "This heavenly maiden is the sacred place of the most high God." (St. Bonaventure) If Mary is the palace, then her heart must be God's throne.

Thrones of Solomon

King Solomon built a throne of ivory and covered it with brilliant gold. Six steps led up to it and two hands held the seat. (1 Kings 10:18-20) King Solomon had another throne, which also represents Our Lady. "King Solomon made a throne with a seat of gold and pillars of

silver.” (Song 3:9-10) This bed “was surrounded by sixty valiant ones, all holding swords, expert in war, because of fear of the night.” (3:7-8)

These valiant ones are the mightiest of angels, armed for combat. (St. Bernard) They surround Mary’s heart in the world’s dark night. They prevent the powers of darkness from troubling the divine Solomon (Jesus) as He rests on His holy couch (Mary).

Solomon made his throne “for himself” (Song 3:9). Jesus made His masterpiece, Mary’s heart, a throne worthy of Himself. “This throne is a figure of every Christian’s heart” (St. Gregory of Nyssa). “The heart of every Christian is the seat of God because it goes wherever He wants it to go.” (Richard of St. Victor). Mary’s virginal heart felt only those affections which came from the Master.

Other Aspects

Solomon’s throne was made of incorruptible wood, a symbol of Mary’s heart conceived without sin. God’s heart is incapable of sin by His nature. Mary’s heart is incapable of sin by grace.

Solomon’s throne had four columns, symbols of the four cardinal virtues (justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance). The throne’s silver is an image of the innocence of Mary’s heart.

The gold seat represents the free will and any human will that is submitted to God becomes Jesus’ throne. Mary’s will accomplished this perfectly. “After the disorder occasioned by the sins of angels and men, Jesus found his rest in Mary.” (St. Peter Damien)

The backdrop of purple represents Mary’s ardent desires to give God glory and to accomplish His will on earth. Divine love constantly urged Mary to suffer great things for God’s plan.

Finally, the throne, was made for the daughters of Jerusalem, represents all that Jesus did for Mary. He confided the sacraments to her care, especially the Eucharist where He resides in person. He filled Mary with privileges and powers to assist us. He filled her heart with love and we are blessed when we invoke her name. He put his throne into her heart for two reasons – to be His throne of honor and to be a throne for us to receive His mercy.

Our Lord receives more glory in her heart than in all the angels and saints. All of heaven’s citizens adore God without end in Mary’s heart. “On a high throne I saw a man sitting whom a multitude adore by their singing.” The three Magi found Jesus held close to Mary’s heart, “They found the child with Mary, his mother.” (Mt 2:11). The Church Militant must join the Church Triumphant in adoring Jesus in the heart of Mary.

Throne of Mercy

Her heart is a throne of mercy where Christ absolves all sinners and dispenses all his favors. Let us approach this throne of grace where “we may obtain mercy and find grace.” (Heb 4:16).

3.4 THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

The Jerusalem temple was one of the great wonders of the world and prefigured Christ's sacred humanity. By these words, Jesus spoke of His own body. When He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up." (Jn 2:19)

The True Temple

The Jerusalem temple prefigures the Church and every Christian soul, and all our churches and cathedrals. The true temple, however, is Mary's holy heart, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. When Paul wrote "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" (1 Cor 6:19) he describes Mary's heart, the true temple of God.

This temple of Mary's heart was built only by God Himself. He achieved greater wonders in one instant than all the powers of heaven on earth in a thousand years. Mary's heart was consecrated by Jesus Christ. He adorned it with extraordinary virtues.

All the Riches of Jesus' Mysteries

Her heart is made of a gold infinitely more precious than any earthly gold because it is totally transformed into love. It contains all the riches of God and holds all the mysteries of Jesus' life. "His mother kept all these things in her heart." (Lk 2:51).

When Christ became a man, He offered His first sacrifice in Mary's heart. His greatest sermon is the virtues He placed in His mother. God is more profoundly worshipped in her heart than in all the world's churches. Her smallest acts render more honor to God than the greatest actions of any saints. Her heart is a temple filled with the greatest marvels.

Seven Objects

I want to mention seven objects which the Father placed in the temple as symbols of Mary's heart - the golden candlestick, the table with the loaves of proposition, the altar of perfumes, the Ark of the Covenant, the tables of the law, the propitiary and the altar of holocausts.

The Golden Candlestick

1. "The golden candlestick is a figure of the Mother of God." (St. John Damascene). After Jesus, Mary is God's most luminous torch. St. Epiphanius wrote, "O virginal candlestick which enlighten those who sit in darkness. You dissipated the gloom of hell and caused heaven's brilliance to shine in our souls. O radiant lamp you are always filled with divine love to inflame our hearts."
2. The Table
God commanded that the table for the loaves of propitiation be made of a rare and incorruptible wood, completely covered with gold and embellished by two golden crowns. The priests offered the loaves of propitiation daily as a perpetual sacrifice. Then, the priests consumed them.

These loaves were a figure of Jesus Christ, the royal bread come down from heaven and the bread of angels and of men. The table prefigures the Blessed Virgin because the bread is meant to lay on it. Did not Our Lord lay on the heart of his Mother? Did she not receive him to give him to us? In the Eucharist, the Father gives us Jesus every day. Mary possesses one heart with God and blazes with love for men, a love which induced God to send His Son. A similar love induced Mary to give her Son as the Eucharistic bread for men's souls.

3. The Altar

The Altar of perfumes represents our hearts, which offer continual praise to God. This altar especially symbolizes Mary's heart, which is the "Golden Altar before the Throne of God." (Rev 8:3)

4. The Ark

"The Ark of the Covenant is a symbol of the Blessed Virgin." (St. Ambrose) "The Ark of Moses was merely a reflection. The true Ark is Mary's heart which contains the secrets of the Eternal Word. She contains the revelations of God by which He reconciled us forever." (St. Bonaventure)

This Ark of Moses contained the Israelites' essential treasure, the bulwark of their defense and the terror of their enemies. So, Mary's heart is the great treasure of Christendom. Her heart is an impregnable stronghold, a well fortified tower where soldiers fighting under Mary's banner find defenses. Against the very powers of hell, Mary is a "terrible army in battle array." (Song 6:3) Let us withdraw into this fortress and never depart from its walls.

5. Tower

Mary's heart is a Tower of Ivory, never defiled by anything unclean. This Tower of David, built with precious stones and perfections of every kind, open only to those who follow Jesus Christ. Whoever wishes to enter this tower must renounce all sin and practice every virtue.

6. Tables

St. Gregory of Nyssa wrote, "The Tables of the Mosaic Law were symbols of the Saints' hearts." St. John Chrysostom said, "The heart of St. Paul was the table of the Holy Spirit." If this is true of the saints' hearts, then Our Mother's heart must be the holiest table of all. The Holy Spirit wrote the gospels so deeply that the powers of hell could snatch the sun from the sky more easily than erase one word. Mary's incomparable heart is a living book, written by the Holy Spirit. The Father poured all of His secrets into her heart. "Then another book was opened, the book of life." (Rev 20:12) This Book contains all the hearts of the saints, but especially the heart of Mary.

The Propitiatory symbolizes Mary's intercession which extinguishes God's wrath. Because of Mary, He looked on mankind with favor and was moved to compassion for

our infirmities. Mary is “the propitiation of man’s salvation.” (St. Ildephonsus) Her heart made her our advocate before Divine Justice.

7. The Altar of Holocausts symbolizes the Saints’ hearts which are daily altars of sacrifice. Mary’s heart is the true altar of holocaust. On it the sacred divine fire blazes night and day.” (John Gersen)

Mary constantly offered sacrifices of expiation for the sins of the world. She sacrificed her own life, her thoughts, her words and deeds and all that she possessed. She offered her Son on Calvary. Jesus offered himself once. She offered him a thousand times in her heart. What veneration is due to that altar of her heart. O Mary, you consecrated your heart to God’s glory. Transform our cold hearts into glowing altars.

3.5 THE FIERY FURNACE OF BABYLON

Daniel (chapter 3) describes Babylon’s fiery furnace, which is a symbol of Mary’s sinless heart of fire. “O Mary, this furnace, filled with a burning and refreshing fire, is a faithful image of the eternal fire burning in you.” (St. John of Damascus)

Foreshadowing the Christian Mysteries

How could a furnace, designed for torture, represent so holy a heart? Scripture mentions many wicked things that represented a future good. Daniel’s three companions were a symbol of all Israel, and all Israelite events foreshadowed the Christian mysteries. “All things happened to Israel in symbols.” (Cor 10:11)

For example, the scapegoat represented Jesus, burdened with the sins of the world (Lev 16:7-9) The inordinate love of King Solomon for foreign wives represented God’s love for sinful souls. The Egyptian woman who symbolized Our Lady said, “I am black but beautiful.” (Song 1:4) She is called “my dove, my perfect one”, words that clearly apply to Mary. (Song 6:9)

A passionate lover writes his beloved’s name everywhere (on paper and stone). The incomprehensible love of God writes Mary’s name everywhere, picturing symbolizing her heart even by the fiery furnace of Babylon.

A Furnace of Protection

The King’s rage produced that furnace to show God’s miraculous protection for his special friends. That furnace is a symbol of Mary’s heart, a furnace of love. In that furnace, God’s power filled that furnace with a refreshing wind. “The angel made the middle of the furnace like a wind bringing refreshment.” (Dan 3:50) The sevenfold heat (ordered by the King) refreshed the three Israelites but burnt their persecutors (who were a distance away). The three men walked around in joy, sang God’s praises, and came out of the ordeal stronger. The fire did not hurt a single fiber of their clothing. These great marvels foreshadow the miracles that happen daily in Mary’s glowing heart.

Both Fire and Water

The fire and the water are symbols of the divine fire in Mary's virginal heart. They existed side by side in the furnace. The fire did not turn the water to steam and the water did not quench the fire. The water of tribulation flooded the Mother of Sorrows. The divine fire did not dry up those sorrows. Yet, the waters of affliction could not diminish her divine ardor. "Many waters cannot quench love." (Song 8:7) Love actually increased her afflictions. Her tribulations were inflammable liquids augmenting the fire.

True divine love unceasingly inflamed Mary's purest heart and extinguished all fires of self love. This fire consoles Mary's children and burns her enemies. Mary even directs the flame of the fire's anger against those who injure her children.

Three Israelites entered the Babylon furnace, but everyone can enter Mary's heart. They can dwell there in a paradise of delights with their heavenly Mother forever. "Your dwelling is filled with rejoicing." (Pr 86:7)

The prophet saw a fourth figure in the furnace, like the Son of God. (Dan 3:92). This figure only represented God's Son. The real Son of God dwells permanently in His mother's heart and he is all fire. "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." (Dan 7:9) "His throne is like flames of fire." (Dan 7:9) "The house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame." (2 Kg 2:11) This is the abode of Jesus Christ.

Getting Freed

Although the three young men were bound hand and foot, the fire freed them immediately. Come, poor slaves of sin and self love. Plunge into the sacred fire. These flames will destroy your chains and give you the liberty of God's children. They will inflame you with heavenly love and transform you into the fire. Your hearts will become a furnace filled with Mary's fire. If you let your hearts become furnaces of eternal love, you will avoid judgment.

What will you do, O Lord, with ungrateful men who have loved everything but You? You will make them furnaces of wrath and will hurl them into Satan's eternal fire. In life, they would not yield to your holy love. In death, they must yield to hell's devouring fire.

To avoid this tragedy, promise to remove every obstacle in your heart. If this sacred flame already burns there, allow it to increase. Seek ardently to share in this fire and to spread it everywhere. God delights to have His chosen ones help Him to save souls.

The Fiery Torch

Take your torch and set the world afire. This torch is you. "Elijah, the prophet, was like a fire and his words burnt like a torch." (Sir 48:1) Jesus describes John the Baptist as a burning lamp. (Jn 5:35) Zechariah says "On that day I shall make the princes of Judah like a burning torch among sheaves." (12:6) These "princes" are the apostles who enkindled earth with the fire

of heaven. True disciples enkindle everyone. They make selfish men into spiritual beings, which glow with love.

Anyone with the obligation of souls must become a furnace. They must be ardent in prayer and brilliant in action, aglow within and shining without. Where will you light your torch? Where will you obtain this fire? In the furnace of the Mother of Divine Love. Approach that holy furnace frequently. Ask her to enkindle your heart with her celestial fire.

Set All on Fire

With your lighted torch, set everything on fire. Ignite everyone with the fervor of your prayers and the light of your teaching. O divine fire, burning in Mary's Immaculate Heart, come into our hearts. Destroy every other fire. Transform our hearts into flames of love. "O Sacred fire, how sweet is your heat! How penetrating your light and how desirable your burning coals. Woe to those on whom you do not shine. Happy those burned by your sacred flame." (St. Augustine)

Come, most holy fire. Sweep over us. Burn everything. Melt us into an eternal fire of love. "O fire, ever burning and never dying out. O Love, always ardent and never weakening, inflame my entire being." (St. Augustine)

3.6 THE HILL OF CALVARY

Calvary reveals the sorrows of Mary's crucified heart. Calvary is Palestine's most important mountain. Mary's heart is the most illustrious hill.

Calvary is Mount Moriah, where God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Calvary is where David established an altar so God would stop the plague ravishing Israel. Calvary is the hill of Solomon's Temple.

Calvary and Mary

Christ established the holiest altar in the heart of Mary. The cross of Jesus was raised on Calvary but it was raised first in Mary's heart. Calvary is stained with the Precious Blood but Mary's heart was bathed in the Precious Blood, which penetrated her far more deeply.

On Calvary we see wounds which covered Jesus from head to toe. Those same wounds were in Mary's maternal heart. "The nails which crucified the son's body, crucified his mother's heart as well. The whips and the thorns ran through Mary's heart and shattered it. Every blow on his body echoed in her heart." (St. Sophronius)

Crucified With Jesus

St. Bonaventure wrote, "Oh my Queen, you not only stood at the cross, you were crucified with Jesus in your heart. All his wounds unite in your heart which was also wounded by a lance. Why were you immolated for us? Is not your Son's passion sufficient to save us? I seek your heart but covered over with sorrows. I seek God's mother but I see only nails and a lance, lashes and wounds." (St. Bonaventure)

I see my Redeemer's death on Calvary and His death in Mary's heart. She lived His life and died His death. Both Mother and Son were nailed to the cross." (St. Laurence Justinian) "Mary died in her heart while Jesus died in His body." (St. Bernard) "Jesus' greatest charity was to ask forgiveness for His executors." (St. Augustine). When Jesus pleaded, Mary echoed his words." (St. Augustine)

Behold Your Mother

On Calvary, Jesus gave us the indescribable gift of Mary when He said to the Beloved Disciple, "Behold your Mother" (Jn 19:27) Mary also gave herself to us. Both Jesus and Mary say to us, "Behold your Mother". O Mary, every one of us is your child whom you love and protect.

On Calvary, Jesus grew cold in death and was buried in a tomb. He was also buried in Mary's heart, a life giving tomb. Having cooperated in Jesus becoming man, Mary's heart also cooperated in His resurrection. On Easter Sunday, He left the tomb and returned immediately to her heart (where He will remain forever). Isaiah said, "His tomb shall be glorious." (11:10) This is said also of Mary's heart. Calvary is an excellent picture of our Mother's heart. If you want to resemble Mary, plant Christ's cross in the center of your own heart.

I have chosen these 12 scriptural images to show that God is the Author of devotion to Mary's heart. Once we see God's tributes to her, we can pour out our own admiration. O divine painter, in these twelve pictures, you have portrayed our glorious Mother. Make our own hearts an image of her virtues.

PART FOUR

THE DIVINE PEFECTIONS MIRRORED IN MARY'S ADMIRABLE HEART

4.1 JESUS CHRIST, TEACHER OF DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART

Jesus Speaks to St. Mechtilde

The adorable heart of Jesus is the second foundation of this devotion. Listen to what he revealed to St. Mechtilde (1300). One day, as the saint sought to honor the Mother of God, Jesus said, "Honor my Mother's heart as an ocean filled with heavenly treasures for mankind. After Mine, her heart is the purest. She was the first to take the vow of chastity. Honor her heart as the humblest. Her humility drew me from the Father's side. Honor her heart as supremely devout because her desires became the cause of salvation. Honor her heart as the most prudent because she retained every memory of my life. Honor her heart as the most faithful because she offered me as a sacrifice to the Father. Honor her heart as the most zealous, for she ceaselessly prayed for the Early church. The favors she gained for man are indescribable." In these words, Our Lord revealed how pleased He is by devotion to his Mother's heart.

The Source of Mary's Wonders

Jesus continued, "I alone can proclaim the devotion which souls should have to my Mother's heart. I am her oldest son, the firstborn of her heart and the first fruit of my Father's heart. My Mother carried Me in her heart before she carried Me in her womb. The sanctity of her womb flows from the purity of her heart.

God's Masterpiece

"Oh, admirable mystery, her heart is God's masterpiece of creation. By her humility, she drew Me from the Father's side where I existed before all ages. After my Father, she is the unique object of my love. Whoever loves Me must honor her heart which I love more than any other.

I must become the first teacher of this devotion. I speak now to those with a special devotion to my virginal Mother's heart. I am the one who has planted this devotion in you. After God, her heart must be the first object of your love because it is an inexhaustible fount of blessings. My Mother's heart is like a divine sun enlightening you in darkness, comforting you in sorrows, and strengthening you in human frailty.

A Mirror and a Furnace

"Her heart is a beautiful mirror which will reveal your sins so you may cleanse them. Her heart is an unshakeable stronghold where you can seek refuge from your enemies. It is a burning furnace of love in which you can be consumed into divine love. Her heart is a perfect pattern of obedience to all those in authority. It is a fountain of kindness, with which to treat others. Her heart is a heavenly book which you must study unceasingly to learn perfectly the ravishing beauty of Christian virtue. Her heart is a holy rule of divine life showing you the evangelical virtues. By her heart, you can measure the holiness that you need to please me and sanctify yourself.

"Her heart is a vast ocean of the graces which you need every moment to avoid the snares of Satan. It is a precious vessel containing the wine you need to withdraw from earthly delights, so you can enjoy heavenly pleasures.

Receiving Mary's Heart

"I have given you Mary's royal heart to govern your own heart. I have given you my Mother's heart so you can adore God with a heart worthy of God's infinite goodness. Hers is an immense heart, always ready to sing the divine praises. Lose your earthly heart so you can receive a heavenly heart. My Mother's heart contains every possible blessing. You must have a profound affection to preserve this treasure jealously.

"I speak so you will engrave these words on your heart, and become her true children. If you do, I will carry you and prepare a place for you in My heart and in her heart. You will live there forever and possess all our treasures. Our hearts will be your paradise. In this love of My heart and My Mother's heart, you will glorify the sovereign heart of the Trinity."

Actions of Jesus

Let us study Jesus' actions towards His Mother's heart. He has exalted her heart above every other heart, making it a heaven more brilliant than all other heavens. When God created her heart, He poured out His own divine perfections and made her heart the most admirable of all.

St. Dionysius says, "Divine love reflects the divine attributes in the hearts of the nine choirs of angels." Jesus gathers all the perfections shared by the nine choirs of angels, and places them in her heart. He tries to make her similar to Himself in His divinity, just as she made Him similar to her in His humanity.

As the Father makes His Son the "image of God", so Jesus makes His mother share in all of His perfections. Mary's admirable heart is a radiant mirror. Next to Jesus, her heart is the principal object of devotion on earth and the first object of veneration in heaven.

4.2 SOME ESSENTIAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS MIRRORED IN MARY'S HEART

Mary is "A woman clothed in the sun." (Rev 12:1) She is not just surrounded by the sun, she is penetrated by it. Mary is "the compendium of God's incomprehensible perfections." (St. Andrew of Crete)

God's Mirror

Her heart, the source of her humility, is elevated to the divine state. Her glowing heart is the perfect expression of God's attributes. She is the perfect mirror of Christ's ardent love. God's ardent and pure love possesses her, inflames her virginal heart, and stamps all the divine attributes on her heart.

Some Divine Attributes

God alone is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Likewise, there is only one heart of God's Mother, unique in its excellence, surpassing in virtue the heart of any angel or saint. She is a living image of divine unity.

Never having had aimless desires or superfluous thoughts, her heart knows only the purest love of God. Her heart desires only to please God and to fulfill his will. In this way, she ravished the heart of her heavenly bridegroom. "You have wounded my heart, my spouse." (Song 4:9) She did this by seeking always to do what is most pleasing to God.

Because duplicity, deceit, worldly wisdom and self love had no place in her heart, it resembles divine simplicity. Possessed by truth and sincerity, she was always "simple as a dove." (Mt 10:16)

Her almost infinite dignity of being God's Mother raises her smallest action to the highest degree. Her heart shares in God's infinity and incomprehensibility. Her heart is filled with innumerable gifts. "When Our Lady was made Mother of God, she was raised to an almost

infinite dignity. Only God can know perfectly the boundless extent of her graces.” (St. Bernadine of Sienna).

Mary’s heart also resembles the immensity of God. “O Mary, I see in you a great capacity. Although the immensity of your womb enclosed the infinite, the immensity of your virginal heart was even more immense and the immensity of your graces are totally filled with charity. Your charity reaches everything that God has made. It encompasses countless worlds.” (St. Bonaventure)

Her heart is a symbol of divine stability, always remaining resolute in pleasing God. O Jesus, by that unshakeable love which Mary has for you, strengthen holy love in our hearts so that nothing “can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.” (Rom 8:38-39)

Mary’s heart represents the eternity of God. Her desires had no temporal attachments. Her heart was filled with prophecy, and shared in the eternal vision of God. Our Lady possesses every virtue of every saint in the highest degree. In fact, the saints receive all their virtues by her intercession.

Filled with every good, God has need of nothing. Mary’s heart, loving God alone, was filled with every grace. So, her heart perfectly imitates God’s self-sufficiency. Paul wrote, “Be filled to the fullness of God.” (Eph 3:19) Mary was filled to that fullness and enjoyed perfect peace because God filled her heart to capacity. It was as if she possessed a million possible worlds. Mary always prayed, “My God and my all.”

4.3 GOD’S PURITY AND SANCTITY

Mary’s heart is a living image of purity and sanctity. (These two virtues are one). St. Dionysius wrote, “Sanctity is perfect in purity (meaning free from the slightest imperfection)”. Mary’s holy heart was removed from sin, free from earthly attachments, skilled in every virtue and intimately united to God. “Mary is the abode and sanctuary of the virtues.” (St. John Damascene). Our Lady lived in a world poisoned by sin, yet her heart never contracted any disease. She was one with God, as if nothing else existed. “Let my heart be undefiled in your justification.” (Ps 119:80) Her heart adhered to the divine will which always sanctifies hearts which obey it.

Her heart remained forever immaculate, filled entirely with God’s holiness. Her being was transformed into divine purity to such a degree that her merit gained the world’s salvation. “The pure sanctity of Mary’s heart surpasses all other creatures. She became the restorer of a world wrapped in perdition.” (St. Anselm)

To find a place in her heart, you must realize that “the will of God is your sanctification.” (1 Thes 4:3) Every baptized person must apply these words to himself. The sanctification of your soul is a privilege, granted to you through the sanctity of Mary’s heart.

4.4 **THE STRENGTH AND POWER OF GOD**

Scripture calls God both “strong” and “mighty” because God’s power and strength are the same perfection with two different effects. Power does great wonders. Strength does them easily. Because Almighty God chose Mary as His mother, she exerts a power over Him. Mary has the power of God’s mother and Jesus will never withdraw her privileges.

If Jesus said that all things were possible for one who believes (Mk:23), what would be impossible for Mary’s heart? St. Paul says that he can do all things in Christ who strengthens him. What, then, is the power of the Queen of Apostles? Her virginal heart is all powerful.

Mary is the valiant woman, prophesied by Solomon. She bears the sharpest pains with unshakeable fortitude. She crushed the dragon’s head. Hell’s powers fear her like an army in battle array. She even vanquished God Almighty. An angel changed Jacob’s name to Israel, meaning “strong against God”. The angel said, “If you have been strong against God you shall prevail against man.” How often the Mother of Christ has disarmed the anger of God and turned back the floods of his indignation against our innumerable sins? She has stopped many divine thunderbolts. Her charity halted God’s justice and brought pardon.

History shows many instances of Our Lady publicly manifesting her protection over those who invoked her. O Glorious Queen, give us strength against our enemies.

4.5 **THE WISDOM AND TRUTH OF GOD**

If the soul of the just is the seat of divine Wisdom, then Our Lady’s heart is the highest throne, because God has poured out wisdom into Mary’s heart. She is the mother of the “Wisdom of God” and her heart is a living image of that Wisdom. Christ has all treasures of wisdom and He certainly gave His Mother more than He gave to anyone else.

Mary never suffered the “wisdom of the flesh”, because the heavenly light of uncreated Wisdom dwelt there. She is “the city of the sun”. (Is 19:18)

The Saints Say

St. Bernardine wrote, “From her initial moment of existence, she possessed a perfect, general knowledge of her creator and of all creatures. She knew all things in God and beheld God in all things. The Mother of God saw all things as expressions of God’s wisdom. If this was her beginning gift, what divine splendors she must have seen at the end of her life.”

“Mary is clothed with the sun because she has penetrated deeply into divine Wisdom. She is immersed in God’s inaccessible light.” (St. Bernard) Our mother in heaven is entirely absorbed in God’s ocean of eternal wisdom. She has dominion over every creature, and is filled with divine wisdom so she can govern every creature according to God’s will.

Our Lady especially knows those devoted to her. She knows their trials, their perils, their temptations, the devil’s schemes against them, and the helps that they need. What a great advantage to be devoted to her!

Filled With Truth

God filled her heart with the image of truth so she was conformed to God's decrees. "All in her was sanctity and truth." (St. Jerome)

God, the infallible, gave the Virgin Mary enlightenment in all her judgments. The Holy Spirit led her in total truth. Our Mother's deeds were always conformed to God's truth because they came from her perfect heart. May that holy heart of truth always guide us against all deceit of the flesh and of the world.

4.6 GOODNESS AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD

God has three types of goodness. His natural goodness is the perfection of His divine nature. His moral goodness is His infinite moral virtues. His benevolent goodness is God's inclination to communicate His fullness to us.

He pours out this fullness in two ways, within Himself and outside Himself. Within the Trinity, the Father gives all to the Son, and both give all to the Holy Spirit. Outside the Trinity, He communicates His own goodness in nature, grace and glory.

By nature, he bestows life, giving beauty to creation, wisdom to rational creatures.

By grace, he gives Himself through the mystery of Jesus Christ and of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

By glory, he gives Himself fully to the souls in heaven, enrapturing them with His joys and sharing with them His goodness.

God's Goodness

God communicates His beauty and goodness to Mary's Immaculate Heart more than to any other creature. "Why fear to come into Mary's heart, so filled with sweetness. In the gospels, she shows not the least sign of harshness. Her heart is filled with sweetness and she never rejects anyone who comes to her. So, we always pray with St. Bernard, "Never was it known that anyone who fled to her protection was left unaided."

Mary's Generosity

She readily grants what is asked. "Whoever invokes your name will receive their petition. Heaven and earth would sooner perish, than Mary refuse help." (St. Bernard)

Her help extends to saints and sinners. "You aid the just man by keeping him in the state of grace. You help the sinner by bringing them Divine Mercy." (Raymond Jourdain) "She assists even those who do not pray to her." (St. Bernard) "Mary spurns no one. She comforts all. She

shows kindness even to those who have no devotion. She draws these souls to God gently because God established her as a supreme gift to mankind.” (Abbott Blosius)

She even loves those who hate her. She sacrificed her Son to those who crucified Him. Mary’s boundless charity extends to all times and all places. She is Queen of the Universe pouring out her special gifts, especially upon those who believe in her Son. In a unique way, she cares for those who keep their eyes upon her. They are the apple of her eye. She carries them through dangers, gives them light in all darkness and protects them from the Evil One. At death, she takes them into her hands and leads them upwards to heaven. If all this is true, why should any Christian hold back his love for her?

PART FIVE

FURTHER DIVINE PERFECTIONS MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

5.1 THE MERCY OF GOD

Divine Mercy supervises God’s creation and brings about works of grace. It pulls mankind out of the depths, restores grace and lifts man to his heavenly home. “Tender mercies are over all his works.” (Ps 114:9)

Three Masterpieces

God’s mercy shows itself in His three masterpieces, the human nature of Jesus, the Mystical Body (the Church) and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To raise us to the highest happiness, God willed that His Divine Son should come to earth, to speak with us, to die for us, to rise from the dead and to found a Church. Christ’s sufferings, thoughts, shedding of blood, establishing sacraments and communicating graces, came from Mary’s mercy. Wanting everyone to become His children, the Father willed that His Son be born of a daughter of Adam. In this way, we have the same father and the same mother as the Son of God. We are His brothers and sisters.

Double Office

By Divine mercy, Mary fulfilled her double office of Mother and Mediatrix. Mercy gave her dominion over heaven and earth. Her loving heart became the throne of His mercy.

Divine mercy reigns perfectly in her heart. “She opens the treasure of divine mercy to whom she chooses, when she chooses, and as she chooses.” (St. Bernard) God’s mercy holds complete control over her heart. “You are the sinner’s only hope.” (St. Augustine). “Her heart is the ladder by which sinners go up to heaven.” (St. Bernard) The Church teaches us to pray “Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy” and Mary says, “In me is all grace, all hope of life and of virtue.” (Sirach 24:25)

Mercy Towards Sinners

“Mary is the only relief of the afflicted.” (St. John Damascene) “She is a boundless ocean of mercy.” (St. John Chrysostom) “Mary’s mercy toward the sinner was great while she lived on earth. In heaven, she sees all the sins of mankind and shows even greater mercy.” (St. Bonaventure)

Her gentle heart overflows even into hell. “O Blessed Virgin, your mercy extends to the last day on all who invoke you. It encompasses the whole world, reaching to heaven and even to hell.” (St. Bonaventure)

Her mercy extends to sinners who want to be converted and to many who never think of their eternal salvation. She asks her Son to place fear of judgment in their hearts, and to have holy people enter their lives to bring about their conversion. She has extraordinary privileges, often saving from hell those who would, according to Divine Justice, be condemned forever. Our Mother’s mercy often saves those whom the justice of the Son would condemn.

“O Mary, you are the assured refuge of sinners. If you forsake us, to whom shall we go? As breath is a sign of life, so your holy name constantly on our lips is a proof of your life and protection.” (St. Germanus)

5.2 MEEKNESS, PATIENCE AND CLEMENCY OF GOD

Meekness, patience and clemency have different effects than mercy. Mercy delivers creatures from their miseries, especially from sin, by which man becomes an object of God’s wrath and deserves to be instantly destroyed. God’s meekness prevents this destruction. His patience persuades Him to await for the sinner to repent. His clemency takes away all or part of the punishment due to sin.

When someone is in mortal sin, God’s clemency often sends temporal difficulties so the person experiences true sorrow and conversion. Even so, divine justice requires the penalty to be paid. Clemency changes eternal punishment into temporal punishment and even tries to avoid temporal punishment altogether.

God’s clemency offers many means, like jubilees and indulgences, to induce the sinner to attend Mass and to receive Holy Communion. Another form of mercy is purgatory where our purification is completed. God’s clemency even mitigates the suffering in Purgatory by indulgences, fasts and almsgiving by people on earth.

Mary’s Clemency

God has given meekness, patience and clemency to Mary’s heart. When Mary lived, many people tried to dethrone God and set up the Evil One as an usurper. Our Lady experienced indescribable sorrows when she saw the Chosen People crucify her Son.

Knowing His innocence, she saw him treated as a criminal. She saw him dragged through the streets, given over to mockery, spurned in favor of Barrabas and condemned to death. She saw him nailed to a cross and his heart pierced.

What did she do? Did she cry out against his murderers? Did she invoke God's Justice? She remained silent. Only her tears were seen. Her heart fought against all bitterness toward His tormentors. Abounding with meekness, patience and clemency, she imitated her Son, and she offered His blood for their salvation. She was prepared even to sacrifice herself.

Mary Sees Everything

In heaven, the glorious Virgin sees all the sins committed against God. She sees this earth (which should be a paradise) filled with sinners who dishonor her Son even more than the devils. Her Son shed his blood to save all, yet she sees mankind forsaking Jesus and siding with Satan.

She sees all this wickedness which offends her great love of God. Having all power, she could easily avenge these insults. However, her patient heart uses her merits to halt God's vengeance and to stop God's wrath from bursting forth. She forces God to be a father and not a judge and to treat us as His children, not His enemies.

Mary's Feelings

She does not treat all sinners alike. She loves what God loves and hates what He hates. Since the damned will be condemned forever, they will always be the object of her anger.

Toward sinners in this world, her heart is filled with kindness, "No sinner is so detestable that the Virgin is not disposed to reconcile the sinner with her Son. While earthly grace endures, she always has her eyes on the sinner who invokes her and desires a true conversion. No one who invokes her with devotion and perseverance can possibly perish forever." (Blosius)

O Virgin, look down upon the troubled and the sinners, especially upon the countless souls in the state of sin. Take pity on the great number of voices crying out to you, who are the refuge of sinners. To thee do we cry. Turn your eyes of mercy to us.

5.3 **JUSTICE OF GOD**

God has two kinds of justice, distributive and vindictive. "Distributive justice gives to each person what belongs to them. Vindictive justice is an infinite hatred of sin to deliver man from its tyranny." (St. Dionysius) Mercy and Justice are sisters who hold each other's hand. In Mary's perfect heart, mercy and justice give each other the kiss of peace.

Filled With God's Justice

Our Lady always rendered to God what belonged to Him, sacrificing all she was and all she possessed. She obeyed her parents and all authority. Divine Justice had so filled her heart with an unfathomable hatred for sin that she was willing to undergo the punishment of hell rather than commit a single venial sin.

She joined her will to the God's and consented to the painful death of her Son so he might destroy sin. She consented to Jesus' death because she saw him carrying the sins of men. Who, then, can doubt her hatred for sin wherever she finds it? She sometimes unites herself with divine vengeance to destroy sin in souls, especially those who support evil. These sinners force our Mother to relinquish her mercy and share in the divine severity which punishes hard-heartedness.

O Virgin, having one heart with your Son's heart, you also have his sentiments. You love what he loves and hate what he hates. You share in his infinite hatred of sin and the Evil One.

5.4 **ZEAL OF GOD**

All that exists, all of Jesus' actions, all souls in heaven and earth proclaim God's zeal for His own glory and the salvation of souls. "The Lord has made all for his own purposes." (Pr 16:4)

Hatred for Sin

Because God has zeal for His own glory, the humble person renders God great honor and the proud steals from Him. God seeks this glory from all created things, even from the greatest evil. "He gains good from evil, rather than preventing it altogether." (St. Augustine) Zeal led Our Lord to assume human nature, to live poorly and to suffer a cruel death.

Zeal for Souls

God's immense love enkindles a zeal for everyone to be saved. The three Divine Persons, through the angels, the Church and the sacraments, do everything to gain our salvation. This zeal also inflames Our Lady's Immaculate heart. She always acts to gain God's glory and is ready to suffer for it. She sacrificed her Son to destroy all that was against God's glory so that souls could glorify God forever.

Holy People

Moses, inflamed with zeal for the salvation of others, said, "Either forgive them this sin or strike me out of the book of life." (Ex C32) He offered his own eternal happiness so the Israelites would be delivered from damnation.

St. Paul wrote, "I would be separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers." (Rom 9:3) "Paul would have accepted the pains of hell so that others would praise Christ. Not having this degree of charity, we cannot understand these words." (St. John Chrysostom)

Examples

Blessed Jacepane desired the most unimaginable sufferings (even to be thrown into hell) to atone for the sins of mankind.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pozzi was shown a place where numberless demons were. God asked her to endure such a place for five years to save many souls. She consented, and for five years, suffered interiorly and exteriorly.

These examples are overwhelming but how do they compare to just one spark of divine love in the burning furnace of Our Lady's heart?

Divine Love is Measured by Zeal

Our Lady's heart was more inflamed than all the saints put together.

She can say "My zeal has made me pine away. Springs of tears flow because people have not kept your law" and "Zeal for your house has consumed me." (Ps 68:10) Our Lady accomplished more to save souls by sacrificing her Son than all the saints could have done if they suffered the pains of hell until the end of time.

We must honor Our Lady's zeal by loving what she loves and hating what she hates. Let us do all we can to gain the salvation of souls. Salvation is God's only business.

5.5 **GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

Scripture calls God, "Lord", more than any other title. God himself often says, "I am the Lord", and stresses the need for a complete submission to His supreme authority. By His Divine sovereignty, God can hurl us into the abyss of nothingness or withdraw us from it. "The Lord puts to death and gives life." (1 Sam 2:6) God gave Our Lady His divine Sovereignty in the highest degree.

Our Lord and Our Lady

God is called "Lord" and he wants Mary to be called "Lady". She is the sovereign Lady of the universe. He is the "King of Kings." She is the "Queen of Queens." Having given her power over his Son, he also gives her marvelous power over everything. God possesses dominion and Our Lady possesses the power of God's Mother.

Mary's Power

Jesus said, "All power is given to me, in heaven and on earth." (Mt 28:18) Mary exclaims "My power is in Jerusalem" (Sirach 24:11) God has given her power over Jerusalem (that is, the Church) and over its suburbs (the other parts of the world). "In every nation, I have had the chief role." (Sir 24:9-10)

"When Mary became Mother of the creator, God established her as Sovereign Lady of all creation. The Son of Mary put all creation under her power." (St. John Damascene) "God wanted all things to be possible for her." (St. Anselm) "Nothing is capable of resisting her power. All things comply with her commands. Her sovereignty is over everything." (St. Gregory) "God has given her absolute power over heaven and earth." (St. Bernard)

The Saints Say

Other saints say that her intercession never fails. When she appears at our judgment, she is the Mother of the Son, having all power over Jesus. “How could your Son, resist your maternal authority?” (St. Peter Damian)

The Lord and Mary share the same flesh and blood. They are of one mind and will. She is the mistress of heaven and earth. Whoever prostrates before the Son, also must bend the knee to the Mother. “He who governs all things subjected Himself to His Mother.” (St. Peter Damian) ‘All things and God himself are subject to Mary.’ (St. Bernardine) “Behold two great prodigies. God’s majesty is lowered to obey a woman and a woman is lifted up to command God.” (St. Bernard)

“Every person should remain profoundly silent, not daring to look up at Our Lady’s sublime height.” (St. Peter Damian) Mary holds her sovereign power because the Lord communicates to her His divine Sovereignty. If she is Queen, her heart is King. If she has all power, so does her Immaculate Heart. O Mary, your humility caused God to exalt you. Humbling yourself, God raised you above all creatures and confirmed his power in you.

Joy and Sorrow

I am filled with joy that God has made you the sovereign of all hearts and I am filled with sorrow to see so many prefer Satan’s tyranny rather than your reign. Sin causes this and human hearts refuse to be governed by you. How frightful the power of sin to withstand the omnipotent heart of Our Lady.

O Mother, you see that the world is filled with hearts enslaved by Satan. They do not even perceive their own misfortune. Please break these chains. Your Son came to give sight to the blind and to replace hearts of stone with the Holy Spirit. I offer you my own miserable heart. Destroy all that displeases you and establish your sovereign empire within me.

5.6 **THE PEACE OF GOD**

“God’s peace is the union of God with Himself.” (St. Dionysius) He is united to Himself by His infinite love for Himself, by His holiness (which lifts God above anything that could affect his peace), and by His simplicity (which joins all His perfections into one.)

Hell itself cannot trouble God’s peace. God himself sent His Son as the Prince of Peace to kill all enmity and to reconcile us with God. “He is our peace.” (Eph 2:16) Our Savior destroys sin and division. “He made peace by the blood of his cross.” (Col 1:20)

Nine Reasons For Mary’s Peace

- (1) God’s admirable peace impressed its image on Mary’s heart so that sin, the only enemy of peace, had no power in her heart.

- (2) Divine grace always reigned, keeping her passions and faculties under God's law.
- (3) Mary's humility allowed her to endure all her sufferings with peace.
- (4) Her love for poverty led her to accept all sorrows with peace.
- (5) Her love for the cross allowed her to find refreshment even in trials.
- (6) Her invincible patience gave her peace amid all her troubles.
- (7) Her love for all humanity gave her a closeness to all, even those who crucified her Son. By offering her Son to obtain peace between God and man, Mary found the treasure of peace that man had lost by sin.
- (8) Her virginal heart always possessed God's peace because she followed only God's will.
- (9) God's peace so filled her heart that she became a haven of peace to all shaken by adversity and temptation.

O Mary, may our hearts also gain that holy peace!

5.7 **GOD'S GLORY AND HAPPINESS**

God's glory is His full knowledge of His divine perfections. God's happiness is a combination of God's knowledge and God's love for himself. He is ineffably happy at every moment.

In the virgin mother's heart, this glory and happiness exist as in God himself, because His love has transformed her. Fire transforms iron. While remaining iron, it gains the qualities of fire.

No fire can equal that which inflamed Mary's heart. Even while she was on earth, she had one mind and one will with God. We can ask, "Did not all her sufferings remove this glory and happiness?" Not at all. Jesus called His own sufferings, "The Father's glory." "Father, glorify thy son, so thy son can glorify Thee." (Jn 17:1) Christ's passion represents God's highest glory because it made reparation for all the injuries due to sin. The great moment of glory is the hour of Jesus' death.

Happiness and Suffering

Our Lady shared totally in her Son's feelings. If He called His passion "glory and joy", then she, too, found glory and happiness in her passion. This happiness did not prevent her from suffering. No one on earth, except for her Son, suffered more. Joy exists in the soul's superior part and suffering in its inferior part.

When Our Lady suffered her bitter anguish, she enjoyed a profound peace in her spirit, knowing that this was God's will. While she was on earth, God's glory and happiness lived in her heart. In heaven, she is totally absorbed into God's glory and is filled with greater happiness

than all the saints and angels. O Mary, my heart is filled with joy to see your unspeakable happiness.

5.8 COMPENDIUM OF GOD'S LIFE

Paul writes, "The just man lives by faith" (Rom 1:17) Jesus said, "This is life – that they might know you, the only true God." (Jn 17:3) We are God's children by knowing God with the light of faith and by loving God with a supernatural love.

God's Life

The Blessed Mother's heart enjoyed both God's wisdom and His love. By faith and love, God lived in Mary's heart and she lived in God.

God has an interior life (known only to himself) and an exterior life (manifested in the humanity of His Son, in the saints as they lived on earth, and in all creatures). God's mother also has an interior life (known only to God), and an exterior life manifested in her actions.

God lives to a different degree in each heart. In negligent souls, His life languishes and is half dead. In ardent souls, God's life is more vigorous. In those souls who have totally destroyed self-will, God reigns perfectly. Their only joy is doing God's will. Such is the heart of the Virgin Mary, where God reigns so sovereignly that Mary's heart perfectly resembles God's life.

O Mother, I rejoice to see your heart, never touched by sin and always united to Jesus' adorable heart. May every soul cry out with me, "Glory to the Admirable hearts of Jesus and Mary. May all hearts honor their hearts."

PART SIX

THIRD FOUNDATION – THE HOLY SPIRIT – THE HEART OF GOD

6.1 ALL THE GLORY OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER IS WITHIN

The Holy Spirit is compelled by divine love to reveal the treasures hidden in Mary's heart. So, He says "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." (Ps 45:14) Three truths come from these words. First, the Queen of Heaven is the King's daughter. All her glory comes from her heart. She is the Empress of the Universe, the eldest Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son and Spouse of the Spirit. Second, her heart is the source of all graces and of all the mysteries of her life. Third, her heart is the source of the virtues which she practiced on earth and of the glory which she enjoys in heaven.

How the Source

How is her heart the source of all these? Our Lord said that all evils come from the heart. (Mt 15:19) and that a good man brings forth treasures from his heart. (Lk 6:45) Therefore, Mary's supremely good heart is the source of all that is admirable in her.

Second, Mary's heart is the source of all goodness found in the Church. Whatever graces the Church has, she has received from Mary. "All gifts are like streams flowing from her fountain." (Abbot Rupert) "God decreed to give nothing to anyone, except through Mary's hands." (St. Bernard).

By the holiness of her most charitable heart, Mary made herself so pleasing to God that he chose her as an intermediary. Her heart is the origin of everything precious. "Her heart is the fount of numberless graces." (St. John Chrysostom).

The Fountain

We must move on to the third truth. The heart of Mary is the fountain of all that is holy. At the beginning of the world, God created a fountain which watered all the earth. (Gen 2:6) Jesus is the water and Mary is the fountain. "I came out of paradise like the channel of a river." (Sir 24:41)

"Mary is the fountain of all good things. God sought her consent so she could be the principle of all good." (St. Irenaeus). "She is the perennial font of every good." (St. Andrew of Crete) O Mary, abyss of miracles, who can describe the unfathomable marvels God worked in you? You are heaven's own heaven, the abode of Jesus. Next to Jesus' heart, you are the highest throne of the Trinity.

O Jesus, you have given us the Blessed Mother with a heart full of tenderness. May the hearts of her children bear her image and likeness.

6.2 "A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY BELOVED TO ME" (SONG 1:12)

The Song of Songs reveals Mary's heart ablaze for God. The Blessed Virgin says, "My beloved is a bundle of myrrh to me. He shall abide between my breasts. (1:12) The beloved is her Son. He is a "bundle of myrrh" because he was crucified in an ocean of torments. She is a desolate heart in a sea of anguish. Jeremiah's words, "Great as the sea is your desolation" (Lam 2:13) apply both to Jesus and Mary. O Mother of Christ, the world's desolations are a tiny drop beside your boundless ocean of sorrows.

Incomparable Love

To understand her sorrow, try to grasp the immense love which constantly inflamed her heart. She shared in the paternity of the heavenly Father who gave her a love befitting her role as God's mother. Her love is incomparable. All the love in the world is just a spark compared to God's furnace. Jesus is Mary's only son and He possesses all that is loveable. He is everything to His mother. He is her treasure, her glory, her Creator and Redeemer.

Her Martyrdom

What a painful martyrdom for Mary to see Him bathed in blood and covered with wounds. “All the torments of the martyrs is nothing compared to the immensity of Mary’s sorrows.” (St. Anselm) “O Mary, your sweetest heart is changed into a heart of sorrow, saturated with gall and myrrh. Your heart is plunged into the gaping wounds, while the crucified Jesus dwells in your heart.” (St. Bonaventure)

Without a miracle, “Our Lady would have died at the cross”. “My Son’s sorrow was my sorrow because His heart was my heart.” (Mary to St. Brigid) “O my Queen, you are on the cross. Jesus suffered in body and you in heart. You gathered his scattered wounds with your heart.” (St. Bonaventure)

6.3 **I SLEEP AND MY HEART WATCHES**

The Song of Songs describes Mary, “I sleep and my heart watches.” (5:2) The words, “I sleep” reveal three truths. Because “I sleep” signifies self-denial, the first truth is the death of Our Lady’s heart to all that is not God. The second is the admirable contemplation of her heart. The third is the perfect union of Mary’s heart with God’s will. She found perfect rest in God’s commandments. Hearts always find a real paradise when they obey God’s will.

Devoting Herself

“My heart watches” shows that Jesus is her true heart. While Mary performs her duties, Jesus’ infinite love makes Him take unceasing care of her. He protects His mother from the enemy’s snares, guides her steps and inflames her heart.

“My heart watches” also reveals the watchfulness of Mary’s heart. God’s watchfulness makes Him incapable of fatigue. Watchfulness is God’s torch. David wrote, “He who keeps Israel, neither slumbers nor sleeps.” (Ps 121:4) He is always attentive.

Always in Vigil

Our Lady possessed this divine vigilance. She says, “I sleep and my heart watches.” While her virginal body took its rest, her heart was in constant vigil. Filled with tenderness, she gave the greatest care to her Son.

Because Mary saw the unfolding of his life, his growth, his miracles, and his sorrows, she could praise these mysteries in the name of all mankind. She preserved them all in her heart so she could enrich the Church and her children with numberless blessings. Her heart stood in perpetual vigilance over her interior inclinations, exterior senses and all the powers of her soul.

O, Mother of God, may we imitate your watchfulness so we are numbered among the elect, worshipping your Son and beholding your grandeur in the company of the saints who are always vigilant in glorifying the Trinity.

6.4 MY BELOVED TO ME AND I TO HIM

Three times the Song of Songs uses this phrase “My Beloved to me and I to him.” (2:16, 6:2, and 7:10) These words have nine different meanings which reveal God’s love for the Virgin Mary and her love for Him.

Nine Meanings

- (1) Because of love, God belongs totally to Mary. He thought of her from all eternity. She was His first thought after Jesus’ Sacred Humanity. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways.” (Prov 8:22) “Scripture was written for Mary, about Mary and on account of Mary.” (St. Bernard) All that God accomplished in creation and in Jesus’ sacred humanity was done for Mary more than for all other creatures.

“I to my Beloved” shows that Mary’s heart belongs totally to God. Her every thought was inflamed with a divine love which sent fiery darts into God’s heart. “You have wounded my heart.” (Song 4:9) Mary fulfilled St. Peter’s command, “Whoever preaches, let it be with God’s words.” (1 Pet 4:11), and St. Paul’s command, “Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.” (1 Cor 10:31)

- (2) By his almighty love, God belongs entirely to Mary. The Father gave Mary a power greater than any other power in the universe. Her Son gave her greater wisdom and the Holy Spirit poured a limitless ocean of love into her heart, which floods heaven and purgatory. God’s flaming love consecrates her memory to the Father, her intellect to the Son and her will to the Holy Spirit. She used these three faculties for God’s honor.
- (3) Mary belongs to Jesus (who saved her by keeping her free from sin) and Jesus belongs to Mary because she formed Him in her womb and preserved Him when Herod tried to kill him).
- (4) God’s Son is Mary’s Son from all eternity. Mary was always his chosen instrument for becoming man.
- (5) Mary belongs to Jesus according to nature, grace and glory. She gave Him His nature as man. She daily gives grace and gives glory to His members because, after Jesus, she is the source of all heavenly glory.
- (6) The Eternal Father belongs to Mary as her Father. The Son belongs to Mary as His mother. The Holy Spirit belongs to Mary as His bride and His masterpiece.

Mary belongs to the Father because she surrendered her blood and virginity to the Father to bring forth the Son whom the Father had begotten before all ages. Mary belongs to the Son because she gave herself fully, “Let it be done to me according to Your word.” (Lk

1:38) Mary belongs to the Holy Spirit as His bride, believing the angel's words, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you." (Lk 1:35)

- (7) The Father's intellect belongs to Mary because He produces the Eternal Word in her. The Son's will belongs to Mary because He gives her the Holy Spirit so she can be one with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit's love belongs to Mary because He performed His most stupendous miracle in her, the conception of Jesus Christ.

The Father gives Mary the fruit of His intellect, and returns this fruit to Him, (Jesus Christ), fully formed. Jesus gives Mary the fruit of His will, and she returns all her desires. Mary never possesses any will apart from her Son. The Holy Spirit, by placing the humanity of Jesus in her heart, establishes in her the empire of holy love.

- (8) The Church triumphant, suffering and militant, (Christ's Mystical Body), belongs to her. Jesus, fighting on earth, suffering in purgatory and triumphant in heaven, belongs to Mary because He has given her everything.

Likewise, Mary belongs to the Church Militant, Triumphant and Suffering. She is the general in Christ's army. She is the sun filling the hearts of the saints. She is the comforter of the holy souls, always refreshing them. She told St. Brigid that she makes every pain in purgatory more bearable.

- (9) The heavenly Father's heart belongs to Mary as His daughter. Jesus' heart belong to her as a son. The Holy Spirit's heart belongs to her as the perfect spouse.

Mary's heart belongs to the Father as His peerless daughter. Her heart belongs to the Son as the most loving mother. Her heart belongs to the Holy Spirit as a bride's heart, a furnace of the most ardent fire that ever existed.

Mary's Beloved belongs to her and she to her Beloved. Everlasting praise to you beloved daughter, mother and spouse of God. Through your prayers, o Mary, may the Father, Son and Spirit take full possession of our hearts.

6.5 PUT ME AS A SEAL UPON YOUR HEART

Christ commanded his followers, "Put me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm." Because "Love is as strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell." (Song 8:6) Mary has kept perfectly this command to die to all things and live only for Christ.

Living Images

The Lord did not say "Put my seal upon your heart", but "Put me as a seal upon your heart." Christ wants our hearts to be living images, filled with his feelings and clothed with His

virtues. He also said “And as a seal upon your arm.” This means our exterior life, which must show forth His meekness, affability and holiness. Our Lady accomplished all these goals.

“Love is as strong as death.” (Song) Our Lord said to St. Brigid, “I am love itself and I could endure as many deaths as there are souls. I would do for one soul what I did for all mankind.” Our Redeemer would rather endure the pains of hell to save a sinner than to chastise him. Our Lady, also, would gladly have suffered the pains of hell to save one sinner. She would suffer anything to cooperate in saving souls.

The Spirit speaks of Mary’s love when he says, “The lamps are fire and flames” (Song 8:6) Her thoughts, words and actions were flames leaping from her heart’s furnace, flying to heaven and enkindling even the seraphim.

The Greatest Privilege

“Put me as a seal” shows Our Lady’s greatest privilege. When a ruler entrusts his seal to someone, he gives his entire governing powers to that person. This is how the King of Kings honored his mother. Having shared in His sufferings, she shares also in His kingly power. All the thoughts and desires flowing from Mary’s heart have the same power as these coming from Our Lord’s heart.

Why Given to Mary?

Jesus gives His living seal to Mary so she can grant petitions, make generous gifts and dispense graces to whomever she chooses. Jesus does whatever Mary does. The Church Fathers declare that Mary possesses all power in heaven and earth. God grants her every request. “All power is given you in heaven and earth.” (St. Peter Damian) “God has raised her so high that she has become all-powerful with Him.” (St. Anselm)

O Jesus, it is as if You granted these same powers to us, because You gave them to Mary to assist us. O Mary, take full possession of my heart. Destroy what displeases you. Make my heart an ardent lamp of God’s fire.

6.6 **MARY KEPT ALL THESE WORDS, PONDERING THEM IN HER HEART**

Devotion to Mary’s admirable heart is not new. Twice, Luke says that Mary “Kept all these words in her heart”. (1:19 and 1:51) These texts reveal that Mary’s heart was the faithful custodian of Our Lord’s inestimable treasures.

Keeping these words

“Word” also means “deeds”. For example, the shepherds said, “Let us go to Bethlehem, and see this word that has taken place.” Mary kept “all these words”, that is, all the deeds that God had done. God’s words remain because “He spoke and they were made.” (Ps 33:9)

Mary kept all these marvelous events in her heart. “The Holy Virgin always carried God’s mysteries and the deeds of her Son in her heart.” (St. Ambrose) They were tokens of Jesus’ love for her and she preserved them as precious fuel which increases the divine fire (so she could inflame our hearts).

For Mary, these memories were living miracles, proofs of God’s goodness and the mysterious secrets of God’s Alliance with men, the rich inheritance of God’s chosen children. As the King’s general, Mary kept these words as heavenly weapons to help us to overcome the enemy and gain salvation. They were sacred torches which give light to our path, so clouded by death’s shadows.

A Treasury of God’s Secrets

These memories are a medicine against all evil and a remedy to gain every good. They are the inexhaustible records of divine wisdom. The heart is the treasury of secrets. So, scripture is the treasury of God’s plans and secrets.

Mary did not keep these words just in her memory and intellect. She kept them in her heart, the most worthy sanctuary. Mary’s heart is a furnace of love and the paradise of the Most Holy trinity. She kept all the marvels of Jesus in her heart so they could become an object of her own affections.

All These Things

She kept “all these things”, not just some or a part. Everything in Our Saviour’s life was important. Every step, every breath and every thought deserved full adoration. Also, Mary knew that Jesus’ love counted every hair of our head. (Lk 12:7) “You even number my steps” (Job 14:16) He rewards our least action (like a cup of cold water) and guards every person “as the apple of his eye”. (Sir 17:18) Just as a man guards a purse full of diamonds, so God guards every alms given to a poor man.

With her eyes always on her Son, Our Mother was attentive to the smallest detail. She did not lose one heavenly diamond because she knew their eternal, infinite value. She preserves these treasures for all eternity in her heart where she guards them more securely than the Seraphim.

Why Did She Keep Them?

She kept these treasures out of love for her Son and for us. She constantly adores these mysteries in our name (for we are so indifferent to them). She kept them so that, one day, all heaven and earth can adore them. She revealed them to the gospel writers so they become the center of our faith. She revealed them to the apostles so they would preach them to the whole world.

She “kept all these things” so she could compare them with each other. Having read the prophets, Mary compared their words with the events happening before her very eyes. She rejoiced to see that the prophecies were being fulfilled. She compared these prophecies with the events of her conceiving and giving birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, to her flight into Egypt and to all the other mysteries.

It was revealed to St. Brigid that the infant Jesus revealed many divine secrets to Mary so she could enlighten others. She is “the teacher of the apostles” (St. Irenaeus). Other writers call her “the library of the Apostles, where they learned many things they would never have known.” (St. Jerome)

What gratitude we owe to Mary for preserving these treasures. We should honor her heart which contains the hidden manna of those mysteries, tasted only by those consecrated to her by love.

PART SEVEN

INSPIRED CATHOLIC TRADITIONS

7.1 TESTIMONY OF ANCIENT WRITERS

Having listened to the Spirit’s words in scripture, we now turn to the writings of eleven Church fathers.

1. St. Augustine (Speaking about the Annunciation)

“Who can thank you, O Mary, for your help to a lost world? By consenting to Gabriel’s request, we found the beginning of our deliverance in you.

“Accept our thanks and our resolutions. Excuse our sins. Receive our offering. You are the sole hope of our happiness.”

“The divine motherhood would give no profit to Mary if she had not first received Jesus in her heart.”

2. St. Leo the Great (preaching on the glory of Mary’s heart)

“A royal virgin is chosen to be the Mother of an infant God and to conceive Him in her heart before she conceived Him in her womb.”

3. St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (Author of “The Excellence of the Blessed Virgin Mary”)

“What praise we owe to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The holy purity of her devout heart surpasses the holiness of all creatures and merited that God would choose her to restore the world.” He attributes this restoration of man to her holy heart which drew God the Son into her womb.

4. St. Peter Chrysologus (Bishop of Ravenna)

“Whoever is not amazed at the perfections in Mary’s soul, ignores God’s greatness. Heaven trembles and nature is overwhelmed at her power. A virgin receives the infinite God and gives him a worthy dwelling place. In return, God wills that she receive the power to grant peace on earth, glory for heaven, and salvation for all who are lost.”

“What more can be said? Mary’s heart is the sacred palace of the world’s Monarch, according to the words, “Wisdom has built herself a house, made out of seven pillars. She has set her table, mingled her wine and sent her messengers. Whoever is little, let him come.” (Prov 9:1-5) This house built by Divine Wisdom is Mary’s heart. The seven pillars are the gifts of the Holy Spirit which make her heart secure. The wine mingled with water is Jesus’ divinity and humanity united in her womb.

5. St. John Damascene (great defender of holy images)

“O Mother, your lips praised Jesus Christ and were pressed against His. Your mouth tasted only the heavenly wine of God’s word, which inebriated you. Your Immaculate heart always turned to Him to contemplate and to seek Him.”

6. St. Bernard

“O Mother, open your merciful heart to our prayers. You do not reject even a corrupt sinner. Your heart is filled with compassion because God’s greatest work of mercy was accomplished in your womb. From your virginal flesh, He has built a house with the golden bed of your holy heart. You are the unique woman in whom the Saviour finds perfect rest. Because He pours out all of his treasures, the Holy Spirit consecrates your womb by the divine mysteries. This consuming fire inflames your loving heart.”

“O ravisher of hearts, you have ravished my heart. When will you give it back to me?”

7. St. Bonaventure O.S.F.

Commenting on Luke, Chapter 2, he calls Mary’s heart “the Ark of the Covenant”. As the Ark contained some manna from heaven, so Mary’s heart contains all the mysteries that Christ brought down from heaven.

8. St. Bernardine of Sienna

It is difficult to find this saint’s equal. Speaking about the Immaculate Conception, he says that Mary’s heart will be an object of rapture for all the heavenly saints. It is a mirror with a fire so ardent that it inflames all who come before it. Also, “The vehement desires of all the Old Testament saints for the Messiah’s coming are united in Mary’s heart. No words can express these desires.”

9. St. Lawrence Justinian (Author of “The Triumphant Agony of Christ”)

(Patriarch of Venice)

In his book, “The Triumphant Agony of Christ”, Lawrence presents Mary’s heart as a clear mirror of Our Lord’s passion and a perfect image of his death. The angels, in seeing Mary’s heart, also see the nails, the wounds and all the torments of her Son.

10. Richard of St. Laurence

In his book “The Praises of the Glorious Virgin”, he mentions six things. Mary’s heart was the source of salvation. It was the first heart worthy to receive the Son of God. In her heart, mercy and justice gave their first kiss. Her heart received the same wounds as the Redeemer. Her heart was a treasury of both the Old and the New Testament. Finally, the life of Jesus Christ was written in her heart.

11. Venerable Louis of Granada

Venerable Louis, a Dominican, commenting on the text “She kept all these things in her heart”, wrote, “This gospel is a table which God has set for his saints with thousands of delicious foods. Everyone can take what they wish. For myself, the sentence about ‘Keeping all things in her heart’ is my dessert.”

“O Queen of Heaven, what did your heart experience as you pondered all these mysteries? Who can understand what was in your heart when you saw Almighty God wrapped in swaddling clothes? You were astonished to see how much God loved man and wanted to lift him up by His sacred humanity.”

Four Writers

Joseph de la Cerda O.S.B., John Gerson, Nicolas Salicet O.S.C.S., and Bartholomew de los Rios O.S.A. are the four evangelists of Mary’s heart.

Abbot Nicolas gathered his writings from the Fathers and wrote “I shall speak to your most pure heart and prostrate myself before your holy temple. Hail, unique sanctuary, anointed by the Spirit, which Jesus Christ dedicated for his entrance into the world. You are filled with heavenly manna, containing all delights and all remedies of grace. In your heart, God met humanity with a kiss of love.

“You are an emerald cup which offered the sweet drink of faith to the thirsting King by saying, “Be it done unto me according to your word.” May every creature praise your heart from which comes our salvation.

“You are a furnace which inflames the Seraphim. The Spirit of God, like a burning winds, breathed on you.

Contributions of the Jesuits

The Jesuits have established Sodalties of Our Lady in all their schools. By their preaching, they have spread knowledge of Our Mother. Three hundred Jesuits have written about the perfections of Mary’s admirable heart. All learned devotion to Mary’s heart from their founder, St. Ignatius, who from his conversion to his death bed, always wore an image of Mary’s Admirable Heart. May he inspire us in this devotion.

7.2 CHURCH APPROVAL

Pope Julius II, who had devotion to Our Lady of Loreto, wrote, “O Queen of Mercy, I salute your perfect purity never stained by sin.”

Pope Clement X authorized devotion to the admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin and dedicated every chapel of the Congregation to the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary (founded by St. John Eudes himself).

Cardinal Peter de Berulle (French Oratorians) – “By nature and by grace, Mary had the privilege of possessing the heart, the spirit and the life of Christ so intimately that Jesus became her heart, her spirit and her life.”

“The mystery of these two noblest hearts is that the heart of Mary and the heart of Jesus were so near they were one living heart. O sweet union of hearts. God united them together. May he also unite our hearts with theirs.”

There are three places where we can see Christ, in the bosom of the Father, in the Sacred Humanity and in the chaste womb of Mary.”

Seven Theologians At University of Paris

Seven theologians have written their acceptance of this devotion. “All true children of Mary should be convinced that her holy heart was never stained by sin, was always full of grace and never existed for one moment without loving God. It was pierced with a thousand arrows of sorrows because of us. We give our approval to this book contains nothing against Holy Scripture or the Church’s teaching. (January 31, 1661)

(Note – This approval was important because the devotion to Mary’s admirable Heart was quite new).

7.3 EXAMPLES OF SAINTS AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Every saint belongs to the Queen of Saints. However, certain ones stand out in their devotion to her. First is St. Joseph. Secondly, John the Baptist who was sanctified by Mary’s visitation to his mother, Elizabeth. St. Gabriel was Mary’s Guardian Angel. The Beloved Disciple to whom Mary was entrusted at the foot of the cross. St. Luke also belongs to Mary, because he revealed the secret that “she kept all these things in her heart”. Other important saints include St. Bernard, St. Dominic, Blessed Alan, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Bernardine of Sienna.

St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude (Benedictine nuns) described Mary’s loving heart through the revelations they received. St. Thomas Becket (martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, 1170) had devotion to Our Lady’s seven joys – (Annunciation, Visitation, Birth of Jesus, Adoration of

the Magi, Finding of Jesus, Resurrection and her Assumption). St. Thomas of Canterbury wrote a canticle about the heavenly joys because Our Lady told him to join these seven earthly joys to her seven heavenly joys.

Religious Orders

The Carmelite Order founded by St. Teresa has a tender love of Mary's heart. St. Philip Neri, founder of the Oratorians, showed special love for Mary. Also, John Tauler, O.P., Blosius O.S.B. and Lanspergius, OCSO, have written about the glories of Mary.

Mother Mary Villani, a Dominican, was inspired to say three Hail Mary's. In the first, she offered the Immaculate Heart to the sacred Heart. In the second, she presented the Sacred Heart to his mother. In the third, she offered her own heart to Jesus and Mary. Our Lady appeared to her and promised special protection to those practicing devotion to these two hearts.

St. John Eudes' Congregation

The Priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (founded by St. John Eudes) are indebted to Our Lord and Our Lady for five reasons:

1. This Congregation is consecrated to Mary's admirable Heart. Its members must conform their hearts to her heart.
2. All their churches and chapels are dedicated to Mary's Admirable Heart.
3. This Congregation was the first to celebrate the feasts of the Admirable Heart of Jesus and Mary.
4. Ever since its beginning, this Congregation has experienced the extraordinary effects of Our Lady's love. All the members know that Mary cherishes them. If they place no obstacle of sin, they will have a secure place in her heart in heaven.
5. St. Paul assured his spiritual children that nothing could separate them from Christ's love. Our Lady gives the same assurance to the members of this Congregation. We all acclaim, "Who can separate me from the loving heart of Jesus and Mary? Tribulation or distress, or danger, or the sword? Neither death, nor life, nor things present or to come, nor any creature, keep them from the heart of Jesus and Mary."
6. The Religious of Our Lady of Charity (also founded by St. John Eudes) is consecrated to the Admirable Heart of Mary. They work for the salvation of lost souls (the greatest charity we can perform on earth). May their own hearts experience Mary's sacred fire.

By all of the above examples, the Holy Spirit preaches eloquently of devotion to Our Lady's holy heart. Let us also be sharers in this devotion.

PART EIGHT
FOURTH FOUNDATION
SANCTITY OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

8.1 HEART OF MARY, IMMACULATE AND SINLESS

Mary is the “Valiant Woman”, the general of God’s armies and the enemy of Satan. Hell fears Mary like a small group of soldiers fear a gigantic army. God has said, “She shall crush your head.” (Gen 3:15), meaning that she vanquishes all sin. Mary would suffer any torment rather than consent to a single venial sin. Scripture calls Mary the “one dove”, “all fair” and “the immaculate one” (Song 6:8 and 4:7).

Quotes of Saints

At his death, St. Andrew said, “As the first Adam was formed from earth before any sin, so Jesus Christ was formed in virginal flesh, never sullied by sin.” St. James the Less calls Mary “holy, immaculate, more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious than the Seraphim.” “This holy one has been preserved from sin from the beginning. That is why the angel said, “Hail, full of grace.” (St. Thesiphon). This doctrine is highlighted by the great feast of the Immaculate Conception.

O Blessed Virgin, take full possession of my heart and banish all sin from it.

(Note: This chapter was filled with many references to books, authors, religious orders and universities that taught that Mary was sinless. These quotes were used by St. John to prove the Immaculate Conception. These proofs were needed when this book was written because only on February 11, 1854, did Pope Pius IX infallibly declare the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

8.2 HEART OF MARY, OCEAN OF GRACE

Sanctifying grace exercises its powerful influence in the deepest part of the soul, called the heart of the person. Mary’s heart is an ocean and the angel declared it “full of grace” even before she conceived Jesus for two reasons. First, Mary was filled with grace, beyond all the angels, at the moment of her conception. Second, the Virgin was never idle. She always loved God according to the full extent of her powers. By the time Gabriel spoke, she had attained an inconceivable degree of grace.

Infinite Graces

If Mary was already full of grace, what plenitude did the Spirit give her when she said “yes” and conceived God’s Son? The dignity of being God’s mother is infinite and, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, her graces were proportioned to her dignity.

What can we say of her privilege of giving life to Jesus by her virginal blood? What new graces did she receive to become God's mother? What did the infinitely generous Christ child give her during those nine months in her womb? What about the graces Mary received by praising Him? These graces found no obstacle and Jesus could give His mother every possible grace.

Mary and Jesus

After his birth, Mary performed all the duties of a mother. She took Him to Egypt to save Him from Herod and later led Him back to Nazareth. "By her consent, she gained more grace than all the angels and saints put together." (St. Bernardine) If so, what graces did she receive by her conversation with Him and by listening to His words? Also, by offering Him in the Temple and at Calvary?

If she received infinite graces before she conceived, how much grace was hers by offering her Son on the cross? As her heart became an immense sea of sorrow, it also became a boundless ocean of grace.

Imagine her great sorrow when she saw him die and imagine the immense graces when her Risen Son appeared to her and later ascended into heaven.

After Pentecost

What graces did she receive when she attended mass and received Holy Communion? "My mind fails me when I try to contemplate the immensity of your grace." (St. Anselm) "The sacred Virgin is an immense abyss of grace." (St. John Damascene)

An immense vessel can only be filled by immense graces. If Mary encompassed God in her womb, how much more she can receive Him in her heart! God gave Mary a vast heart and filled it with an ocean of blessings for all her children. O admirable Heart, you were closed to every sin and open to every holiness. I offer you my heart. Possess it so that no sin enters and only grace reigns.

Grace for the Church

Mary is the source of every grace in the Church. God chose her so we might receive Jesus, the author of all grace. By the Virgin's consent, God gave us the Saviour. Only by her consent, does He grant graces. "God wants us to have everything through Mary." (St. Bernard). "No one is saved except through you, O holy Virgin." (St. Germanus) "The graces of all the saints overflow into Mary as rivers into the sea." (St. Bonaventure) "You spread the grace found in God's Bosom over all the earth." (St. Augustine). Many saints wrote that every grace comes from her intercession.

O God, we have a great obligation to praise You because You enriched the glorious Virgin. We praise you for these graces because through her they will all come to us. O Mother, you found the grace that mankind had lost. "O Mother of Mercy, you do not despise the sinner. You open the doors of your heart to all who cry to you." (St. Bernard).

8.3 **HEART OF MARY, MIRACLE OF LOVE**

Sanctifying grace is the great queen of God's gifts and is always accompanied by the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), by the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance), by the fruits of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) and by the eight evangelical counsels. (Mt 5:1) These heavenly princesses are never separated from their queen (sanctifying grace). They are all found in the heart of God's mother.

Although I would like to describe all of her virtues, lack of space obliges me to speak only of her love for God, her charity for us, her humility and her perfect submission to God's will.

I begin by saying that Mary's Admirable Heart is a living miracle of love which consumes Our Lady's heart. The source of this love lies in the adorable heart of the Father and in the ineffable heart of the Holy Spirit (the essential, uncreated love). These are the sources of Our Lady's love.

The heavenly Father gave Mary His fatherly love, so she can worthily love His only Son. To Mary, the Son gave his love for the Father so she could cooperate in the Redemption. The Holy Spirit inflamed her heart with a love for her spouse, so she could be like the Bridegroom.

This divine love for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit burns in the Queen's heart and has twelve perfections. It is holy, wise, prudent, strong, ardent, zealous, constant, vigilant, patient, faithful, joyful and pure.

The effects of this love are more numerous than the stars. Every moment of her life was a moment of new love. All her thoughts and actions came from this love. All her virtues were sealed by this love. Count all the services which she gave to Jesus (from birth to death) and all the steps she walked with him. Consider all her pains and burdens. These effects all flow from love.

Love Inspires Everything

Perfect love penetrated her heart completely, and became the heart of her heart. Love inspired everything. She prayed in love. She adored in love. She spoke in love. She ate, drank and slept in love. Her heart was so transfigured by love that love's acts became innumerable. "The seven words she spoke in the gospels were seven flames of love." (St. Bernardine) If men did not oppose this love by the coldness of sin, it would enkindle the whole world. "Our Lady loved her Son so much that she would have died numberless times for Him." (St. Bernardine) Now you understand the effects of love that consume her marvelous heart.

All From Mary

Count all the acts of love of all the angels and saints because Our Lady is the cause of these acts. All of these proceed from God's adorable heart and from Mary's admirable heart "Without Mary's petition, nothing comes down from heaven to us." "Everything that is precious comes through Mary, in Mary, with Mary and from Mary". (Raymond Jourdain) "God became

man only with the virgin's consent so she would be the source of every good for mankind." (St. Irenaeus)

O Jesus Christ, may every tongue glorify You for having established this furnace of love in Mary's heart. O Mother, send the sparks of that divine fire into our hearts. Associate us with all the tender love that you gave to the Trinity.

Three Graces

Three special graces are contained in the commandment to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourself. These often go unnoticed.

First, God's command to love Him is a great favor. Imagine the infinite distance that separates God from man. He is holy and we are sinners. Amazingly, He commands us to love Him. Allowing us to think of God and to adore Him is a great privilege. God goes further, commanding us to love.

Second, God is not content just to love His children. He wants the children to love each other. He forbids us to hate or to harm each other.

Third, God goes beyond this and asks us to love one another as He loves us. St. Augustine and St. Thomas say that love of God and of neighbor are both virtues of charity. Therefore, the second commandment is like the first. We must love God for Himself and His own interests. This is how we must also love our neighbor.

Our Lady's Love

The Blessed Virgin loves us in this way. Charity in Our Lady is indescribably more ardent because she loves us with the same love which she has for God.

Also, she loves us with the same fervor that she loved her Son. She knows that we are members of His body. As mother of the Head, she is also mother of the members. On the cross, Jesus gave us to her as her children. Although we had nailed Him to the cross, He gave us this special gift of His Mother. "Behold, your Mother." (Jn 19:27) He did not give us to her as her slaves. He said, "Behold your son". He asked Mary to love us as she had loved Him. Having loved us in all the torments we had caused, He asked Mary to do the same.

Mary's burning flames contain more love than all parents have for all their children. In this dazzling flame, we see our faults so we can detest them, our enemies so we can avoid their traps, the world's illusions so we can refuse them and God's goodness so we can serve Him. Mary's vigilant love guides us in all things. Her heart is an oracle that resolves our difficulties and provides the right answers.

Describing Her Love

Her love is an impregnable defense for God's friends who choose to die rather than deny Him. Her love is swift "Never was it known that anyone who sought you was left unaided." And "We cannot pronounce your name without being assisted." (St. Bernard)

Mary's love is not terrifying. "She is full of sweetness. Milk and honey are under her tongue." (St. Bernard). "Her heart is manna, containing all of heaven's sweetness." (St. Ambrose) Her love is a paradise of delights for all who serve Jesus as their King.

Mary's love is liberal, giving immense treasures which include all of God's riches. She has already given us Jesus Christ, the treasure of all treasures. Other riches await us.

Mary's love is zealous to save souls. From the very beginning, she offered prayers, sacrifices and many tears so the Father would send His Son. She consented to that mystery and offered Jesus at the greatest cost at Calvary.

Her love is invincible. All our ingratitude, infidelity, cowardice, imperfections and sins cannot extinguish her love. She perseveres until our last breath to keep us from the snares of our enemies.

8.5 MARY'S HEART, ABYSS OF HUMILITY

"Deep calls upon deep." (Ps 42:8) speaks about a twofold abyss, a humble heart convinced of its own nothingness and all the graces that fill such a humble heart.

The first (a humble heart) calls forth the second (God's blessings). Divine Goodness refuses this heart nothing. Emptiness attracts heaven's graces and safeguards them. "Humility is the safe treasury of all virtues." (St. Basil)

The Blessed Virgin accomplished all her great deeds by her humility, always attracting grace after grace until she came to the summit of holiness. "She who considered herself the least deserved to be honored as the holiest." (St. Bernard).

Twelve Manifestations

Jesus said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Mt 11:29) Our Mother's life was a constant practice of humility, which has twelve manifestations.

1. Her complete self-annihilation by which she praised God all her life.
2. Her great uneasiness at the Angel Gabriel's words of praise. "She was accustomed to be visited by angels." (St. Thomas), but she had never heard the words, "full of grace". Her humble heart received these words with trembling.
3. Her response "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." (Lk1:29) reveals her humility. Mary's humility is deep. She is saluted by an archangel, overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, made God's mother, raised above all creatures, appointed the sovereign lady of heaven, but still calls herself the handmaid of the Lord." (St. Bonaventure)

4. She kept these favors a secret. After conceiving by the Holy Spirit, she reveals this glory to no one, not even to her spouse, St. Joseph. Her cousin, Elizabeth, learned this truth from the Holy Spirit.

Mary's humility is a stupendous silence. "O peerless humility, what shall I say? You are the Queen of heaven and earth and you tell no one. Only in the presence of Elizabeth, who knows the mystery, do you admit 'My soul magnifies the Lord'." (St. Thomas of Villanova).

5. The great graces flowing from this humility sanctify John the Baptist while still in Elizabeth's womb.
6. Her honoring St. Joseph as her husband manifests this humility. "See the Mother of God and the Queen of heaven making meals for a poor carpenter and obeying him as a dutiful wife. She prefers humiliation rather than reveal to Joseph the mystery God accomplished in her. Never has there been such humility." (St. Thomas of Villanova)
7. Her humility is shown by going to lowly Bethlehem to give birth to the King of Kings. Turned away from all housing, she gives birth among the animals, and accepts all this without complaint.
8. She showed her humility by subjecting herself to the Jewish laws of purification after childbirth.
9. She suffered great penance during Jesus' forty days in the desert. Remember that He engraved on her heart all the mysteries of his life so she could share in them.
10. At Cana, she obtained the miracle of water changed into wine. She did not use her authority as the mother of Jesus, but with the greatest modesty, she made known to Jesus the need for more wine. She left her request to the divine will.
11. Mary suffered with Jesus all the rejections and humiliations of His public life. People saw Jesus as a madman, or a blasphemer. They tried to throw him off the hill at Nazareth.
12. After Jesus' Ascension into heaven, when the disciples return to Jerusalem, Luke names all the apostles and disciples, listing Mary last of all. Her profound humility urged St. Luke to treat her as the least of all the disciples.

Besides these twelve manifestations, we must count all the moments and all the humble acts of her life. O Mary, how removed we are from true humility. Obtain pardon for our sins so we can imitate your humility.

8.6 MARY'S HEART, EMPIRE OF THE DIVINE WILL

The divine will reigned perfectly in Mary's heart for the following six reasons.

1. The Blessed Virgin always saw God's will as the source of her being and of her life.
2. She honored the divine will as the purpose of her existence, directing all her actions to God's will and finding in it her perfect rest.
3. She respected the divine will as her ruler never considering the slightest disobedience.
4. She loved God's will as her paradise and found there all her delights. God receives infinite pleasure in giving commands. Mary received heavenly joy in obeying.
5. Mary accepted God's will whenever it was manifested – in St. Joseph, in the Law of Moses, in the emperor, Augustus, and in every event of Divine Providence.
6. Although she was God's mother and held rule over all creatures, she was "subject to every human creature for God's sake." (1 Pt 2:13) Mary always yielded to her superiors, her equals and her inferiors, preferring the will of others to her own (when this did not violate God's law).

Accomplishing God's Will

Her love for God's will was intense, allowing her to live a heavenly life on earth in both her interior and exterior powers. Our Saviour said, "I came to do the will of Him who sent me." (Jn 6:38) Mary wholeheartedly repeated those words.

St. Gertrude once asked Our Lord that His will be accomplished perfectly in her. If the saint possessed this desire, how much more the Queen of saints. God says of Mary, "You shall be called my pleasure." (Is 62:4), because she identifies herself with God's will.

Mary's heart was the home of the divine will. God held the keys and enjoyed complete sway. He could use her heart to conquer all his enemies because it belonged totally to heaven.

Let It Be Done

St. Bernard said, "We all die but in Mary's 'Let it be done' we are called back to life." "I dare affirm that nothing was made without her. God accomplishes everything through Mary's 'Let it be done'" (St. Ambrose) "Nothing is made except through Mary's hands. God himself became Man only at her word." (St. Bernard) "By God's command, heaven and earth were created. By Mary's 'Let it be done' the Eternal Word became man". (St. Andrew of Jerusalem)

Her consent to the death of Jesus was her final submission to God's will. Mary was so obedient that she would have been willing to sacrifice Jesus by her own hands, just like Abraham with Isaac. God enjoys absolute power over her heart where He will reign forever. Eternal glory to that divine will and unending thanksgiving to Mary's admirable heart for her great obedience.

8.7 HEART OF MARY, TREASURE HOUSE OF THE CHARISMS

The Holy Spirit bestows charismatic gifts for the benefit of others. St. Paul lists nine charisms – word of wisdom, word of knowledge, the gift of faith, the power to heal, the gift of miracles, or prophecy, of tongues, of discernment of spirits and interpretation of Scripture. (1 Cor 12:7-10)

Explaining the Charisms

By the Word of Wisdom, the Holy Spirit helps us to explain the truths of faith. By the word of knowledge, we can explain moral truths. The charism of faith is the confidence needed to work miracles (St. John Chrysostom) or the strength to preach the gospel boldly (St. Ambrose). It is the heavenly light given to preachers of the gospel.

Healing and miracles bring about bodily health. By prophecy, we know future events or secrets. This includes the gift of revelation. By discernment of spirits we know the source of an action, whether it comes from a good or an evil spirit. The gift of tongues, given at Pentecost, includes the special power of making heavenly truths known to diverse cultures. The gift of interpretation enlightens the mind to understand God’s holy word.

Our Lady’s Use of Charisms

Our Lady had all these gifts because she was “full of grace”. The Holy Spirit adorned her with the most perfect charisms. She must possess them all graces so she can dispense them.

The Blessed Virgin had the most penetrating understanding of Scripture and enjoyed the greatest confidence to work miracles. She prophesied when she said, “All generations will call me blessed.” (Lk 1:48) The Spirit was always revealing His mysteries to her, and Jesus shared His secrets with her during his hidden life. John the Evangelist learned about Christ’s divinity and the revelations contained in the Book of Revelation from Mary’s lips. (St. Ambrose)

She discerned good and evil better than any angel or saint. At Pentecost, she received the fullness of the gift of tongues. Filled with every gift, she could easily interpret Scripture with the greatest clarity. These gifts flow from the holiness of Mary’s heart. All should praise the Trinity for bestowing such marvels. O reader, you cannot imitate these sublime gifts but you can admire them.

The Church and Revelations

Although the Spirit of Light works marvelously in certain soul, the spirit of darkness counterfeits these gifts. Therefore, we must obey St. John, “Do not believe every spirit, but discern the spirits to see if they come from God.” (1 Jn 4:1)

Some believe too easily. Others don't believe at all. Avoid both dangerous extremes. Do not accept every revelation and do not reject every one. Do people destroy real money just because some counterfeits exist? Satan has false prophets but God has his chosen mouthpieces. He has promised, "Your sons and your daughters will prophecy." (Joel 2:28)

He leads some saints by ordinary paths and others by the extraordinary ones. Faith, (the highway to eternal life), is built upon divine revelation, the fundamental revelations authorized by the Church. Sometimes, it is wise to withhold approval. However, those investigating revelations must never rely just on themselves. They should seek the Holy Spirit's help and invoke the Mother of Truth. "Do not extinguish the Spirit. Despise not prophecies. Test all things. Hold to what is good." (1 Thes 5:19-21)

(Probably St. John Eudes added these final paragraphs because revelations to a saintly French woman, Mary de Valles were being questioned).

8.8 **HEART OF MARY, INESTIMABLE TREASURY OF RICHES**

Divine goodness has given us four great treasures.

1. The Eucharist contains all that is richest in the saints, the angels, our Blessed Mother, in the humanity and divinity of Jesus, in the divine essence and in the three eternal Persons.
2. Sacred scripture is the heart of God and contains all his mysteries.
3. The relics of the saints are the dowry of the Church's divine spouse.
4. The Admirable Heart of Mary is a treasure of unfathomable riches.

We shall speak about this fourth treasure.

Our Lady and the Trinity

The heart of Mary "is the treasure of the eternal Father's love. He has placed his beloved Son there, where He will dwell forever." (St. Methodius)

Second, her heart is the treasure of God's only Son. He hid there and preserved all his mysteries on earth in her heart. Jesus enriched her heart with all the graces of His mercy. Mary distributes this mercy, "to whom she pleases, when she pleases and as she pleases." (St. Bernard)

Her heart is also the Holy Spirit's treasury. He gave graces to the prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins. He enthroned in Mary's heart all the virtues, the gifts, the fruits and the beatitudes. She is "the most holy treasury of all sanctity." (St. Andrew of Crete)

Her Mercies

She contains all the mercies needed by the Church Militant, “No man is delivered from the snares of Satan except through Mary.” (St. Germanus) Her heart is a treasury of consolation for the Church Suffering. Mary’s charity constantly diminishes the suffering in Purgatory. Every favor from God’s throne passes through her hands. “O Mother of God, you are the most precious treasure of the entire universe.” (St. Cyril of Alexandria)

The Four Treasures

We actually possess four hearts: 1. the adorable heart of the Father (which is Jesus Christ, whom we possess in the Eucharist); 2. the loving heart of Jesus in the relics of the saints; 3. the divine heart of the Holy Spirit in the Sacred Scriptures; 4. the tender heart of our Blessed Mother.

The Three Debts

How rich we are! We have all the means needed to pay our three great debts.

First, we owe a debt to the Holy Trinity. To pay this, we offer all the honor and glory rendered by the hearts of Jesus and of Mary.

Second, we must love God with all our heart, but we are incapable of this. To make up for our deficiency, we offer the heart of Jesus to the Father and the heart of His Blessed Mother to Jesus.

Thirdly, we must satisfy Divine Justice for all our sins and negligences. To pay this debt, we offer the sufferings of the all-perfect hearts of Jesus and Mary and we accept all the sufferings they ask us to bear.

Whenever we have a need, we ask the Father’s help through His Son’s loving heart. We implore the Son’s help through his mother’s heart. In this way, we shall certainly obtain our desire. Do not be sad. We have inestimable riches, contained in our mother’s heart. She loves us more than our own parents. We would die of joy if we realized the treasures stored for us in her heart.

8.9 **HEART OF MARY – SANCTUARY, CENSER AND ALTAR OF DIVINE LOVE**

The hearts of all the angels and saints are sanctuaries of divine love. Our Lord’s heart is the Sanctuary of sanctuaries, glorifying God infinitely. The Blessed Virgin’s heart is the second sanctuary. It was fashioned by the Holy Spirit, never defiled by sin and adorned with every virtue. All the saints and angels abide in her heart where God’s glory exists more than in all material and spiritual sanctuaries of earth and heaven.

Sanctuary and Censer

In her heart, Mary has always offered a perpetual sacrifice, on earth and in heaven. Her sacrifice of praise adores the Blessed Trinity more perfectly than all the angelic hearts.

Her heart is represented by the golden censer, held by the angel of great counsel who always guided Mary's heart. (Rev 8:3) The Lord holds an earthly King in His hand, so He can guide him. How much more He holds the Queen of Heaven?

The angel fills the censer with incense (the prayers of the saints), just as the Son of God filled his mother's heart with the sacred heavenly fire. Jesus places all the saints' prayers in her heart so they are more acceptable to God.

Three Victims

In her heart, Mary offers three victims of love. First, in the Jerusalem temple and on Calvary, she offered her divine Son. Now, she offers him daily in the mass. "Although Mary was not made a priest at the Last Supper, she was anointed with an interior grace to offer a pure host on the altar of her heart." (John Gerson).

Second, she offers herself, imitating her Son who offered Himself to save mankind.

Third, she offers the countless souls who sacrificed themselves in Mary's virginal heart. Our Lady knew that everything in the universe belonged to her. She offered them all in sacrifice because the creature's greatest honor is to sacrifice itself to God's will. In heaven, Mary continually offers these three victims. Mary's heart is at once, the sanctuary, the victim and the priest.

The Altar of Divine Love

Her loving heart is also the altar of divine love on which all these sacrifices are made. "After the sacrifice of Calvary, the greatest sacrifice to God is the sacrifice offered by the Holy Virgin on her heart's altar, where she often sacrificed her Son. On this altar the sacred fire of divine love burns continually." (John Gersen)

The Virgin's heart and Jesus' heart form a single altar, continually offering the same sacrifice. We, too, must offer our sacrifice on that altar.

Filled With Every Blessing

During the First Eucharistic prayer, the priest prays that the sacrifice, "be carried by the hands of your holy angel" so that all who will receive the sacred Body and Blood would be "filled with every heavenly blessing." The priest kisses the altar (a symbol of the hearts of Jesus and Mary) to show the intimate union our hearts must have with theirs.

O heart of Mary, you are the holiest earthly victim. You are the perpetual incense of sacrifice. You are the queen of all who are privileged to offer this sacrifice of the mass. O reader, when at mass, realize that you go to God's altar, the heart of Jesus and Mary. Constantly give yourself to them. Tremble before this holy altar so Mary can immolate your heart in her sanctuary.

8.10 **HEART OF MARY, CENTER OF THE CROSS AND CROWN OF MARTYRS, DOCTORS AND VIRGINS**

Mary's heart is the center of Christ's saving cross, where she experienced such poignant sorrow that she would have died if God had not given extraordinary strength. She is a martyr, suffering more than all the martyrs.

Three Special Martyrs

O Mary, your Son has exalted you as the Queen of martyrs. You gave to each martyr the grace to accept death. They place their crowns at your feet because they owe their triumph to you. I want to cite three special martyrs. John Travers was burned at the stake by King Henry VIII of England. He always prayed to Our Lady for this grace. During his trial, he was asked if he wrote books to defend the papacy. He held up three fingers saying, "I wrote them with these three fingers. After his body was burned, the three fingers remained intact.

St. Andrew of Greece was martyred (1463) by the Mohammedans. He constantly invoked Our Lady. His mangled remains were miraculously restored in the grave and his body was incorrupt. St. James Intercis, a Persian, is remembered because he constantly invoked Our Lady during his extreme tortures.

Three Titles

Mary is Queen of Martyrs. Pray for all who will suffer these pains. Mary is also the teacher of the learned. Invoke her help for those in error and darkness. She is Queen of Virgins. Beg her to impart chastity on your soul.

8.11 **HEART OF MARY, WORLD OF WONDERS**

So many Churches are dedicated to Mary. Many feasts are held in her honor and every Saturday is dedicated to her. So many congregations are named after her and all miracles are worked through her intercession. Every nation in the world has produced books which exalt her and explain her prerogatives.

Centuries of Praise

By all of these, God proclaims His love for Mary. The Holy Spirit has praised her for centuries, beginning with the apostles. In the second century, St. Irenaeus, St. Ignatius and St. Justin Martyr, praised her. In the third century, St. Gregory and St. Athanasius did the same.

I cite the following – St. Augustine (fifth century), St. Fulgentius (Sixth century), Pope St. Gregory the great (Seventh century), St. Germanus (Eighth century). Raymond Jourdian (Ninth century). In the following centuries were St. Anselm of Canterbury, who wrote, “O woman may you always carry me in your heart.”

St. Bernard (twelfth century) explained the symbolism of Mary’s twelve stars. Other writers include St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, Thomas a Kempis and St. Brigid. Trying to gather all that has been written would involve countless volumes.

O Mother, most admirable, these writings show that your heart is the center of all wonders. I praise your virginal heart which has so many titles. I will testify thousands of times that all sublime perfections are yours.

PART NINE

PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

9.1 TWELVE REASONS FOR HONORING THE HEART OF MARY

There are 12 principal motives to honor the heart of Mary:

1. We should love what God loves and honor what honors God. After Jesus’ Sacred Heart, no heart has rendered God such glory as Mary’s admirable heart.
2. The incomparable heart of Mary contains ardent flames of love for Jesus. If you could count all her thoughts, feelings and actions, you would have the number of reasons to praise her heart.
3. All her thoughts, words and actions were directed toward our salvation.
4. Picture Mary’s fasts, prayers, tears, and sufferings which she used to help Jesus in his work of salvation. These add additional obligations to revere her.
5. Her name has been so highly honored. Previously, the Church had the custom that everyone knelt at the name of Mary (Blosius).
6. The Church says daily “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nourished you.” (Lk 11:27) We can never forget the womb that bore the Son of God.

7. All the hearts of believers are temples of Jesus Christ. Jesus, himself, assures us that the Father, Son and Spirit live within all who love God. Certainly the Trinity dwells more fully in Mary's heart than in any other.
8. The evangelists gave us written records of the Redeemer. How much more we owe to Mary who gave us the Redeemer himself?
9. We sinners have pierced Mary's heart a thousand times with our innumerable sins. Are we not obliged to make reparation for her anguish.
10. Mary's heart is the perfect image of the Sacred Heart and the model for us. "The greatest devotion is to imitate what we honor." (St. Augustine) By engraving her image on our hearts, we become her worthy children.
11. Her heart is not just our model. It is the sovereign ruler of our hearts. Imitating her is not enough. We must give her homage as our sovereign.
12. Consider all her virtues, attributes and perfections. That is the number of reasons to honor her heart.

9.2 **TWELVE METHODS OF PRACTICING THIS DEVOTION**

Having seen the many reasons for honoring this admirable heart, let us study the twelve suitable methods of fulfilling this obligation.

1. Zealous for our salvation, Mary says, "Son, give me your heart." (Pr 23:26) and "Be converted to me with all your heart." (Joe 2:12) In Baptism, we promised to renounce Satan, his sins and his enticement.

To be completely converted to God, we must use the passions of our heart for God's glory. For example, our love must be directed to God's interests, our hatred toward all that leads to sin, and our fear only to offending God. Let nothing sadden us except our sins and let our only joy be in serving God.

2. Keep in your heart the feelings in Mary's heart:
 - a. hate every kind of sin
 - b. scorn the world's superficial charms
 - c. humble yourself
 - d. esteem the things of God and the Church
 - e. love the cross and sufferings. "My brothers, count it pure joy to encounter every kind of trial." (James 1:2) "I glory only in the cross." (Gal 6:14)

3. Implant in your heart a lively image of each of Mary's virtues – her meekness, humility, devotion, patience and faithfulness.
4. Ask her to take complete possession of your heart so she can fill you with supernatural desires and mold it according to Jesus' heart.
5. Assist the poor. Protect the helpless. Visit the infirm. All these acts please the Mother of Grace.
6. Seek the salvation of all. This is the greatest joy we can offer to her. All the angels rejoice when a sinner returns. How much more the Queen of Angels takes joy in one soul returning.
7. Cultivate a special devotion to those saints who enjoyed a unique relationship with Mary's heart (including the author – St. John Eudes, feast day August 19th).
8. Make a careful study of Mary's heart so you can imitate her virtues.
9. Perform all your actions with dispositions of Mary's heart. At the beginning of each activity give yourself to Mary, so all things are done in her holy dispositions.
10. Honor daily the sovereign Lady of the Universe by saying the Hail Mary. This is highly pleasing to her.
11. In all of your difficulties, have recourse to Mary's heart. Use it as your refuge and fortress. Mary's heart is "the comfort of our exile". Her wisdom understands all our needs. Her strength fights all our foes. Her heart contains all power. Her hands distribute every treasure, "to whomever she wills, whenever she wills and however she wills." (St. Bernard).
12. Always celebrate her feats with devotion, especially December 8th (when the Almighty God fashioned her Immaculate Heart), her Nativity (September 8th), her Presentation in the Temple (November 21), her Annunciation (March 25), her Visitation (May 30), Christmas, and her Purification (February 2nd).

To these 12 practices add daily meditation on her virtues to motivate yourself to love her.

PART TEN

AN EXPOSITION OF THE MAGNIFICAT, THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

10.1 EXCELLENCE OF THE MAGNIFICAT

After Elizabeth said, "Blessed are you who have believed the Lord's words to you would be fulfilled", Mary sang her Magnificat.

Many saintly women sang inspired canticles. Scripture records the songs of Mary (the sister of Moses), Deborah (one of the judges of Israel), Judith and Anna (mother of Samuel). However, because of the holiness of its author and the mysteries it contains, the Magnificat is the greatest canticle.

The Power of the Magnificat

Mary prayed the Magnificat after the Spirit's sanctifying action upon John the Baptist and Elizabeth. During the centuries, this song has cast out demons and performed miracles.

Although Our Lady only sang this canticle in public once, she recited it privately on numerous occasions. Some writers report that Our Lady has appeared in churches at the Evening prayer (when the Magnificat is sung publicly). As you sing Mary's song, surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit.

10.2 **THE TRUE CANTICLE OF MARY'S HEART**

The Magnificat is the true canticle of Mary's heart for 4 reasons.

1. This song originated in her Immaculate Heart.
2. Her bodily heart, filled with joy, compelled her lips to sing with extraordinary jubilation. Her spiritual heart, enraptured by God, brought forth ecstatic words, "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." Her divine heart, (the divine child hidden in her womb), is the real author of this canticle. He inspired the thoughts and pronounced its prophecies through her lips.
3. This canticle comes from the heart of the Holy Spirit, who possesses Mary and sanctifies Elizabeth, Zachary and John.
4. Divine love inflamed her and inspired these words, which "are like so many flames of love darting from the furnace burning in the Immaculate Heart." (St. Bernardine)

O virginal canticle, your origin lies in Jesus and in the Holy Spirit. Only Mary's lips could pronounce this message. Although the angels are unworthy to do so, we sinners can repeat these words. What veneration we must have! What purity of tongue and holiness of lips are needed. What flames the song should enkindle.

O Mother, share with us the holiness with which you sang this canticle. May we sing this canticle for all eternity so we can thank you for all your wonders.

10.3 MY SOUL DOES MAGNIFY THE LORD

We will consider each part so we can magnify God for His great blessings upon our heavenly mother.

God's Fullness

What does it mean to magnify God? How can we magnify Someone who is infinite?

Even God cannot make Himself greater than He already is. His divine perfections are infinite and cannot increase in themselves. However, we can magnify God in ourselves. "Every soul can conceive the eternal Word by faith, can engender God in others by preaching, and magnify the Creator by loving Him. To magnify the Lord is to exalt His infinite excellence." (St. Augustine).

We magnify God by esteeming Him, by loving Him with all our hearts, by adoring His infinite wisdom, by performing our actions for His glory, by humbling ourselves, by carrying our cross, by accepting our suffering and by exalting Him in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Unfortunately, we do the opposite. We lower God by choosing creatures instead of Him we seek our own will instead of His interests. O holy Virgin, you were different. You exalted God from the beginning of your life to its end, in all your thoughts and affections and in your interior and exterior senses.

What is "My Soul" ?

Our Lady does not say "I" but "My soul". This shows that she exalts God from the utmost depths of her heart. She uses all her faculties – imagination, memory, intellect and will. She exhausts all her powers in praise. She exalts God for all creatures and for all graces ever given to man.

What is this "soul" that the Virgin calls her own? One author teaches that her soul is Jesus Christ. The word pertains first to Mary's natural soul that gives life to her body. Second, it refers to the soul of Jesus, whom she is carrying in her womb. (In a sense, they form a single soul). Also, it means all created souls who have ever been or will be. Mary is well aware when God gave Christ to her, he gave her everything. She knows her sacred obligation to use every gift for God's honor. In saying, "My soul magnifies the Lord" she speaks for all souls and uses them to exalt Christ.

Magnifying the Lord

Our Lady magnifies "the Lord". This Lord of Lords, is the Father, Son and Spirit Who have a single essence. She exalts the Father for sharing with her His divine paternity. She magnifies the Son for choosing her as His mother. She praises the Holy Spirit who accomplished this work in her. She magnifies them all for the infinite graces They have given to her and will give to mankind.

Let us imitate the Virgin, saying often, "My soul does magnify the Lord." We must praise God with all our strength to unite all souls into the one great heart of Jesus.

10.4 MY SPIRIT HAS REJOICED IN GOD, MY SAVIOUR

These words reveal the incomprehensible joy which completely enraptured Mary from the moment she conceived Jesus until the end of her life. Her body would have left her soul if God had not miraculously kept her alive. History recounts people who died of joy at receiving some news. How much greater was Mary's joy to see herself as God's inexpressible choice to be His mother.

Reasons For Rejoicing

She rejoiced in God, Who is infinitely good and merciful. She rejoiced in the Saviour who redeemed her by preserving her from original sin and made her the mediatrix in saving all mankind. She rejoiced because God took His greatest pleasure in her humility. "Mary rejoiced because God loved her humility." (St. Augustine). She rejoiced because of God's greatest wonders in her, greater than all the preceding centuries and the ones that would follow. She rejoiced in God's favors to the humble and in His justice toward the proud.

A Complete Delight

Mary delighted completely in God, because she saw the countless millions who would have a special love for her and would be numbered among the predestined. This inconceivable joy brings forth her shout, "My spirit rejoices." (St. Antonius)

This mother loves her children as if they were her own spirit. "I exhort you to love our Blessed Lady so you are safeguarded from all dangers and temptations. Cultivate a special veneration in order to find comfort and never to be overcome. She is a tender mother, who despises no one. She never ignores those who seek her aid. She desires only to place God's graces at the disposal of sinners. Love her and you will be chaste. Honor her and you will be devout. Imitate her and you will be holy. (St. Bernard)

Snatching Sinners From Hell

"No one who loves her can perish. All who imitate her gain eternal life. She has taken into her arms many sinners, with one foot in hell, and led them to goodness. She snatched them from the Evil One and placed them on the road to paradise. Jesus gave her power to gain penance for the sinner, grace for her followers, and glory for those who imitate her." (Lanspergius the Carthusian).

Mary's Ecstasy

When Mary conceived Jesus, God filled her with the joys of the heavenly saints. He took her to the third heaven where she saw God face to face. St. Paul, while still on earth, was lifted to the third heaven and saw God's essence. Did not God's mother enjoy this privilege on many occasions? (cf St. Bernard, St. Albert and St. Antonius). "O Mother, a torrent of heavenly delights burst upon you, inebriated you, and made you experience what no eye has ever seen." (Abbot Rupert)

Peace of God

The children of this world believe, (quite erroneously), that earth holds only afflictions for those who serve God. This hateful delusion comes from the Father of Lies. Paul wrote “Tribulation comes upon all who do evil, but glory and peace to all who do good.” (Rom 2:9-10)

The heart of a sinful person is an always-agitated sea. “The wicked are like a raging sea.” (Is 57:20) but the fear of God changes our hearts into joy. “The fear of the Lord shall give joy and length of days.” (Sirach 1:12) Paul was filled with joy amid all his tribulations. (2 Cor 7:4)

To “Taste and see the goodness of the Lord” (Ps 34:9) you must renounce the misleading delights of this world. O Virgin, give us a detachment from the false pleasures of earth. Help us to seek our happiness in honoring your Son and yourself with all our heart.

10.5 **HE HAS REGARDED THE HUMILITY OF HIS HANDMAID**

Humility is the only virtue that never becomes aware of itself. In her lowliness, Mary knew the blessings bestowed by God but returned all glory to Him. Mary lowered herself, and God exalted her. “Mary’s humility is the heavenly ladder by which God descended to earth. God saw and approved this humility. Many times, people seem humble but they seek men’s praises and not God’s approval.” (St. Augustine)

Two Kinds of Humility

“There are two kinds of humility. The first is cold and consists of knowledge. The second is warm and consists of love. We learn the first from our sinfulness. We learn the second from Jesus Christ who fled earthly glory and accepted death”. (St. Bernard)

Why would God regard Our Lady’s humility rather than her other virtues? “Because it was more pleasing to him than any of her other virtues.” (St. Albert the Great) “Virginity is praiseworthy but humility is necessary for salvation. Without humility, even Mary’s purity would not have pleased God and the Holy Spirit could not have descended on her. She pleased God by her virginity but conceived God’s Son by her humility. Her humility made her virginity pleasing to God.” (St. Bernard)

Source of Divine Favors

O humility, you have given us a God-Man and a Mother of God. You are the source of all the divine favors which we have on earth and which we hope to have in heaven. You destroy all evil and bring forth all good. We should esteem you and use every means to gain you.

A person without humility has nothing. A soul with humility possesses everything. The Word became Flesh to teach us humility. “O eternal God, Our Saviour took flesh and died, so we might imitate his example of humility.” (Prayer on Palm Sunday) “What the devil destroyed by pride, the Saviour regained by humility.” O Mary, you have crushed the proud head of Satan. Crush pride in our hearts and share fully with us the humility which led the Trinity to make you the Mother of the Saviour.

10.6 **“FROM NOW ON ALL GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME BLESSED”**

These words contain one of the greatest prophecies ever spoken. They announce the infinite blessings which God will accomplish everywhere in the world, so that every age honors Mary.

All Call Her Blessed

The Father sent the Archangel Gabriel, the prince of His empire, as an ambassador to tell Mary that she was full of grace. This exalts her above all the angels. He makes her the most blessed among women and gives her powers surpassing all the powers of heaven and earth. The Son of God proclaims her as blessed among all the nations. The Holy Spirit chooses her as His worthy spouse and makes her the Queen of all saints.

All the angels, upon seeing her assumed into heaven, wonder, “Who is she?” After adoring God, they proclaim unending praises to their Queen. The Church perpetually says, “Blessed is the womb that bore the Saviour and the breasts which nourished Him.” Our Lady told St. Brigid that she eases every pain in purgatory and that these souls gain their freedom through her intercession. Even the souls who died before Christ were blessed by Mary. She gave them the redeemer to set them free.

The demons rage against her, but how many times she snatches a soul from their grasp? This is her inconceivable charity toward them. When Mary’s name is pronounced, the devils must leave their prey and return to hell. Thus all generations, angels, saints, souls in purgatory, lost souls and even the demons fulfill these words, “All generations shall call me blessed.”

All the World

Finally, every person in every country in the world must proclaim that the Mother of the Saviour is the most blessed, powerful and admirable of all creatures because she thinks only of blessing the world and making everyone a sharer in her heavenly glory.

“O Mary, you are blessed because you believe, because you are full of grace, because God has done great things in you, because you are both a mother and a virgin, and because no creature is your equal.” (Gerson)

“Who does not admire and love you? You are our firm hope, our vigilant guardian, our strongest defense, the treasure of our joy, the garden of our delight, the port for those in danger, the salvation of the lost, and the source of every good. O Queen of Heaven, your praises are sung everywhere in the world.” (St. Germanus)

May this divine prophecy be fulfilled more and more. May every beat of my heart be a continual voice proclaiming you blessed. O blessed Mother, temple of the Lord, you have no rival in pleasing the Lord. Pray for your people!

10.7 **HE THAT IS MIGHTY HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME**

In this verse, Our Lady reveals why all generations will call her blessed. What are the great things? The saints explain this mystery. “It is a great thing for a virgin to become a mother, for her to carry the Word of God in her womb and to clothe Him with her own flesh. The handmaid of the Lord has become His mother.” (St. Augustine)

“It is a great thing to create the heavens and the earth, to bring down manna from heaven, and to give the Israelites their Promised Land. It is great to give sight to the blind, to drive out demons, to cure the sick and to restore the dead. However, the Spirit overshadowing Mary to form the Word made Flesh surpasses all of these.” (St. Antoninus)

“God elevated Mary so high, that men and angels cannot even see her. He transformed a daughter of Eve into His own Mother. She brought forth a new prodigy, a God who became man. This is the miracle of miracles.” (St. Thomas of Villanova)

Surpassing All Wonders

“All the wonders witnessed on earth, the parting of the Red Sea, the burning bush, little Moses lying in a basket, the column of fire that guided the Israelites, the manna sent from heaven, the sun which halted at Josue’s command, and Elijah restoring the dead child, are as nothing compared to God coming into Mary’s womb, the virgin bringing forth a child, the King of heaven lying in a manger, the divine fire enclosed in a tiny cloud to guide the world, the Word descending from heaven, a God annihilating himself, the Father restoring His Son after three days in the tomb and Jesus ascending to the very throne of God.” (St. Thomas of Villanova)

God’s Exhaltation

“I no longer admire the construction of the world, the stability of the earth, the order of the days, or the course of the sun because I admire a God made man in a virgin’s womb.” (St. Cyprian)

“God could have made a larger earth, a more vast sky and a more brilliant sun but he cannot make a mother greater than the Mother of God. To do so, he would need a more excellent Son.” (St. Bonaventure)

God exalted this virgin so high that she returned greater gifts to God than what she had been given. Although Mary was finite, the Queen of Heaven gave birth to the Lord. Although she was God’s creature, she allowed God to be Emmanuel (God with us). She allowed Him as man to possess all power on earth, to be universal Judge, to sit at the Father’s right hand, and to forgive sins. If Jesus gave the apostles the power to do works greater than His (cf Jn 14:12) He certainly allowed His mother to give him greater gifts than those she received.

Admiring These Great Things

Who will not admire these “great things” which the Father has done? What a miracle to be a virgin and the Mother of God, to be clothed with virtue by the Most High, to partake of God’s fecundity, to give birth in time to Someone born before time began, to give life to Him who gave her life and to be the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

These are the marvelous things which God has done. Although the Virgin Mary was great and holy, she humbled herself as the lowliest person. It is a great thing to be a virgin and the Mother of God, but it is greater that Mary considers herself as nothing.

Furthermore, Mary uses all her powers and privileges to help the sinner (if he just asks). “All power is given to her. Nothing is impossible. She can restore hope to the most despairing sinner.” (St. Peter Damian) “O Mary, because the almighty Lord is with you, you are most powerful through and in God.” (St. Bonaventure)

O benign Virgin, I give God infinite thanks for making you so great, and I ask you to destroy in me whatever displeases God and to establish His perfect reign in me.

Six Mysteries Contained in the Words, “And Holy is His Name”

These words contain six mysteries.

1. The mystery of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary to form his masterpiece.
2. The mystery of the holy humanity of the Divine Infant, which is sanctified by His union with the Trinity. “He will be called the Son of God.” (Lk 1:35)
3. The mystery of this sanctified Infant glorifying the Trinity as It deserves.
4. The mystery of the infant anointed with the divinity and consecrated as Saviour and Sanctifier, who immediately sanctifies both Elizabeth and John the Baptist.
5. The mystery of the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary and accomplishing the holiest work ever done. Jesus, by His conception, overwhelms His mother with an ocean of inconceivable holiness.
6. The mystery of the Word becoming flesh, the most inexhaustible fountain of holiness that will ever exist.

How many wonders are contained in these few words pronounced by the mother of the Saint of Saints.

10-8 **HIS MERCY IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, TO THOSE THAT FEAR HIM**

We come to the second part of the Canticle. Having magnified God and proclaimed that all generations would call her blessed, Our Lady gives another prophecy and proclaims God’s mercy is from generation to generation.

This mercy “is our bountiful Saviour” (St. Augustine). David begged God, “Show us, O Lord, your mercy and grant us your salvation.” (Ps 85:8) “God is always ready to save by His mercy those whom He cannot save by justice. However, we turn our back even on His mercy.”

(St. Jerome). Peter wrote “He has saved us according to His mercy.” (1 Pt 1:3) All of God’s mercy, (from the beginning until the end of time), comes through Jesus Christ.

Three Elements

Mercy has three parts. First, it takes pity on others. Second, it desires to help the outcast. Third, it puts these desires into action. Let us examine these three parts. First, Our Lord was filled with pity and carried us in His heart. He kept His eyes on our misfortunes and tribulations, realizing all that we would suffer to the end of time. Although this tender love caused Him countless deaths, His love was stronger than death.

Secondly, all our tribulations were before his eyes and he always wanted to free us. Jesus did this even though he foresaw our ingratitude. Even our sins could not dampen His ardor.

Thirdly, our Redeemer did everything possible to save us from eternal suffering. His actions, His trials, His sacrifices, fasts, vigils, and especially His cruel death, were to free us from evil and give us an eternal empire. O my Savior, you are a God of mercy. O my human heart, what shall you love if you do not love Jesus Christ.

On Those Who fear Him

“From generation to generations, to them that fear Him” means that our Savior pours His mercy upon those who fear Him. God experiences a sovereign pleasure in bestowing blessings upon His children. “Divine mercy belongs to the Trinity but is particularly attributed to the Son because the Incarnate Lord delivered us from the torments of hell and acquired an eternal empire.” (St. Bernard)

In this great work of mercy, Our Lord decided to associate His mother. “It is not good for man to be alone.” (Gen 2:18) and Christ chose His helpmate. The Father gave Him Mary to cooperate in saving the world.

St. Catherine’s Description

In 1379, St. Catherine of Sienna called Our Lady, “Bearer of Fire, Peaceful Ocean, Fiery Chariot and Administrator of Mercy.” She is bearer of fire because she carried Him who cast the fires of love upon mankind; Peaceful Ocean because her sea of grace is always calm and peaceful, transporting all to eternal salvation; Fiery Chariot because inflamed with love for her children and with terror to all demons. Her followers will ascend to Paradise in a fiery chariot; Administrator of Mercy because with extraordinary kindness and unparalleled power she will comfort all who have recourse to her. She continually does this for the whole world “Heaven and earth would long ago have been reduced to nothing if Mary had not prayed.” (St. Fulgentius)

Let us acknowledge her as the Mother of Mercy because her Son shared with her His works of clemency. May all the saints and angels sing forever of your mercy.

10.9 **HE HAS SHOWN POWER IN HIS ARM**

Having praised the Saviour's mercy, our mother now exalts God's divine might. What arm does God use? All the saints say that Jesus Christ is the arm of the Father because man performs his deeds with his arms. "Just as man's arms extend his body, so the Son of God extends the power of the Father." (St. Albert the Great)

Jesus Christ

"He has shown His might" means that God has created all things through Jesus, who has redeemed the world, vanquished the devil, opened heaven to us and performed numberless miracles. What a miracle. Two natures, divine and human, (infinitely removed from each other), are united in one Person, coming forth from a virgin. What a miracle! God makes woman the Queen of Heaven.

Sometimes, God's works are attributed to his hands and his fingers. "The heavens are the work of your hands." (Ps 9:4) The miracles for Moses are "done by the finger of God" (Ex 8:19) But the incomparable work of the Word becoming flesh is attributed to God's arm because it surpasses all His other works.

The Saints Say

"Perfect God becomes perfect man. He is the only new being that has ever appeared or can appear. In him, the infinite power of God is more manifest than in any other part of the universe. What is greater to behold than God made man?" (St. John Damascene)

"How good is this child who wills to become the son of Mary. What a dignity for Mary to have both the fruit of fertility and the flower of virginity. The Son of God "descends like rain upon the fleece." (Ps 72:6) Where does He descend? Into the virginal womb of Mary." (Richard of St. Victor)

"Sing to the Lord a new song because he has done wonderful things." (Ps 98:1) "These wonderful things are God becoming man through a virgin, delivering up His Son for sinners, giving the Judge over to criminals and the Innocent to the evil ones." (Cardinal Hajues)

God's shows His greatest might in destroying sin. The Church prays, "O God you show your greatest power in forgiving us our sins." Sin offends God so much that only infinite might can forgive it and only the Almighty's arm can crush it. His might is also shown in the strength given to martyrs and to all who suffer extraordinary afflictions with great patience.

This is a brief summary of the countless miracles performed by God's arm. Our Lord performs these deeds daily for His Father's glory and His mother's honor.

10.10 **HE HAS SCATTERED THE PROUD IN THE CONCEIT OF THEIR HEART**

Who are these proud persons? They include the rebellious angels cast out of heaven, the biblical enemies of Israel (like Pharaoh), the demons driven out by Jesus, those who scorned Jesus' teachings, sinners who rebel against the divine will and to all who are dominated by pride. The proud are princes, wise men, and tyrants who opposed the preaching of the gospel. The words extend from the beginning until the end of time.

“God destroyed the proud by a secret determination that he would become man and redeem the guilty. The devil could never discover this secret decision.” (St. Augustine) Other writers say “God exterminated those with high esteem for themselves” and “He scattered their inner thoughts and resolutions.”

Using Their Own Arrows

By her words, Mary revealed that God annihilates evil thoughts and turns proud thoughts into confusion for His own glory and for the holiness of those who serve Him. God uses their own weapons and turns their own arrows against them. He uses their plans to fulfill His own. Their evil leads to the advantage of God’s friends.

The Church says, “O happy fault that merited so great a redeemer.” Adam’s sin merited the great gift of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, Joseph’s brothers’ envy led to Joseph’s gaining power in Egypt. Did not Pharaoh’s cruelty towards the Israelites, lead to the miracles of the Red Sea?

Christ’s enemies thought, “Let his name be remembered not more.” (Jer 11:19) Although they tried to nullify God’s work, God used their evil plans to redeem the world. Have not tyrants tried to destroy the Church and ended up creating hundreds of martyrs?

Destroying The Proud

Concerning King Herod, St. Augustine said, “The cruelty of Herod was more profitable to these Holy Innocents than all the friendships and favors given by others.” The all powerful arm of Jesus Christ overturns the undertakings of the proud.

The proud are destroyed by the Virgin’s humble heart which attracted the Eternal Word. She stamps out our own pride for she is “the glory of Jerusalem (the angels) and the joy of Israel.” (mankind) (Judith 15:10) This glory of Jerusalem is the voice of the angels and the joy of Israel is the happiness of mankind.

O humility of Mary, you are the source of all blessings. O pride, you are the source of all evils. O my queen, make this virtue reign within us for God’s glory.

10-22. **HE HAS PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY FROM THEIR THRONES AND HAS EXALTED THE LOWLY**

When the moment came for the Father to redeem mankind, He chose an instrument which seemingly had no capacity for this mighty work. He sent His Son in the weakness of mortal flesh and He became “the most abject of men.”

He wanted His eternal Son to be born of a woman who was humble in her own eyes, and saw herself as the lowliest of all creatures. Wishing to find coworkers for His Son, the Father chose fishermen with no learning or eloquence and He sent them forth to establish a worldwide religion.

Surprising Results

When they went forth, how were they received? Everyone rose up against them. Men used every effort to oppose the gospel. The disciples were cast into prison, suffered the worst atrocities and killed.

What happened? They triumphed gloriously. They overturned the idols of hell and established Christianity. They became masters of the world. "You will make them princes over all the earth." (45:17) God overturned the thrones of kings and the pulpits of philosophers. He gave the Kingdom to fishermen. All of this fulfilled the virgin's prophecy "He has put down the mighty and exalted the lowly". This will happen until the end of the world.

Biblical Examples

Did not God humble Saul and exalt David? Did He not destroy Vasthi and exalt Esther? Did not Our Lord deliver us from the demons who ruled the earth? Did He not replace the pagan emperor, Diocletian, with the Christian emperor, Constantine? Did he not replace the high priests with fishermen?

Peter writes, "Be humbled under God's mighty hand, that he may exalt you." (1 Pt 5:6) Christ always acts this way. The anti-Christ lifts himself up above God but "The Lord Jesus shall kill him with the breath of his mouth." (2 Th2:4), casting him into hell. O humble Queen, extinguish my arrogance and place humility in my heart so I can resemble the heavenly Father.

10.12 **HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS, AND THE RICH HE HAS SENT AWAY EMPTY**

Some say that these words refer to the angels, both good and bad. The good angels are hungry because they return all things to God and keep only their nothingness. They pass from grace into the glory of the blessed eternity. The bad angels, seeing the excellence given to them by God, seek self-satisfaction and glorify themselves. Their pride and arrogance force God to strip away their brilliance and reduce them to barrenness in the depths of hell.

Applying These Words

Others refer these words to the Gentiles who accepted the gospel. Before Christ, the Gentiles had lived in total spiritual poverty. By embracing Christ, they obtained inconceivable treasures. The Chosen People were rejected their Savior and lost their favors.

Other writers apply these words to the good people in the Old Testament who were filled with grace because they had an insatiable hunger for the coming of the Redeemer. On the other hand, the Pharisees, convinced of their own wealth, scorned the graces offered by God's Son and lost their faith.

Because the Blessed Virgin's love was intense, her hunger was much greater than the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs. Therefore, the ardently sought Saviour overwhelmed Mary with infinite, inconceivable blessings during the nine months he lived in her womb. He continued to pour out graces whenever she received Holy Communion. "The humble realize that they are nothing and stand in extreme need of heaven's help. The proud see themselves as filled with virtues. So, God must bless the humble and deprive the proud." (St. Augustine)

Poverty

These words also refer to the poor of heart who are detached from this world's goods. They embrace poverty because Jesus Christ was poor. Those who voluntarily choose a state of poverty imitate the Saviour who said, "The foxes have their lairs and the birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Mt 8:20) How blessed is this voluntary poverty and how dangerous is having worldly wealth. "Woe to you rich for you have your consolation." (Lk 6:24) "They that become rich fall into temptation and a snare of the devil." (1 Tim 6:9) Set aside the false riches and love the wealth of heaven.

The Salvation of Others

"Those who hunger" are those who seek the salvation of others. Our Lady prophesies this work until the end of the world. In the Old Testament, King David prophesies that all the kings of the world will adore the Messiah King, that all tribes will be blessed in Him and all generations will glorify His name. The Father promises His Son this inheritance of all the nations. (Ps 2) "Let all the earth sing a psalm to your name." (Ps 66:4) Every day, the Church wants her priests to celebrate mass for the world's salvation.

World Wide Conversions

St. Paul promised that after the conversion of the Jews, the whole world will be converted. God refuses His grace to no one. He said to St. Brigid, "The time will come when there will be one fold, one shepherd and one faith, when God will be known by all." And "Pagans will have such a great devotion that Christians will help them spiritually. The scriptures will be fulfilled "The People that knew me not will glorify Me." All the world will say, "Glory to the Father, Son and Spirit and all honor to the saints."

The Fathers agree. After the death of the anti-Christ, the whole world will be converted. Many saints have predicted this ultimate, universal conversion when we will see Our Lady's prophecy fulfilled. "He filled the hungry with good things." Even if not all are converted, those who hunger for God will enjoy a great feast, be overwhelmed with inconceivable happiness, see the Saviour and His mother honored throughout the world. They will also see the demons lose all hold upon souls, thus fulfilling the words, "He sent the rich away empty". Those who hunger for God's glory will enjoy a magnificent feast, overwhelmed with joy in seeing God and His mother so honored and the demons dispossessed of the souls which they hold captive.

This prophecy is fulfilled in heaven where the hunger of all the saints will be satisfied. The psalm says, "I will be satisfied when your glory appears." (17:15) No mind can conceive the blessings which God will shower upon the saints. O Mother of Mercy, hasten this time of worldwide conversion, so necessary for the salvation of souls who perish daily. Ask your Son to have pity on them because of the precious Blood that he shed.

10.13 **HE HAS RECEIVED ISRAEL AS HIS SERVANT**

God made angels in heaven and men on earth. Both revolted against their Creator. The angel's pride was so enormous that Divine Justice sent them to hell. Man was different. Because he was seduced into sin, God promised a Saviour. However, this gift was delayed by man's many sins. During this time, mankind was plunged into an abyss of darkness, always more and more engulfed in evil.

Remembering His Promise

God was known only in Judea. All other nations were clouded in darkness and oppressed by Satan. Moses' law revealed sin but could not cure it. Seemingly, God had abandoned the human race. His mercy was hidden. His anger had swallowed up His enemies in the Red sea and fire from heaven had reduced cities to rubble. Suddenly, God remembered His promise to Adam, Abraham and David. He, himself, descended from heaven and united human nature to His Person to save all who are true Israelites.

Mary concludes her Canticle saying, "He has remembered Israel, his servant, mindful of her mercies." This means, "Here is the fulfillment of the prophecies. This is why I sing to my God and rejoice in my Saviour. This is why the nations are blessed and why God's mercies are poured out in every generation. The humble are exalted and the proud ruined because, "He has remembered Israel his servant."

Israel, the Servant

Israel refers to the whole human race, for the Word united Himself to a humanity. The word "servant" (Puer) has two meanings. First, it means a child, an infant. Jesus makes us children of God. Second, it means servant, "He emptied himself and took the form of a servant." (Phil 2:7) Jesus came to serve. O Savior, you became a slave to free us and make us God's children. You call us friends and make us co-heirs. You go even further. You are the spouse of our souls, sharing all your riches with us. You go further. You are our Head and we your members. You give us your Spirit and your life, so we become one with the Father. You prayed, "That they might be one in Us." (Jn 17:21) "You have loved them even as you loved me." (Jn 17:23)

O Jesus, You will give us the same Kingdom and have us feast at the same table. You will seat us on thrones and make us enjoy your Spirit and life. Should not these gifts soften the hard human heart? If we do not love You, whom shall we love?

Mary – The Cause of Blessings

What is the primary cause of these infinite blessings? The Virgin says "You have remembered your mercies." In receiving God's mercy, which we are indebted to Mary's maternal heart. What else brought the Divine Word from the Father's bosom? O Mary, your profound humility gave forth such a sweetness that it attracted God to descend from heaven to redeem the world. "While the King was sleeping, my perfume sent forth its odor." (Song 1:11)

O Mary, how many prayers, sacrifices and petitions you sent to heaven to have the Word become flesh. After divine mercy, it is your humility and zeal that brought about the Word made flesh. May the angels and saints always sing a canticle of gratitude for what they owe to you.

10.14 **AS HE SPOKE TO OUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM AND TO HIS CHILDREN FOREVER**

God is faithful and true, infinitely powerful in overcoming all obstacles to His promises and infinitely wise in fulfilling them at the proper time.

God's Fidelity

Men are quick to promise but their promises often come to nothing. God has only one Word (Jn 1:1) and through this Word, He made all things and preserves all things. (Heb 1:3) God accomplishes even more than He promised. He promised Abraham a son and gave him countless sons. He promised to withdraw mankind from darkness and to free from Satan. Instead, He Himself descended from heaven to make us children of God.

The Blessed Virgin includes all of God's promises in the phrase, "As He spoke to Abraham and to his seed forever." Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad." (Jn 8:56) By revelation, Abraham had seen Jesus saving the world.

Earthly and Heavenly Promises

Seeing God fulfill some of His promises, gives us with infallible assurance that He will keep all of them. There are two kinds. Some promises pertain to earth and others to the life to come. On earth, God promises to preserve us from evil. "No evil shall happen to those who fear the Lord." (Sir 33:1) and that "All things work together for good for those who love God." (Rom 8:28) He promises to know our every act of service. "He has numbered my steps." (Job 14:16) and "He cherishes our works as the apple of His eye." (Sir 17:18)

His promises extend also to heaven. He promises to raise our bodies and to clothe them with immortality, making them like a "body in glory." (Phil 3:21) He promises that we will dwell with Him in heaven, "Where I am, they also may be." (Jn 17:24) He promises to make us kings and co-heirs (Rom 8:17), to give us his own glory. (Jn 17:22) We will live with the angels (Mt 24:47), dine at his table (Lk 22:30), sit on his throne (Rev 3:21) and share in his nature (2 Pet 1:4). How can God fulfill such wonders? He will do this just "As He spoke to Our Fathers."

O Christian, how holy is your call and how exalted your state! How can your heart remain cold amid God's flames of love? How fearful the furnace of hell if you despise God's promises and trample on His commandments. O God, I wish to love you from pure love. Take complete possession of my heart.

Faithful Virgin

Our Lady has revealed her three favorite titles, "Mother most amiable", "Mother most Admirable", and "Virgin Most Faithful". Concerning her fidelity, Mary calls everyone, saints

and sinners, because she seeks everyone's salvation. The Spirit says, "Come to me all who desire me." (Sir 24:26)

God has given her all power and the greatest tenderness. Mary has given her life to Christ, the head. She will also give herself to His members. She guides us everywhere, comforts us in all sorrows, and defends us from every enemy. She lights the darkness and protects in temptations, especially at the hour of death. After our death, she will receive our souls and present them to Jesus.

She says, "Blessed is the man who hears me." (Prov 8:34) She wants us to follow her road of charity, humility and purity. "Blessed are they who keep my ways." (Pr 8:32) About her Son, she says "Do whatever He tells you." (Jn 2:5) Jesus and Mary love all who love them and will infallibly fulfill all of their promises.

O Jesus, you willed to be Mary's Son and to accept us as her children. Help us to love her with your heart and to love You with her heart.

CONSECRATION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

O ever Immaculate Heart of Mary, you are the image of Jesus Christ's adorable heart where mercy and justice are joined and where peace between heaven and earth began. You experienced our miseries and suffered for our salvation. You have merited the love of all men. Please accept my little tribute of love.

I thank you for your feeling of love and mercy toward me. I thank you for all your gifts. I unite with all those pure souls who honor you. They have learned from the Holy Spirit to go to Jesus Christ through you.

From now on, I will venerate your most loving heart. You will be the way that I walk to my Saviour and the way that His mercy will come to me. You shall be my refuge, my consolation and my teacher of every virtue.

I presume to offer you my heart, sullied by thousands of sins. I know you will not despise it. May it be purified from every creature and penetrated with sorrow for sins. Fill it with the love of Jesus' heart so I might love God forever. Amen.