

Volume 4, No. 1



Jan. - Mar. 2017

TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

A Quarterly Marian Magazine



Montfort Marian Centre, Bengaluru

A statue of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, a French Catholic priest and mystic, is shown on the left side of the image. He is depicted in a light-colored, possibly white or cream, robe with a sash. His right arm is raised in a gesture of blessing or invitation, with his index finger pointing upwards. His left arm is bent, and he holds a small, ornate cross. The background is a vibrant, abstract design with shades of blue and green, featuring geometric shapes and a sense of movement.

God Alone

*We
Montfortians
in India are happy
to invite you
to participate
in our mission
and*

**TO BE PART OF US TO SERVE THE LORD AND OUR
BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE WORLD IN THE SPIRIT
OF OUR FOUNDER ST. LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT**

**DO YOU DESIRE TO ANSWER THE CALL OF THE LORD
BY BEING A MONTFORT RELIGIOUS PRIEST?**

CONTACT US :

**Our address : Vocation Director : Guru Mandir, 22, Lalithamahal Road
Siddarthangar P.O., Mysore - 570 011, Karnataka Tel : 0821-227912**

Provincial House : Adarsh Bhavan, 9th Cross, Wilson Garden, Bengaluru - 560 027



Mary: Mother of Mercy

In 2015 our beloved Pope Francis visited Philippines, while addressing the gathering he said that he could not live without mercy and compassion. I was personally touched by these words of our Pope. Recently he has published a book titled "The name of God is Mercy," and this book was translated into eighty six languages all over the globe. In my homilies and spiritual talks I have invariably mentioned about God's unconditional love especially in reference to the Prodigal Son. Very often I used to reflect and share that if the prodigal son were to have a mother probably he would not have run away. I think the prodigal Son lacked motherly love and affection. Hendry Neuwen in his book "The Return of the Prodigal Son" says, "Becoming a compassionate Father in the life of another is the essence of spirituality". "No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh," (*Misericordiae Vultus* no. 2). Have you ever found it difficult to forgive others? If so, then turn to Mary, Mother of Mercy; she is the Mother of God whose "mercy endures forever" (Ps 118: 1). Towards the end of Jesus' earthly life when the Pharisees, and the religious leaders who twisted Jesus' words and goodness, and brought him before Pilate, Mother Mary was generous even then to forgive them. The soldiers who were there had stripped the garments of Jesus and made him stand naked, yet even then Mother Mary showed mercy and forgiveness. When Jesus was on the cross He prayed to the heavenly Father, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Like Jesus, Mary also prayed to the heavenly Father at the foot of the cross, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Mercy is essential for all of us because we all are sinners and in need of God's Mercy and forgiveness. The prodigal son never repeated the act of sin because he had experienced mercy and the tender love of God. While addressing the priests Pope Francis said "I ask you in the name of Christ and the Church never be tired of being merciful." Pope Francis asked the Church to make the sacrament of reconciliation a forefront of her ministry.

Time and again our Pope turns to Mary, Mother of Mercy, and intercedes with her that all may experience again the joy of God's tenderness. Mary has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she fully participated in the mystery of Incarnation. In the *Magnificat* she declares the mercy of God towards his people (Lk 1: 46- 47 & 49). Pope Francis reminds us that "we too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary" (MV no.24), The *Magnificat* is Mary's reply to God's incomprehensible gift of mercy. Having experienced God's mercy, she herself becomes the bearer of mercy for all generations. As a mirror image of divine mercy and example of Christian mercy, she is a model for each one of us, for the Church, and for the entire world. So let us pray the "Hail, Holy Queen" every day during this Holy Year of Mercy, asking Mary, the Mother of Mercy, to help us to be merciful so that we may use the medicine of Mercy in our life. May Mary, the Mother of Mercy be "our life, our sweetness, and our hope" As I introduce the topics, Mary Mother of Mercy, Mary a Gentle Mother, Mary a Compassionate Mother, Mary Mother of Forgiveness, etc. I hope all these articles on Mary would help us to be more merciful in our mission and ministry with our brothers and sisters. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." (Mt 5:7).

Selva Kumar smm

Editor & Publisher

Peter Mascarenhas SMM

Editorial Board

Peter Swamy SMM

Selva Kumar SMM

Michael Menezes SMM

Shibi Jose SMM

Prem Kumar SMM

Yvonne Pushparaj

Thomas Mathew

T. Ravi SMM

*To Jesus Through Mary***DIRECTOR**

Montfort Marian Centre

Montfort Fathers, Maria Bhavan

Christ School Road, Bangalore - 29

Mobile : +91 9448845137

+91 7353249122

E-mail : mcbgle@gmail.com

Price : Rs. 35/-

*For private circulation only***Contents**

Editorial	1
The Light Divine on the Night Divine	3
Mary Mother of Compassion	5
Mary Most Gentle Mother	8
Mary Mother of Forgiveness	13
Christmas with Children	17
Mary Woman of Wisdom	19
Mary, Mother of Divine Mercy	25
All Time Christmas	29
Door of Mercy	31
Children's Day - Maria Bhavan	32
Santa Claus	34

THE LIGHT DIVINE ON THE NIGHT DIVINE

Allan smm

"O star of wonder, star of night,
Star of royal beauty bright,
Westward leading still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light."

Every year whenever the Christmas approaches the first sign used to indicate the festive mood of the joyful season along with the advent wreath is the star. The star is the festoon that is displayed first before the season of Christmas and taken away after the Epiphany of the Lord, since it is very much related to the feast of Epiphany. In reality, the star directed not only the three wise men; it also directs us, whenever we go to sing carols as a team door to door to all Christian houses; the caroling groups are helped by these tiny glittering stars to identify the Christian houses. I have always felt that this star is a guiding star.

What is this star? Is it true that the star guided the wise men? Can a star move?

These are some of the references regarding this star of wonder. To refer to some bible scholars and astronomers, unfortunately the relevant appearance of comet called "Halley's comet" was in 11BC which is too early for the birth of Christ. Also the same with another great star called 'Supernova' that shows no

astronomical records in the years closer to the birth of our savior.

The only popular theory could be "conjunction of planets" which suggests that in 7th BC three planets namely Jupiter, Mars and Saturn came together in a very rare conjunction that only occur once in every 125 years. Another possibility is a conjunction of two planets Jupiter and Venus in 2nd BC. This theory is suggested by the "Star of Wonder" at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago.



Despite all these theories, I believe that the star which is mentioned in the Scripture is not an ordinary comet or any natural light that appeared on the sky. This was supernatural light. The light divine appeared on the night divine, representing Christ himself. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself as a bright burning light to Moses and to the chosen race, Israel as a 'pillar of fire' to guide them in the wilderness. In the New Testament the gentile wise men were led by this sparkling

mobile light towards the perfect supreme light Jesus.

When the Magi looked at the sky it was full of millions of brilliant stars. I am left wondering how they chose the very one that would lead

them to Christ. Today thousands of starry lights blink at us, each beckoning us and be our guide. One beckons to effortless satisfaction and pleasure for the asking. Another twinkles with money, comfort and material goods in plenty. Another leads the way to lust, attraction, drugs and living at the toss of a coin, some other spells passion for art, science, politics and power. All kinds of stars, and they can lead us to an enormous variety of things, most of them of little lasting value.

The question is, among all these chaos how to choose the right star? They all are tempting in their own way and people do not know which way to turn as they begin to wake up to life. It is the Father who made this guiding star shining brightest on the way of the wise men and on our way towards Jesus. We will be led straight to God, provided we allow Jesus to be

born in us. Whenever we allow Jesus to be born in us the celebration begins. Our life turns to be Christmas, sharing the Good News to the people whoever walk into our life to be part of our celebrating life, and we ourselves become part of that light divine shinning for all people, for he said, "you are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).

So let our prayer for this season be..... Draw us O Lord to yourself dearly. Draw all people who have followed you wholeheartedly by the shining light of your gospel of love and peace. Grant us Lord that our lives may mirror something of your light and reflect it for our neighbours to see, so that like the Magi we may set out on the path that leads to you, to encounter you face to face in the fullness of light. Amen

JOKES

A girl asks a boy: "Peter, how much do you love me?"

The boy looks her in the eyes, "Look up at the stars, that's how much I love you."

The girl is confused, "But it's morning, there are no stars?"

Boy nods, "Exactly!"

Father buys a lie detector that makes a loud beep whenever somebody lies around it.

The son comes home in the afternoon. Father asks him, "So, you were at school today, right?"

Son: "Yeah." Detector: "Beep."

Son: "OK, OK, I was in a cinema." Detector: "Beep."

Son: "Alright, I went for a beer with my friends."

Father: "What?! At your age, I wouldn't touch alcohol!" Detector: "Beep."

Mother laughs: "Ha haha, well, he really is your son!"

Detector: "Beep."

MARY MOTHER OF COMPASSION

Prem smm

In mercy she excels;
Great is her gentleness.
Not one soul she repels
That seeks her tenderness.
Jesus himself constrains
My soul to grasp and prize
The grace her suffrage gains.
Dare I do otherwise?
Hymns of St. Montfort (no. 76)

Mother Mary is a special gift of God to mankind. Her being at the foot of the cross to be with her Son in his last moments, portray the compassionate mother who enters fully into the pain of her children. What is compassion all about? Is it understanding or knowing the other? Is it concern about the need of the other or carrying the pain of another? Our mother wept all the time in her apparitions to her children. She was very much anxious about the pathetic condition of people. The sinful nature that exists in the form of disobedience to Jesus' teachings brought pain and suffering to her. Her compassion and concern for us made her appear in order to caution and warn us. Further, she reminded us about the importance of prayer, penance and zeal. It is all because of her motherly love and compassion towards us and concern about our sinful nature. It is because of her love that was reflected all the time she spoke, that would bring us closer to Jesus, and that would reduce the wrath brought about because of our sins.



Mary in the history of salvation shows the greatest compassion towards human beings, she saves us from

sin and death. This great



compassion comes to us in the form of accepting the will of God, therefore from 16th century the church gives her the titles sorrowful mother, compassionate mother and merciful mother. The church gave importance to the compassion motherhood of Mary because of the sacrifices that she made to the salvation of the human kind. The two

texts from the Bible give importance to Mary as the prime person for the salvation of human kind through the mercy towards her children; 1) Gospel of (Lk 1:26-30) which presents the annunciation 2) The Gospel of (Jn 19:26) present Mary at the foot of the cross where the visible sign of her sorrow is seen and keeps treasured in her heart and accompanies the church from then on to seek the mercy of God.

Mary replicates the mercy and compassion of God in the world

In the annunciation incident the compassion of Mary through the will of God is narrated "from age to age his mercy extends to those who live in peace" (Lk 1:50). The compassion of God

towards the human race is made through the intervention of Mary. Therefore the compassion of God replicates in Mary and through that same compassion Mary saved humans by the Grace of God. St. Ignatius of Loyola says “that Mary who unfolds the knot that has been tied from the original sin of Eve”. Therefore Mary still unbinds us from the knot of sin and death that go away from the love of God. In an ordinary sense we may think that even our own mothers have the same compassion towards her children that cannot be ruled out but the children of those mothers always differ from each other in all aspects of existence.

We need to see Mary in a broad horizon of Gods plan to save the world from sin and give people divine life and possibility of eternal happiness in heaven. None of us could choose our mothers, but if we could, we would naturally select the greatest woman imaginable. The Son of God was able to pick his mother endow her with the greatest of graces, freedom from the original sin. We should not be amazed that the Son of God could imagine beforehand what kind of a mother he would want. If an artist draws or paints the mother does he not imagine first and later do the painting? In the same way God had imagined such a mother who has compassion of the heart and will to save the mankind.

Mother Mary was not merely an observer. She was rather an integral part in the salvation economy. No doubt she suffered a lot along with her only son who endured painful suffering and death to bring salvation for all. It was for humanity she suffered and cried. This suffering started at the time when she said “yes” to the

will of God. The role of Mary in the mystery of salvation and her place in the midst of people of God is very much favourable for us. She took the burden because she was the first to respond to God's plan for the salvation of humankind in Jesus. Extending her maternal love to us, her children, Mary accompanies Jesus in our journey on earth among dangers and difficulties, until we reach the blissful home.

The events in Mary's earthly life can often relate to the lives of our own parents who suffer because of misfortunes like sickness, accidents, or death that befall their sons and daughters. The suffering of each Christian is reflected in at least some part of Mary's suffering. Her very presence was great comfort to Jesus as we see in the event of the miracle at Cana, at the death of Jesus on the cross etc. Mary embodies the fruitfulness of divine compassion.

Several devotions are based on the Seven Sorrows of Mary, which are believed to be the seven most emotionally difficult times in her life. The seven sorrows of Mary may be compared to the difficult situations in our own lives we face in this day and age. Through these incidents we can understand the compassion of Mary towards her children.

Her experiences give us guidance and comfort in our own lives. We can continue to identify with and grow from Mary's life in different ways. One is through devotions. A good resource for learning about how we can integrate Mary's teaching from the seven sorrows into our lives and her compassion towards her children. We are all witnesses to suffering and Mary is our example. Her ability to

A good resource for learning about how we can integrate Mary's teaching from the seven sorrows into our lives and her compassion towards her children. We are all witnesses to suffering and Mary is our example. Her ability to endure the death of her son is not just a story from the past, but it speaks to each of us in our lives today.

endure the death of her son is not just a story from the past, but it speaks to each of us in our lives today. We all can imitate Mary by reaching out in compassion and love to assist others who are suffering. This can be as simple as just

listening to someone as a friend who is suffering. It could be as difficult as watching a loved one suffer through a painful terminal illness. It helps us, during the times when our own suffering is extreme, remember Mary at the foot of the cross. Even when it seems like we cannot go on, Mary shows us that through our love for others, rooted in our love for God, faith in the resurrection and the power of God's grace, we have the strength to persevere any suffering that comes our way. Mary still has the compassion on the children who come to our assistance and pray every day for liberation from the sin and death.

JOKES

Fantastic exercise that really helps you to lose weight: Turn your head to the left. Good. Turn your head to the right. Very good. Repeat this exercise whenever you are offered any food.

Doctor, how can I live longer than 100 years?
Do you smoke? No.
Do you eat too much? No.
Do you go to bed late? No.
Do you have affairs with promiscuous women? No.
Then why would you want to live more than 100 years?

A student at a management school came up to a pretty girl and hugged her without any warning. The surprised girl said, "What was that?" The guy smiled at her, "Direct marketing!" The girl slapped him soundly. "What was that?!" said the boy, holding his cheek. "Customer feedback."

MARY MOST GENTLE MOTHER

Merlin smmi

Mary is the most adorned, honored, gorgeous and sought after woman in history and in the present world? Why is she the most loved and interceded person? Most people irrespective of religion go crossing rivers and mountains to have her 'Dharshan'. ***Is it not because of her love and gentleness?***

There are only a few references to Mary in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout the Bible we do not see Mary mentioned as gentle woman, yet anything of Mary is mentioned, it speaks volumes of her gentleness. She is a "par excellence and a mirror image of the divine". Traditionally, Mary had been looked up as a person who humbly submitted to the will of God, a loving mother and wife. She was understood as a person who was very docile and soft spoken. But today, we can see the Gospels portraying Mary as someone truly different – quiet, yet daring; soft,

She is a "par excellence and a mirror image of the divine". Traditionally, Mary had been looked up as a person who humbly submitted to the will of God, a loving mother and wife. She was understood as a person who was very docile and soft spoken. But today, we can see the Gospels portraying Mary as someone truly different – quiet, yet daring; soft, yet courageous; hardworking and tough, yet gentle.



yet courageous; hardworking and tough, yet gentle. "We

venerate Mary above all of the creatures as God's most perfect creature and as an instrument in God's hands (*Lumen Gentium*, 66).



The Virgin Mary holds a singularly exalted place in Islam and is considered by the Quran to have been the greatest woman in the history of humankind. The Islamic scripture recounts the divine promise given to Mary. "Mary! God has chosen thee, and purified thee; He hath chosen thee above all the women of creation because you are holy, loving and gentle".

In China there was an earthquake in 2008 measuring 8.0 Magnitude. When the intensity of the earthquake subsided, the rescuers reached the ruins to search and to help, while on the process, the team leader was driven by a compelling force to the ruined house of a dead woman. He knelt down and used his hand through the narrow cracks to search the space under the dead body, suddenly he shouted with excitement: "a CHILD! There is a CHILD!".

A whole team worked together carefully; they removed the pile of rubble round the dead woman. There was a three month old little baby

wrapped in a flowery blanket under his mother's dead body. It was obvious that the mother had made the ultimate sacrifice to save her son. When the house was falling, she used her body to make a shelter to protect her son. What a great and gentle mother to think of saving that child at that crucial moment? The little boy was still sleeping peacefully when the team picked him up.

In the same way the whole world's salvation began with the courage, love and gentleness of Mary. We cannot understand Jesus' redemptive work without Mary's instrumentality. From annunciation till the cross Mary stood by her 'YES'. She cooperated with God's will and supported Jesus in his mission of establishing the reign of God. And for this mission, God avails of the human instrument of His choice, namely, Mary. Mary became the chosen one 'favoured' by God and she responded with all her child-like trust and openness, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your Word" (Lk. 1/38). Incredible was Mary's faith that propelled her to take the leap of faith and discover a new world of God's providence and guidance. Mary became the right instrument in the hands of God to carry out His redemptive mission. Such an absolute surrender to God was the consequence of her profound gentleness.

Matthew and Luke in the New Testament describe Mary as a gentle Mother and we believe that she conceived her son by the Holy Spirit. The Father of love took the initiative with the sinful humankind, fashioning Mary's soul from the moment of conception, preserving it from the effects of the original sin. It was this

unique and extraordinary foundation of grace in Mary's soul that enabled her, years later, to respond to the angel Gabriel's message with total gentleness and surrender. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word." Therefore, she was made the masterpiece of the Father's love and grace, and in the fullness of time, this special grace within her enabled her to receive our Saviour into the world.

Incidentally, Mary reveals her gentleness by asking a question to the Angel, "How can this be since I am a virgin"? This shows her discerning and pondering over the responsibility and challenges that she is going to face. This question is not to approve or disprove but to improve her condition of faith and it is not to doubt the ability of God but to express her absolute commitment. This makes her faith intelligible and such a faith sustains her to remain committed even after the death of Jesus. This new pilgrim did not fetch luxuries of the world; her life was to be flooded with difficulties, insults, uncertainties and even the sacrifice of her own son labelled as a criminal.

Mary's total trust in her God, in spite of the harsh social criticisms, becomes a sign of how the church, the new Israel should respond

Mary became the chosen one 'favoured' by God and she responded with all her child-like trust and openness, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your Word" (Lk. 1/38). Incredible was Mary's faith that propelled her to take the leap of faith and discover a new world of God's providence and guidance.

always to the Creator. Her physical purity, open-hearted and guileless, commitment to the reign of God is the sources of inspiration in day-to-day circumstances. Faith and conviction of Mary is amazing at this situation, she proved as the gentlest woman, not in external or transitory action, with a profound effect on the whole of her life. Mary is gentle in God's sight. The gentleness shown in her every action is grace-filled benevolence and the pleasure of God. Therefore she has been granted with a special task with the assurance that she will have the powerful help of God to carry out the task and this demonstrates the inclination of God toward Mary and how she is united with God shows her height of gentleness.

The gentleness shown in her every action is grace-filled benevolence and the pleasure of God. Therefore she has been granted with a special task with the assurance that she will have the powerful help of God to carry out the task and this demonstrates the inclination of God toward Mary and how she is united with God shows her height of gentleness.

The Second Vatican Council points that "the Mother of God is a model of the church in the matter of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ". Mary did not cling on to her own traditional beliefs and world view. She surrendered herself fully in God's hands. Mary was completely God-centered. Every fiber of her being was tuned towards God. When the Word of God came to Mary, she accepted it wholeheartedly. She was aware of the implications behind her 'Yes'. Her obedience was risk-taking and persevering. She

experienced uncertainty and insecurity on account of her obedience. Her "Fiat" can be understood as a courageous positive response to bear responsibility among her people.

According to St. Luke the angel Gabriel addressed Mary with the words, "Hail, full of grace." The Greek word used here is 'kecharitomene', which means, "Graced one," or in this context, "transformed by grace." 'Full of Grace' is the most common prayer to Mary; the greeting of the angel (Lk.1/28) is combined with that of Elizabeth (Lk.1/ 42). What is the meaning of "full of Grace"? Why was she addressed with that? "Blessed are you among women". Mary highly favoured, and loved, God has been pleased with you, he has made you loveable. Therefore, the salutation "Full of Grace" is not some vague compliment but refers specially to the gentlest action of Mary. The Blessed state of Mary refers to her exalted state as being the greatest among the women. Mary has been venerated since early Christianity, and is considered by millions to be the most meritorious saint even today.

It was the task of Moses to act as mediator between God and the people and to guide them from slavery to the freedom of the Promised Land. David had the task to save Israel from the hands of its enemies. Mary's role is somewhat different, but not any less important. She had a definitive significance that brought to fulfilment the work of God, as the noble woman who gave to the people of God, the very Son of God. As gentle mother she accompanies on the road to human maturity the one through whom God offers to men and women the fullness of life and love.

A gentle Mother Mary was with Jesus at the wedding feast at Cana (Jn. 2/1-12). When the wine got over, Mary sensed that the bridal couple must be embarrassed, if not ashamed. Definitely they were a poor couple, for a rich family would have ensured there would be plenty of wine. Mary, sensitive and caring, took the initiative. She told the servants to go to Jesus and 'do what he tells'. She reveals how she makes up for our battered and weak wills; she does this by substituting herself for us. Mary comes into our crisis of life, to support us in the same way that a mother supports a sick child. The Blessed Mother understands our cries and worries, and knows them better than we know ourselves. Neither the wine steward nor the diners knew that the wine was getting over, and so they could not ask for help. The gentle role of Mary at this crucial situation is esteemed and honoured by the whole of Christendom.

She reveals how she makes up for our battered and weak wills; she does this by substituting herself for us. Mary comes into our crisis of life, to support us in the same way that a mother supports a sick child. The Blessed Mother understands our cries and worries, and knows them better than we know ourselves.

Blessed Virgin as she stood at the cross of her Son must have been devastating (Jn. 19/27). It is devastating for any mother to see her child suffering in pain. She even witnesses the suffering of her Son in the life of the Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ. One can only imagine what she was thinking at the foot of

the cross. Perhaps, every scene from Christ's birth until that moment was passing through her mind. When our Lord was removed from the cross, she held him with all gentleness of a mother, every pain and sorrow permeating her. As her Son was pierced with nails and a spear, so too was she pierced, receiving the grace of sharing in her Son's cross by her agony, yet she bore this with gentleness and compassion, and she still bears her sorrows for us.

Do you remember the statue by Michelangelo, called the Pieta? Mary is holding the dead body of Jesus in her hands. The left hand is small and feminine, but the right hand is under Jesus, supporting the weight of his body. What does it mean? It means that the love of Mary is gentle and feminine, yet strong and firm.

Gentleness in the midst of suffering with her Son is a source of inspiration especially to those who are most in need of comfort and who are dwelling in the abyss of despair and distress. She is our mother, who suffers with us in our sufferings, compassionate when we are in the midst of our distress, and gentle in the midst of our pain. This is the bond of love in which we have become participants because we are Christ's body. She shows us how to love gently with courage even in the midst of dark

She is our mother, who suffers with us in our sufferings, compassionate when we are in the midst of our distress, and gentle in the midst of our pain. This is the bond of love in which we have become participants because we are Christ's body.

days of our life. Her life teaches us to carry our sorrows with gentleness and courage and pulls us out of our torpor and indigence.

Thus, Mary is the ideal and gentle disciple. She sums up in herself the greatest mysteries of faith and radiates them outward by being with Jesus from his birth to his death. In the same way she stood by him when he was on the cross. At every major event in Jesus' life we could see Mary's active presence. Even after his death, she was with the disciples giving them encouragement and consolation. Her presence amidst the disciples at Pentecost paved the way for her to be the Mother of the church. God has given us a gentlest mother for a reason.

Let us therefore, make the GENTLEST MOTHER as role model of our life to live fruitfully and meaningfully in fulfilling our mission.

Alone we are only a spark, but with Mary we are a fire

Alone we are only a string, but with Mary we are a Lyre

Alone we are in despair but with Mary we are peaceful

Alone we are only a man/woman but with Mary we are a gentle man/woman

JOKES

Girlfriend: Darling Give me your Diamond Ring.

Boyfriend: Why honey?

Gf: I'm going to miss you see it everyday.

Bf: You would remember me anyway.

Girlfriend: How's that?

Bf: thinking that I had not given you that precious ring.

Banta: What's the difference between us and Camels?

Santa: They can work without drinking for 7 days

And we can drink without working for 7 days!

When my wife starts to sing I always go out and do some garden work so our neighbours can see there's no domestic violence going on.

MARY MOTHER OF FORGIVENESS

Lancy Dias SJ

Every human needs healing and wholeness. The deepest longing of every individual is for a restored relationship with all. Forgiveness is a key for this healing. It is a decision of the will. Since God commands us to forgive, we must make a conscious choice to obey God and forgive. The offender may not desire forgiveness and may not ever change, but that doesn't negate God's desire that we possess a forgiving spirit. There is a mystery in forgiveness. It is not just an act of personal will. There is something ineffable which happens too, something beyond our conscious control. Forgiveness happens, to a large extent, by allowing ourselves to become available to the grace of God.

As Christians we are required to forgive. Yet, how to actually do it? The Bible says wonderful things about forgiveness. Forgiveness was obviously a core teaching of Jesus. If we do not have a method to help us to forgive easily and regularly then resentment can build up. We can get disgruntled about life or disillusioned about our fellow human beings.

Mother Mary comes to our help here. She is a model of forgiveness. Pope Francis in his homily on the feast of the Mother of God said, "Mother of God," is also



"Mother of forgiveness" who "knows no limits" and "renews life" filling it "with true happiness." For Pope Francis, "The Mother of forgiveness teaches the Church" that forgiveness does not stop before "the law with its quibbles" or "the wisdom of this world with its distinctions".

Forgiveness and Grace

Forgiveness and grace are closely connected. Forgiveness is itself a grace we receive from the Lord. What is grace? The common

meaning of grace is beauty, graciousness and amiability. It also means favour, mercy and goodwill. In the Bible we find two meanings "I



Pope Francis in his homily on the feast of the Mother of God said, "Mother of God," is also "Mother of forgiveness" who "knows no limits" and "renews life" filling it "with true happiness."

will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex 33:19). Here it is very clear that grace signifies absolute, gratuitous favour, freely given. "You have found grace in my sight," God said to Moses (Ex 33:12), precisely as the angel said to Mary, "You have found grace with God." Here grace denotes favour and benevolence.

Mary is full of grace because she found favour with God. She is full of divine favour. Grace fills Mary's soul. God wasn't in her just through power or providence but also in person through his presence. God not only gave Mary His favour, but all of Himself in His Son.

In the life of Mary, the angel's greetings reflect these meanings of grace. Mary is full of grace because she found favour with God. She is full of divine favour. Grace fills Mary's soul. God wasn't in her just through power or providence but also in person through his presence. God not only gave Mary His favour, but all of Himself in His Son. The grace in Mary's holiness has in itself the quality that places it above the grace possessed by any other person in the New or Old Testament.

In contemplating Mary, therefore we can discover in her the embodiment of undivided grace, grace that is complete. Grace in her indicates both the fullness of divine favour and the fullness of personal holiness. It reflects the very presence of God in the strongest way imaginable, both physical and spiritual. It also indicates the effects of this presence, which makes Mary what she is. No other person is like her even if they possess the same Spirit that

sanctified her.

Forgiveness in Suffering

Mary, the woman of grace is favoured and benevolent and yet she was not free from all the sufferings that a human being goes through. From the very beginning she had to go through various tests and trials even being the mother of God. Mary, with Christ in her womb, and in her arms, with Christ at Nazareth and in his public life, with Christ on the hill of Calvary, suffered and agonized with Him, receiving into her Immaculate Heart the sufferings of Christ. Mary's response in all these events of her life shows that she clearly understood God's invitation to be the mother of the "suffering servant" and to co-suffer with Him in the salvific mission of Redemption.

In all the events of her life she had to undergo the sufferings, and forgive all those who caused that suffering. Though her forgiveness is not obviously mentioned in the Scriptures, each event that occurred in her life shows that the suffering she underwent led her to forgive from the heart. She received confirmation regarding her mission of co-suffering in all these events beginning with the flight to Egypt, right up to Calvary.

She had to patiently endure the sufferings and keep on forgiving from her heart when her Son Jesus was rejected by the people during his public life. When Jewish leaders falsely accused him of blasphemy, when Pilate unjustly condemned him to death, when the soldiers mocked and insulted her Son, she endured all that and forgave them all. Even when the last sword pierced her heart, when the lifeless body

And, she has been given a pre-eminent part in God's plan of salvation not merely through her sufferings but also through her loving forgiveness for those who have caused her Son's sufferings. Mary the Mother of Sorrows is also the Mother of forgiveness.

of her son was laid in her arms, she did not react or condemn them rather she forgave them.

When her Son's disciples fled from the scene after seeing his arrest, she did not condemn them or lose heart. Rather she forgave them and embraced them when they returned. She kept them together. Mary is "Our Lady of Sorrows." And, she has been given a pre-eminent part in God's plan of salvation not merely through her sufferings but also through her loving forgiveness for those who have caused her



At the foot of the Cross, Mary saw her Son offer himself totally, showing us what it means to love as God loves. At that moment she heard Jesus utter the words which probably reflected what he had learned from her as a child: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:24). At that moment, Mary became for all of us the Mother of forgiveness.

Son's sufferings. Mary the Mother of Sorrows is also the Mother of forgiveness. She prayed with her tortured and crucified Son: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). She made his prayer her own and forgave each of us for our part in killing her Son. This made it possible for her to obey the dying Jesus' command that she be our mother (Jn 19:26-27). Mary is the "Mother of the Church" because she is first "the Mother of Forgiveness."

Pope Francis rightly points out that "Mary is the Mother of God who forgives, who bestows forgiveness, and so we can rightly call her Mother of forgiveness". This word - "forgiveness" - so misunderstood in today's world, points to the new and original fruit of Christian faith. A person unable to forgive has not yet known the fullness of love. Only the one who truly loves is able to forgive. At the foot of the Cross, Mary saw her Son

offer himself totally, showing us what it means to love as God loves. At that moment she heard Jesus utter the words which probably reflected what he had learned from her as a child: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:24). At that moment, Mary became for all of us the Mother of forgiveness. Following Jesus' example and by his grace, she herself could forgive those who killed her innocent Son.

Mary the Apostle of Forgiveness

Mary can be considered as the apostle of forgiveness. All through her life she forgave. Some of the divine interventions in her life will throw light on this fact.

Firstly The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the great divine act of grace that lay at the foundation of God's whole work of salvation through Christ. The Father of Mercy took the initiative with sinful mankind, fashioning Mary's soul from the moment of conception, preserving it from the effects of original sin, making her soul the very masterpiece of His mercy, and it was this unique and extraordinary foundation of grace in Mary's soul that enabled her, years later, to respond to angel Gabriel's message with total, trustful surrender: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word." By God's infinite grace, she was made the masterpiece of the Father's mercy and forgiveness and in the fullness of time, this special grace within her enabled her to receive our Saviour into the world.

Secondly Mary was the one chosen to be the Mother of God — in other words, she was the Mother of the merciful Saviour, and in this way she literally brought Divine Mercy Himself -into

our world. When Mary humbly accepted angel Gabriel's call, she actually conceived in her womb, and brought to birth into our world, the merciful and forgiving God made flesh, Mercy and Forgiveness Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Therefore Mother of our merciful Saviour can be rightly called the Apostle of forgiveness. She plays a unique and unequalled role in God's plan to shower His forgiveness upon us all. Like any true and loving mother, her children can be trustfully and completely dependent upon her to bring us all God's infinite mercy and His unconditional forgiveness.

Conclusion

Mother Mary is an icon of forgiveness to all Christians. She as the first disciple of Jesus standing at the foot of the cross forgave all her adversaries. In the words of Pope Francis, "The gift that Mary bestows in offering us Jesus is the forgiveness which renews life, enables us once more to do God's will and fills us with true happiness. This grace frees the heart to look to the future with the joy born of hope" Therefore let us be transformed and inspired by Mary, mother of forgiveness, to rediscover our Christen vocation to unconditional forgiveness to live an authentic Christian life.

JOKES

Q: Why are Egyptian children always confused?

A: Because after death, their DADDY becomes a MUMMY.

CHRISTMAS WITH CHILDREN

Maria Madtha

The different colors of the rainbow blend to create a perfect combination that touches every heart when it meets an eye. We had a similar experience when we stepped into 'Anugraha Girls Home' at Sumanahalli managed by Montfort Fathers. All the residents living in harmony forgetting the cultural differences reinforces the spirit of humanity. The tranquil ambience subdues the diverse background making it an ideal place to find peace.



There were about 25 girls studying from 1st std. to 10th std. eagerly waiting to receive us. Fr. Joseph extended a warm welcome. He also thanked for the gifts we donated for children. Miss Sahana a girl from 10th std. compeered the program. It started with a welcome dance followed by a folk dance by little girls. Fr. Peter

On 10th Dec 2016 a group of 15 Montfort Associates under the guidance of Fr. Peter Mascarenhas and Mr. Frank Madtha visited Anugraha a home for the orphans, and children of leprosy patients, as a part of their Christmas outreach programme. This home is managed by Fr. Joseph and Fr. Prem, the Montfort Missionaries.



Fr. Peter Mascarenhas gave the Christmas message to children and Associates. Mrs. Maria Madtha spoke about the



importance of keeping a goal and achieving success in life.

After the programme refreshments were arranged for all of us. The essence of Anugraha is to try and fill the emotional scars experienced by the young girls during their traumatic

childhood. Needless to add it was indeed a pleasant and fulfilling evening for all the Associates as we were all basking in the radiance of the unconditional "Love of God" genuinely experienced by all present.



MARY WOMAN OF WISDOM

Roy John Elavunkal smm

The Blessed Virgin Mary can easily be seen as the most appropriate role model for women. She is the Woman of wisdom. She is the motherly figure for all humanity. Mary exemplifies strength of godliness, fortitude, and maternal instincts. Mary portrays traits of holiness, piety, and humbleness. As the woman of wisdom, Mary instructs women, the importance of trust and perseverance. The most obvious role Mary plays in the Bible is as the mother of wisdom. One might consider her to be the mother of all mothers. She received this reputation because she is the mother of Jesus Christ.

Out of all the women in the world, God chose a common woman who lived in the little town of Nazareth. She wasn't a woman of great wealth or stature. God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus Christ because she possessed traits of Wisdom, holiness, piety, and humility. As a role model, Mary teaches all the women the importance of trusting in the Lord. Her faith in God was tested when an angel of the Lord informed her that she would miraculously give birth to the Saviour. Most women wouldn't have shown the trust she did. Most women wouldn't have believed the message. Mary listened to the angel with acceptance. She knew God had a plan for her. Present-day women should have the same trust and simple lively faith in the Lord as Mary did. God has a plan for us just like he had a plan for Mary. Therein I make an attempt to present the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Seat of Wisdom.

Who is the blessed Virgin Mary?

The word **Mary** comes from the Greek word *Mariám*, Aramaic *Mariam?* and Hebrew *Miriam*. *Mary* also known by various titles, styles



and honorifies, in the first century Galilean Jewish woman of Nazareth, and the mother of Jesus, according to the New Testament. The gospels of Matthew and Luke describe Mary as a virgin in Greek *parthénos* and Christians believe that she conceived her son while a virgin by the Holy Spirit. The miraculous birth took place when she was already betrothed to Joseph and was awaiting the concluding rite of marriage, the formal home-taking ceremony. She married Joseph and accompanied him to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. The Gospel of Luke begins its account of Mary's life with the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and announced her divine selection to be the mother of Jesus. According to canonical gospel accounts, Mary was present at the crucifixion and is depicted as a

As a role model, Mary teaches all the women the importance of trusting in the Lord. Her faith in God was tested when an angel of the Lord informed her that she would miraculously give birth to the Saviour. Most women wouldn't have shown the trust she did. Most women wouldn't have believed the message.

member of the early Christian community in Jerusalem. According to the Catholic and Orthodox teaching, at the end of her earthly life her body was assumed directly into Heaven; this is known in the West as the Assumption.

The four Catholic dogmas regarding Mary are: her status as *Theotokos*, or Mother of God; her perpetual virginity; her Immaculate Conception; and her bodily Assumption into heaven.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. Mary, also known by various titles, styles and honorifics, was a first century Galilean Jewish woman of Nazareth and the mother of Jesus, according to the New Testament. According to Wikipedia Mary,- Born: Nazareth, Israel, Spouse: Saint Joseph, Parents: Joachim, Saint Anne, Nicknames: Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Virgin Mary, Saint Mary, Mother Mary. Grandparents: Emerentia, Matthat, Estha, Home towns: Nazareth, Galilee.

Mary's divine encounter:

Never have the words 'Let it be' sounded so sweet or so important. That is how Mary responded after the angel Gabriel told the virgin

that, through the Holy Spirit, she would conceive the Son of the Most High. 'I am the Lord's servant,' she says, according to the Gospel of Luke. 'Let it be with me just as you have said.' Countless paintings and stained glass windows have sought to capture this moment. They depict a beautiful young woman faithfully accepting the divine birth announcement. However, what Christians recognize as Good News comes out of a very



harsh and at times ugly reality one that typically doesn't get the stained glass treatment. With an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, 'she definitely would have been in precarious.'

Mary in a culture of honour and shame:

Not only did she risk her relationship with Joseph and the economic stability she only could get through marriage, she may have risked her life as well. Yet, she confronted all this danger for God. As the Gospels show, Mary did far more than sit silently in a peaceful Nativity scene. She defied the social expectations of her day. Wilson and other church leaders say her faith, bravery and prophetic witness offer lessons for Christ's followers today. **How can this be?** At first glance, Mary would seem an unlikely candidate to bear the King of Kings. She was no aristocrat but a young Jewish woman in what was then

Roman-occupied Galilee. On top of that, she wasn't from a major urban centre but from Nazareth.

Mary was undoubtedly poor. In Luke, Mary refers to herself as someone of low status. (Lk 2:24) also notes that when Mary and Joseph presented the baby Jesus at the temple, she sacrifices a pair of turtle doves or pigeons. Under Levitical law that meant Mary didn't have the money to sacrifice a sheep. Matthew's Gospel hints at the kind of trouble a mysterious pregnancy would mean for a woman in Mary's tenuous circumstances. In Matthew's account, Joseph considers breaking off the couple's betrothal, until an angel visits him in a dream. What the Gospel doesn't say explicitly is that Joseph had the option of pressing charges against Mary before the local religious elders. Such a move could have put her at the same risk of stoning, faced by the adulterous woman Jesus later encounters.

Mary - in a precarious situation:

Despite all this, Mary receives Gabriel's announcement as a sign of God's favour. In her own way, she doesn't take the news lying down. Instead, according to Luke, she immediately hurries through the rugged Judean hill country to share her joy with her relative Elizabeth, who by then was six months pregnant. Mary's trust in God to the scepticism the priest Zechariah, her in-law, expresses when Gabriel announces that the long-barren Elizabeth will bear John the Baptist. Mary demonstrates an open inquisitiveness; her faith is a process that responds to the divine, And the fact that she believes Gabriel's words, whereas Zechariah does not, indicates an overturning of hierarchal

gender structures as well.

God has lifted up the lowly

Luke's account of Christ's birth and ministry continues to emphasize such social reversals, with Mary leading the way. When Elizabeth hails Mary as blessed above all

When Elizabeth hails Mary as blessed above all women, Mary responds with not just praise for God, but also a description of the kind of change God brings. 'He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly,' the expectant Mary proclaims. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed.

women, Mary responds with not just praise for God, but also a description of the kind of change God brings. 'He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly,' the expectant Mary proclaims. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. The Song of Mary - also called the *Magnificat*, for Mary's declaration that her soul 'magnifies the Lord' is not a typical Christmas carol. The *Magnificat* shows Mary to be a prophet, Luke and Acts identify Mary in a slightly different way than the other Gospel writers or even other Marys in the text. Instead of spelling her name the Greek way as Maria, Luke identifies Jesus' mother by the Jewish spelling Mariam. In Exodus, Moses' sister and protector has her own famous song celebrating God's victory over earthly powers.

Mary's treasure

Jesus identifies his family as those who

follow him rather than his blood relations. However, Mary proves to be a true disciple and member of Christ's adopted family. According to the Gospel of John, she was instrumental in Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine. John also says she was one of the women present at Jesus' crucifixion. The Acts of the Apostles places Mary alongside the other disciples after Jesus' ascension to heaven. Mary was faithful. Mary also understood power, as is clear in the Magnificat. She was also resourceful; turned a feeding trough into a newborn's bed. She also joined Joseph in fleeing with Jesus to Egypt, away from a murderous Herod. Mary is more than a role model; her story is a call to help the marginalized today, Mary was vulnerable because she was not valued by society, Women today face abandonment or worse misfortunes because of rape or an unexpected pregnancy. Even giving birth can put a woman's life in danger.

Mary, seat of wisdom:

The prayer to the Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, was written by Mother Julia Verhaeghe (1910-1997). This prayer is a plea to the Mother of God for the gift of wise love. At the same time it is an instructive guide to the attainment of this love, to which Mary wants to introduce us. Our Lady is an outstanding model as well as an excellent teacher. We desire her to be our teacher so that we will learn how to truly love. This prayer makes considerable demands on us because love is the greatest and highest virtue. Saint Paul writes: Faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13). Real wise love is a gift for which we must confidently ask God. This true love is like a high, magnificent peak. The road to it is steep,

but the effort will be well-rewarded, let us therefore go forward as experienced mountain climbers step by step and let us be led by this prayer to Our Lady:

Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Seat of Wisdom, open our hearts to receive your divine Son and make them like your heart, full of your own wise and generous love. A love, that brings true peace to our lives and to those of many others.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Seat of Wisdom, open our hearts to receive your divine Son and make them like your heart, full of your own wise and generous love. A love, that brings true peace to our lives and to those of many others; a love, that creates an atmosphere of joy and security to all those with whom we live day after day; a love, that strengthens our will when sacrifice is demanded and that urges it on to virtue, while keeping us always kind and gentle; a love, that gives us strength to deny ourselves and to carry the spiritual burdens of others; a love, that does not flee from sacrifice, but that can carry the daily cross with persevering trust; a love, that is willing to serve without looking for praise or reward, and that is thus able to comfort those in trouble; a love, that enables us to be silent about ourselves and to heal many spiritual wounds through our reparation and penance. Mother of Divine Wisdom, hear our prayer.

Biblical understanding of the wisdom woman

The connection between Mary and Eve is further strengthened by the Gospel references to Mary as 'woman' (Jn. 2:4, Jn. 19:26). The

most important New Testament reference to Mary as 'woman' for our purposes is in Revelation 12:1-3, 5, and 9: And a great portent appeared in heaven, a *woman* clothed with sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child... And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon... she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule the nations with a rode of iron... And the great red dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan.

This imagery is much like Wisdom 7:29. Both this verse and Revelation 12:1 include the sun and stars, and while the moon is not mentioned in Wisdom, there *is* a light to which Lady Wisdom is 'found to be superior' or above, just as Mary had the moon at her feet. Wisdom 7 describes Lady Wisdom as excelling all the heavenly bodies. This shows that Mary is the Queen of Heaven and Earth and the most exalted of all creatures. Also, in both Genesis and Revelation there is opposition between the "woman" and the serpent or dragon (Rev. 12:3). It is interesting that both words translate into the Hebrew word "*nahash*," which encompasses all crawling creatures from earthworms to dragons.

The catechism of the Catholic Church on wisdom

The Catechism recognizes the 'Seat of Wisdom' title of the Blessed Mother as well as the application of wisdom literature to Our Lady. Paragraph 721 says: Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the

Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the Seat of Wisdom. In her, the wonder of God that the Spirit was to fulfil in Christ and the Church began to be manifested. This passage even cites Proverbs and Sirach in the footnotes. The magisterial testimony of Mary as Lady Wisdom of the Old Testament as well the unbroken continuity and witness of the Church Fathers prove, without question, the academic and theological soundness of the application of the wisdom literature to Mary.

Modern Magisterium on wisdom St. Louis de Montfort's work has been especially inspirational to many popes. This adds a great deal of weight to his many references to Mary and the wisdom literature. Advocates of his *True Devotion to Mary* include Pope Pius IX (d. 1878), Pope Leo XIII who beatified Fr. de Montfort in 1888, and even granted a plenary indulgence for making his consecration, Pope St. Pius X (d. 1914), Pope Pius XI (d. 1939), Pope Pius XII (who canonized Fr. de Montfort in 1947), Pope Paul VI (d. 1963), and most significantly Pope John Paul II (d. 2005). Fr. de Montfort, *True Devotion*, v-vi. Blessed Pius IX's 1854 papal bull *Innefabilis Deus* (which solemnly defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception), citing wisdom literature, says, The fathers and writers of the Church, well-versed in the heavenly scriptures, celebrated the august Virgin as the spotless dove, as the holy Jerusalem, as the exalted throne of God, as the ark and house of holiness which Eternal Wisdom built. Pope Leo XIII uses the title 'Seat

The magisterial testimony of Mary as Lady Wisdom of the Old Testament as well the unbroken continuity and witness of the Church Fathers proves, without question, the academic and theological soundness of the application of the wisdom literature to Mary.

of Wisdom' in several of his encyclicals, most notably in his 1897 *Militantis Ecclesiae* and *Aeterni Patris*, which invoke Mary, Seat of Wisdom, in their conclusions. Pope Leo XIII, *On the Rosary*, 1896, no.13. Pope Pius XII in his 1950 apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (which solemnly defined the dogma of the Assumption) says that Song of Songs 3:6, 4:8, and 6:9 all refer to the heavenly Queen. John Paul II, as alluded to, agreed with de Montfort's writings to the point that he even took his papal motto '*Totus Tuus*' (which means 'Totally Yours,' referring to consecrating oneself entirely to Jesus through Mary) from Fr. de Montfort's writings. Indeed, he went on to call Fr. de Montfort one of the great doctors of Marian spirituality.

CONCLUSION:

Mary possessed a great deal of Wisdom and humility. She was not a woman of conceit with a proud nature. She was content being a servant of God. She took on the responsibility of raising the Messiah with dignity and

enthusiasm. She thought of herself as unworthy of the task, yet the divine plan to be fulfilled God seeks her consent and she surrenders to him by saying I am the handmade of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word. "*All generations will call me blessed*": "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship." (Lk: 1: 48). The Church rightly honours "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honoured with the title of Mother of God, to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. This very special devotion differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration." (LG: 66) The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an epitome of the whole Gospel, express this devotion to the Virgin Mary. (SC:103) The Virgin Mary is the ultimate role model for all women, she is the mother of all mothers. She possessed character traits that other women should strive to meet. Holiness, piety, and humbleness are valued very highly in the eyes of the Lord that is why we call her Mary the woman of wisdom. Today the church and the modern woman should look at Mary and not only admire her, but learn from her.

MARY, MOTHER OF DIVINE MERCY

Dona Sanctis BS

From age immemorial, every human being longs to be in communion with God and with one another. Everyone longs to be loved, accepted, and cared for. But human reality is such that our ego and self-centredness take precedence. God in His mercy comes in search of us and offers us possibilities through His word and His chosen instruments, men and women, as we find in God's love story narrated in the Holy Bible. Mary, Mother of Jesus is one such powerful instrument chosen by God from all eternity to whom no human being can be compared. St. John Paul II in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) no. 9 says: "Mary is the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has. At the same time, still in an exceptional way, she made possible with the sacrifice of her heart her own sharing in revealing God's mercy." God in His mercy created Mary immaculate and preserved her from sin. She was chosen to be the Mother of His beloved Son Jesus and God made her to be the participator in the redemption of humankind. Mary, who experienced God's mercy in abundance becomes the intercessor of God's mercy to her children. To cite an example where Mary reveals that she is the Mother of Mercy, we take a text from the diary of St. Maria Faustina Kawalska who was specially chosen by Jesus to communicate His divine mercy to humanity. She says:

Once, the confessor told me to pray for his intention, and I began a novena to the Mother of God. This novena consisted in the prayer "Hail, Holy Queen" recited nine times. Toward the end

of the novena, I saw the Mother of God with the Infant Jesus in her arms...I could not stop wondering at His beauty...I heard a few of the words that the Mother of God spoke. The words were: "I am not only the Queen of heaven, but also the Mother of Mercy, and your mother."

(Diary of St. Faustina, 330)

Mary is chosen by God to be part of His amazing grace. She became an instrument of God's mercy in the context of her time. Though very little is known about Mary from the Biblical texts, the devotees of Mary bear witness to her contribution as dispenser of God's mercy. During this Year of Mercy, we are invited to rediscover God's mercy and we wish to reflect on God's mercy that comes to us through Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. Therefore, this article emphasises on two aspects, viz., Mary, woman of mercy from Biblical perspective and mercy drops around us are falling through Mary, to emphasize how Mary continues to be the Mother of mercy.



She was chosen to be the Mother of His beloved Son Jesus and God made her to be the participator in the redemption of humankind. Mary, who experienced God's mercy in abundance becomes the intercessor of God's mercy to her children.

Mary, woman of Divine Mercy from Biblical perspective

In the Biblical account Mary is highlighted as the woman of mercy. Pope Paul VI declares in *Marialis Cultus* (1974), no. 30 that "the Bible is replete with the mystery of the Saviour, and from Genesis to the Book of Revelation, also contains clear references to her who was the Mother and Associate of the Saviour."

Mary was linked up with the woman of Genesis 3:15 - "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel." The woman who will triumph over the evil is referred to as Mary. It is through her Son that God's saving mercy reaches humankind. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 55 emphasises the function of the Blessed Virgin in the plan of salvation. It says that the sacred writings of the Old and the New Testaments as well as venerable tradition bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. When looked at in this way, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was promised to our first parents after their fall into sin.

From her tender age, Mary, the *anawim* of Yahweh, experienced God's mercy in her personal life and well as in the life of her people, Israel. Mary became the recipient of God's mercy as she was chosen to be the 'mother of God' which enabled her to accept the plan of God in her faithful surrender. By freely surrendering herself to God's will, Mary cooperated in God's saving plan to divinize humankind¹. The angel Gabriel's salutary

greeting was that of grace. She became the embodiment of grace through this divine encounter. Mary received the Divine Mercy, the merciful Saviour in her heart and in her sacred womb and gave Him to the world as gift of grace and blessing. Rightly, therefore, we honour Mary as the tabernacle of God's mercy.

In the history of the Israelites the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant were considered the symbols of God's holy presence which constantly reminded the people of Israel God's benevolent presence. It is pertinent that Mary can be compared to these two powerful imageries that indicate Mary's role in the history of redemption revealed in her Son Jesus. The very fact Mary was chosen as the Mother of Jesus, God's Son, Mary is the Christ-bearer, the Ark of the New Covenant, as well as the temple of the Holy Spirit². Mary became an embodiment of God's grace and tabernacle of God's presence of awesome mystery through whom pervades God's abiding presence.

It is pertinent that Mary can be compared to these two powerful imageries that indicate Mary's role in the history of redemption revealed in her Son Jesus. The very fact Mary was chosen as the Mother of Jesus, God's Son, Mary is the Christ-bearer, the Ark of the New Covenant, as well as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, Mary became merciful par excellence, as she sets out in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth in her dire need in her

¹Cf. George A. Maloney, *Mary: The Womb of God* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976), 50.

²Cf. Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2013), 209.

pregnancy. Mary's visit, her going to serve Elizabeth in her need and to learn what she is soon to experience expresses her act of mercy. In her song '*Magnificat*' Mary proclaims that God's mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him (Luke 1: 50). Here, Mary "summarizes the entire history of salvation and describes it as the story of God's mercy."³ In the Hebrew tradition God would remember an evil done down to the third and fourth generation, but good was remembered to a thousand generation. Mary reminds all generations to come that God is glorified for his mercy, even as He promised. All generations will know this powerful mercy.⁴

In the Gospel according to John the two texts that include the Mother of Jesus deals with mercy. First, at the wedding of Cana (John 2: 1-11), Mary moved by mercy tells Jesus to attend to the great need of the family. She remains at the background by telling the servants to do what Jesus tells them to do. From this event, the public ministry of Jesus begins and people experience God's abounding mercy as they participate in the divine grace that comes to them in fullness from Jesus, the merciful Saviour. Second, Mary, the mother of Jesus stands at the foot of the cross. Jesus looks at his mother, then by offering his beloved disciple to her says: "Woman, behold your son" (Jn. 19: 26) and gives her over to John by telling him "Here is your mother" (Jn. 19: 27). Mary is now not only his mother, but she is the mother of all believers,

his last gift to humanity.⁵ Mary is in a sense a synthesis of the Old and the New Covenants. In her, God's promises are fulfilled and new promises made.⁶ At the foot of the cross, Mary becomes the recipient of God's mercy through Jesus' *kenosis* and in turn she becomes the instrument of God's mercy to humanity.

Mercy drops round us are falling... Mary continues to be the Mother of Divine Mercy

The significance of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy that was opened by Pope Francis on 8 December, 2015, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception opened the door of mercy to the entire world. Highlighting the mystery of mercy, Pope Francis in his bull *Misericordiae Vultus* says that mercy is the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. He further emphasizes that mercy is the bridge that connects God and human, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.⁷ Mary who exemplified in her life the mercy of God invites us and leads us to her Divine Son Jesus and inspires us to be merciful to our brothers and sisters.

Mary is indeed our mother of great mercy. Many experience God's tenderness and mercy through Mary and find hope that she would answer their prayers for she is our merciful mother. "Mary is in touch with us and eager to do all in order that Jesus become Lord and

³ Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, 208.

⁴ Megan McKenna, *Mary: Shadow of Grace*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 47.

⁵ Cf. Megan McKenna, *Mary: Shadow of Grace*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 113.

⁶ Cf. Clifford Stevens, *The Blessed Virgin: Her Life and Her Role in our Lives*, (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1987), 165.

⁷ Cf. Francis Pope, *Misericordiae Vultus*, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, 11 April, 2015, n. 2.

He further emphasizes that mercy is the bridge that connects God and human, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. Mary who exemplified in her life the mercy of God invites us and leads us to her Divine Son Jesus and inspires us to be merciful to our brothers and sisters.

Master in our lives⁸." When we pray the most beautiful Marian prayer "Hail Mary" we invoke God's mercy through the intercession of Mary: Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Various titles attributed to Mary which we find in the litany express her role in the life of Jesus as well as in the life of the Mother Church. They highlight Mary's person and personality. In the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (1987) by St. John Paul II, Mary is called as the "Mediatrice of mercy" which emphasises Mary's unique role as the dispenser of God's mercy.

Devotees of Mary experience God's abundant mercy and faithfulness through her power of intercession. Mary's concern sways Jesus in his first miracle during the wedding feast at Cana. When wine of mercy runs short in our life, let us have recourse to our heavenly mother. She would constantly invite us, her children, to "Do whatever he tells you," as she told the attendants. Do what our conscience - the little inner voice of God tells us what we ought to do⁹. We invoke Mary daily in the prayer 'Hail, Holy Queen' - Mother of mercy, hail our life,

our sweetness, and our hope. We seek Mary's tender care and protection as we tell her to turn her eyes of mercy towards us. As she turns her eyes of mercy towards us, she tells us to be merciful to one another and become her worthy children. Mary is the mediating presence of God in our hearts, in our broken, dark selves. It is His presence that can transform our broken hearts into beautiful temples of God¹⁰. In this process, Mary becomes our mediator and source to experience God's abounding mercy as well, as we are connected to one another. The Church hails Mary as the honour of human race for her invocation with the merciful God on behalf of the erring humankind.

Conclusion

God is ever merciful and His mercy never ends. Mary is truly the channel of Divine mercy to humanity. God's mercy is experienced by all as showers of mercy are falling everywhere through the powerful mediation of Mary, Mother of Divine Mercy and God draws each one unto Himself. Because of God's mercy in our hearts we are able to be merciful to one another. "Mercy is the reflection of God's glory in this world and the epitome of the message of Jesus Christ, which was given to us as a gift and which we are to further bestow on others"¹¹. "How fortunate are we to be the beneficiaries of God's mercy through our loving and Merciful Mother! Shall we then become partakers of God's mercy through Mary, the mother of Divine Mercy?

⁸George A. Maloney, *Mary: The Womb of God* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976), 179.

⁹Cf. Ramon Nubiola, *Mary in my Life* (St Paul Publications, Bandra-Bombay, 1987), 46.

¹⁰Cf. George A. Maloney, *Mary: The Womb of God* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976), 183.

¹¹Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, 218.

ALL TIME CHRISTMAS

Arun D'Souza smm

It's that time of year again. December has come and with it all the joys of Christmas. But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, turkey dinners with family and friends, snow in the yard, stockings hanging in the living room, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas? For many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don't have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmas time when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons. Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy-God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special Child.

Christmas gives a new view about what is and what should be our Christmas. Every



culture and every society has its own special festivals. In contemporary society people gather to give form and expression to ideas that are a source of joy and strength for their respective societies. They are also expressions of ideas perhaps even

mysteries, which one generation shares with the next generation. It is a kind of continuity among generations and an attempt to help a society understand things which are not obvious in daily life.

Christmas is such a festival of joy wherein we joyfully commemorate the birth of Jesus. The actual date of Jesus birth is unknown. The history of Christmas dates back over 4000 years as the various custom and tradition associated with the festival of Christmas were celebrated centuries before the birth of Christ. The exact day of the Christ child's birth has never been pinpointed. Traditions say that it has been celebrated since the year 98 AD. In 137 AD the Bishop of Rome ordered the birthday of the Christ Child celebrated as a solemn feast. In 350 AD another Bishop of Rome, Julius I, choose December 25th as Christmas day. The history of Christmas can be traced to some of the popular festival celebrated by early civilizations that gave way to Christmas.

Although there are various theories on the selection of December 25th to be celebrated as the day of the birth of Jesus, except the church of Armenia, for which, it is January 6th. There is no evidence of celebrating the nativity of Jesus before the 3rd century. Therefore January 6th became widely observed in the 3rd century to commemorate the manifestation of Christ on earth, including his birth, baptism and the visit of the magi, but 25th December was widely accepted date because it had already been a major pagan festival. This day the pagan's celebrated the birth of the invisible sun or the birth of the unconquerable sun. Gradually Christmas replaced the pagan festival having applied the title "sun of righteousness" to Christ.

Christmas message

The Christmas stands at the heart of much of our understanding of God becoming man and dwelling among us. The story of the birth of Jesus brings about a reversal in the value system of the world; it provides an opportunity to re-examine our values. One of the most remarkable features of Christmas is its family character. Unlike the other feasts it imparts to our hearts an intimate joy. It brings friends and relatives and indeed the whole community of the faithful together.

Christmas brings us together-

- To experience the love and warmth of our near and dear ones.
- To break the uniformity and feeling of loneliness.

- To be reconciled with those who alienate themselves from us.
- To build a community where peace, happiness and harmony dwells.

Christmas is not an event of past. It is the event of the present. So Christ has to be born in our hearts every day. In order to experience the joy of Christmas celebration in our homes today:

- We have to acknowledge Christ as our light.
- We must purify our souls from all stains of sin and corruption and open the door to Christ.
- Accept the message He brings, the message of peace and love.
- Share the love of Christ with others, for joy shared is joy doubled.

Christmas without Christ is empty and Christian community life without Christ is meaningless. So as Christmas is approaching near let us keep in mind this original inspiration of St. Francis of Assisi in our mind. When we prepare the crib and celebrate the coming of the Lord, let us feel the presence of our Lord in the cave of our hearts. Let us share this experience with others and with joyful hearts sing with our family and friends. "Joy to the world the Lord has come let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing."

DOOR OF MERCY

Judith D Souza

The Jubilee Year of Mercy started on the 8th of December 2015, the Feast of Immaculate Conception. Our Holy Father Pope Francis called for this special year to highlight God's forgiveness and mercy for all people. The Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica in Rome was opened on that day. Pope Francis wanted the jubilee year to be celebrated not just in Rome but all around the world. Therefore, the holy doors of the cathedrals of all dioceses, significant shrines, and historic churches were also opened on that day.



Peter Mascarenhas, made a solemn entry through the holy door of the Cathedral. We recited the rosary and spent some time in prayer to our Lady the Mother of Mercy. Fr Peter concluded the prayer with a blessing. Though the Jubilee Year of Mercy has ended we have learned to live out the church's call for mercy and forgiveness.



The jubilee year officially ended on 20th of November 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. The Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica was closed on that day. The Montfort Associates of Maria Bhavan, Bengaluru, met at the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier Bengaluru to commemorate the closing of holy door and conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The group, led by Fr.

CHILDREN'S DAY - MARIA BHAVAN

Prakash Chandren smm

It was indeed a Super Sunday not because it was a holiday rather it was Children's Day in Maria Bhavan. The Children's Day is celebrated every year on the 14th of November to commemorate the birthday of the architect of modern India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He loved children immensely. Sometimes he became so excited that he did mischief like children. Children also got excited by his mischief and responded calling him 'Chacha'. The Children's Day in Mariabhavan was memorably organized by the Mariabhavan brothers on 20th of November. This year it was really different and wonderful not because brothers were good in number but the good number of children came from different orphanages. There were nearly hundred and twenty five children along with them there were ten volunteers.



We began the Children's day with the short reading from the Scripture and with a prayer song sung by brothers. Fr. Aswani welcomed the children and teachers and sisters who brought them to the house. He encouraged the children by calling them to take part in all the activities of the day joyfully and make each other happy and he thanked the children for coming over here to be with us. Immediately after this, a variety of attractive, thrilling games were conducted for the children. The whole campus filled with children was really amazing and every child was given the opportunity to enjoy participating in the games. The children were not only simple but they were spontaneous in talking to each other, running around, having fun with brothers, shouting, clapping,



encouraging each other to win the games.

In the evening we had organized cultural competition to the children. The cultural evening was inaugurated with lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries and prayer dance by the Anugraha children. The inaugural message was given by Fr. Peter Mascarenhas. He addressed the Children by asking questions and drew their attention to the words of Jesus who had great love for children.

He told them that children are gift from God; children in the true sense are the resources of our country. Finally he told the children not to keep the happiness for themselves but carry it home and share it with others. The evening was really colourful with the cultural program by the children.



The aim of organizing this Children's Day Celebration was to bring out the talents that are hidden in children and to develop them emotionally, physically and mentally so that they would become better citizens tomorrow. At the end the prizes were distributed to all the children to build in them the confidence to shine and to

improve their talents that God has blessed them with. By God's grace everything went on well. Fathers and brothers in Maria Bhavan spent their valuable time with children in being with them and encouraging them. The day was ended with the refreshments for the children sponsored by the president of the Montfortian lay associates. We are grateful for all those who contributed to make this day a joyful one to all children and organizers.



SANTA CLAUS

Jaya Kumar D. smm

Every year, a significant portion of adults in the U.S., and a significant number of them around the world, get together and, spurred by some combination of love and whimsy and magical thinking, engage in a massive lie. Santa Claus, a.k.a. St. Nick, a.k.a. the bearded old man who embodies childhood: He is a spoiler in every sense of the word. He showers children with gifts, yes, but he's also a wide-scale deception that puts the paternalism in "paternalistic lie." And Santa does all that, of course he being what he is because people let him.

Why do people call Santa?

First, the Santa was a myth itself. There are, best I can tell, three general assumptions that have survived today to explain the origins of Santa as a Christmas icon. One is that his imagery is based on St. Nicholas, the fourth-century Bishop of Myra. Another is that he was introduced, as a commercial figure, in ads for the Coca-Cola Company in the early-20th century. Another is that he's a tale as old as time that the current manifestations of Santa are iterations of a figure who's been part of Western culture for as long as

that culture has involved rooftops and reindeer and Christmas trees.

From St. Nicholas to Santa

How did this St. Nicholas become a North Pole-dwelling bringer of Christmas gifts? The

original saint was a Greek born 280 years after Christ who became bishop of Myra, a small Roman town in modern Turkey. Nicholas was neither fat nor jolly but developed a reputation as a fiery, wiry, and defiant defender of church doctrine during the "Great Persecution," when Bibles were put to the torch and priests made to r e n o u n c e



Christianity or face execution. Nicholas defied these edicts and spent years in prison before Constantine brought Christianity to prominence in his empire. Nicholas's fame lived long after his death (on December 6 of some unknown year in the mid-fourth century) because he was associated with many miracles, and reverence for him continues to this day independent of his Santa Claus connection.

St. Nicholas was the unchallenged bringer of gifts and the toast of celebrations centred around his day, December 6. The strict saint took on some aspects of earlier European deities, like the Roman Saturn or the Norse Odin, who appeared as white-bearded men and had magical powers like flight. He also ensured that kids toed the line by saying their prayers and practicing good behaviour.

But after the Protestant Reformation, saints like Nicholas fell out of favor across much of northern Europe. "That was problematic," Bowler said. "You still love your kids, but now who is going to bring them the gifts?"

Bowler said that, in many cases, that job fell to baby Jesus, and the date was moved to Christmas rather than December 6. "But the infant's carrying capacity is very limited, and he's not very scary either," Bowler said. "So the Christ child was often given a scary helper to do the lugging of presents and the threatening of kids that doesn't seem appropriate coming from the baby Jesus."

What about Santa Claus?

Parents reason that they owe the whole Christmas myth to their children! Christmas traditions are focused primarily on kids, and they are certainly the center of most of what happens. I know because I kept seventeen Christmases. My older sister and younger brother and I were the recipients of much and the givers of very little on that day and it all started with the Santa Claus lie.

Conclusion

At Christmas, we celebrate that God himself came in bodily form, in real flesh and blood, to earth. However, after he ascended to heaven and his physical presence was no longer on earth, Jesus entrusted believers to be his "body" (1Corinthians 12:27). By all accounts, St. Nicholas lived a life that helped others to see the reality of Christ. How can we follow his example and help others to see Christ in us (in real flesh and blood) this Christmas?

On Christmas day, few people stop to think how it originated. Started as a pagan holiday during the time of Romans, it developed into a Christian celebration dedicated to Christ. People in different age groups, both kids and adults, enjoy the season of Christmas. Christmas has been very big and an inspiring holiday for many families around the world for many centuries. Packed with busy shoppers, jingle bells, colorful lights and Santa Claus, Christmas is thought by many people to be "the most wonderful time of the year". Winter, snow, Christmas tree, decorations and Santa Claus are very important things which make us think that it is the most beautiful day of all the year. Everybody waits for Christmas, because that day has various meaning for different people. But for kids, rather than shoppers, colorful lights, Santa Claus is their main reason why they count the days till Christmas eve. Even though one might say that Santa is just a big lie, Santa Claus brings a whole new meaning to the season of Christmas. Although almost everyone has already figured out that Santa

Claus is a big myth, kids, who are younger than 12 or 13 years, should have the right to be fascinated, and to use Santa Claus as a possible role model.

Unlike adults most of the kids wait for this season of the year hoping that they might able to get a glance at Santa Claus and his best friends, reindeers. Santa Claus is one of the most important imaginary figures on this earth, who has touched the hearts and souls of many children, is Saint Nicholas. It is said that he placed gold coins in the socks of three poor

sisters so that they would have a dowry and not be sold into prostitution. St. Nick, better known as Santa Claus, is famous for bringing gifts to children that are in need. Known for having a huge belly and a gigantic heart, Santa Claus brings hope to kids who are hopeless and smiles to those who have lost theirs. While snuggled in their bed, desperately trying to catch a wink of sleep, children around the world await the arrival of Santa Claus. Dressed in red and with a jolly old smile, he manages to fulfil the dreams of kids through millions of miles.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I want to subscribe/give a gift subscription for year/s to

Name :

Address :

Pincode :

CURRENT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 Copy	Rs. 35/-
1 Year (4 Issues)	Rs. 125/-
2 Years (8 Issues)	Rs. 250/-
3 Years (12 Issues)	Rs. 375/-

I am sending Rs./- by M. O. on / Bank Draft No. Date

(D.D. Should be drawn in favour of the **Director, Montfort Marian Centre,**

Maria Bhavan, Bangalore - 560 029)



Congratulations

*The New Cardinal of
Papua Newguinea John Ribat
visited the Vice Province of India*





**Montfort Marian Centre
Bengaluru**