



# *Journey to Our Lady*

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## *My Dear Friends,*

In the prayer, Hail Holy Queen, Mary is “Our Life, Our Sweetness, and Our Hope.” This simple message tells us that the Mother of God is our most faithful advocate. Perfectly united with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our Blessed Mother can guide us gently to our salvation.

Born of human parents and without the stain of original sin, Mary was completely centered – body, mind, and spirit – in God’s way of living and never strayed from God’s path during her entire human existence on earth. Unlike Mary, we are born with the stain of original sin. However, through Baptism and the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation we are given every opportunity to wash away our sins so that we too can live life as God wants us to live it.

We are all God’s children, however many of us choose to stray from the path God has laid out for us to reach eternal life in His Kingdom. In all of her life’s journeys, Mary was steadfast in her love, her belief, her faith, and her trust in God. For our journey, our Heavenly Father entrusts us to our Blessed Mother.

When we place ourselves in Mary’s maternal care, our Lady helps us to overcome our own imperfections and fears – opening our hearts to God’s loving graces so that we can follow the Lord’s way without fear, without hesitation, and be Christ-like in our daily living.

Mary, indeed, is full of God’s grace which protected her on earth and ultimately raised her to Heaven to be Queen of the Most Holy. As our heavenly Mother, our Lady will intercede for us and dispense God’s graces upon us so that we can rise in holiness in our lifetime and enter into eternal joy — body and soul. Let us continue our journey.

## *Our Living Garden*

St. Therese of Lisieux often spoke of flowers — that every flower of every size and color plays an important role in beautifying our world. If every flower wanted to be a rose, according to St. Therese, spring would lose its loveliness. (St. Therese; *Story of a Soul*)

Like nature’s flowers — from the tiniest wildflower to the most beautiful rose — each one of us has something different to offer our world because each of us is different by God’s design. Regardless of our “status” in life, we all can bring our world closer to Heaven — if we each choose to do so — with our unique offerings of faith, hope, and love.

At the same time, we are meant to complement one another — not compete with one another — in our journey to holiness. Just as the variety and diversity of flowers add beauty to any garden, according to St. Therese, “so it is in the world of souls, our Lord’s living garden.” (*Story of a Soul*)

In our Lord’s garden, Christ is the sower of seeds. “Seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it” [Matthew 13:23] and flourishes with it. In addition, God gives us Mary our Blessed Mother to tend to us, to nurture us, and to draw us closer to her Son Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, so that we can grow in holiness.

Christ entered the world through Mary for our salvation, therefore it is hard to imagine (see story, pg.2) >

## ***(Living Garden, cont'd from pg. 1)***

growing in holiness without Mary's help. When we open our hearts to Mary's loving care, we unite ourselves to her Immaculate Heart which unites us to her Son's Sacred Heart. Truly, Mary with her maternal love and guidance can cultivate us into beautiful examples of God's love and mercy if we choose to be flowers in our Lord's living garden—if we choose to grow in holiness according to God's plan.

St. Therese referred to Mary as her heavenly gardener. Our Blessed Mother knows what we need to grow in holiness because we cannot grow by ourselves using our own limited resources. St. Therese never relied on herself, knowing that without God's grace, the weeds of sin would smother the Little Flower.

How often do we feel smothered by life's demands and pressures? God calls us to live a life of faith, hope, and charity, but society pulls us in a different direction. We are torn internally and our faith has little chance to grow in an increasingly secular world. We yearn for a better life and peace on earth, and yet we often find ourselves unfulfilled.



Mary is our refuge and our hope. Our Blessed Mother, the only human being who put herself perfectly into God's hands, can help clear away the obstacles that hinder our growth and discourage us from achieving our full potential as disciples of Christ. As disciples — as flowers in the Lord's living garden — we can spread God's love and mercy to those in greatest need. By the grace of God, we can make our world less barren and more beautiful with faith, hope and charity. #

## ***Holy Light***

We all know the pleasure of being outdoors on a beautiful day under a big blue sky with the warmth and light of the sun on our faces. A feeling of peace and serenity comes over us and we want to hold onto that feeling for as long as possible.

We can hold onto that feeling when we do the work of our Lord. As His disciples, we can brighten and give warmth to our world with rays of faith, hope, and charity. Our work is not easy, especially when the news events of the day seem to be all bad. However, that is when the need is greatest.

When we put our full faith and trust in God, we are given the grace—the light—to see our world as our Lord sees it—with love and mercy in our hearts. Truly, Mary our Blessed Mother is our beautiful role model. During her earthly life, Mary met every one and every challenge with compassion, mercy, patience and most of all, with God's love in her heart.

Because of her faith in God, Mary's heart never hardened. "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled," said Elizabeth to Mary during the visitation [Luke 1:45]. Jesus shone through Mary because Mary believed in the Word of God and said yes to His calling. We are called to do the same.

Once faith takes hold in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Son of God can shine through us, and we can be Christ-like in our daily living. We can bring joy into our world like Mary when we say yes to God's call and allow Jesus to live within us and through us each and every day, even in our darkest days.

Yes, our faith will be tested, but our Lord will reinforce our faith with His love and mercy so that we can live life as it is meant to be lived—with the peace and serenity of knowing our lives are in good hands—in God's hands. In turn, we too can be a source of light and warmth for those of us still struggling in the dark. May the Light of Life shine upon us and through us in all the days of our lives! #

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### ***Prayer***

*Holy Mother,  
May the Light of Life  
shine through me  
as it shines through you.  
In union with  
the Holy Spirit,  
help me  
to accept God's graces  
so that I can be  
Christ-like in sharing  
love and mercy  
with those around me.  
Help me to grow  
in holiness every day.  
Do not let  
society's pressures  
overwhelm me  
and tear me down.  
Like the flowers  
in fields and gardens,  
may my life add  
beauty to the world  
with God's grace.  
Amen.*

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## ***Fruit of the Tree***

In a perfect world, when a tree receives the proper attention and care, its blossoms become abundant fruit for all to enjoy. However, in our world that is not so perfect, bad weather, disease, insects can interfere with our best efforts and cause the tree and its fruit to wither. We do not always like to admit it, but relying on our own resources has its limitations.

Try as we do to lead good and fruitful lives, we are limited when we rely solely upon ourselves without help from God. All too often we have witnessed the withering of society's standards in a world that desperately needs Christ's living waters to thrive. "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing," said Jesus [John 15:5].

Admitting that we can do nothing without our Lord is difficult especially when we believe ourselves to be self-sufficient. Truly, there is more to life than self-sufficiency. If we want to do more than just survive with an empty soul, we need to be united with the Holy Trinity in order to live life fully. Mary, our Blessed Mother, is testament to that.

St. Maximilian Kolbe explained that Mary was spouse to the Holy Spirit, being completely filled with God. From that union Jesus Christ, the fruit of Mary's womb, came into our world to save us from sin so that we could grow in holiness on earth for eternal life in Heaven.

Our Blessed Mother can help us obtain unity with the Holy Trinity through her intercession and dispensing of God's graces. With the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can be fruitful by bringing Christ to those who are in most need of His love and mercy. #



## ***"I Thirst"***

There is such a longing, a yearning, a thirsting in the world for a better way of life. Our instincts tell us that something is wrong, something is missing, and yet many are not clear on what that "something" is.

Christ knows. From His cross He told us what that "something" is when He said "I thirst" [John 19:28]. Christ thirsts for us. He yearns to give us His love and welcome us in His Father's kingdom.

Mary, who stood at the foot of His cross, knows her Son's thirst. Christ gave us Mary so that our Blessed Mother, in union with the Holy Spirit, could lead us to His Sacred Heart to receive His tender love and mercy. In other words, the "something" that so many of us are missing is God's presence in our lives.

So many believe we are alone with only our wits and earthly wisdom to get us by; all too often we are led astray by anger, resentment, and temptations. What many of us do not realize is that to satisfy our yearning, to quench our thirst for a better life, we must quench the thirst of Jesus. We can do this by opening our hearts and souls to Him, so He can pour His love into us. We in turn can share our Lord's love with those who are suffering among us in our world.

How many of us turn a blind eye to the lonely, the poor, the sick as a way of shutting out people and their suffering especially when our own problems appear to be more than we can handle? Do we forget our Lord's call to us? "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me...For my yoke is easy and my burden light" [Matthew 11:28-30].



What we learn is the way of life that our Lord wants us to live on earth. With Mary's guidance, we can answer our Lord's call and quench our thirst with faith, hope, and charity in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. #

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### ***Prayer***

*Dearest Mother,  
Help me to find  
God in my life.  
The emptiness I feel,  
the dryness,  
is overwhelming.  
Help me to see  
that only in unity with  
God the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit,  
will I experience  
true fulfillment  
in my life.  
Show me the way  
to embrace  
the Holy Trinity  
and  
to share  
that fulfillment  
with those less fortunate.  
May I help  
to alleviate suffering.  
Only then  
can my thirst  
be quenched.  
Amen*

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## Dear Angel,

Our Lord wants so much to love us with His Sacred Heart and yet many of us reject His perfect love, causing His heart to ache. Please do not allow me to be a source of His pain. Instead, help me to pull away the thorns so that I may console the heart of Jesus.

With Mary, our Blessed Mother, as my advocate and Mediatrix, may I humbly receive God's graces so that I can participate in our salvation according to God's plan. Strengthen my resolve so that I never turn my back on our Lord and never abandon Mary at the foot of her Son's cross. Amen.



## Taste of Heaven

At the Wedding Feast of Cana, turning water into wine was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. He went on to heal the sick, turn sinners into disciples, raise the dead, and blaze a path to Heaven for the sake of our salvation and the salvation of the world. Today, our Lord continues to give His love and mercy to those of us willing to accept His graces and share in His work.

So how can we partake in this feast of graces that our Lord has laid out for us with His merciful love? As Mary our Blessed Mother said to the servants at the wedding, "Do whatever He tells you" [John 2:5]. In other words, believe in the Gospel, repent, and "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" [Matthew 5:48].

Remember, with God, nothing is impossible. When we open our hearts, say yes to God, and welcome the Holy Spirit into our souls, our lives are transformed. With every breath we take, with every move we make, and with the grace of God, we can sanctify our lives. Like Mary, our souls can proclaim the greatness of the Lord and our spirits can rejoice in God our savior! [Luke 1:46-47] Regardless of who we are – young, old, rich, poor, married, single, healthy, or sick – we can magnify our Lord – as Mary did – in the way we live, work, and love.

Our Blessed Mother will help us. We have no better advocate than Mary. Christ listens to His mother when she intercedes on our behalf, just as she did at the wedding feast. As Mary guides us closer to her Son, we discover that our attachment to earthly wants decreases as our attachment to Christ increases. The more we become Christ-like in our daily living, the more we become true children of God in whom our Lord is well-pleased.

To grow in holiness, we must find that quiet room in our lives to pray. We must make room in the center of our lives for God's love by cleansing our souls through Baptism and Penance, participating in Mass, and receiving the Holy Eucharist. Christ gives us everything we need – His body, blood, soul and divinity – to strengthen our will and reinforce our resolve to sin no more and to love one another as God loves us. What we do in this world, how we treat ourselves and each other, how we handle adversity, and what role – if any – we allow God to play in our lives will determine our salvation and the world's salvation.

By changing water into wine, Christ gave the wedding guests the very best – He gave them a taste of Heaven. True, we cannot perform miracles, but we can magnify our Lord by sharing in His work of merciful love. By the power of the Holy Trinity with Mary's intercession, we can make our world a better place. In essence, we can give our world a taste of Heaven.

### *Journey to Our Lady*

is published five times a year to help readers develop a closer relationship to Mary our Blessed Mother.

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