



Journey to Our Lady

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My Dear Friends,

Another New Year and time already is going by so quickly. How do we stay on top of all that is happening in our world? There is only so much we can absorb. There is only so much we can understand.

Where can we go to find comfort? What can we do when fear creeps into our hearts? Who can we trust?

Let us remember the Psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures He makes me lie down; to still waters He leads me; He restores my soul.” [Psalm 23:1-3]

True, green pastures and still waters might seem out of place when our world appears to be breaking apart, but that is when we need the peace and serenity that only God can provide in our souls. And it is through that peace and serenity that we can see clearly and think clearly.

We may not understand the events of the day. Like Mary, we can ponder much in our hearts so long as we do not close our hearts. When we allow our hearts to harden and allow anger to take root in our souls, we poison ourselves and our world. Sowing seeds of hatred only pulls us away from God and Heaven.

Let us remember that love, compassion, mercy, and dignity were part of Mary’s daily living because her life was centered in God. Let us reach out to our Blessed Mother. Our Lady is with us to guide us to Our Lord’s embrace—bringing our world closer to Heaven. Let us continue our Journey.

The Best is Yet to Come

How often have we heard we are heading in the wrong direction? How many times have our instincts told us something is not quite right? With each new year, we are given an opportunity to plot a new course in our lives. As we move forward—especially as we approach the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Fatima—let us rediscover our faith in God and find the fullness of life itself.

God has given us so many gifts and yet so many of us have yet to discover those gifts. Each one of us has God-given talents that are meant to be shared. True, those talents may not make us rich and famous, but those talents are not meant to be tossed away either. Each one of us is called to be a beacon of heavenly light in our own individual way.

Mary, our Blessed Mother, will help us and guide our light so that it always shines toward God. Among the many blessings God gave Our Lady was her loving and open heart. Throughout her entire life in this world, Mary used her blessing to share God’s love. Our Lady did so by saying yes to God’s call to bring Jesus into the world for our salvation.

Mary continues to share God’s love by reaching out to us through her apparitions. Our Lady calls on us to devote ourselves to her Immaculate Heart as a way to lead us to God. Mary teaches us how to love God as He should be loved—without hesitation and with full faith in His Word, His way and His (See story, pg. 2) >

(The Best to Come, cont'd from pg. 1)

mercy. When God is in the center of our lives, nothing is impossible. Look at the three children of Fatima—Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. Look at what was accomplished when these children, at Mary's behest, offered themselves to God. Heeding Mary's call to pray and make reparations for sins changed the course of history in 1917.

Mary's message is just as timely today as it was 100 years ago—we must stop offending God because He is already too much offended. These offenses—and their dangers—come when we turn away from God and commit acts against God's will. With these warnings also comes a clear message of hope and mercy. If we pray as Our Lady asks us, God will give us peace in our world.

Such peace will come as we experience an internal transformation when we allow God to be the center of our lives. With that internal peace, we can take part in God's plan with a sense dignity, modesty, respect and value for all human life. Our beacons of light can cast out the darkness that is trying to take hold of our world and keep Heaven out of our sight.

We are called to live our faith in every aspect of our lives—not behind closed doors, which would be like hiding our light under a bushel. God certainly does not want us to bury His gifts. He wants His gifts to be shared for the good of all of His creation in order to keep our world connected to Heaven. God's creation is meant to be renewed and restored, not torn apart.

Let us use these days ahead to live out God's will and turn gloom to joy. Mary, the Cause of Our Joy, will show us the way and truly our best days will come. #

Prayer

*Heavenly Mother,
Help us to embrace
your
Immaculate Heart.
United
with your Son
Jesus Christ,
guide us on the path
that leads us
to the
Heavenly Kingdom.
Help us
to live a life
that
glorifies God
and
lights the way toward
our Heavenly Father.
May we never lose
the light of God's love
so we may live
to share His love
always.
Amen.*

Salt of the Earth

“You are the salt of the earth,” says the Gospel according to Matthew 5:13. Back in the days of Christ, salt was used to protect food from becoming rancid. Today, we use salt to enhance the flavor of our food. As the salt of the earth, perhaps we are called to preserve and add flavor to life.

How do we preserve, protect, defend and add flavor to life? Each in our own individual way, but that does not mean to the exclusion of everyone else. What we do in life is meant to be shared and whether we believe it, or see it, or not, what we do in life does have an impact.

That impact will either serve good or it will serve evil—that is the choice we make. Remember, evil flourishes when good people do nothing. What does evil do? It destroys and makes life rancid. That is why we must be the salt of the earth.

Imagine if Mary, our Blessed Mother, had done nothing. Even after Mary said yes to God's call to be the mother of our Savior, Our Lady had opportunities to do nothing, but Mary choose otherwise. Mary did not hide herself; instead Our Lady shared all that she had, especially Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.

Like Mary, we are called to share Jesus by the way we live and work and treat one another. Our calling is to be Christ-like and to see Christ in others; whatever we do for the least of our Lord's brothers and sisters we do to our Lord. Through the lives of Jesus and Mary, we understand what it means to be the salt of the earth.

Each day we have the opportunity to share love, compassion, and mercy with the people around us—that is how we preserve our world and add good flavor to life. That is how each of us can be faithful stewards of God's gifts to us. Otherwise, what do we have and what do we lose?

As Matthew went on to say: We are “the light of the world” [Matthew 5:14]. With that light, we can spread God's loving warmth and show the way to better days. Let us look to Jesus and Mary to teach us, to guide us, to embrace us, and with the Holy Spirit, unite us with our Father in Heaven. #

Time to Live

God wants each of us to live life to the fullest. Let us not get confused—having a busy life is not necessarily a full life. Remember the saying, if the devil does not make us bad, it makes us busy. Perhaps we should take stock, clean out the clutter in our lives, and make room for what is important.

We need to give ourselves space and time in order to have that quiet room where we can hear God's answers to our prayers and see God working in our lives. When our lives are in sync with God's will and we are living the way God wants us to live, we are living life to the fullest.

That fullness comes from God's love—a love that has to be and needs to be shared. St. Paul once wrote: Do you not know you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? [1 Corinthians 3:16] God is love, therefore we are temples of God's love. As temples, we have a responsibility to represent the best life has to offer—charity, compassion, and good will. We should dedicate our time to being perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.

Perfection is a tall order for us because we are imperfect. We were born with the stain of original sin, but that one imperfection should not stop us. Let us remember that all of the saints were imperfect people, but they dedicated their lives to sharing God's love each in their own individual way and in doing so, they helped to provide healing to our world from the wounds of sin.

True, a daunting task, but God does not expect us to take on this challenge alone. Mary, our Mother and Queen of the Most Holy, will help us along with an army of angels and saints. Yes, there will be pain as there was for the children of Fatima. They endured much for the conversion of sinners and for the healing of our world. What they endured they offered up to God. We too can offer up what we experience in life—good and bad—giving our lives a meaningful purpose we otherwise would not have. Yes, let us live life to the fullest. #

No Greater Love

Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear sufferings for the conversion of sinners? This is the question Our Lady asked Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco when Mary first appeared on May 13, 1917 in Fatima, Portugal. How would we answer such a question?

The Bible tells us there is no greater love than to give up one's life for your friends [John 15:13]. When we think of giving up one's life for someone, we may think of the ultimate sacrifice; most often, however, it is the willingness to give up life as we know it along with its comforts and conveniences.

When the three children of Fatima said yes to Mary, they did not know what they were getting into, but they offered themselves willingly and without regret. The children made many little sacrifices for the conversion of sinners; the fact is they gave up life as they knew it—for the love of God and humanity—and through it all, they prayed.

We may never know how many lives were changed for the better or how many souls were saved as a result of Fatima, but that is not for us to count. It is far more important that we follow the examples of Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta—to willingly say yes to God's call. Certainly what they endured for God and humanity was not easy. At times, what they experienced was quite scary, but they were always safe with Mary—let us always remember that.

Mary shows us that God does not abandon us, but do we abandon God when life does not always go the way we expect it? What do we do when God's plan changes our plans? Are we willing to say yes? Saying yes does not guarantee happiness in this world. The children of Fatima faced great resistance, their lives were threatened, and they were even thrown in jail. Saying yes does mean uniting ourselves with our Lord, which will lead to a better world and ultimately everlasting joy. #



Prayer

*Holy Mother,
Please give me
the courage
to offer my life
to God.
Instead of fear,
help me to feel
the joy
of serving God
in my daily living
even when it means
walking away
from the comforts
in my life.
Help me to see
God's love
through my tears.
The days ahead
may prove difficult.
Alone,
I do not have
the strength to endure.
Stand close to me,
Dear Lady,
so that I do not fail.
Amen.*

Dear Guardian Angel,

Oh, dear Angel, please never leave my side. There are days when I feel so outnumbered; when my beliefs seem so out of place; and when I wonder if I am going in the right direction. On those days, confusion and doubt tend to reign.

Help me to find God's goodness in this world, especially when darkness seems to be taking hold of man's heart. Help me to find the strength to live my faith fully and without fear. Protect me through life.

Show me the way to Mary, the Queen of angels and saints. May I always feel the safety and comfort of her loving maternal embrace. Mary wants what is best for us. May I devote myself to her Immaculate Heart, which will ultimately triumph. #



You Are in My Prayers

Such simple words—"you are in my prayers"—they mean so much and should not be said lightly. Prayer is very powerful when we commit to it with sincerity in our hearts. Remember what Our Lady said to the children of Fatima—a message that is meant for all of us: Pray. Pray very much.

God wants us to do more than pray for those we love. He wants us to pray for those who want to harm and persecute us. In doing so, we remove the angst and anger from our own hearts and we untie the knots in our stomachs. We remove the obstacles between us and God. In essence, when we pray we heal.

In her earthly lifetime, Our Lady dedicated her life to prayer. Mary urges us to pray because Our Lady knows its power and importance in the work of healing, reparation, and redemption. When we pray, we share in that work and in the process, we unite with Jesus Christ. Mary wants us to unite with her Son because only through that saving unity with Jesus Christ will we reach the Kingdom of God.

Even if we are unable to do anything else, we can always pray. The problem is not enough people pray and as a result, so many are unable to witness and experience God's loving mercy. Imagine how much closer our world would be to Heaven if we all prayed. Perhaps we think prayer is like a drop of water in a bucket. What difference does a drop of water make? It's one more drop than what was there before. If each one of us adds a drop every day, the bucket eventually becomes full and overflows.

Let us consider Fatima. When Our Lady first appeared on May 13, 1917, Mary stood before three children. Word of the apparitions spread and by October 13th, roughly 70,000 people witnessed the miracle of the sun in Fatima. Many prayers were offered up and many were answered. Today, a Basilica stands in Fatima and millions have come to pay homage and to pray.

Of course, God answers our prayers in His own time and choosing. An answer may come overnight or it may take months or even years. However, time is never wasted in prayer. If we persevere in our prayers, we solidify and fortify our relationship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that is the relationship Mary our Blessed Mother wants for each of us.

Truly our world is in need of many prayers to help it through these very challenging, and often, violent times. We do not know what the future holds, but we can certainly do our share to ensure a better, more loving, more forgiving, more compassionate and by far a more peaceful future for ourselves, our loved ones, and our enemies if we devote more time to pray for one another and our world. You are in my prayers. #

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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