



# *Journey to Our Lady*

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## *My Dear Friends,*

With His love and mercy, our Lord has given us directions that will lead us to Heaven. The question is: Will we follow those directions? That is the choice each one of us has to make.

Perhaps many of us think the way to Heaven is too difficult—too many rules, not enough freedom—the way to Heaven does not conform to the “earthly” way of life. Such an outlook keeps Heaven out of reach and prevents many from seeing that there is much more to life than the secular world has to offer.

When we focus on our self-interests and personal pleasures, we limit ourselves. When we focus on living for God’s sake, we broaden our horizons! We find the strength to resist sinful temptations and discover the joy in finding our time is better spent sharing faith and hope through charity. We have such potential to bring beauty into our world; much of that potential remains unexplored.

Mary, our Blessed Mother, can guide us in this exploration through the mysteries of the Rosary which show us how to accept our Lord and His will—without fear and with an open heart. We see how to be Christ-like with acts of faith, hope, and charity in our daily living even on our darkest days. If we remain true to God, we will find ourselves being lifted higher in our journey toward Heaven.

Always remember: With God, nothing is impossible. If we choose to follow our Lord’s directions and with Mary’s maternal guidance, we can live holy lives in this world—keeping Heaven within our reach. Let us continue our journey.

## *Now I See*

“Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect,” said Jesus Christ [Matthew 5:48]. How many times have we heard this call to holiness, only to think of it as an unrealistic, perhaps impossible, expectation? The truth is we can be holy in this world! With divine help, we can answer our Lord’s call to holiness with a resounding yes!

What we aspire to in holiness is not by our own power, but by the power of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, that does not mean we can sit back and do nothing. Yes, we have work to do; work that is directed by the Holy Trinity. Mary, our Blessed Mother, will help us follow those directions.

One might think that Mary, who was born without the stain of original sin and found favor with God, had already achieved the pinnacle of holiness even before she said yes at the Annunciation, but the Rosary shows that our Lady was raised even higher in her lifetime. You may ask how can we, who are born with original sin, live up to such divine expectations? Simple—with patience and humility.

To be truly holy, we need to remember that God does not work according to our timeline or according to our human imaginations, which is why patience and humility are helpful companions on our journey. While some of us may be called to do the extraordinary with God’s grace, most of us are called to live holy lives in our ordinary ways and daily duties. There is no one way to holiness; the way is different for (see story, pg.2)>

***(Now I See, cont'd from pg. 1)***

each and every one of us because each one of us is unique by God's design.

The Rosary opened my own eyes to this call and helped me to see the wonderful inner potential that goes mostly untapped because many do not see the connection between us and Heaven. With proper meditation, we can apply each of the Rosary's mysteries to our own lives and be transformed so we can live life according to God's plan. Mary wants very much for us to live holy lives which is why our Blessed Mother calls on us to pray the Rosary every day. Mary made her message clear during her apparitions to the three shepherd children of Fatima, Portugal in 1917: We must pray many Rosaries. What better way for faith, hope, and love to live within us and through us than to follow the Rosary's mysteries to Heaven!

The Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries show us that we should not be afraid to open our hearts, to say yes to God's call, to obey His will, to live our faith, and to actively participate in our Lord's plan for peace and salvation for us and for our world. When we meditate on the mysteries, we learn through Jesus and Mary to see beyond our own needs and to go the extra miles to share love and compassion with those in most need of God's mercy. No matter how difficult the journey and the burden, and no matter how often we stumble, if we reach out to God with love, sincerity, and repentance in our hearts, God will give us the graces to complete our purpose in this world in order to reach Heaven's gate.

Becoming holy is easy, St. Faustina wrote; "it just takes a little good will"—and a loving, open heart to God and the graces He wishes to bestow on us through the Holy Spirit. If the soul is faithful to God, according to St. Faustina, a person can reach the highest levels of holiness one can attain here on earth. #

***Prayer***

*Heavenly Mother,  
May your holiness  
inspire me.*

*Help me to see  
that living a holy life  
in this world  
is within my grasp.*

*Help me  
to be faithful  
to God's inspirations.*

*The perfection  
God seeks  
is in my openness  
to His call.*

*In all humility  
may I accept  
my imperfections,  
not as barriers,  
but as reminders  
that I need God  
in my life  
and in my journey  
to Heaven.*

*Amen.*

***Out of Darkness***

*"I am the light of the world," said the Lord. "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." [John 8:12].*

Have you ever noticed a seedling in its early stages of growth? It reaches toward the sun. Without the sun, it cannot grow; it cannot blossom. It must have the sun's light and warmth to thrive. Can the same be said of us?

It is obvious that without the light and warmth of nature's sun, we would have cold darkness in which little would have a chance to take root and grow. Perhaps nature is Heaven's way of showing us that without the Lord's light, we have the cold darkness of sin with little chance to grow in holiness. How can we possibly live under such conditions?

One could argue that just as nature's sun is not necessary when man-made light can be used to make plants grow, the Lord's light is not necessary to live good and fruitful lives when we are inclined to do so on our own. When a source of light and warmth is provided, what difference does it make where it comes from?

The difference is our connection to God and Heaven. Without that connection, we lose the source of nourishment and strength that only God can provide; we limit ourselves to our own abilities, shortcomings, and short-sightedness. Like man-made light, we can easily burn out. Unless we turn toward Heaven, we will fail to see that God is the source of eternal light—the light of life.

Through the Rosary's mysteries, we can see that the light of life shone through Mary, the Blessed Virgin, while she lived on this earth. Mary's heart was open to God and by God's grace, our Lady became the Mother of our Savior and Mother to us all. Mary is our Mother of Hope and the Cause of Our Joy because through her, Jesus came into the world to show us the way to eternal life in Paradise.

By following the way of the Rosary, we too can open our hearts to God and God's grace can shine through us so that we can be a source of joy and hope here on earth and beacons of light that shine toward Heaven. #

## Small Steps

Living a holy life on earth may seem overwhelming especially when we consider what the saints, who came before us, went through during their lifetime. The obstacles, the struggles, the sufferings are enough to make some of us say: Forget it! Perhaps that is why God gives us only what we can handle—when we are ready and willing. That is our choice.

During the season of Lent, we generally make small sacrifices, abstain from little vices or habits, and possibly do extra charity work and go to confession more often than we normally do during ordinary time. When the 40 days of Lent are over, what do we choose to do? Do we breathe a sigh of relief and go back to our usual ways and habits? Or, do we try to build on those little changes we made during Lent in order to live more faithfully according to God's plan than to our own plan?

If we choose to live more faithfully according to God's plan, then what we do during Lent helps us to make room in our souls for God's graces. No matter how small that room is, God provides the grace—and the light—to help us see the beauty and the purpose of His will. If we act faithfully on God's inspirations, even in the smallest of ways, God sends us the grace to strengthen our faith to help us take on greater challenges and responsibilities. As the graces increase and as the Lord's light burns brighter in our souls, we see that what we once thought to be impossible becomes possible by the grace of God. Let us remember, however, that grace only comes to us to carry out what is inspired by God.

As we learn through the Rosary, the Blessed Virgin Mary was full of grace and the Lord was with her, enabling Our Lady to take on the responsibilities and challenges of faith, hope, and charity she was called upon to take during her lifetime. Therefore, let us call upon our Mother. Mary, the dispenser of God's graces, can help us take the steps that will lead us to holiness on earth and in the Kingdom of Heaven. #

## God's Love Lifts Us Higher

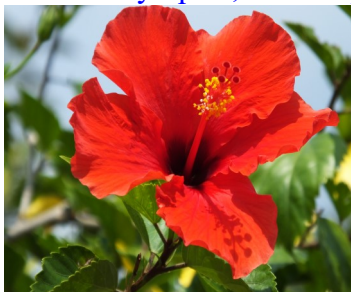
With the Assumption of Mary, we can see how God's love lifted Our Lady, body and soul, to Heaven—home for all eternity. Whether or not we reach Heaven depends on the choices we make during our earthly lifetime. The journey to Heaven does not begin when our lives end; that journey is upon us right now.

Mary can help us with our journey. Mary is our Mother and model of faith and charity. Born without original sin and already dedicated to God, our heavenly Father raised Mary to greater holiness when she said yes to His call to be mother of our Savior. Our Lady was raised higher when she became mother to us all at the foot of her Son's cross, and when she received the Holy Spirit for the second time in her life at Pentecost.

Raised to Heaven, our Blessed Mother is the Queen of angels and saints, who stand ready with Our Lady to help us, guide us, and protect us as we make our own journey. According to St. Louis de Montfort, Mary will lead us by the hand along the path of holiness, steady us when we might stumble, and help us to rise when we have fallen. Why? Because Mary knows the way. When we follow Mary, we cannot go wrong.

Everything Mary did in her lifetime demonstrates what we are to do for the love of God and salvation. Mary's openness, her acts of charity, her reliance on faith, hope, and trust in God, her union with her Son Jesus Christ, her acceptance of the Holy Spirit, and her prayer-filled life show us the beauty of God's graces.

With an open heart and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can unite ourselves with Christ, and all that we do in our work, our homes, and our communities can be for the glory of God. What we do in this world by the grace—the love—of God will lift us in our journey to holiness. How far we go is determined by our own free will. May the grace of God give us the will to follow our Lord's way to Heaven. #




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**Prayer**  
*Holy Mother,  
 God's love lifted you  
 to Heaven,  
 body and soul.  
 Help me  
 to be open to God's love  
 so that  
 I can follow  
 the Lord's way without fear  
 and  
 without hesitation.  
 The world around me  
 weighs me down.  
 Please give me strength  
 so  
 the weight of the world  
 does not stop me  
 on my journey  
 to holiness.  
 May the love and mercy  
 of  
 God lift me  
 as high as  
 Heaven allows.  
 Amen.*

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## ***Dear Guardian Angel,***

How do I hold onto God's goodness when life proves to be so difficult? How do I see God's graces working in my life when it seems so much is working against me? Help me, dear Angel, when I feel so alone. Help me to find comfort in following our Lord's will when it appears that so many are rejecting God's way of life.

Help me to feel the joy of seeing our Lord in my life as Mary Magdalene and the apostles did when they recognized Christ after His resurrection. Christ comes to all who are searching for Him. May the Blessed Mother, the Cause of Our Joy, help me so I do not lose my way as I follow the Lord's way. Amen.



## ***Promises to Keep***

God loves us so much that He sent His only Son into the world, not to condemn, but to save the world from the evil that exists. Jesus kept His promise. He carried the burden of sins to His crucifixion and then rose from the dead, charting the way for us to live for all eternity in Heaven.

Each time we go to Mass, each time we take Holy Communion, and each time we go to confession, we witness God's promise working in our own lives. What do we do in return for that promise? How do we react? Do we give our gratitude and thanks? Do we give our trust? Are our faith and sense of hope restored? Do we make a promise in return?

In essence, we do make a promise when we participate in Mass and go to confession. We promise to follow the Lord's way in faith, hope, and charity. Do we keep our promise? Do we give God reason to have faith, hope, and trust in us? Do we earn God's graces?

Following the Lord's way is not meant to make our lives difficult. Quite the contrary. Remaining true to our faith builds a relationship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as protects us and frees us from the complications and obstacles caused by sin. However, there are those who want us to think that answering yes to God's call and living our faith cause turbulence, anxiety, and ill will. The temptation is always there to abandon our journey—our promise.

If we think the way to Heaven is difficult, it is because we make it difficult with our resistance, our earthly ambitions, and misplaced desires for acceptance and attention. We want to believe in God, but we do not know how to make God "fit" into our lives and lifestyles. Many of us want God to conform to our ways instead of us conforming to God's way. Mary, our Blessed Mother, can help us out of this conundrum.

Love—God's love—was the center of Mary's life. Everything Mary did in her lifetime emanated from this center of love. Although Our Lady was a human being, Mary's love had no boundaries. Let us remember that God's love is infinite. Filled with this grace, Mary our Immaculate Mother wants to share this never-ending love with us. If we choose to accept it, we too receive the desire to share this love through faith, hope, and charity, just as Our Lady did during her human life. If we choose not to accept the grace of God's love, then what we share in this world, including our love, has its limits and boundaries.

God gives us everything we need, including our Blessed Mother, to help us keep our promise. Therefore, let us break through our boundaries and limitations—with the love of God, we can. By keeping our promise, as our Lord has kept His promise, we can live holy lives free from sin on earth and for all eternity in Heaven.

### ***Journey to Our Lady***

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

**Editor/Writer:** Carol Monaco, **Address:** P.O. Box 30101, Bethesda, Md. 20824; **Email:** cmonaco@journeytoourlady.com

**Web site:** www.journeytoourlady.com

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