



Journey to Our Lady

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My Dear Friends,

Rejoice and be glad! Our Lord kept His promise. He was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell and on the third day, rose from the dead in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into Heaven. He has broken the chains of sin and gives a lifeline to the faithful by way of the Holy Spirit.

Imagine, if you can, Our Lord pouring out the Holy Spirit onto us so that we are never alone. The Holy Spirit is Our Lord's gift of love to us. As Jesus explains in John's gospel, the Holy Spirit is to be with us always. The Holy Spirit "will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you," said the Lord [John 14:26].

The question is: do we have room for the Holy Spirit or are our hearts and minds too cluttered with earthly matters? Of course we are preoccupied with the here and now. We have work to do and responsibilities to meet. There is not much energy or time left for anything else—which is precisely why the Holy Spirit is so important to our lives.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are what we need to meet our responsibilities and to do our work as God wants us to do it—with faith, hope, and love in the forefront of all our life decisions. However, for the Holy Spirit to live within us and through us, we are called to love Our Lord and keep His Word. Doing so enables us to recognize God's love in our daily living.

For guidance, we certainly can look to Mary, our Blessed Mother. During her earthly lifetime, Mary followed every prompting of the Holy Spirit. With the power of Mary's intercession, we can do the same. Let us continue our journey.

Come Holy Spirit!

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth..." [John 14:15-17] The Holy Spirit is our Advocate that lives within each of us if we allow it. Let us ask ourselves: Are we truly inspired by the Holy Spirit?

In the profession of faith, we say we "believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets." We say it, but do we actually believe it?

Truly, we have much to ponder and if we are honest with ourselves, we may realize that we are not giving the Holy Spirit full rein of our lives. Consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts are meant to sustain us and help us recognize and obey divine inspirations in our daily living. Do we make use of these gifts as God intended?

Of course, allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit may conflict with demands in our daily lives and societal pressures. The Holy Spirit prompts us to follow the Word of God while society pressures us to follow a more secular way of life with a sense of moral relativism creeping into our conscience. Without the Holy Spirit, the lines between right and wrong, good and bad become blurred and confusing. (See story, pg. 2)

(Come Holy Spirit, cont'd from pg. 1)

And yet, God has a way of making crooked lines straight. Being filled with the Holy Spirit cleans out our internal clutter, conflicts, and worthless desires. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.” [Matthew 5:8] Yes, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can see God’s love in our lives perhaps in ways we had not seen before.

Let us turn to Mary, the Mother of God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Mary made the Word visible; through Mary, the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ and dwelt among us. By her complete adherence to God’s will, Jesus’ redemptive work, and every prompting of the Holy Spirit, Mary is our model of faith, hope, and charity (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Like Mary and the early disciples, we too can be instruments of God’s love. The Holy Spirit awakens our faith which gives us hope and the inspiration to share God’s love in our world. In essence, we can make the Word visible by the way we live our lives—if we open our hearts and souls to the Holy Spirit, which prepares us for whatever role God wants each of us to have.

In his apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis said we are called to holiness in ordinary daily life. Therefore, we need to allow ourselves to be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit to take part in the plan of our Heavenly Father’s loving goodness and be transformed into children of God with Mary as our Mother. Let us call on Our Lady’s intercession to help us accept the grace of the Holy Spirit that enlightens us to live in a way that is worthy of God’s call—with humility, respect, dignity, and love for one another as our Lord loves us. Come Holy Spirit come! #

Prayer

*Dearest Mother,
Help me
to be clean of heart.
Help me to clear
away the distractions
so that I can see
God’s love in my life.
Mary, Queen of the
Most Holy,
you who are perfectly
united with
God the Father, the Son,
and
the Holy Spirit,
please share the graces
I need with me
to follow
divine inspirations
instead of my
earthly desires.
May God’s love remain
in me and I in Him
all the days of my life.
Amen.*

God’s Love

“God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in Him [1 John 4:16]. In our distractions, temptations, and weariness, we may not realize that Our Lord is constantly giving us signs that His love is with us every day.

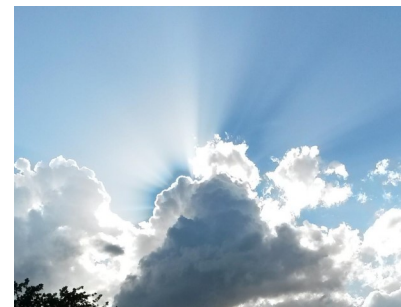
Consider symbols of the Holy Spirit—water, fire, cloud, light, the hand, the finger, the dove—what we may consider as ordinary, Our Lord used to signify the extraordinary. Perhaps using ordinary signs and symbols to show us the greatness of God’s love is a way of telling us that we can show the greatness of our love for God and for one another through our ordinary lives.

No act of love is too small in God’s eyes. Every act of love adds to the goodness in our world with each of us making a contribution. Granted, we cannot perform miracles the way the Apostles did after they received the Holy Spirit, but we can experience the wonders of God. Those wonders keep us connected to God’s love and enlivens the Word within our souls.

Consider: Mary, perfectly united with God’s love, brought forth the Word into the world by the fruit of her womb, Jesus. As we strive for perfection, we can bear fruit of the Holy Spirit—charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. What we experience will differ for each of us because each of us is unique by God’s design.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God...To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” [1 Corinthians 12:4-7]

May we never lose sight of God’s love in our lives and in our world and may we remain in God’s love until the end of time. #



Splendors of the Light

Among the many wonders of Spring are the light of day grows longer and the warmth of the sun beckons the flowers to come alive after a winter's slumber. Perhaps, the signs and wonders of Spring illustrate the splendors of the Light of Life.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me...will have the Light of Life," said the Lord [John 8:12]. Like seedlings that are transformed in the light of the sun, we are transformed by the Light of Life—the perfect light which enables us to live a full life like a flower in peak bloom.

God's light brings to life within us faith, truth, wisdom, charity, virtue, prayer, and the security of knowing Our Lord is present in our lives. With the light and warmth of God's grace, we can experience true joy and obtain the inner peace and serenity that we need to endure the unpredictable nature of our earthly lives. And just as the tiniest wild flower to the most beautiful rose brings loveliness to spring time, each of us can add beauty to our world—the beauty of sharing God's love and mercy.

However, unlike flowers in a field, we have the free will to choose. With the Light of Life, we are able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. As a result, we are able to recognize our own imperfections that stop us from growing closer to God. We also are able to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit which beckon us to keep our faith, trust, and hope in the Lord with open hearts.

We can either turn away from the light and never live up to our greatest potential or we can take in as much as our hearts and souls can absorb. If we choose the latter, the Light of Life will shine through us as it shone through Mary, the Mother of God, emanating the hope of salvation and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. Like the morning star that precedes the rising of the sun, Mary, our Blessed Mother, can guide us toward her Son—the Light of Life—so that we may experience the glorious splendors of God. #

Mission in Life

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you," said Jesus to his disciples [John 20: 21]. Like the first disciples of Christ, we have a mission in life and like the first disciples, Our Lord does not send us out alone.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Trinity is fully revealed—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As the Father sent the Son into the world for our salvation, the Son pours out the Holy Spirit which comes from the Father—all for the sake of love. This glorious gift of love is ours for the keeping and for the sharing—that is our mission.

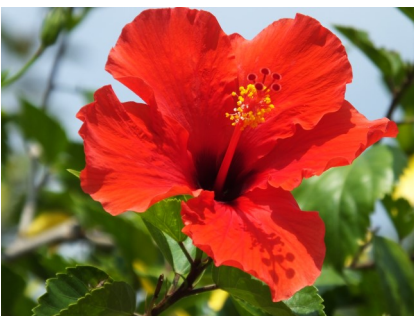
As we share in the communion of the Holy Trinity, we make a promise—to live by the way of the Lord—to become vessels for His use in the world. By doing so, we live less for ourselves and more for the glory of God—not out of an obligation, but as an act of selfless love.

In this union with the Holy Trinity, we realize our own littleness and limitations and discover the greatness of God—truly overwhelming, but certainly not meant to discourage our efforts. Rather, we experience our own transformation into children of light—the children of God.

With this transformation, we are able to see our purpose which is to love as God has loved us. We are able to see what it means to be Christ-like and to see

Christ in others. We are able to recognize the graces of God that give us the strength to follow Christ's way of the cross—willingly.

Should we ever stumble, we have Mary, the Blessed Mother, to support us and to guide us because Mary lived in perfect unity with the Holy Trinity. Mary's entire human existence was a mission of love. By the power of Mary's motherly intercession, may our lives be transformed into a mission of sharing God's love. #



Prayer

*Heavenly Mother,
Please guide me
to your Son,
Jesus Christ,
so that the
Light of Life
may shine on me.
I do not wish
to walk in darkness.
Oh, Queen of Peace,
share with me
the grace of peace
to end my
inner turmoil and distress.
Help me to find
my mission of love.
Do not let me become
discouraged
by my imperfections
and limitations.
May the grace of God
enlighten my heart
and soul
so that I will always see
God's love in my life.
Amen*

Dear Angel,

Inner peace is so elusive. Many times, I try to put my life in God's hands, only to pull it away in fear. Oh, the inner turmoil! Why is my trust in the Lord so weak? Our Lord gives us everything we need for our salvation and yet why do I reject His love? Help me, dear Angel, to get rid of the clutter that crowds my heart and soul.

Help me to make room for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that provide me the strength and virtue I need to make my daily decisions in ways that are pleasing to God. And may the Queen of Peace help me to make peace with our Lord so that I may obey His will out of love, not fear. Amen



Peace Be With You

Let us ponder: When the crucified Christ rose from the dead in His glory, He still had the wounds in His hands and feet from the nails on the cross and from the lance in His side. Yet, He was at peace. Our Lord shows us that when we truly put our faith, hope, and love in God, we obtain an inner peace that no wound or suffering can destroy.

This inner peace—this gift of love from God—heals us in ways the world cannot. When we only rely on worldly efforts to heal our brokenness in whatever form that may be—emotional distress, physical pain, abandonment, loneliness—we may be left with scars that harden the heart and weaken our faith, hope, and love. God calls us to do otherwise.

“If today you hear His voice, harden not your heart,” according to the Letter to the Hebrews [3:15]. With a heart filled with loving mercy, Christ's purpose from the beginning has been to show us the way to everlasting peace—free from sin! “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you,” said Jesus [John 14:27]. Like the first disciples, Christ calls on us to receive the Holy Spirit to form in us the first fruits of eternal Glory. Among those fruits is peace. Where there is this inner peace, there is patience, kindness, respect, dignity, charity, and a quiet confidence to help us face the challenges that await us.

Without the Spirit of Our Lord, we are vulnerable to sin, which causes inner turmoil and exposes us to fear, anger, envy, worry, and doubt. The devil comes in and eats away at our resolve to sin no more. Remember, the devil tempted Christ; Christ was scared in the Garden of Olives; He needed help carrying His cross; and He felt abandoned when He said “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” [Matthew 27:46] But Christ never gave up. His faith, hope, and love carried Him through everything He endured.

When we cannot find the peace our Lord wants us to have in our lives, let us look to Mary our Blessed Mother who is the Queen of Peace. Perfectly united with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Mary had an inner peace that sustained her throughout her life and in her darkest moments. Yes, even without the stain of original sin, Mary had to endure pain and suffering as she shared in her Son's passion, following Him to Calvary and witnessing His death on the cross.

Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Mary had peace in her loving heart which Our Lady shares with all in search of salvation. United with her Son, the Prince of Peace, in the work of our redemption, Mary makes the grace of peace available and calls on us to make our peace with God, thereby ending our inner turmoil and reinvigorating our faith, hope, and love in the divine. May peace be with you and in your spirit!

Journey to Our Lady

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