



Immaculate Heart of Mary

NATIONAL Geographic magazine ran a full-length story of the Virgin Mary as its main feature in its December issue, describing her as the "world's most powerful woman". Among other things, it says that praying for Our Lady's intercession and being devoted to her have become a global phenomenon.

It is said that devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary began as early as the 12th century, based on the writings of the saints.

It was, however, St John Eudes (died 1680), a French priest, who did much to propagate the devotion, and to have a feast celebrated in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

However, it was only in 1944 that Pope Pius XII instituted the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and placed it on Aug 22. It has now been moved closer to the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, always falling on the Saturday after the Feast of the Sacred Heart. This year it falls on June 4.

Traditional depictions of the Immaculate Heart show it pierced with seven wounds or swords, in homage to the seven dolors or sorrows of Mary. Also, roses or another type of flower may be seen wrapped around the heart.

The seven dolors are the piercing of Mary's heart predicted at the child Jesus' presentation in the temple, the flight into Egypt, searching for the child Jesus in Jerusalem, meeting Christ on the road to Calvary, standing near the cross of Christ, receiving the body of Christ from the cross, and the burial of Christ.

Best-known Marian Apparitions

The Blessed Virgin Mary has appeared around the world many times, often to children, and she has often communicated the need for penance among the people of the world. This graphic shows some of the best-known apparitions, and these seven have been approved as authentic by the Vatican. The faithful are not required to believe a particular apparition actually occurred, but the Vatican has approved these as worthy of belief. The building of shrines, prayers of devotion and pilgrimages to the sites often follow the authentication of an apparition.

Banneux, near Liège, Belgium
8 times Mary appeared between Jan. 15 and March 2, 1933.
1949 Devotion approval was given.

Mary called herself the **Virgin of the Poor** and has since been venerated as **Our Lady of the Poor, the Sick and the Indifferent**.

Beauraing, Belgium
33 times Mary appeared between Nov. 29, 1932, and Jan. 3, 1933, to **five children** in the garden of a convent school in Beauraing.
1949 Final approbation was given.

Fátima, Portugal
6 times Mary appeared between May 13 and Oct. 13, 1917.
October 1930 Apparitions were declared worthy of belief.
Devotion to **Our Lady of Fátima** was authorised under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary.



Guadalupe, Mexico

4 times Mary appeared in 1531 to an Indian, Juan Diego (beatified in 1990 and canonised in 2002), on Tepeyac hill outside of Mexico City, and instructed him to tell Bishop Zumarraga of her wish that a church be built there.
1910 Designated patroness of Latin America.
1942 Designated patroness of the Americas.

La Salette, France
2 peasant children see Mary as a sorrowing and weeping figure Sept. 19, 1846.
1942 A Mass and Office with this title were authorised.
The message she confided to them regarded the **necessity of penance**.

Lourdes, France
18 times Mary, identifying herself as the **Immaculate Conception**, appeared between Feb. 11 and July 16, 1858.
1907 A feast commemorating the apparitions was extended throughout the Church.

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, France
3 times Mary appeared in 1830 to Catherine Labouré (canonised in 1947).
1832 Miraculous Medal made for the first time.
Mary commissioned Catherine to have a medal made of the **Immaculate Conception**.

(Source: 2014 Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac)



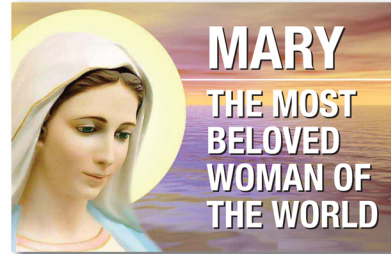
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To be a **worshipping, welcoming & caring** community
成为一个敬拜、欢融与关怀的团体



St Ignatius Church, PJ

MAY 2016



THE December 2015 issue of National Geographic magazine named her "The Most Powerful Woman in the World". But unlike other powerful and respected figures in the world, Mary, who came from a little town, Nazareth, more than 2,000 years ago, is also the most beloved woman of the world.

"Mary has beguiled the finest poets of the West... she has been the subject of paintings by the greatest masters...; over the centuries, millions of people have visited her shrines seeking her aid and calling to her as their mother. She is referred to as the Queen of all the saints, the Queen of the angels, and the Queen of heaven. And she has been invoked, over and over again, across the centuries, in the words of the simplest and most beautiful prayer in the Catholic tradition: the Hail Mary." (*"Catholicism"* by Bishop Robert Barron, 2011)

Do Catholics worship Mary?

Catholics worship none but the divine Trinitarian God. However, Catholics venerate the saints and, most of all, our Blessed Mother Mary, just as we venerate our ancestors and ask for their blessings and prayers on our behalf.

Contrary to popular belief, the rosary is about Christ, not Mary. When we pray the rosary, we ask for Mary's intercession and let her take us along on her journey through the life of her Son.

Holy Mary, Mother of God (Theotokos)

In most cultures, the queen of a kingdom is the wife of the king, but in the Old Testament Jewish culture, the "Queen" was understood as the mother of the king. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines but only one mother. The mother of the king was celebrated as a unique position in relation to the king, seated on the throne next to the king. In the Old Testament (1 Kings 2: 13-20; 1 Kings 15: 9-13; Jeremiah 13: 18-20) the position of Queen Mother was an actual office in the Kingdom known as Gebirah. She was an intercessor and advocate for the people of God and was given responsibility for the care of the people. Today, Mother Mary, our Queen, continues to fulfil this role for the Church.

Mary and other cultures/religions

Mary draws all peoples from all religions and cultures through her humility, purity and holiness. Protestants revere Mary as the Mother of Jesus and believe in the virgin birth.

In Islam, Mary or Maryam is referred to 34 times in the Quran, more than in the Bible. She is highly honoured as the only woman mentioned by name in the Quran. Muslims also share with the Catholic Church the dogma of the virgin birth and the immaculate conception.

Marian apparitions

After the first known vision of Mary to St John in Revelation 12, Marian apparitions have continued to appear all over the world. To date, of the 2,000 reported sightings, the Vatican has recognised only 16 after stringent and long processes of investigation.

Pope Benedict XVI describes Mary beautifully in his Encyclical Letter "God is Love":

Mary is a woman who loves. How could it be otherwise? As a believer who in faith thinks with God's thoughts and wills with God's will, she cannot fail to be a woman who loves. We sense this in her quiet gestures, as recounted by the infancy narratives in the Gospel. We see it in the delicacy with which she recognises the need of the spouses at Cana and makes it known to Jesus. We see it in the humility with which she recedes into the background during Jesus' public life, knowing that the Son must establish a new family and that the Mother's hour will come only with the Cross, which will be Jesus' true hour (Jn 2: 4; 13: 1). When the disciples flee, Mary will remain beneath the Cross (Jn 19: 25-27); later, at the hour of Pentecost, it will be they who gather around her as they wait for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 14).

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The Trinity - the core of our belief



TRINITY Sunday, also known as Holy Trinity Sunday, is celebrated a week after Pentecost Sunday in honour of the most fundamental of Christian beliefs — the Holy Trinity. All through the Bible, God is presented as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is not three gods but three persons in the one and only God.

In the Catholic faith, we worship one God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in oneness; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance; for there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit but the divine nature of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is co-eternal.

Of such nature as the Father is, so is the Son, so also is the Holy Spirit; the **Father** is infinite, the **Son** is infinite, and the **Holy Spirit** is infinite; the Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal; nevertheless there are not three eternals but one eternal; similarly the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Spirit is almighty; and yet there are not three almightys but one almighty; thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; nevertheless there are not three gods, but there is one God; so the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to confess singly each one person as God, and also Lord, so we are forbidden by our Catholic religion to say there are three Gods or three Lords.

There is, therefore, one Father, one Son, one Holy Spirit, and in this Trinity there is nothing first or later, nothing greater or less, but all three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal with one another, so that in every respect, as has already been said above, both unity in Trinity, and Trinity in unity must be venerated. Therefore, let him who wishes to be saved think thus concerning the Trinity.

Here are some key Bible verses expressing the concept of the Trinity:

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
- Jesus said The Helper will come – the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God and who comes from the Father. I will send Him to you from the Father and He will speak about Me. (John 15:26)
- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

The nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be seen clearly at these two major events in the Gospels:



The Baptism of Jesus – Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptised. As Jesus rose out of the water, heaven opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove, descended upon Him. Witnesses to the baptism heard a voice from heaven saying, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."

The Father clearly announced Jesus' identity, and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, empowering Him to begin His ministry.



The Transfiguration of Jesus – Jesus took Peter, James and John to the top of a mountain to pray, but the three disciples fell asleep. When they awoke, they were astonished to see Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. Jesus was transformed. His face shone like the sun, and His clothing dazzled. Then a voice from heaven said: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." At the time, the disciples did not fully understand the event, but today readers of the Bible can clearly see God the Father directly and powerfully linked to Jesus in this account.

Accordingly, it is the right faith that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. He is God begotten of the substance of the Father before time, and He is man born of the substance of His mother in time: perfect God, perfect man, consisting of a rational soul and a human body, equal to the Father.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead; at His coming all men have to arise again with their bodies and render an account of their own deeds; and those who have done good will go into life everlasting but those who have done evil, into eternal fire.

This is our Catholic faith; unless everyone believes this faithfully and firmly, one cannot be saved. Amen.

Corpus Christi (The Body of Christ)

CORPUS Christi is Latin for Body of Christ.

It is liturgically celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday (60 days after Easter), or "where the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is not a holy day of obligation, it is assigned to the Sunday after the most Holy Trinity as its proper day." This year it falls on May 29.

This feast was championed by St Juliana of Liege (aka Juliana de Cornillon), a Norbertine Canoness, whose vision of Christ instructing her to plead for the Feast of Corpus Christi led to her petitioning the Bishop of Liege, who ordered a celebration to be held every year in the diocese from 1246. Eventually, Jacques Pantalœon of Troyes, when he was then Archdeacon of Liege, was won over by this feast and when he became Pope Urban IV, issued a papal bull in 1264, instituting the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.

By tradition, Catholics take part in a procession through the streets of the neighbourhood near their parishes following Mass and pray and sing. The Eucharist is placed in a monstrance and is held aloft by a member of the clergy during the procession. This culminates with the return to the church where benediction takes place. This is the only occasion when benediction takes place after the Mass as the Eucharistic Celebration (Mass) is normally the culmination or high point of any Catholic celebration.



Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



THE Feast of the Visitation, which falls on May 31, recalls to us the following great truths and events: The visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth shortly after the Annunciation; the cleansing of John the Baptist from original sin in the womb of his mother at the words of Our Lady's greeting; Elizabeth's proclaiming of Mary – under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — as Mother of God and "blessed among women"; Mary's singing of the sublime hymn Magnificat ("My soul doth magnify the Lord"), which has become a part of the daily official prayer of the Church.

The Mass of today salutes her who in her womb bore the King of heaven and earth, the Creator of the world, the Son of the Eternal Father, the Sun of Justice. It narrates the cleansing of John from original sin in his mother's womb. Hearing herself addressed by the most lofty title of "Mother of the Lord" and realising what grace her visit had conferred on John, Mary broke out in that sublime canticle of praise proclaiming prophetically that henceforth she would be venerated down through the centuries:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He that is mighty, hath done great things to me, and holy is His name." (Lk 1: 46)

The Visitation – And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah. (Lk 1: 39)

How lyrical that is, the opening sentence of St Luke's description of the Visitation. We can feel the rush of warmth and kindness, the sudden urgency of love that sent that girl hurrying over the hills. "Those days" in which she rose on that impulse were the days in which Christ was being formed in her, the impulse was His impulse.

Many women, if they were expecting a child, would refuse to hurry over the hills on a visit of pure kindness. They would say they had a duty to themselves and to their unborn child which came before anything or anyone else.

The Mother of God considered no such thing. Elizabeth was going to have a child, too, and although Mary's own child was God, she could not forget Elizabeth's need — almost incredible to us, but characteristic of her.

She greeted her cousin Elizabeth, and at the sound of her voice, John quickened in his mother's womb and leapt for joy.

I am come, said Christ, that they may have life and may have it more abundantly. (Jn 10: 10) Even before He was born His presence gave life.

With what piercing shouts of joy does this story of Christ unfold! First the conception of a child in a child's heart, and then this first salutation, an infant leaping for joy in his mother's womb, knowing the hidden Christ and leaping into life.

How did Elizabeth herself know what had happened to Our Lady? What made her realise that this little cousin who was so familiar to her was the mother of her God?

She knew it by the child within herself, by the quickening into life which was a leap of joy.

If we practise this contemplation taught and shown to us by Our Lady, we will find that our experience is like hers.

If Christ is growing in us, if we are at peace, recollected, because we know that however insignificant our life seems to be, from it He is forming Himself; if we go with eager wills, "in haste," to wherever our circumstances compel us, because we believe that He desires to be in that place, we shall find that we are driven more and more to act on the impulse of His love.

And the answer we shall get from others to those impulses will be an awakening into life, or the leap into joy of the already awakened life within them. - CatholicCulture.org

Trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus



PERHAPS the best prayer most Catholics recall about worshipping Jesus' heart is "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in You".

On June 3, we celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart, also known as the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. It falls 19 days after Pentecost.

Why a devotion to the Sacred Heart?

The "heart" to Christians is not just a vital organ of flesh and muscle that pumps blood. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "the heart is the seat of moral personality." (CCC # 2517). In #1439, the CCC says: "Only the Heart of Christ, who knows the depths of his Father's love, could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way."

Pope Francis, in his homily on this feast in 2014, said: "This is how Jesus defined himself, 'learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart.' (Mt 11:29)"

The significance of this feast, the Pope said, is to discover ever more and to let ourselves be enfolded by the humble faithfulness and gentleness of Christ's love, the revelation of the Father's mercy. "God's faithfulness teaches us to accept life as a circumstance of His love and He allows us to witness this love to our brothers and sisters in humble and gentle service."

How the feast came to be

St Margaret Mary, a French nun in a convent in France, spoke of experiencing visions of Christ where His Sacred Heart was central. The source of the modern feast is a "great apparition" which took place on June 16, 1675, where Christ asked St Margaret to request that the Feast of the Sacred Heart be celebrated on the Friday after the octave (or eighth day) of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Because of initial doubts about the validity of her visions, it wasn't until 1765 that the feast was celebrated officially in France. Almost 100 years later, in 1856, Pope Pius IX extended the feast to the universal Church.

On May 31, 1992, St Pope John Paul II canonised Jesuit priest St Claude de la Colombiere, St Margaret's spiritual director, who had shared her devotion to the Heart of Jesus and helped spread it.

At the canonisation mass, the late Pope proclaimed: "For evangelisation today, the Heart of Christ must be recognised as the heart of the Church: It is He who calls us to conversion, to reconciliation. It is He who leads pure hearts and those hungering for justice along the way of the Beatitudes."

The call to Eucharistic Adoration

Because in the Sacred Host, the Lord Jesus is truly present and He offers each of us His Heart and Merciful Love, the call which comes from this feast day is to Eucharistic Adoration. To spend time in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament and adore Him is the best expression of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Novena

A nine-day novena leading to the feast day is prayed privately, in families or in groups. St Padre Pio is said have prayed this novena every day for all those who requested for prayers.