

Mary the *Evangeliser*



"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35

Gathering Prayer

Gathering Prayer

*Prayer is...welcoming God offering
himself to you ...*

(Louis Evely)

We pause at the beginning of our prayer...
We come together as a Marist community;
We place ourselves in the Lord's presence;
We open ourselves to him.

And we do this in Mary's way...

Mary, we come to you as our Mother
To tell you how grateful we are to God,
For having called us to be little brothers and sisters of
Mary,
And for having you, the first and perfect disciple of Jesus,
as our model.



Marist Litany to Mary

Mary, wellspring of peace, be our source of consolation.
Model of courage, be our example.
Model of risk taking, be our inspiration.
Mary, our Good Mother, lead us to Christ.
Woman of mercy, teach us to be merciful.
Woman of faith, help us in our unbelief.
Woman of vision, open our eyes.
Comforter of the afflicted, give us a heart of compassion.
Cause of our joy, lead us to life.
Sign of contradiction, help us in our uncertainty.
Woman of wisdom and understanding, gift us with
knowledge.
Ordinary Resource, protect and guide us.
Woman pregnant with hope, be our source of new life.
First disciple, show us the way.
Fellow pilgrim, accompany us on life's journey.
Seeker of God's will, help us to be the same.

Amen.

(Br Sean Sammon: In Her Arms and in Her Heart)

Introduction

Star of Evangelisation

Jesus himself, the Good News of God, was the very first and the greatest evangeliser. Both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI spoke of Mary as the “Star of Evangelization” because of the way in which she brings people to Christ. Pope Benedict XVI, reflecting on the meaning of Mary’s journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth writes, “[Mary] wants, above all, to help others to meet Jesus. We have come to the truest meaning and most genuine purpose of every missionary journey: to give people the living and personal Gospel, which is the Lord Jesus Christ himself” (Discourse at the End of the Marian Month, May 2010).

An evangelizer is one who has a deep and lively faith; a sense of urgency, of ‘going in haste to the hill country’; a faith in action - not a faith merely of words but through “deeds of charity” and they are passionate and faithful until the end.



‘Mary, Star of Evangelisation’ Icon courtesy of Br Claude Lane, OSB, Mount Angel Abbey, St Benedict, OR, USA.

Reflection:

- Q:** What does God challenge me to do?
- Q:** Do I respond with Mary’s faith?
- Q:** How do I show my devotion to Mary?
- Q:** In what way is her faith my model?



Scripture

The Annunciation: Luke 26-38

Scripture

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God



Reflection

Reflection on the Gospel

"Let it be done to me, according to your word."

‘We tend to think of the Feast of the Annunciation as one of Mary’s special days, but in fact the correct title of the celebration is the Annunciation of the Lord. When Gabriel appeared to Mary, he announced the impending birth of the Messiah, not Mary’s forthcoming pregnancy.

This distinction may seem slight, but it’s significant. The central message isn’t about Mary; rather, it’s about the person who will be born to her, and about his mission. As the Scriptures say, “He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the House of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. ”

Mary’s importance and influence lies not in her own actions but in the fact that she made possible the birth of Jesus. She’s honoured for what she allowed to happen through her, not for what she herself has done.

Such thinking doesn’t diminish Mary’s importance; instead, it puts it in its proper perspective. When we view a magnificent bronze, we focus on the artist and the finished work of art, not on the wax mold. The mold is essential, certainly, but it’s the final product that commands our attention.

The same is true of Mary. As St Augustine said, “Mary is the living mold of God.” While we owe Mary our respect and admiration, it’s her son to whom we owe our adoration.’

<http://web.infantjesus.wa.edu.au/uploads/ourschool/Veritas%208.pdf>



Q: How can I let God use me as a model?

Q: What would I like my lasting legacy to be?

Share in pairs and then feel free to share with the group

The following are a selection of quotes taken from *Water from the Rock*.

Spend some quiet time reading and reflecting on them:



28. Since the time of Marcellin, his disciples have made Mary known and loved. Today we continue to be convinced that to follow Jesus in the way of Mary is a privileged way of bringing our Christian journey to fullness. With a heart filled with compassion, we share this experience and conviction with children and youth helping them to experience the maternal face of the Church.

How do you make 'Mary known and loved'?

29. Since Marcellin's time the Church has deepened its appreciation of Mary as First Disciple. Marists therefore have a growing relationship with Mary as our Sister in Faith, a woman with dust on her feet, a woman who was disturbed and puzzled by God, who was challenged to trust and give without knowing all the answers, whose faith life was a journey.
51. Mary is surprised by the forceful entry of God into her life. She is afraid. Then she comes to be at peace because of her intuition of the presence and love of God for her. Without having all the answers to her questioning, she trusts and commits herself to a God who inspires trust.
53. God comes into the life of Mary, as it is at that moment. He opens Mary to the truth of her being and of her vocation, and proposes to her what she is able to do. The welcome she gives to the Word of God reveals the quality of her person.

On your own Faith Journey: how are you 'challenged to trust and give without knowing all the answers'?

114. Mary inspired in the first Marists a new vision of being Church which was modelled on that of the first Christians. This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned. A mother believes in the goodness at the core of a person, and forgives readily. We are respectful of each one's personal journey. There is a place for those with doubts and spiritual uncertainty, a place for all. There is listening and dialogue. Challenge and confrontation are done with honesty and done with honesty and openness.

'This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned.' – **What do you understand by this term 'Marian Church'? Have you experienced the 'Marian Church'? How do you show this 'Marian Church' to others?**

- 131.** Mary inspired Marcellin's style of being on mission. She received the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation and responded immediately to Elizabeth's need. In so doing, she shows us that contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of spirituality. Mary's way lays the foundation of all our actions: listening, patient waiting, nurturing interiority and responsiveness to God's will.

'Contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of spirituality.' -**Is this true for you? Is this something that you need to work on?**

- 132.** Confirmed in her own vocation by the invitation of the Spirit, Mary feels compelled to leave her own house to enter the house of another. She indicates for us the direction of mission - that we are to meet others where they are.
- 133.** Mary, as a sensitive and compassionate disciple, goes "in haste," responding quickly to those who need her. She goes "in haste" to joyfully announce the news of a God who loves, and the sure promise that a reign of justice and faithfulness is at hand. She brings to Elizabeth both her hands for service and her experience of the Spirit.
- 134.** As Mary in the Cenacle in the midst of the Apostles we - joyfully, simply and humbly - bring the Good News through our presence and our faith.

Where and how are you called to help others?

- 151.** Our spirituality, Marial and apostolic, invites us to look to Mary as Jesus' First Disciple for our response. She is for us a model of listening, of love for poor people, and of welcoming the message of God. Her way of living the Word of God inspires us and directs us along the way we should go. Like Mary, we not only magnify the Lord with our lips, but commit ourselves to serve God's justice with our lives.
- 152.** In her last words, recorded in the Gospels, Mary directs us: "Do whatever he tells you." What inspires you about Mary's life and way of being?

Group question:

Are there any final comments or thoughts that you would like to share?

Personal Prayer and Commitment

Personal Prayer and Commitment

Take a few moments for Personal Prayer and Commitment

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
He has anointed me to bring good news
to the poor.
Go, therefore, make disciples of all
the nations.*



Final Reflection from Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth #97

'Just as she did for Marcellin Champagnat and the first brothers, Mary inspires the model of the Church that we offer to youth, a Church modeled on that of the first Christians, "This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned. A mother believes in the goodness at the core of a person, and forgives readily. We are respectful of each one's personal journey. There is a place for those with doubts and spiritual uncertainty, a place for all. There is listening and dialogue. Challenge and confrontation are done with honesty and openness.'

St Marcellin Champagnat:

Pray for us

Mary our Good Mother:

Pray for us

And let us always remember:

To pray for one another