

Mary, Virgin, Mother, Friend, Intercessor
S. Josefina G. Nepomuceno, OSB

In the address that Pope Benedict XVI gave on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception during the midday Angelus with several thousand pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square he quoted the dialogue between the angel Gabriel and the Virgin. **“Rejoice! Full of grace, the Lord is with thee,’ says God's messenger.”** This address **“reveals Mary's most profound identity, the ‘name’ ... with which God himself knows her: “full of grace.”** Pope Benedict continued:

This expression, which is so familiar to us from our childhood, as we say it every time we pray the Hail Mary, explains to us the mystery that we celebrate today. In fact, from the moment she was conceived by her parents, Mary was the object of a singular predilection on the part of God, who in his eternal plan chose her to be the mother of his Son made man and, hence, preserved her from original sin. For this reason, the angel addresses her with this name, which implicitly signifies: **“ever full of the love of God, of his grace.** (Angelus Address of Pope Benedict XVI on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 2010 Zenit Org.)

As the one whom God made “full of grace,” the Holy Father continues, “Mary, Mother of Christ, tells us that Grace is greater than sin, that God's mercy is more powerful than evil, and it is able to transform it into goodness.” From her immaculate heart “she says to us: **Trust Jesus, he saves you.**” On his part, Pope Benedict places into Mary's powerful intercession the whole Church: . **“I entrust to her intercession the most urgent needs of the Church and of the world. May she help us above all to have faith in God, to believe in his Word, to always reject evil and choose the good.”** (Ibid)

At 4.15 p.m. the afternoon of the feast, Benedict XVI placed the traditional floral wreath at the foot of the statue of Mary which stands on a column in Rome's Piazza di Spagna. At this annual celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in Rome, the Holy Father told the thousands of people who were gathered, “ the most beautiful gift ... we can offer [*Mary, our Mother*], is our prayer, the prayer we carry in our hearts and entrust to her intercession”.

"Yet when we come here, and especially on this 8 December, what we receive from Mary is much more important than what we can offer to her." She gives us a message: “ Mary tells us that we are all called to open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit in order to achieve, as our ultimate destiny, the immaculate state, fully and definitively free from evil”. (Mary's Message: Openness to the action of the Holy Spirit, Vatican, Information Service, December 9, 2010)

Pope Benedict describes how Mary looks at us. “The gaze of Mary is as the gaze of God upon each one of us. She looks at us with the same love as the Father, and she blesses us.” As God looked at her with special regard, “the Mother looks upon us as God looked upon her, the humble girl of Nazareth insignificant before the eyes of the world but chosen and precious

before God. In each of us she recognizes a likeness to her Son Jesus, even though we are so different! But who better than she knows the power of divine Grace? Who better than she knows that nothing is impossible for God, Who is even capable of drawing good from evil?"

"This", the Pope concluded, "is the message we receive here at the feet of Mary Immaculate. It is a message of hope for everyone in this city and in the entire world". (VIS, Ibid)

The words of Pope Benedict XVI situate Mary in the history of salvation as the immaculate one, free from sin on account of her vocation as Mother of Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior. He also points to us our own "ultimate destiny" to be like Mary, immaculate "fully and definitively free from evil." This destiny is attainable if we "open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit" as Mary did. (VIS, Ibid)

Mary and the Church

Down the centuries, the Popes have affirmed the position of Mary in the Catholic Church and have reinforced devotion to her by actively propagating feasts, activities, and practices that strengthen her role as intercessor and advocate. Particularly in times of danger to the Church and Christianity, Popes have invoked the intervention of Mary, calling for special prayers and devotions. Best known is the victory of the Christian fleet over the Moslems at the naval battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571 which was attributed to the help of Mary whose aid was invoked through praying the rosary. The feast of the Holy Rosary was established by Saint Pius V on the anniversary of this historic naval victory. Incidentally, the statue of Mary atop the column in the Piazza di Spagna was built to honor Mary's Immaculate Conception. Similarly, the victory of the Spanish naval forces over the Dutch fleet in the battle of Manila bay was attributed to the intervention of Mary through the praying of the Rosary. Thus the Philippines marks La Naval de Manila on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7.

Among the Popes, the title of Rosary Pope is given to Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) because he issued a record twelve encyclicals on the rosary, instituted the Catholic custom of daily rosary prayer during the month of October, and created in 1883 the Feast of *Queen of the Holy Rosary*. Leo XIII was concerned about attempts to destroy the faith in Christ, and, if possible, to ban him from the face of the earth. He was convinced that re-Christianisation was not possible without Mary. In his encyclical on the fiftieth anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he stressed her role in the redemption of humanity, mentioning Mary as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix. (Wapedia)

In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the first exercise of papal infallibility *ex cathedra*. With the support of the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholic bishops, whom he had consulted between 1851–1853, Pius IX promulgated the papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (Latin for "Ineffable God"), which defined *ex cathedra* the dogma of the Immaculate Conception

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception gained affirmation and additional significance from the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1858 where a 14-year-old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, claimed a beautiful lady appeared to her. When asked to reveal who she was, the lady said, "I am the Immaculate Conception", and the faithful believe her to be the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Throughout its more than 2000 years of institutional life, the Catholic Church has recognized four attributes of Mary that are worthy of belief and declared as dogmas of faith:

Mother of God – Theotokos, Council of Ephesus 431
Perpetual Virginity -- Council of the Lateran 649
Immaculate Conception -- Pius IX, Papal Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854
Assumption—Pius XII, Papal Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1950

Many titles are bestowed on Mary: Mother of God, Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Savior, Help of Christians, Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of the Rosary, Mother of the Church, and so many more enumerated in the Litany of Loretto.

In almost every town in the Philippines, there's a parish named after a title of Mary : Holy Rosary, Assumption, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Sorrows, etc. There are special devotions such as the Flores de Mayo in May, the Rosary in October, the block Rosary, the Wednesday novena to our Mother of Perpetual Help. Almost every province has a special title of Mary as its patroness: Our Lady of Piat, Nuestra Senora del Pilar, Virgen de los Remedios. There was a time when almost every baby girl was baptized as Maria: Maria Teresa, Maria Luisa, Maria Rosario, Maria Elena, Maria Cristina, etc. It was a way of placing the little girl under the special care and protection of Mary. Every girl who studied in a Catholic school was encouraged to pray three Hail Mary's before going to sleep to safeguard her purity.

Surveying these many honors and attributions to Mary, some quarters have been critical of the exaggerated regard of the Catholic Church and individual Catholics for her. Even among Catholics, priests in particular, there are some who are of the opinion that too much is being made of Mary and voice misgivings that the fond devotion and trust in Mary by ordinary Catholics diminishes the position of Jesus as Lord, Son of God and sole Mediator.

The last person who would want to compete with Jesus is Mary, his mother. That is entirely out of character for this humble woman who had not desired or asked to be the mother of Jesus. It was a calling to her wholly from the design of God.

Mary's story

Mary first broke out into history when the Angel Gabriel came for a surprise visit and announced that she would be a mother. This was a very quiet event. Only Mary knew. We know this as the annunciation.

Who was this Mary? She was a very simple Jewish girl about 14 or 15 years old and as was the custom in the Jewish culture of that time, she was engaged to be married to Joseph. Although betrothed or engaged, she and Joseph were not yet married and so she had not moved into his house. Nothing was said about her family or home in the Gospels but research has shown that she came from a rather backward little town. As a Jew, she belonged to the marginalized, the despised and oppressed conquered people. But she was even poorer because she was a woman, very second class among the men of her time who prayed each day "I thank you God that I was not born a woman." (Pennington, xix)

The angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary was a salute conveying joy. "Hail, full of grace!" The angel did not call Mary by her name but as "the graced one" or full of grace which defines who Mary is for God.

Mary is the favored one by the choice of God like the great persons in the Bible: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. All found grace with God. What did this mean?

It means that [*Mary*] lives wholly by and in relation to God. She is a listener and a prayer, whose mind and soul are alive to the manifold ways in which the living God quietly calls to her. She is one who prays and stretches forth wholly to meet God; she is therefore a lover, who has the breadth and magnanimity of true love, but who has also its unerring powers of discernment and its readiness to suffer. (Ratzinger, Hail full of Grace)

Then the angle continued, "the Lord is with you." This was the promise of God's nearness and support to the prophets (Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Saul, David, and Jeremiah) which enabled them to fulfill their calling without fear, trusting that "their power was the Lord." For Mary, too, this was a promise of the Lord's closeness and assurance that he would fulfill his decisions so that Mary would be firmly supported in the realization of what God wanted of her.

With the words "The Lord is with you" the messenger placed Mary *among the great saviors of Israel*. The woman who was lowly and not esteemed was elevated to the apex of God's plan. There she stood out not as a passive object but as a person who fulfilled a great mission in which she had trusted in the unconditional presence and support of the Lord. (Paredes, p. 72)

Mary initially reacted with fear and confusion at the words of the angel: "She was deeply troubled by his words and wondered what his greeting meant." She had not asked God for such a favor and vocation. "God nevertheless invaded her with his charming grace when she least expected it." (Ibid)

God also gave Mary a *new function*. She received a new charge. "You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus (Lk 1:31-33) Her new charge was of integral maternity

defined by three moments: conception in the womb, childbirth and designation of the name. (Ibid)

This simple girl, brought up in the traditions of her Jewish religion and culture and therefore familiar with the Scriptures, was chosen by God for the most special vocation of all time: to be the mother of his Son. And young though she was, she could make a decision to accept the challenge that the angel had brought before her: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word." Did she fully understand what she said "yes" to? "Did she have time to think of the possible consequences of this in regard to Joseph, in regard to the possible consequences before the harsh law of her people?" (Pennington) Mary's "yes" was unqualified and without reservation. She accepted the consequences of her yes and reaffirmed her yes with every development in her life which she could not fully understand. It took immense courage, it threatened all her plans with Joseph. But her trust in God was total. Her greatness was in the fullness of her faith.

Mary set out from Galilee to the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth whom the angel had announced was six months pregnant at her old age. This showed Mary's readiness of spirit to respond to the word of God. It was her way of getting confirmation of the reality of the angel's visit and what was happening within her. And God did not disappoint. He gave Mary the sign assuring her that God had truly spoken, that it was not the product of her imagination.

Mary knew when she heard Elizabeth exclaim, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." This is the first text in the New Testament that praises Mary on account of her maternity. Elizabeth continued, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (Lk1:41-45) Mary was considered a believer. She belonged to those who accepted the Word of God and put it into practice. "Mary believed that God could bring forth her mysterious maternity through his Creator Spirit. That was her contribution to God's saving plan. She was the first believer of the New Testament. The history of faith in the New Testament began with Mary. (Paredes, 98)

Mary's response is her *Magnificat*, her song praising God's greatness and joyful welcome for her calling. She had answered the angel, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you have said." And in the *Magnificat* she exclaimed: "He has looked with favor on his lowly servant."

In the *Magnificat* Mary celebrates her dependence on God: "he who is mighty has done great things for me—holy is his name." Mary's joy was not only for what God was doing for her but also for what he was doing for others, for all. "In this prophetic moment, Mary's vision reached far: 'all generations will call me blessed.' And she saw them not only blessing her – Our Blessed Mother -- but also being themselves raised up by God's redemptive word accomplished in the fulfillment of her Son's mission." (Pennington, Ibid, p. 11)

Mary proclaimed in advance the Gospel as Good News for the poor and lowly, soon after the virginal conception of Jesus. Luke depicts Mary as “a prophetess of the messianic subversion of all values.” (Paredes p. 102)

Tests of Mary’s Faith

Mary’s faith was tested through sufferings and trials. “To believe is to give oneself to suffering. The following of Christ cannot be understood ‘without taking up one’s own cross,’ without being ready to undergo any eventuality or risk” (Lk 14.27, 33) (Paredes, p. 103)

The first of these trials was the predicament, how was Joseph to be told? The Gospels are silent on what Mary did. We surmise that she left it to God who after all was the mover behind her situation. And again God did not disappoint. Joseph’s own predicament was resolved in a dream and he was told to take Mary as his wife. He was also given the task of naming the child, a privilege given to fathers. Mary’s trust in God was vindicated and reinforced

The second was the trip Mary and Joseph had to take to Bethlehem to comply with the census just at the time when she was due to deliver. In a strange town after a long difficult journey, she had to give birth in a stable and laid her newborn son in a manger because there was no room in the inn. Shepherds came with stories of a vision of angels. “[They] made known what had been told to them about this child.” (Lk 2:17) “But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.” (Lk 2:19) Mary could not comprehend all that transpired around the birth of her Son. She pondered on them, reflecting on what they could mean.

Presentation. Forty days after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph brought him to the great temple in Jerusalem for her purification and to perform the rite of ransoming the first born son. Simeon, guided by the Spirit, took the child in his arms and gave praise to God with his *Nunc dimittis*. Then the old man turned to Mary and said: “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Lk 2:34a-35) Thus Mary was forewarned that suffering would be her lot together with her son.

The Flight to Egypt. The testing of Mary’s faith continued as a process throughout her life. The family’s flight into Egypt on the instructions of an angel to Joseph must have been a great trial. They were uprooted and forced to flee to a strange country where they had to make their home and a living for how long they did not know. The story is silent on Mary. It was Joseph the head of the family who now received the messages. And Mary followed in all humility and simplicity of her faith.

Loss in Jerusalem. Then there was the annual journey to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover when Jesus was twelve years old. Unknown to his parents, Jesus stayed behind. For

three days Mary and Joseph searched for him in sorrow. Like any parent, Mary said to Jesus, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” The boy Jesus answered: “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” They could not understand what he said to them. “His mother treasured all these things in her heart.” (Lk 2: 48-50; 51b) Even when she could not understand, Mary accepted the situation without resentment and instead “ ‘treasured in her heart’ the mysteries revealed to her, never fully understanding, but patiently waiting for God’s time and God’s ultimate answer.” (Moloney, p, 27) Such was Mary’s faith, a faith that trusts and waits.

Mary’s faith in Jesus was called forth at the wedding in Cana. Jesus had not yet started his public ministry. He, his newly recruited followers and Mary were all guests at this wedding. Mary approached him and said, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” (John 2: 1-)

“Mary shows her unconditional trust in her son. She shows, as it were, an intuition of what lies within him, of his power.” (Paredes, p. 184) Even more, “by means of Mary’s indirect response, the evangelist presents the mother of Jesus not only as a woman who hears the Word of God and puts it into practice, but still more, as the one who asks others *to do* whatever Jesus, the Word, *tells them*.

“My hour has not yet come.”

What did Jesus mean by this? What is his hour? “It will be the moment of Jesus violent end (see Jn 7:6, 30; 8:20; 12:27) but –strangely–also the moment of his glorification (Jn 12:33; 13:31) through which he will return to his Father. (Jn 13:1, 32; 17:5) The hour is a given event in the human, historical experience of Jesus of Nazareth, planned by the Father for the Son. But at Cana the mother, the woman, has been inevitably drawn into its horror ... and its power.” (Moloney, 37)

What is the position of Mary in regard to this “hour” of Jesus? Moloney explains:

The mother stands at the beginnings of Jesus’ ‘hour’ as woman and mother (Jn 2:1, 3, 4, 5), It is her intervention which initiates a miracle showing all the signs of the messianic moment: the superabundance of the best of wines, (vv6-10, See Gen 9:20; 49:16-22; Amos 9:13; Hos 2:24; Joel 4:18; 29:17; Jer 31:15) at a wedding feast (see Is 25:6-8; Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Rev 19:7-9) However, ‘the hour’ of the Messiah has ‘not yet come’. When it does come (see Jn 12:23; 13:1; 17:1; 19:17-37), the woman, the mother of Jesus will again be there. (Jn 19:25-27) (Moloney, p. 37)

Mary plays an active role in initiating a process which will lead to the disciples seeing the glory of God and believing in Jesus. ("Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.")

The close relationship between "the woman", the mother of Jesus and "the hour" comes back in the crucifixion scene in John (19:25-27) with the added but significant presence and central role of the Beloved Disciple. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by, He said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' and from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*." (Jn19:26-27) (the Gideon Bible) Jesus used the term "Behold!" which is a pattern used by the prophets when they speak authoritatively in the name of Yahweh (see for example Is 49:18; 60:4; Bar 4:36-37;; 55; Ezek 1:4-3:11; 37:7-14; Dan 2:31-45) As in the prophets, the address "Behold!" leads to a revelation of the ways and will of God. "For the Fourth Evangelist, the crucified Son of God is revealing the will and the ways of God by means of this formula as he solemnly establishes a new relationship between his mother and his disciple." (Moloney, *Ibid*) Mary at the foot of the Cross was not merely a static observer, weeping at the death of her son, focused on her personal grief at his terribly painful physical sufferings and the degrading insults and humiliations on top of her loss. She has just been given a new role.

The mother is now part of a new people who live by faith and love – the Church of Jesus Christ. There is now a place and a people which can be called *ta idia* and where Jesus will be received. The mother of Jesus, 'the woman' who now became a 'mother' in this new situation will lead the way in that process. Her relationship to the Church is not only as another disciple. She is not 'sister' to the disciple, she is not just another member of *ta idia*, this new place and people. She is 'Mother.' (Moloney, pp. 49-50)

The term "**woman**", according to Moloney has symbolic power. Already at this time the term means more than just the historic Mary but links are already being made from Mary the mother of Jesus, back to the figure of Eve and from there to 'the woman' doing battle with the serpent in Gen 3:15. In the words of Raymond Brown,

John thinks of Mary against the background of Gen. 3: she is the mother of the Messiah; her role is in the struggle against the satanic serpent, and that struggle comes to its climax in Jesus' hour. Then she will appear at the foot of the cross to be entrusted with offspring whom she must protect in the continuing struggle between Satan and the followers of the Messiah. (In Moloney, p. 41)

The next scene where we find Mary is in the Upper Room in the midst of the apostles and disciples praying together in preparation for the coming of the promised Advocate. With them she received the superabundant outpouring of the Spirit in tongues of fire and a mighty wind. Thus she was at the official "inauguration" of the Church and witnessed first hand the transformation of the fearful apostles into courageous, bold, articulate proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mary then receded to the background. As she nurtured her son, so she nurtured his infant Church and thus became its mother. But her role is multifaceted. She is a supereminent member of the Church and is its prototype and most outstanding model in faith and charity. She is a woman who, in an extraordinarily coherent way, always gave herself to the service of the Lord. She is the New Eve who serves as the model of the Church. (Paredes, p. 190) “But above all she is the model of that worship which consists in making one’s life and offering to God. Mary’s ‘yes’ is for all Christians a lesson and example of obedience to the Father’s will which is the way and means to one’s own sanctification.” (Ibid)

But Mary could not remain permanently in obscurity. Particularly after the Council of Ephesus declared as dogma her being *theotokos* (Mother of God), the fervor of devotion to her grew and continued to flourish, specially during the Middle Ages. Basilicas, churches, shrines, paintings, statues were the expression of love and devotion to Mary. Popular devotions such as pilgrimages, processions, feasts were high points in the calendar of the Christian communities.

Shrines devoted to Mary make up 66% of all the Catholic shrines in Europe. In Italy, France, Spain and Belgium at least 75 % of the shrines are Marian. For hundreds of years most Catholics throughout Europe made an annual pilgrimage to a Marian shrine which meant walking for more than a day.

What drew them to the shrines to do homage to a statue of Mary? It could be “the atmosphere that feels closer to the spiritual peace of Jesus and Mary than does the mundane world”, not only the presence of her statue that emanates grace but also the ambience. The congregation of hundreds of people produces a certain energy that constitutes a field of spiritual harmony. In addition there are the miraculous cures attested by the hundreds of crutches and other “relics” cast aside by those restored to health and wellbeing which all testify to a special presence. (Spretnak, Missing Mary, p. 105)

Already in the 19th century there was a sense that devotion to Mary began to be exaggerated and distorted. Divine attributes were ascribed to her and a correction was bound to happen.

The Second Vatican Council or simply Vatican II in its thrust for renewal and revitalization of the Church considered the place of Mary as “within the community of the disciples of Jesus. She is in the Church and of the Church. Albeit mother of the Church as mother of its head.” (Pennington, p. 39) As Leahy said “Mary is not merely a devotion but intimately linked with the formation of the Church-community model modeled on the life of the Trinity.” She is Mother of the son, therefore, ... daughter of the Father and temple of the Holy Spirit” 65) Most of all, however, Mary’s work as “helpmate” of the New Adam is focused wholly beyond herself and subordinated to his Trinitarian work of salvation: to make people, i.e., his brothers and sisters, be children of the Father by the gift of the Holy Spirit and thus gather them into a community founded on the Trinitarian life. (Leahy, p. 36-37)

Honor to Mary is due because she has by grace been exalted above all angels and human beings to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ: she is rightly honored by a special cult in the Church.” (Pennington, pp 42-

43) True devotion is defined as proceeding “from true faith by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.” (Pennington, p 43) Mary is a sign of hope and comfort for us pilgrims. She already possess the glory which is the image and beginning of the glory of the whole people of God.” (Ibid)

But from the perspective of popular piety, Vatican II spelled the end of marian devotions. Liturgical renewal has supplanted many of the devotions that were popular in the recent centuries. Statues, pictures votive lamps and flowers were swept away in the renewal of churches. Devotion to the Rosary waned and whole generations of young Catholics, and priests and religious no longer prayed their beads.

Again the popes lent the stature of their position to swing the pendulum, and so Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical *Marialis cultus* in Feb. 2, 1974. On his part Pope John Paul II who was unabashedly marian issued the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* on March 25, 1987. It is subtitled *On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church*. During his long pontificate John Paul II manifested his devotion and affection for Mary and made pilgrimages to her shrines, led the Rosary over Vatican Radio and generally encouraged prayer and trust in Mary.

Alongside these developments of popular piety seemingly on the wane, Mary was undaunted and continued manifesting herself to with unprecedented frequency to different persons in different locales all over the world. Apparitions have long been part of the experience of Catholics but only a few are officially recognized as supernatural occurrences by the Catholic Church. In the 19th century eight (8) of her appearances were recognized as authentic. In the 20th century, one author counted 232 in 32 countries from 1923 to 1975 and still counting. The most recent to be recognized were the apparitions in Fatima. The Medjugorje apparitions are still under study. In all these visits Mary came without being asked, the initiative of her coming completely hers. Her message has invariably been a call to conversion, penance, prayer, sacrifice, fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus and return to God.

Mary continues being concerned for her children to whom she gave birth at the foot of the cross. She lives up to her titles “Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix” and uses her power of intercession as Mother of Christ before the throne of the Father.

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