

4. Mary, Mother of Divine Mercy

The Hail, Holy Queen (Latin *Salve Regina*)

Hail, holy Queen, *Mother of mercy*, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, *thine eyes of mercy* toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Pope Francis: Mary and Divine Mercy

1. Year of Mercy: opened on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Dec 8, 2015)

Mother of Mercy: the Annunciation and the *Magnificat* (Luke 1)

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary...³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I know not man?"³⁵ And 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 called holy, the Son of God.*"³⁶ And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible."³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰*And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.*

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm,

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,

⁵²he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.

⁵⁴*He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,*

⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home. (Luke 1:34-56)

Where is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?¹

It was also in the writing that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tabernacle and the ark should follow with him, and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. And Jeremiah came and found a cave, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense, and he sealed up the entrance. Some of those who followed him came up to mark the way, but could not find it. When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: *“The place shall be unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.”* (2 Maccabees 2:4-8)

The Location of the Ark RevealedThe Ark of the Old Covenant

The glory of the Lord and the cloud cover the Tabernacle (containing the Ark) and *“overshadow”* (*episkiazen*) them (Exod 40:34-35, cf. v. 3)

David *“arose and went”* to the hill country of *Judah* to bring up *“the ark of God”* (2 Samuel 6:2)

David admits his unworthiness to receive the Ark by exclaiming: *“How can the ark of the Lord come to me?”* (2 Samuel 6:9)

David *“leaped”* before the Ark as it was brought in *“with shouting”* (2 Samuel 6:15-16)

The Ark remained in the hill country, in the house of Obed-Edom, for *“three months”* (2 Samuel 6:11)

Mary (Ark of the New Covenant)

The Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and the power of the Most High *“overshadows”* (*episkiasei*) her (Luke 1:35)

Mary *“arose and went”* into the hill country of *Judah* to visit Elizabeth (Luke 1:39)

Elizabeth admits her unworthiness to receive Mary by exclaiming: *“And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”* (Luke 1:43)

John *“leapt”* in Elizabeth’s womb at the sound of Mary’s voice and Elizabeth cried *“with a loud shout”*: *“Blessed are you among women, and blessed in the fruit of your womb!”* (Luke 1:41-42)

Mary remained in the hill country, in Elizabeth’s house, *“three months”* (Luke 1:56)

¹ See Brant Pitre, *Mother of the Messiah: A Bible Study on Mary* (www.BrantPitre.com)

Mary, Mother of Mercy and the Crucifixion (John 19)

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother...²⁶ *When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"*²⁷ *Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"* *And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home* (literally, "to be his own").

²⁸ After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst."²⁹ A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath... the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him;³³ but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.³⁴ *But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.*³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe. (John 19:25-35)

John Paul II: Mary Knows the "Cost" of Mercy

Mary, then, is the one who has the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God's mercy. She knows its price, she knows how great it is. In this sense, we call her the Mother of mercy: our Lady of mercy, or Mother of divine mercy... (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *The Mercy of God*, no. 9).

Pope Francis: Mary, Mother of Mercy, Ark of the Covenant

My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God's tenderness. No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of His love.

Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, Mary, from the outset, was prepared by the love of God to be the *Ark of the Covenant* between God and man. *She treasured divine mercy in her heart in perfect harmony with her Son Jesus.* Her hymn of praise, sung at the threshold of the home of Elizabeth, was dedicated to the mercy of God which extends from "generation to generation" (*Lk1:50*). We too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary. This will be a source of comfort and strength to us as we cross the threshold of the Holy Year to experience the fruits of divine mercy.

At the foot of the Cross, Mary, together with John, the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him show us the point to which the mercy of God can reach. Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the *Salve Regina*, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus. (Pope Francis, *The Face of Mercy*, no. 24)

Vatican II on Devotion to Mary

Perfect model of this apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles.... *Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her and entrust his life to her motherly care.* (Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 4)

Daily Prayer of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary²

My Queen and my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and, in proof of my affection, I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Since I am your own, keep me and guard me as your property and possession. Amen.

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² See esp. Michael Gaitley, *33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat In Preparation for Marian Consecration* (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 2011).