

## Our Lady...Mother of the Forsaken

**\*\***In the Memorare prayer, we say:

"...never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided."

The conclusion we take from this is that we will not be the first ones to be forsaken in history.

In this regard, devotion to Our Lady of the Forsaken is very important.

It started on the first Sunday of Lent in 1409. On his way to preach a homily in the Valencia Cathedral, a friar saw boys cruelly mistreating a group of insane people. The friar defended the unfortunate insane ones, reprimanded the boys, and continued his way, very impressed by the event.

He changed the content of his sermon, including an emotional appeal for charity and for the insane of the city who were left to their misery, subject to abuse.

To make a long story short, charitable souls came forward and funded a hospital to care for the mentally ill who were forsaken at the time. The hospital was founded on March 15, 1410. It was the first ward for the mentally ill in the world.

Let's turn our attention from mental illness to spiritual illness. In the modern world, mental illness is far from the gravest of evils. Spiritual insanity is far worse; sin and the loss of the notion of good and evil are the greatest evils.

So let's pray a nine day novena to Our Lady of the Forsaken, asking her to save us and all the souls in our world from the greatest insanity of all: **SIN!**

### PRAYER

My Lord Jesus Christ, remember that I am a sinner.

Blessed Virgin, pray for me.

May you always be praised and blessed.

Pray for this sinner to your beloved Son,  
precious beauty of the angels, prophets and  
patriarchs, crown of virgins;  
save me from the appalling figure of the devil  
when my soul leaves my body.

O holy source of piety and beauty, joy of heavenly glory,  
consolation of heaven,  
rest after work!

With you, Virgin most prudent, the angels rejoice.

Safeguard my soul, and the souls of the faithful;  
pray for us to your most blessed Son  
and lead us to eternal paradise,  
where you live and reign forever,  
and there we will praise You forever.

Amen, Jesus.

**\*\***(excerpted from: americanneedsfatima)

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## Our Lady of the Forsaken

Valencia, Spain  
1416



*Our Lady of the Forsaken, pray for us.*

## *Our Lady of the Forsaken*

\*In the late fourteenth century, Padre Juan Gilabert Jofre, a friend of St. Vincent Ferrer, assisted in founding an order of brothers who devoted their lives and fortunes to the noble plan of rescuing children who had been abandoned by their parents. Later, after seeing some youths in the marketplace ridiculing a poor, mentally retarded man, the charity of the brothers was extended to include the elderly and the sick. After prayer and reflection, they named their community: "The Brotherhood of Innocent Children and of the Mother of the Forsaken."

The statue venerated as Our Lady of the Forsaken has an origin clouded in mystery since there are no certain facts regarding the sculptor or the date of its completion. One source claims that Padre Juan Gilabert was consulted concerning a statue that would bear the title and represent the charity of the new community. The good priest supposedly arranged to have a statue sculptured by a respected artist of great talent. Heaven, it is said, intervened.

About the year 1416, three young men approached the monastery claiming to be sculptors. They offered to carve the statue for the honor and glory of the Mother of God if the community would provide them with wood or marble and the necessary tools. At their request they were locked in a room for three days, and although no sounds of activity were heard, a beautiful statue was discovered in their room on the fourth day. When no trace of the men could be found, it was surmised they had been sculptors sent from Heaven.

When this claim was made known, the citizens of Valencia flocked to the feet of the Madonna, and there numerous favors were promptly dispensed.

The statue is indeed a beautiful representation of our holy Mother. While leaning forward, Our Lady of the Forsaken stands about four feet tall. The Infant Jesus is held on her left arm, while the right hand holds a bouquet of lilies. Two small children, representing the first charity of the brothers, are on either side of the Blessed Mother. With hands folded in prayer they gaze upward while kneeling under the protection of the Madonna's mantle.

The statue is usually clothed in fabric of elegant design. On certain feast days Our Lady's many jewels are attached to her garments. These jewels and ornaments represent gifts given by her devotees who have received solutions to difficult problems or cures of physical afflictions. Because of the large collection of jewels and ornaments, Our Lady of the Forsaken is considered to be one of the most richly endowed images in Spain. Some of the costly tokens were donated by Queen Isabella II in 1859. Some years ago, the donations made by the queen were valued at \$50,000. Christina of Bourbon, grandmother of King Alfonso, also gave costly presents to the sanctuary.

In Valencia's great cathedral, the miraculous statue of Our Lady is found in her own spacious chapel which was built especially for her in 1667. Standing high atop the altar, Our Lady is flanked by two large marble columns. At a lower level are located a statue of St. Vincent the Martyr and on the other side of the altar, St. Vincent Ferrer, a son and patron of Valencia.

The statue of Our Lady of the Forsaken was honored with a papal coronation on May 12, 1923. Many honors have been conferred upon Our Lady, and one of the more recent awards was given on May 13, 1961. A historic procession with the miraculous statue took place on that day, when Our Lady of the Forsaken was proclaimed Patroness of the region. Also carried in the procession was the framed papal document.

Of the many miracles and unusual events that took place as a result of prayer to Our Lady, we will relate one of the most extraordinary and most carefully witnessed. This involved a criminal condemned to death for murder. While being taken to the place of execution, he was permitted to stop at the cathedral to offer a prayer before the miraculous statue. While he was kneeling in prayer, the hand of the statue which held the lilies was seen to move several times, to the shouts and exclamations of the people. It was decided that such a miracle must indicate the man's innocence, and for this reason he was set free. The liberated man returned to this shrine of Our Lady numerous times to offer his gratitude. \*(excerpted from: *Miraculous Images of Our Lady*)