

PRACTICE

IT IS, then, meet and just that we should devoutly honor and praise the name of Mary. Let us never mention it except in reverence and devotion. Let us invoke Mary by it in all dangers of body and soul, mindful of the words of St. Bernard: "O sinner, when the floods and tempests of this earthly life overwhelm thee so that thou canst not firmly set thy foot, turn not away thy gaze from the light of this guiding star. When the storms of temptation assail thee, and the rocks and quick sands of vexation and trial threaten to shatter thy bark of hope, look up to that bright star in the heavens, and call on the name of Mary. When the billows of pride and of ambition, when the floods of calumny are about to submerge thee, look up to this star and call on the name of Mary. When anger, avarice, and concupiscence convulse the peace of thy soul, look up to this star and call on Mary. When thy sins rise up like hideous monsters before thy troubled vision, when thy conscience stings thee, when the terrors of future judgment fill thee with deadly anguish, when gloom and sadness overpower thee, when thou findest thyself on the brink of hellish despair, take courage; think of Mary, and thou wilt find from thy own inward experience how true are the sayings of those who tell thee that the name of the Blessed Virgin is 'Star of the Sea,' the name of the Virgin is Mary."

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer



WE HAIL thee, beloved child Mary, adorned with every virtue, immeasurably above all the saints, and therefore worthy Mother of the Saviour of the world, who by the operation of the Holy Ghost didst bring forth the incarnate Word. We give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

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Novena in Honor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Chapter 7

III of VI



The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary

FIRST DAY

The Birth of Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

MARY is born! The dawn announcing the coming salvation of mankind is at hand. The deep significance of Mary's birth is expressed in the words of the Church: "Thy birth, O virgin Mother of God, has brought joy to the world; for from thee is to come forth the Sun of Justice, Christ our Lord, to dispel the curse and bring the blessing, to conquer death and bring us everlasting life. On this day a light broke forth to brighten the paths of men through all time. Let us, then, rejoice in Mary's coming."

Equally expressive and touching are the reflections of that great Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine: "The day has dawned, the long-wished-for day of the blessed and venerable Virgin Mary. Well may this earth of ours rejoice and be glad for having been honored and sanctified by the birth of such a virgin."

PRACTICE

LET us, then, rejoice in Mary's coming. Let us hail the birth of her who attained the dignity of mother without losing the high privilege of a virgin. Let us imitate her holy life, that she may become our intercessor before the throne of her Son, our judge and redeemer. By becoming the Mother of God she became also our Mother. As Mother of the Redeemer she is also the Mother of the redeemed. Richard of St. Lawrence writes: "If we desire grace and help, let us have recourse to Mary and we shall obtain what we desire." For, as St. Alphonsus remarks: "All graces and gifts which God has resolved to bestow upon us He gives us through the hands of Mary."

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, strong child, who didst put to flight all hell and the powers of darkness. We give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

NINTH DAY

The Holy Name of Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

ST. ALPHONSUS writes of the name of Mary: "This name was neither invented on earth, nor imposed by human agency. It came from heaven and was given to the Mother of God by divine command." Just as it is a peculiar glory of our Savior's name, that "God hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (*Philipp.* ii. 9), thus it also behooves that Mary, the most perfect, the most pure, and most exalted of all created beings, should receive a most holy, lovely, and powerful name. St. Methodius declares that the name of Mary is so rich in grace and blessing, that no one can pronounce it devoutly without at the same time receiving a spiritual favor. Bl. Jordan exclaims: "Let a heart be ever so obdurate, let a man even despair of God's mercy, if he have recourse to thee, O Mary, virgin most clement, he can not fail to be softened and filled with confidence if he invokes thy name; for thou wilt inspire him with hope in God's mercy, pardon, and grace."

EIGHTH DAY

The Joy of the Just in Limbo at Mary's Birth

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

FOR four thousand years the just in limbo sighed for redemption, and sent up to Heaven the plaintive cry, "O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down!" (*Is.* xiv. 1.) "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (*Is.* xlv. 8). What joy must have filled the souls of the just when they heard the welcome tidings of the birth of Mary, the virgin Mother of the promised Messiah; how great their consolation at the rising of that dawn which preceded the Sun of Justice, whose splendor was to illuminate the darkness of them that sat in the shadow of death!

PRACTICE

A JOY similar to that which filled the captive souls in limbo at Mary's birth now fills the souls in purgatory when we implore her to come to their relief. Contemplating the immense love of the Most Holy Trinity for Mary, we may not doubt but that, by her intercession, she might at once deliver all the suffering souls from their prison, if such were in accordance with God's will. But God's wisdom and providence have decreed otherwise. Therefore Mary does not pray for the release of all souls in purgatory, but recommends them, in conformity with God's will, to His mercy. St. Bernardine of Sienna applies to Mary the words of Holy Scripture, "I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep and have walked in the waves of the sea" (*Ecclus.* xxiv. 8), and says: "She descends into that sea of suffering and soothes the pains of the poor souls." St. Denis the Carthusian remarks, that when the name of Mary is mentioned in purgatory, the souls there imprisoned experience the same relief as when a sick person hears words of consolation on his bed of pain.

Therefore let us entrust our prayers for the souls in purgatory to Mary. She will present our petitions to God, and thus presented, He will speedily hear and graciously grant them.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto

In Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary

LORD, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us,
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of virgins, pray for us.
Mother of Christ, pray for us.
Mother of divine grace, pray for us.
Mother most pure, pray for us.
Mother most chaste, pray for us.
Mother inviolate, pray for us.
Mother undefiled, pray for us.
Mother most amiable, pray for us.
Mother most admirable, pray for us.
Mother of good counsel, pray for us.
Mother of our Creator, pray for us.
Mother of our Redeemer, pray for us.
Virgin most prudent, pray for us.
Virgin most venerable, pray for us.
Virgin most renowned, pray for us.
Virgin most powerful, pray for us.
Virgin most merciful, pray for us.
Virgin most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of justice, pray for us.
Seat of wisdom, pray for us.
Cause of our joy, pray for us.
Spiritual vessel, pray for us.
Vessel of honor, pray for us.
Singular vessel of devotion, pray for us.
Mystical rose, pray for us.
Tower of David, pray for us.
Tower of ivory, pray for us.
House of gold, pray for us.
Ark of the covenant, pray for us.
Gate of heaven, pray for us.
Morning star, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.

Refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.
Help of Christians, pray for us.
Queen of angels, pray for us.
Queen of patriarchs, pray for us.
Queen of prophets, pray for us.
Queen of apostles, pray for us.
Queen of martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of confessors, pray for us.
Queen of virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all saints, pray for us.
Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us.
Queen of the most holy rosary, pray for us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us, O Lord.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God:
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

VOUCHSAFE, O Lord, that we may be helped by the merits of Thy most holy Mother's spouse; that what of ourselves we can not obtain may be given us through his intercession. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Prayer

MOST lovely child, who by thy birth hast comforted the world, made glad the heavens, struck terror into hell, brought help to the fallen, consolation to the sad, health to the sick, joy to all; we pray thee with all fervent love, be thou born again in spirit in our souls through thy most holy love. Renew our fervor in thy service rekindle in our hearts the fire of thy love, and bid all virtues blossom there, which may cause us to find more and more fervor in thy gracious eyes. O Mary, may we feel the saving power of thy sweetest name! Let it ever be our comfort to call on that

Redeemer of sinners? Again, the angels rejoiced at Mary's birth, because she would fill, through the salvation of mankind by her divine Son, the places made vacant in heaven by the apostate angels.

PRACTICE

GOOD children rejoice on the birthday of their parents and gratefully remember all the benefits they have received from them. Thus should we, also, celebrate the nativity of the Blessed Virgin by a grateful remembrance of the innumerable graces, individual and general, we received through her intercession. In acknowledging Mary's co-operation with our salvation, Holy Church calls her our mediatrix, and greets her as the "Cause of our joy," because, though we receive grace from Christ, it comes to us through her mediation. What cause, then, have we not for rejoicing at her birth! Again, greeting Mary as the cause of our joy, let us remember the protection she extended to the Church in times of adversity and persecution; let us, furthermore, remember all the graces which, according to the holy Fathers, are dispensed to us by Mary's hands. "Of her plenitude," says St. Bonaventure, "we have all received; the captive liberty, the sick health, the sad consolation, the sinner pardon, the just grace." Therefore the Church invokes Mary as the mother of mercy, the health of the sick, the comforter of the afflicted, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians, in a word, as the cause of our joy.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, fair soul of Mary, who from all eternity wast God's, and God's alone; sanctuary and living temple of the Holy Ghost; sun without blemish, because free from original sin. With all our hearts we pray to thee, O Mary, to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, beautiful moon, O Mary most holy, who didst shed light upon a world wrapped in the densest darkness of sin. Humbly prostrate at thy feet, we give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

SEVENTH DAY

The Angels Rejoice at Mary's Birth

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

DESCRIBING God's power and wisdom as shown in creation, Holy Scripture, according to the explanation of the Fathers, introduces Him as saying, "When the morning stars praised me together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody" (*Job xxxviii. 7*), and by these words intends to convey with what joy the angels praised God's omnipotence on beholding the wonders of creation. What, then, must have been their joy on beholding this new wonder of divine power and wisdom, the child Mary, destined to be their queen. Filled with admiration they exclaimed, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" (*Cant. vi. 9*.) And moreover, if, as Our Lord declares, the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, how great must have been their joy at the birth of her who was to be the refuge of sinners and the mother of Him who was to be the

great name in all our troubles; let it be our hope in dangers, our shield in temptation, and in death our last aspiration.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

SECOND DAY

Mary, the Elect of God

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

WE FIND the explanation of the great prerogatives and privileges which God bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin Mary by reflecting on her singular and glorious predestination. From all eternity she was predestined to become the Mother of His divine Son; therefore, says Pope Pius IX, God loved her above all created beings, and in His special predilection made her the object of His divine complacency. With singular appropriateness we may apply to her the words of Holy Scripture, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (*Jer. xxxi. 3*). The eternal Father regarded Mary as His beloved Daughter; the divine Son honored her as His dearest Mother; the Holy Ghost loved her as His spotless Spouse. "And," says St. Anselm, "they loved each other with an affection unsurpassed by any other."

PRACTICE

INSPIRED by the contemplation of Mary's extraordinary privileges, St. Anselm exclaims: "Thou, O Mary, art more exalted than the patriarchs, greater than the martyrs, more glorious than the confessors, purer than the virgins, and therefore thou, alone, canst achieve more than they can without thee." Let us, then, rejoice that we possess such a powerful advocate in heaven, and let us place implicit trust in her. But let us also co-operate with the graces and favors which she obtains for us. Moreover, let us remember that we grievously offend God and Mary if we abuse what

we obtain through her intercession to gratify our evil inclinations, and that the graces she obtains for us for our salvation will redound to our ruin if we do not use them for the glory of God and the promotion of our soul's welfare.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, Mary, who, sprung from the royal line of David, didst come forth to the light of heaven with high honor from the womb of holy Anna, thy most happy mother.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

THIRD DAY

Mary, the Child of Royalty

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

ACCORDING to her lineage, as traced in two Gospels, Mary numbers among her paternal and maternal ancestors the holiest and most renowned personages of the Old Testament. We find amongst them Abraham, the friend of God, the father of Israel and of all the faithful; then David, the man after God's own heart, the inspired Royal Prophet; and Solomon, the wise and mighty king, and the whole line of the kings of Judah. On her mother's side she belonged to the tribe of Levi, and was descended from its noblest and most prominent family, that of Aaron the High Priest,

SIXTH DAY

Mary, the Joy of the Most Holy Trinity

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

IN THE child Mary the eternal Father beheld His unsullied glorious image, which image had been defaced in all other human beings by original and actual sin. What a joy to Him to behold this stainless, immaculate child! And how great must have been the joy of the Son of God at the birth of her who was to be His Mother! From her He was to take that sacred body in which He was to dwell on earth, the blood of which He was to shed on the cross for our redemption, and in which He was to return to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. He will call her Mother, and regard her with all the filial tenderness of a child for his mother. She will love Him in return with a true mother's affection and devotion. As the Mother of Sorrows she will weep over His inanimate body taken down from the cross. But like Himself, she will leave the tomb, and reign at His side as the queen of heaven. How great, then, must have been His joy at the birth of this child!

The Holy Ghost, too, rejoiced at Mary's birth. He infused into her the plenitude of His holy love, for she was destined to become the Mother of God. And how Mary will love God, from whom she received so many and so great graces, and whom she is to bear in her arms as her real and true Son! This, her divine Son's love for mankind, will be imparted also to her. Therefore the Holy Ghost rejoices at this child, who received into her heart the fullness of His grace, and shall be the helper of those who have recourse to her.

PRACTICE

RAISE your spirit above time and space; try to contemplate well the mystery of Mary's predestination. To make us realize the great privileges conferred upon her, the Church applies to her the words of Holy Scripture, "He that shall find me, shall find life, and have salvation from the Lord" (*Prov. viii. 35*). Only when we consider Mary as the Mother of God, do we arrive at a right conception of her great dignity. Hence St. Bonaventure exclaims, "God might have created a more beautiful world; He might have made heaven more glorious; but it was impossible for Him to exalt a creature higher than Mary in making her His Mother."

granted to her. She lived in constant communion with God, undisturbed by evil inclinations from within or temptations from without.

PRACTICE

THROUGH the effects of original sin we have lost the supernatural prerogative of original justice, and even after receiving sanctifying grace in holy Baptism we are exposed to many temptations. Our life is a constant warfare. We must, however, not despair in this struggle, for if we are true children of Mary she will come to our aid. In all temptations Mary is the "Help of Christians" if we have recourse to her. But if we wish her to help us, we must not expose ourselves unnecessarily to temptation. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (*Ecclus. iii. 27*). This sad experience has come to many. Let us, therefore, avoid the danger and occasion of sin; and whenever evil approaches us in any shape, let us call upon Mary, and we may rest assured that she will assist us. "I shall certainly triumph over my enemies," exclaims St. Alphonsus, "if I place my trust in thee, O Mary, and if thou art my shield and protection against them."

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, O chosen one! who like the untarnished sun didst burst forth into being in the dark night of sin. Humbly prostrate at thy feet, O Mary, we give thee our homage, and with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

and was therefore a relative of the High Priests of the Old Testament. Thus royal and sacerdotal prestige distinguished Mary's lineage.

PRACTICE

THE Blessed Virgin was not proud of her illustrious ancestry, and not depressed because of the downfall of her family, but applied herself diligently to adhere to the faith and follow the example of her ancestors. Remembering the wicked members of her family, she learned from them that temporal greatness, success, wealth, and glory are more dangerous to virtue than poverty, retirement, and work. Let us imitate

Mary's example. Even possessed of the most excellent prestige's of the natural order, of ourselves we are nothing. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" (1 *Cor. iv. 7*.) Therefore do not overestimate yourself; do not be conceited; do not strive for praise, honors, and high station; be not boastful or arrogant; do not presume on your merits; rather be distrustful of yourself and patiently bear affronts, neglect, and humiliations. However poor you may be, be content with your lot, remembering the words of the Apostle: "They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which draw men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils: which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows" (1 *Tim. vi. 9, 10*).

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, O Mary, heavenly babe, white dove of purity, who, despite the infernal serpent, was conceived free from the taint of Adam's sin. With all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to come down again and be born in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

FOURTH DAY

Mary, the Child of Pious Parents

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

TRADITION tells us that Mary's parents were called Joachim and Anna. The holy Fathers rival each other in praising the virtue of this holy couple. St. Epiphanius writes: "Joachim and Anna were pleasing in the sight of God because of the holiness of their lives." St. Andrew of Crete remarks: "Joachim was eminent for the mildness and fortitude of his character. The law of God was his rule of life. He was just, and never relaxed in the fervor of his love of God. Anna was no less noted for her meekness, continence, and chastity." St. Jerome relates: "The life of this holy couple was simple and just before the Lord, edifying and virtuous before men." St. John Damascene exclaims: "O happy, chaste, and immaculate couple, Joachim and Ann! You are known, according to the Lord's word, by your fruit. Your life was pleasing in the sight of God, and worthy of her who was born of you."

PRACTICE

IT is a great blessing, and one to be esteemed more highly than wealth and high station, to have God-fearing, pious parents. For their sake God is gracious to the children and lavishes His gifts on them. It is certainly a great privilege to be offered up to God immediately after birth by the hands of a pious mother. To have, from childhood up, the example and guidance of virtuous parents is certainly of the greatest importance. St. Chrysostom writes: "The parents' example is the book from which the child learns." A pious bishop was wont to say: "The good example of the parents is the best catechism and the truest mirror that a family can have." If Christian parents imitate the example of Joachim and Ann the blessing of God will rest on them and on their children; for because her parents were so dear to Mary, she will not refuse to join them in their prayers for us.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

GRANT to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation, the commemoration of her nativity may give increasing peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

WE HAIL thee, brightest morn, forerunner of the heavenly Sun of Justice, who didst first bring light to earth. Humbly prostrate, with all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to be born again in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, who didst come into the world free from stain: obtain of God for me that I may leave it without sin!

FIFTH DAY

Mary's Supernatural Prerogatives

PREPARATORY PRAYER

WE FLY to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, and deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!

MEDITATION

MARY was the masterpiece of God's creation; her soul was the most perfect ever dwelling in a human body. A pious tradition tells us that she possessed the use of reason much earlier than other children. Her intellect was illuminated by supernatural light; her will was exempt from concupiscence. Being preserved from original sin, she surpassed in holiness, from the first moment of her existence, all angels and men. She possessed all virtues in the highest degree, because of her faithful co-operation with sanctifying grace and with the countless actual graces