

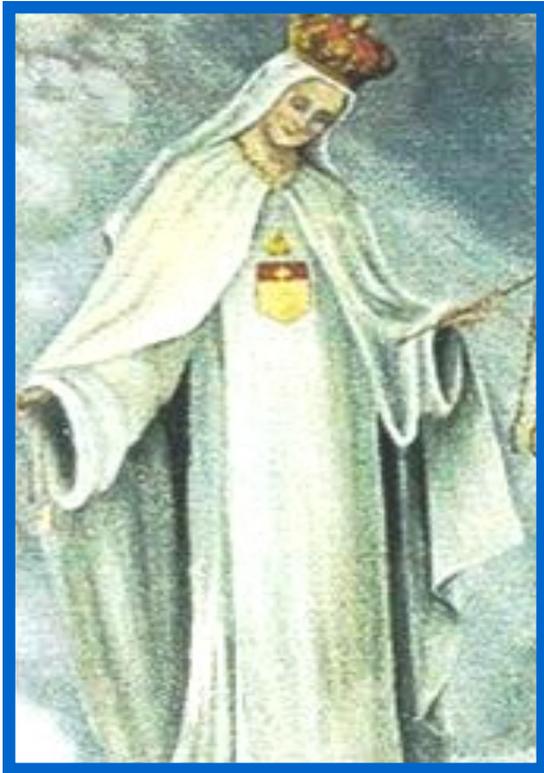
"Mary is Mother of Mercy because her Son, Jesus Christ, was sent by the Father as the revelation of God's mercy (Jn 3:16-18).

Christ came not to condemn but to forgive, to show mercy (cf Mt 9:13). And the greatest mercy of all is found in His being in our midst and calling us to meet Him and to confess, with Peter, that He is "the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16). No human sin can erase the mercy of God, or prevent Him from unleashing all His triumphant power, if we only call upon Him.

Indeed, sin itself makes even more radiant the love of the Father who, in order to ransom a slave, sacrificed His Son: His mercy toward us is Redemption. This mercy reaches its fullness in the gift of the Spirit who bestows new life and demands that it be lived."

~ Pope John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor

*(excerpted from:www.praytherosaryapostolate.com)



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Our Lady of Ransom Queen and Mother of Mercy Barcelona, Spain Feast Day September 24



***Prayer to Our Lady of Ransom
O God, Who by means of the most glorious Mother
of Thy Son was pleased to give new children
to Thy Church for the deliverance of Christ's faithful
from the power of the heathen;
grant, we beseech Thee, that we who love and honor her
as the foundress of so great a work may,
by her merits and intercession,
be ourselves delivered from all sin and
from the bondage of the evil one.
Through the same Christ, our Lord.
Amen.***

Queen and Mother of Mercy

*This feast commemorates the foundation of the Mercedarian Order and the apparition of Our Lady of Ransom.

In the early thirteenth century the Moors still held much of Spain, and in sudden raids from the sea they carried off thousands of Christians, holding them as slaves in Granada and in their citadels along the African coast. A hero of these unfortunates was Saint Peter Nolasco, born about the year 1189 near Carcassonne in France. When he went to Barcelona to escape the heresy then rampant in southern France, he consecrated the fortune he had inherited to the redemption of the captives taken on the seas by the Saracens.

He was obsessed with the thought of their suffering, and desired to sell his own person to deliver his brethren and take their chains upon himself. God made it known to him how agreeable that desire was to Him. Because of these large sums of money he expended, Peter became penniless. He was without resources and powerless, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and said to him: "Find for me other men like yourself, an army of brave, unselfish men and send them into the lands where the children of the faith are suffering."

Peter went at once to Saint Raymond of Pennafort, his confessor, who had had a similar revelation and used his influence with King James I of Aragon and with Berengarius, Archbishop of Barcelona, to obtain approbation and support for the new community.

On August 10, 1218, Peter and two companions were received as the first members of the Order of Our Lady of Ransom, dedicated to the recovery of Christian captives. To the three traditional vows of religion, its members joined a fourth, that of delivering their own persons to the overlords, if necessary, to ransom Christians.

The Mercedarians celebrated their institution on the Sunday nearest to the First of August because it was on August 1, 1218 that the Blessed Virgin showed their founder, Saint Peter Nolasco, the white habit of the order. On 22 February 1696 it was extended to the entire Latin Church, and the date was changed to September 24th.

Peter was concerned with the evils of slavery and unjust imprisonment. During his meditation and prayer over the tragic results of these dual evils, Our Lady appeared to him. Our Lady stated to him that it was God's good pleasure that he should found a religious order. And he should call it the order of Our

Lady of Mercy. "Who am I that God should honor me like this? And who are you, who knows so well, the secrets of my heart?" asked Peter.

The Lady answered: "I am Mary, The Mother of God. My Son, The Redeemer of the World, who came to give liberty to the captive, has much people bound in captivity, and wishes The Order to be established."

Peter was filled with joy to have been blessed to serve Our Lord and Our Lady. He decided he must immediately begin making his work a reality. He went to the King of Aragon to report the message from Our Lady of Mercy.

Peter was surprised to learn that the King had also been given a visit from the Queen of Heaven. Immediately, the Bishop of Barcelona and his ministers were to begin to lay the first stone of the new order. Peter was to be given a rope and scapular that would represent his new mission to the slaves and captives. The King also authorized the order to bear the royal arms. The order prospered under its divine directors and human mediators.



PRAYER TO OUR MOTHER OF MERCY

Merciful Father and God of all consolation, you have shown yourself to be wonderful in the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, and have given her to us as the Mother of Mercy.

May all of us who venerate her with devotion, always experience her powerful intercession, and enjoy Your immense mercy.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.