

## Mother of Mercy: The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

- Scriptural Passage
  - *During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*
  - *And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*
  - *Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.*
- Introduction
  - I'm very happy to be invited to be with you during this Novena to the Immaculate Conception during which we're pondering Mary and the seven sacraments instituted by her Son. Tonight we come to an examination of Mary and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
  - At first glance, it might seem that Mary has very little to teach us with regard to a Sacrament she never received. Because she was conceived without original sin and because she never used her freedom to choose to sin, she never had a need to receive this gift from her Son or from his apostles. But the flip side of her immaculate conception and the continual fiat of her life is very relevant to this Sacrament as well as to what is supposed to flow from it. Back at the beginning of time, after the first Eve and first Adam sinned, God prophesied that he would put enmity between the serpent and the woman, between the devil's offspring and the Woman's. The serpent would strike at her heel but she would strike at his head. Mary has an enmity, a hatred, for sin and all the lies of the devil. We see that her Offspring, likewise, had that same enmity, calling others to cut off hands and pluck out eyes if it leads to sin. But as that Offspring was dying as the Lamb of God on the Cross to take away the sins of the world, he did something really important. He saw his mother standing there as well as his beloved disciple and said to his mother, "Behold your Son" and to that disciple, representing each of us, "Behold your mother!" From that moment, we became Mary's adopted offspring and we, too, are called to have the same enmity toward the serpent, toward sin, toward evil. To enter into Mary's school is to enter into a double-dynamism, as is shown in most images of our Lady. On the one hand it's to enter into a dynamism of prayer, lifting our head, our eyes, our hearts and whole life to God. And at the same time, we're supposed to be stomping on the devil's head, having nothing to do with him. Mary wants us to spurn the evil one because we're spurred on by love of God. She wants to help us live our baptismal participation in the graces she received at the first moment of her conception, so that we may reject Satan, all his evil works, all his empty promises, and entrust ourselves fully to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- Gospel passage of the Visitation
  - In today's Gospel, we learn from Mary that to entrust ourselves to God means to confide our entire existence to his mercy and to his mission to save and sanctify. As soon as the Archangel Gabriel had entrusted her the mission of being the mother of the Son of God, she began to share in his saving work. She went with haste on the 60-mile journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem and then down hill

toward Ein Karim and it's there that her Son, still an embryo, sanctified John the Baptist as a fetus. Mary was already assisting her Son in freeing John from his original sin and filling him with grace.

- When Mary proclaimed her famous Magnificat, she sang a hymn to the Lord's loving mercy. In Psalm 89, the Jews would chant, "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord." That joy flourished in Mary's words, "His mercy is from generation to generation on those who treat the Lord with awe," and led her to characterize God's relationship with his chosen people as one of undying mercy: "He has come to the help of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy."
- That Magnificat was not just a hymn of praise to God for all that the Almighty in his goodness had done for Mary in her humility but also a means by which all of us could enter into her own experience of God, to teach us that the Lord's mercy extends to every generation, in accordance with the eternal promise of mercy he has made left her presence to all Abraham's spiritual sons and daughters — provided that we learn properly how to "fear" the Lord, how to hold him in a holy awe, never seeking to displease him.
- This passage of the Magnificat was used by Blessed John Paul II in his beautiful encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* "God who is rich in mercy," to introduce how Mary seeks to mother us all in a continued hymn of praise for God's mercy. He wrote saying that Mary's Immaculate Conception showed that she is "the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has." And he went on to say that that singular grace continued in her own "unique sharing in the revelation of God's mercy. "No one has experienced, to the same degree as the Mother of the crucified One, the mystery of the cross, the overwhelming encounter of divine transcendent justice with love: that "kiss" given by mercy to justice. No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son, together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive 'fiat.'"
- "Mary, then," he said, "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; in each one of these titles there is a deep theological meaning, for they express the special preparation of her soul, of her whole personality, so that she was able to perceive, through the complex events, first of Israel, then of every individual and of the whole of humanity, that mercy of which "from generation to generation" people become sharers according to the eternal design of the most Holy Trinity.
- That participation, John Paul II continued, leads to a singular maternal mission. "The above titles which we attribute to the Mother of God speak of her principally, however, as the Mother of the crucified and risen One; as the One who, having obtained mercy in an exceptional way, in an equally exceptional way "merits" that mercy throughout her earthly life and, particularly, at the foot of the cross of her Son; and finally as the one who, through her hidden and at the same time incomparable sharing in the messianic mission of her Son, was called in a special way to bring close to people that love which He had come to reveal... It was precisely this "merciful" love... that the heart of her who was the Mother of the crucified and risen One shared in singularly and exceptionally - that Mary shared in. In her and through her, this love continues to be revealed in the history of the Church and of humanity. This revelation is especially fruitful because in the Mother of God it is based upon the unique tact of her maternal heart, on her particular sensitivity, on her particular fitness to reach all those who most easily accept the merciful love of a mother. This is one of the great life-giving mysteries of Christianity, a mystery intimately connected with the mystery of the Incarnation.
- And so tonight we're going to ponder that "great life-giving mystery," the mystery of Mary's mission of mercy together with her Son, culminating in the Sacrament of Confession.
- Mary and Mercy in the Approved Apparitions of the Church
  - One of the most powerful ways to see Mary fulfilling this mission of bringing people close to the merciful love of her Son is seen in the Marian apparitions that have been approved by the Church. In them we see Mary constantly seeking to remind us of our need to have enmity for evil and trust for mercy. Let's look together at five, asking ourselves, how many times does the Blessed Mother need to come to earth to remind us of our need for her Son's mercy?
  - In Guadalupe, 1531.

- Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego five times 482 years ago this upcoming week. In the first apparition on December 9, she said, “I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may show and give all my love, compassion, help and protection, for I am your merciful Mother, to you and to all mankind who love me and trust in me and invoke my help.”
  - She is our merciful Mother. She wanted a teocalli or Church built precisely so that she could lead others to the mercy of her Son.
  - Many scholars believe that the name “Guadalupe” is a transliteration of the Nahuatl term Coatlxopeuh, which means, “the one who crushes the serpent.” Our merciful Mother is no wimp. Her mercy involves crushing serpents. She wants to raise us to be children who learn how to imitate that strength to say no to evil out of love for God.
- Miraculous Medal, 1831.
  - 300 years later, our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Labouré on Rue du Bac in Paris. She asked her to have a medal struck, showing her with rays flowing down from rings on her fingers on one side, and on the back a symbolic depiction of Mary at the foot of her Son’s Cross. Around the oval medal on the front she had St. Catherine print the words, “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”
  - She wanted us to have recourse to her under what the reality of her Immaculate Conception.
  - St. Catherine noticed that most of the rings were radiant as the sun but a few were dull and without light. When she asked about the difference, Mary said that the ones full of light pointed to all the graces that God through her hands sent those who had recourse, but those who had no light were graces meant to be given but that were never requested. It’s an important lesson for us. Mary has many graces for each of us, but we need to have recourse to her. We need to “run-back” (literally what recourse means) to her whenever we wander from her pure heart and life.
- LaSalette, 1846.
  - Fifteen years later, two young kids Melanie and Maximin found Mary on a mountain side in the French Alps weeping. Balling her eyes out. She lamented four sinful practices that are still very common today: blaspheming God’s name, missing Sunday Mass, failing to pray, and not even taking the conversion of Lent seriously. We need to ponder what our sins do to her. St. Monica wept so much for the sins of her son, Augustine. How much more must Mary weep for our sins!
  - She wore a radiant Crucifix that had two symbols on it, one a hammer and another a pair of pincers, a sign of the freedom each of us has, the freedom to refuse God and hammer Jesus to the Cross through sin, or the freedom to love God and take the pincers to remove the nails.
  - LaSalette is not principally a message of sorrow, but one of great hope. Melanie and Maximin were not practicing Catholics when Mary appeared and seldom said their prayers. Their conversion led to the conversion of many others, beginning with Maximin’s father. When he was drunk and yelled at his son for speaking about this Lady so much, the 11-year old responded that Mary had spoken of his dad. That pierced his father so much that he came to the place where Mary had appeared to the children, where a stream had begun to flow where Mary had sat. He drank some of the water and received a spiritual healing, to give up the booze and begin to live off of the Living Water of Jesus Christ instead. He became a daily Mass goer for the rest of his life.
  - His conversion was one of so many that have occurred there. His conversion is meant to inspire our own.
- Lourdes, 1858
  - Perhaps the most famous Marian apparitions of all time happened 12 years later, In Lourdes, France, where the message of Mary on conversion was constant.
  - On the sixth apparition, Feb 21, 1858, St. Bernadette asked the Beautiful Lady, “What saddens you?” She replied, “Pray for sinners.”

- On the 8<sup>th</sup> apparition, three days later, she said, “Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners!”
- On the 10<sup>th</sup> apparition, on Feb 27, she said again, “Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners. Go, kiss the ground for the conversion of sinners. Go and tell the priests to have a chapel built here.”
- The next day, on the 11<sup>th</sup> apparition, she said the same words, Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners. Go, kiss the ground for the conversion of sinners.”
- Mary had come to ask Bernadette and us to pray for our and others' conversion from sin. In doing so, she was an icon of hope that freedom from sin is possible.
- When Bernadette at the local bishop's request asked Mary what her name was, Mary responded on March 25 (16<sup>th</sup> apparition) in a way that encapsulates this hope. Mary did not reply, "Mary of Nazareth," or "the Mother of Jesus," or even, "Your mother." She folded her hands in front of her breast, looked up to heaven, and said in the local patois, "Que soy era Immaculado Conception" — "I am the Immaculate Conception."
- As we see so many times in the Bible, names are more than just arbitrary phonics allowing us to get someone's attention: they're meant to express an identity. Mary expressed her fundamental identity as one who is free from sin, showing that through God's grace such freedom is possible.
- When Pope John Paul II visited Lourdes for the 125th anniversary of the apparitions, he said that this is the essence of what Mary revealed in Lourdes: "What message can I give to guide you? Simply this: the Virgin without sin brings help to sinners!" Mary came down from heaven to encourage us to pray with her for our conversion and the conversion of others, to do penance, and to receive healing from her Son.
- Fatima, 1917
  - The final apparition we'll ponder is in Fatima in 1917. Mary said to the Shepherd children, “Men must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins. ... They must no longer offend Our Lord who is already so much offended.”
  - She asked the young Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia, “Sacrifice yourself for sinners and say often when you make some sacrifice, ‘My Jesus, it is for love of you, for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.’”
  - Our Lady taught the children the prayer most of us now say during the Rosary, “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, lead all souls into Heaven, especially those who are in most need of your mercy!”
  - She showed them a three-part vision on all the destruction caused by sin: showing them hell, the ravages of atheistic communism, and the persecution of the Church.
  - After showing them Hell, she said, “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish throughout the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do as I shall ask many souls will be saved, and there will be peace.... But if people do not cease offending God... another and more terrible war will begin.”
  - In the third part of the Message of Fatima, Mary allowed them to see an angel crying out in a loud voice, “Penance, penance, penance!”
  - Why was the remedy consecration to her Immaculate Heart? Because a heart that’s consecrated to God through Mary is a heart that like Mary’s is pure. It’s a heart that says yes to God. It’s a heart that treasures within his graces. Such a heart is the path to becoming, as the letter to the Ephesians says we’re all supposed to become, “holy and immaculate” in God’s sight.
- So we see with all of these apparitions that Mary is constantly appealing to us to take penance seriously, to take prayer for conversion seriously, to join her in the mission entrusted by her Son to bring people to repentance, forgiveness, belief in and living the Gospel.
- Mary and the Acts of the Penitent
  - Let’s get specific about how Mary can, and doubtless wants to, help us to take more fruitful advantage of the great gift of her Son in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Jesus once

said that heaven rejoices more for one repentant sinner than for 99 who never needed to repent, and so she constantly wants to increase the joy of God, the joy of all the saints, her own joy, and our joy through good and fruitful confessions.

- St. John Vianney
  - In pondering Mary and the Sacrament of Confession, I think often about the reliance of the greatest confessor in the history of the Church, St. John Vianney, on her help. Many of you will know readily who St. John Vianney is, but he was the pastor of a tiny Church in Ars, France, from 1818-1859. For the last 30 years of his work there, he heard confessions 12-18 hours a day, to the tune of over 100,000 penitents in one year.
  - In his extraordinary ministry of conversion, Mary was St. John Vianney's constant intercessor and accomplice. He repeated often that he sought to put into practice the insight of St. Bernard, who attested that he had obtained more conversions by a single "Hail Mary" than by all his sermons combined.
  - The parishioners of Ars routinely witnessed their pastor begging Mary's help for the conversion of sinners. Once when a man was resisting coming into the Church for confession, the Curé of Ars was overheard praying, "Mary, don't leave me for a minute. Be always at my side. Mary! Chase away the demon who has enslaved this person under his empire, who is tempting him and trying to prevent his making a good confession."
  - When others came asking him to pray for the conversion of a loved one, he always readily assented, but he likewise recommended that they have recourse to the Blessed Virgin and make a novena to her for this purpose.
  - He tried to help everyone relate to Mary as a mother full of merciful love. "The heart of this good mother is only love and mercy," he said. She "desires so much to help us... but above all does so when we want to return to the good God." Therefore, "we should address her with great confidence, sure that, even though we're miserable, she will obtain for us the grace of our conversion."
  - To back up this point, he used a characteristically unforgettable image: "The more we're sinners, the more she has tenderness and compassion for us. The child who has cost his mother the most tears is always the one dearest to her heart. Does not a mother always run to the weakest and most exposed of her children? A doctor in a hospital, doesn't he always pay most attention to the sickest?"
  - He encouraged them to follow his example and have recourse to her under trial. "If you invoke her when you're tempted, this mother who is so full of tenderness will come immediately to your aid," for she is "better than the best of mothers."
- And so, just like he urged his parishioners, so we, too, should learn from that best of all mothers. Let's examine the ways she can help us in terms of the "acts of the penitent," the various component parts of a good confession: our examination of conscience, contrition, purpose of amendment, penance and confession itself.
  - Examination of conscience
    - A good examination of conscience — whether based on the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes, or the Seven Capital Sins, or the Precepts of the Church, or the Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy — needs to occur with the help of the Holy Spirit. Mary is the one to show us how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit at all times, including during the preparation for mercy. "God the Father of mercies through the death and resurrection of his Son has sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins..." The same Holy Spirit helps us to prepare for what he wishes to give us through the priests, and Mary shows us how to pray for the spirit, be docile, be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and live according to the Spirit." This helps us to grasp more easily when we've lived according to the flesh.
    - Mary shows us how to ponder things in the heart. This is what is needed for conscience in general. Conscience is an organ of sensitivity within us to attune to

God's voice and Mary shows us how to treasure the moral principles of God within and how to pray to apply them to particular circumstances.

- So many young children making their first confession turn to their mothers for help in examining their consciences, because they don't really know as well as they should. Likewise we should turn to her.
- She helps us to overcome the two main problems of conscience.
  - First, a lax conscience, where we think that our sins can't be that bad, that they're just "peccadillos." Mary shows us, on the other hand, that love is revealed in little things. She noticed what everyone else missed in Cana because she loved more. Likewise she teaches us how to be faithful in the little things and how to examine our consciences not just for extrinsic violations of the law of the Lord but lack of love for the Legislator.
  - Likewise, she helps us to overcome an overly scrupulous conscience, by helping us to trust in her Son's mercy, which is always greater than our misery. "His mercy endures from age to age for those who fear him," she never ceases to remind us.
- **Contrition**
  - The most important part of preparing for the Sacrament of Confession is contrition. The contrition needed for the Sacrament is deep sorrow of the soul and a hatred for the sins committed together with the first determination not to sin again.
  - Mary helps us with this sorrow because she knows the pain of her Son's suffering and can sensitive us to what our sins do to our loving Savior. But also we can be helped in our own contrition by pondering her contrition. Our sins wound her. They're among the seven swords that perpetually pierce her heart. We see in the apparition of Our Lady of LaSalette how she weeps over the sins of her sons and daughters.
  - True sorrow is:
    - Interior and heartfelt — Mary helps us to be able to say honestly, "I am *heartily* sorry for having sinned against you."
    - Supernatural — Mary helps us remember the goodness of God, the pain and love of Christ's suffering and death, the ugliness of sin, the potential loss of eternal life and the everlasting punishment.
    - Universal — We need to have sorrow not just for one or two of our sins but for all the sins. Mary reminds us each is a wound or a rupture to our relationship with God who is love and to be sensitive for the slaps and the big blows.
    - Sovereign — The sorrow we're called to have is meant to be greater than all other sorrows, greater than the sorrow of the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of our reputation. Mary helps us to remember just what's at stake: that the greatest sorrow should accompany the wounding of what is the greatest love for us and what's supposed to be our greatest love of Another.
  - Mary assists us in each of these ways. She helps us grow in sorrow by helping us to identify with her sorrow. The most powerful expression of this sorrowful synergy happens in the great Lenten hymn, *Stabat Mater*.
    - "Is there one who would not weep, whelmed in miseries so deep Christ's dear Mother to behold? Can the human heart refrain from partaking in her pain, in that Mother's pain untold?"
    - "Holy Mother, pierce me through; in my heart each wound renew of my Savior crucified. Let met share with thee his pain, who for all my sins was slain, who for me in torments died."

- “Let me mingle tears with thee, mourning Him Who mourned for me, all the days that I may live. By the cross with thee to stay, there with thee to weep and pray, this I ask of thee to give.”
- Amendment
  - The third act of the penitent is a firm purpose of amendment. This is resolution to have a total change of life. It requires a game-plan, a strategy just as serious as Bill Belichick draws up for the Patriots each weekend. A resolution is not a wish, but a resolve, a commitment, a determination. It’s meant to be:
    - Firm — This means we’re disposed to avoid sin and the near occasions at any cost, including death. The early saints would say, “Better to die than to sin.”
    - Universal — The amendment is supposed to be directed toward all our sins. We’re not just supposed to have an amendment to avoid one particular sin but all sin, which means a firm desire for holiness.
    - Efficacious — This means we earnestly make the effort to shun all proximate or near occasions of sins, that it’s not just a weak wish, but a sincere purposefulness.
    - Durable — This means it’s not just a passing sentiment, but something, like quitting smoking or giving up booze as part of Alcoholics Anonymous, where we wake up every day prepared to keep the resolution.
  - Mary shows us how to have our “game face” on with regard to winning in the battle against sin. She wants to help us to crush the head of the serpent, knowing that as long as we’re alive the serpent will continue to tempt us and so we need to persevere in the pest control.
  - Mary shows us that we can’t put these resolutions off. Just like she went “with haste” to her cousin Elizabeth, so we must, too, go with haste in fleeing from near occasions and in getting the help we need.
  - She ultimately wants to help us resolve to pattern our whole life on hers, so that we may say, “Let it be done for me according to your word.” But that is far from easy and we need her resolve.
- Penance
  - The fourth act of the penitent is the desire to do penance or satisfaction.
  - In several of Mary’s appearances, she asked the young seers to live a life of penance, which is a life of co-redemption.
  - Even though she was sinless, she did penance in her participation in the sufferings of her Son and in her own sufferings on account of her Son. How much more important is it for us as sinners to “make up for what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of the Church!”
  - The penance that is given to us in the Sacrament of Confession is a small part of what is needed to reform our lives. We can’t kill Jesus Christ through sin and think that, in justice, all we have to do in reparation is say three Hail Mary’s. We’re called to live lives of penance in reparation for our sins and the sins of others, so that we and they might receive greater mercy by our greater openness through penance.
- Confession
  - The last act of the penitent — after examining our conscience with great sorrow, forming a firm resolution and entering into a life of penance — is to confess our sins. Many times we think that confession comes before amendment and penance, but both of these should be part of our preparation. Then with the strength of God’s grace in absolution to help us better keep these resolutions, we soldier on reborn.
  - Our confessions should be straightforward, , without hiding things, without guile.

- Mary is a model of this type of forthright speech. She didn't beat around the bush. She said to her son, "They have no wine" and "Do whatever he tells you." Likewise we should without being complicated just say what we've done.
- Mary helps us to be sincere. To get it out. Not to be afraid.
- Prayers to Mary
  - In Christian piety, we're always invoking Mary's help so that we might receive mercy.
  - In the Hail Mary, we pray, "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death," pointing to the reality that we are sinners in need of our prayers at every instant.
  - In the Hail Holy Queen, we call out to her as "Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope." We invoke her with confidence as a Mother who wants to see us reformed and reconciled not punished.
  - In the Memorare, we stand before her "sinful and sorrowful," begging her, "in your mercy, hear and answer" our prayers.
  - We're constantly crying out to her mercy because we're constantly in need. And she never lets us down. She never turns a deaf ear. She's always reminding us that the Lord is merciful in every generation to those who fear him because he has made an eternal covenant to be so to Abraham and all his sons and daughters who live by faith.
- Conclusion
  - As we prepare for her Immaculate Conception, it is important for all of us to recognize that she wants to intercede for us so that, through baptism and the second baptism of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we might likewise have enmity put between us in the serpent so that we may respond to God's call to be holy and immaculate in his sight. We entrust ourselves to her immaculate heart, to her maternal heart, so that we might learn from her how to see God purely in all things and choose him rather than Barabbas in a disguise, so that in choosing the blessed fruit of her womb, he may choose us for ever before the Father.
  - I'd like to finish with the words of Blessed John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation on the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, in which he invites all Catholics throughout the world to entrust ourselves to Mary's Immaculate Heart:
    - John Paul II, Reconciliation and Penance 35: "I invite you to turn with me to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, mother of Jesus, in whom 'is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity... [in whom] is accomplished the work of reconciliation, because she has received from God the fullness of grace in virtue of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.' Truly Mary has been associated with God, by virtue of her divine motherhood, in the work of reconciliation. Into the hands of this mother, whose fiat marked the beginning of that 'fullness of time' in which Christ accomplished the reconciliation of humanity with God, to her immaculate heart — to which we have repeatedly entrusted the whole of humanity, disturbed by sin and tormented by so many tensions and conflicts — I now in a special way entrust this intention: that through her intercession humanity may discover and travel the path of penance, the only path that can lead it to full reconciliation."
  - To discover and travel the path of penance and reconciliation. That's the path on which the Virgin conceived without sin is constantly trying to lead us all.
  - Holy Mary, Mother of God and Mother of Mercy, pray for us sinners, now and always! Amen!