

*Marian Consecration*  
..... FOR .....  
CHILDREN



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CHILDREN

Bringing Mary to Life in Young Hearts and Minds

Carrie Gress

TAN Books  
Charlotte, North Carolina

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FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD,  
BUT ESPECIALLY FOR MY GODCHILDREN

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## A NOTE TO PARENTS



The idea for this book started a few years ago when I sought to find a suitable book for Marian consecration that I could read with my children. I assumed I would have a lot to choose from but was astounded to find very little. (I have since found a couple titles, but only after starting work on this project.) I asked a priest friend for a recommendation, and his quick reply was: “There isn’t one. You should write it.”

It took me awhile to become convinced that I really should write this book because, after all, I’m not a priest, religious, or a theologian. What business did I have writing a prayer book? But a year after this idea was hatched, I wrote *The Marian Option: God’s Solution to a Civilization in Crisis*. It was a book that seemed to come to me out of the blue, and yet it was great preparation for this work. Not only did it require a crash course (or courses) on Mary and Mariology, it also opened my eyes to the basic need our world has for a greater devotion to Our Lady.

As I conducted my research on *The Marian Option*, something happened that I didn’t anticipate: Mary became a real person. In discovering and writing about the many ways she assists us in the world, I began to see her not as some distant spiritual figure but as a doting mother who cares about the wellbeing of her children and will do everything within her power to protect us. It is my hope that this consecration will help your child see her as more real, more accessible, and as more of a mother than they previously knew. We may talk about her a lot, but do we really know her as a tender and loving mother who fiercely guards us, protects us, suffers for us, and intercedes for us?

A look around the world today can leave parents feeling helpless about



how to prepare their children for an uncertain future. And yet there are few things that can prepare them better than a strong relationship with their spiritual Mother. Marian devotion is not limited to adults. History is full of child saints and children to whom Mary has appeared with special messages for the world. This is no accident. These children were chosen because of their deep humility and trust. Children have a special place in salvation history because of their docility and earnest love for God. Just because they're children does not mean that they are childish. Many child saints have displayed profound spiritual maturity, particularly in the face of great suffering and struggle.

Our children have a great capacity for spiritual growth, which can also serve as an example to us. Their fresh eyes can see God in the world in remarkable and beautiful ways. Today, many adults are blind when it comes to this type of vision, and yet our world needs it now more than ever. We need to see the roles that God and his mother play in our everyday lives.

We can sometimes forget the spiritual potential of children, but we must remember that our job is to help them come to know Jesus and his mother, because they cannot love what they do not know. Maria Montessori's approach recognized that the child's soul is asking for one thing: "Help me to come closer to God by myself." This is how a true relationship is fostered. We cannot force the relationship, but we can help lead the child to it so that there is a lasting bond. This book is an attempt to help children grasp and interiorize a strong devotion to Our Lady so that they can love her as the mother that she is and so that she can ultimately lead them to her Son, Mary's true mission.

In this book, I look at many different tales, stories, and Gospel readings, many of which your child might already be familiar with. Storytelling is a

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lost art in our world, and yet it is invaluable in forming the mental structures for moral living. Stories are what help cultures live on as one generation passes down to the next tales of bravery, courage, and moral ideals that form a community with a collective memory.

Beyond cultural importance, stories can also provide a sort of “short hand” for conveying a message. As adults, we’re used to seeing references to stories, books, or movies that we are already familiar with and that drive home a message. I wanted to tap into this latent knowledge that children have from being read to (or from their own reading) in order to make learning about Mary a richer and more welcoming experience. Familiarity with what they already know helps do that.

While this book is written for reading children to use on their own, it could be a wonderful family project. As Fr. Peyton, the Rosary Priest, is famous for saying, “The family that prays together, stays together.” All the more so for the family that unites itself together under the mantle of Our Lady, entrusting all that we have and all that we are to her maternal care.

I have included optional questions to foster discussion with your children about the daily reflections. Additionally, I wanted to make this consecration manageable for busy families, so the prayers are kept to a minimum. Feel free to supplement the prayers with your own family devotions, such as a nightly Rosary.

My prayer and hope is that this book will draw your children, and your whole family, closer to the Blessed Mother so that she can lead you home to her Son.

## CHILDREN'S INTRODUCTION: WHY CONSECRATE YOURSELF TO MARY?

“I’m scared,” said Piglet. “A story will help,” said Pooh. “How?” “Oh. Don’t you know? Stories make your heart grow.”

So just what is Marian consecration? Well, it’s a practice that started long ago as a way to draw closer to Mary. When Jesus was on the cross, he gave Mary to John and John to Mary; this signified that Mary was to become the mother of all of humanity. She is our mother and we know that she longs to have a relationship with each of us. Marian consecration is making a gift of ourselves to the Queen of Heaven so that she may better be able to direct us, mother us, and love us in a way most pleasing to God.

In our world, it’s easy to feel small, as if our little efforts account for nothing. But when we are united with Mary, she can take even our smallest offerings and make them useful in God’s plan. When we consecrate ourselves to Mary, we bind ourselves to her even more closely as her spiritual children so that every effort, no matter how small, can be magnified by her love and become a proper gift to God.

Perhaps you already have a close relationship with Mary and know a lot about her. Or perhaps you don’t. Either way, this book is going to help you understand her better as a real mother who knows and loves you and who wants to help you in your every need.

This consecration has thirty-three days of preparation following the adult versions of Marian consecration. Each day includes a short reflection, some questions to think about or discuss with your family, a short piece of Marian or Church trivia, and, finally, daily prayers.

The preparation is broken up into five parts. The first five days will

focus on getting to know Jesus and his mother; after that, we will take a week to look at Mary as our mother. The third installment will tell the stories of young saints and their important role in salvation history, even in their littleness. Following this, we will consider the vices, or sins, that sadly separate us from Jesus and his mother, as well as the virtues that help bring us closer to them. Finally, the last week will look at what the stories of knights and princesses from the days of old can teach us about Mary and our own mission in the world. On the thirty-fourth day, you will then make the Act of Consecration, which is the gift of self to Our Lady through a prayer of consecration.

There are a lot of stories you will hear throughout these next thirty-three days. Some will be familiar and some may be new. But all of them will help you get to know Our Lady and your particular mission in life, even now as a young person.

## CHOOSING YOUR MARIAN FEAST: WHEN TO START

Like other Marian consecrations, this one has thirty-three days of preparation broken up into different stages. Select a Marian feast day and then begin on the start date provided in the following table that corresponds with that feast.

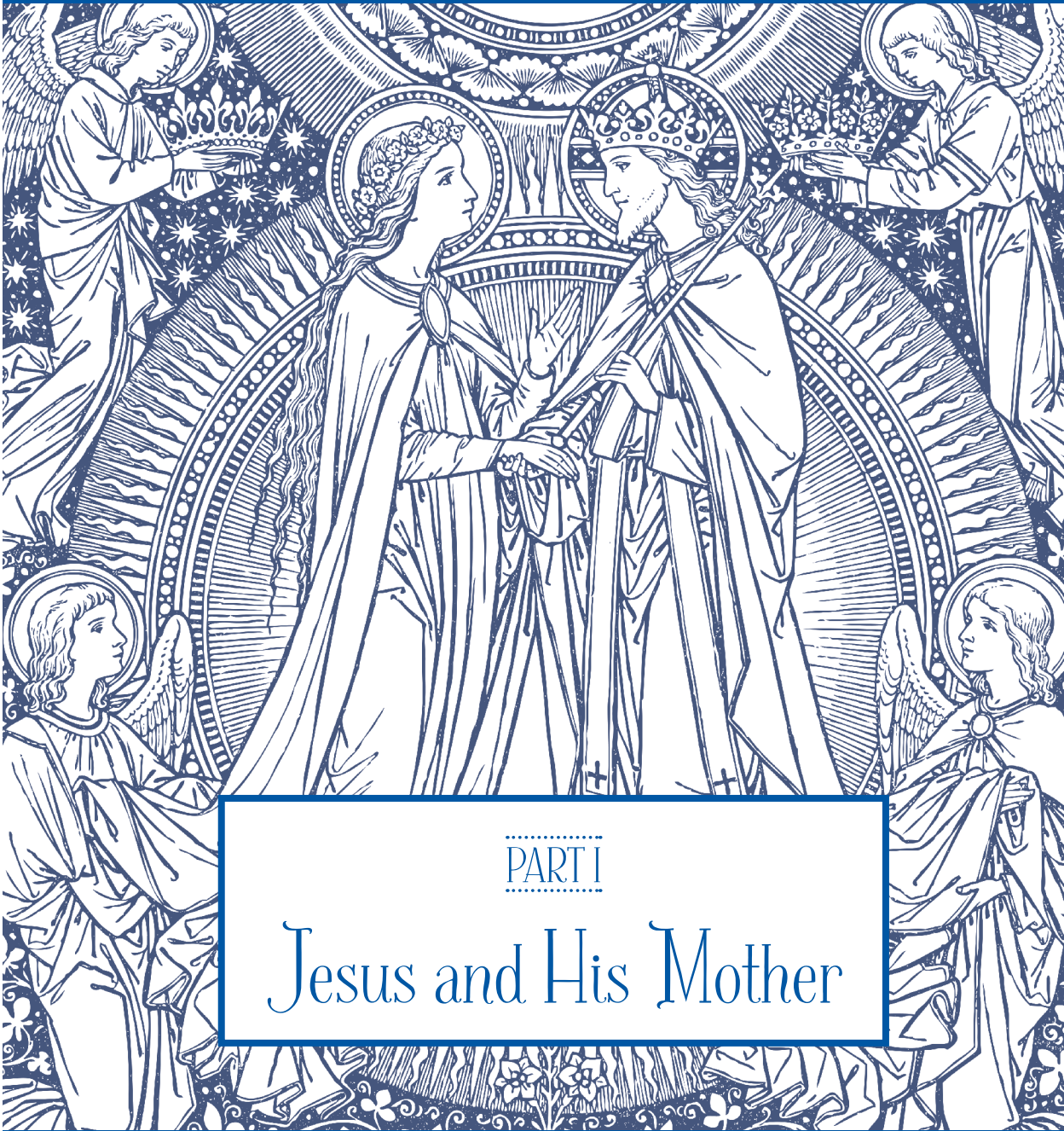
The day chosen for consecration will become your feast day (or your child's) and will likely play an important role in your life. In my own life, I can see a clear pattern connected to the feast of my consecration, the feast of the Annunciation, March 25. The Annunciation has long been my favorite decade of the Rosary, and I love lilies, which are a symbol of this feast. I

was also married on March 25. Every person's mission is different, but it is beautiful when God reveals little clues about his will for our lives in these dates and feasts.

Start	Marian Feast	Consecration
Jan. 9	Apparition at Lourdes	Feb. 11
Feb. 20	The Annunciation	March 25*
April 10	Our Lady of Fatima	May 13
April 21	Mary, Help of Christians	May 24
April 28	The Visitation	May 31
May 25	Our Lady of Perpetual Help	June 27
June 13	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	July 16
July 13	The Assumption	Aug. 15
July 20	Queenship of Mary	Aug. 22
Aug. 6	Nativity of the Virgin Mary	Sept. 8
Aug. 10	Holy Name of Mary	Sept. 12
Aug. 13	Our Lady of Sorrows	Sept. 15
Sept. 4	Our Lady of the Rosary	Oct. 7
Oct. 17	Our Lady of Divine Providence	Nov. 19
Oct. 19	Presentation of the Virgin Mary	Nov. 21
Oct. 25	Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal	Nov. 27
Nov. 5	Immaculate Conception	Dec. 8
Nov. 9	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Dec 12
Nov. 29	Mary, Mother of God	Jan. 1
Dec. 31	Presentation of Our Lord	Feb. 2

\*If a leap year, start on February 21st.

Please note that some of these feasts can be moved if they fall on a Sunday, or Advent, or during the Easter Octave. It is worth looking at the liturgical calendar year to be sure before starting.




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PART I  
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# Jesus and His Mother





## Jesus in *The Chronicles of Narnia*

t has been roughly two thousand years since Jesus walked the earth. During his time here, St. John says that Jesus did so many things that the world could not hold all the books it would take to tell his stories (see Jn 21:25). We hear a lot about Jesus at church during the Mass, but sometimes we forget how remarkable Jesus is. We're used to hearing about him walking on water, turning water into wine, and that he is Our Savior. But sometimes it's good to try to find a new way to see him; this can remind us of how much he loves us and how much he did for each of us.

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, author C. S. Lewis offers a new way to look at Jesus through the character of Aslan, the great and powerful Lion. Lewis wrote seven books in the *Narnia* series, and Aslan is the only character who appears in all of them. In these books, Aslan creates, saves, gives hope, restores life, and cherishes the children and creatures of Narnia in much the same way we can imagine Christ doing with us. It shouldn't strike us as odd that Lewis would imagine Jesus as a lion. In the Bible, he is referred to as the Lion of Judah (see Rv 5:5).

We get a good look at Aslan in *The Magician's Nephew* when young Polly and Digory access a new world through magical golden rings. They witness Aslan creating Narnia and filling it with all sorts of creatures, great and small, who can talk, including mice, dwarves, fauns, and centaurs (half man, half horse). After creating this new world, Aslan then appoints a king and queen, bringing order to this new world. In a funny twist, the first royal

couple was a taxi cab driver and his wife, who had been hanging laundry when they were thrust into this new land. They were hardly noble but somehow rose to the occasion.

Lewis includes many humanizing details that help us feel close to Aslan, like a sense of humor, happiness, and compassion (which we will talk more about on Day 3). But we also get a sense of Aslan's strength and power. "Aslan threw up his shaggy head, opened his mouth, and uttered a long, single note; not very loud, but full of power. Polly's heart jumped in her body when she heard it. She felt sure that it was a call, and that anyone who heard that call would want to obey it." Aslan, like Jesus, is all-good, so when we hear his divine voice, we get a sense that it is important we should follow it.

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lewis makes it clear that Aslan is both wonderful and terrifying—but terrifying in a good way because he is so powerful beyond our experience. "People who have not been to Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever thought so, they were cured of it now. For when they tried to look at Aslan's face they just caught a glimpse of the golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then found they couldn't look at him and went all trembly."

Jesus, like Aslan, can make us feel "trembly," but he is also all-loving. The more we come to know him in our minds and hearts, the more we will want to follow him.



## Discussion Questions

1. How do you think you can feel both terror and wonder for the same thing, like the children felt when they met Aslan?
2. What do you imagine Jesus will be like?
3. Do you think a story about a lion like Aslan in *The Chronicles of Narnia* helps you understand Jesus better? If so, in what ways?

## Did You Know?

C. S. Lewis used a lion to represent Jesus because there is an old title that refers to him as the Lion of Judah. One of the ancient Jewish tribes was called Judah and their symbol was a lion. This image was used in the New Testament in the Book of Revelation where it speaks of a man who had a vision of a scroll, and he was looking to find someone worthy to open it. No man in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, was able to open it. The man



says, “I shed many tears because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to examine it. One of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has triumphed, enabling him to open the scroll’” (Rv 5:4–5). This lion of the tribe of Judah is Jesus, the word of God, who is able to open the scroll.

## Prayers for the Day

### *Our Father*

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.



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***Hail Mary***

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed are thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now,  
and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.