

COMPENDIUM
— *of* —
MARIAN DEVOTIONS



The Coronation of the Virgin (circa 1625) by Peter Paul Rubens

COMPENDIUM

of

MARIAN DEVOTIONS

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The Heart of Mary by Leopold Kupelwieser

INTRODUCTION

Who Is Mary?

Of all the women in the history of the created universe, in all the centuries of history, for all time as well as for all eternity, the greatest is Mary.

Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, the Immaculate Conception, is God's masterpiece, more beautiful and pure than any other creation. Numberless hearts have been captivated by her, devoting their time and talents to honor and venerate her in order that they might give glory to her Son, the final end of all Marian veneration.

In what arenas of life do we see Mary's influence? More than we may realize! As we will come to see, Mary has been the subject of countless pieces of literature, music, and art, and for centuries, parents have named millions of their daughters after her. Still more, cities, towns, countries, and provinces are also named after her. No woman in the history of the world has attracted more love and devotion than the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is because of the role she has played in our salvation, her intimate relationship with the Trinity, the Church, and the saints, and her presence in the pages of Sacred Scripture.

In the Trinity

Mary has a central and intimate place, as well as role, in the very heart of the greatest mystery of Christianity—the Most Blessed Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mary is the Daughter of God the Father; Mary is the Mother of God the Son; Mary is the Mystical Spouse of God the Holy Spirit. In sum, Mary is the living tabernacle and sanctuary of the Blessed Trinity!

In the Church

The council fathers of the Second Vatican Council gave Mary a very special role. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, chapter VIII, presents the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Church. Once pronounced in the assembly, there resounded an explosive applause that seemed to never end!

In the Lives of the Saints

The saints have a very deep, tender, and loving devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. For that reason, among her many titles in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary is that of Queen of the Angels and Saints! However, as in seeing beautiful colors emanate from a diamond through the process of refraction, or a rainbow painting the sky as sunlight breaks through after a torrential downpour of rain, Mary radiates God's eternal beauty in the wide range of her various titles. Some of these are: Our Lady of Good Counsel (Saint Augustine), Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Saint Alphonsus Liguori), Our Lady Help of Christians (Saint John Bosco), Our Lady of Divine Mercy (Saint Faustina Kowalska), Our Lady, Queen of All Hearts (Saint Louis de Montfort). In other words, each and every individual saint loved Mary but was able to contemplate her beauty and majesty in a different dimension.

In the Bible

Biblical typology or symbolism abounds with respect to the person of Mary! She is seen as the conqueror of the ancient serpent, depicted as the second Eve, and viewed as the Ark of the Covenant. Mary also is the Daughter of Zion and can be seen as the Queen Mother in 1 Kings 2; still more, in Isaiah, Mary is the virgin who has conceived the child called Emmanuel—God with us!

But what has all this to do with us? Who is Mary to us?

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, one of the most known and loved of the modern saints, asserted with respect to Mary: "It is true that Our Lady is Queen of Heaven and earth, but she is more Mother than Queen." We all need a mother. The qualities of a mother are many: she gives birth, nourishes, protects and defends, clothes, corrects, heals, educates, comforts and consoles, listens, and gives advice. But first and foremost, a true mother loves her child from the very depths of her heart! With respect to our mother Mary, it cannot be said with greater unction and eloquence than in these words of Saint Augustine, son of Saint Monica: "If you were to take all the love, of all the mothers, of all times and places together, the love that Mary has for you is much greater!" With these moving words of Saint Augustine, we should have a total, unreserved, unlimited, loving trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary, who indeed is the Mother of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Mother of the Church; but most especially, your Mother and mine, in time and for all eternity!

In this *Compendium of Marian Devotions*, you will find a treasury of the many ways the Church has venerated Mary for the last two thousand years. Prayers, theology, artistic works, devotions, apparitions and mystical phenomena, sacramentals, liturgical feasts, hymns, and more fill these pages, drawing you into the heart of our heavenly mother. We hope and desire that all of you who read, reflect, and meditate on this humble work dedicated to Mary will fill your mind, heart, and soul with a tender, filial, confident, loving, and total donation of self to Jesus through the loving hands of Mary. Our hope, desire, and prayer are that your growing knowledge and love for Mary will set your heart on fire with a love for Jesus, her Son, so that when you die, you will be welcomed by Jesus and Mary into heaven. We pray that one day you will be a splendid jewel in the crown of Mary to contemplate the face of God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for all eternity!



The Annunciation (1655–1660) by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo



Madonna with child by Il Sassoferrato

CHAPTER 1

Mary, Our Mother

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, a young Carmelite saint who died at the tender age of twenty-four, loved the Blessed Virgin Mary very much. She was known to have said: “It is true that Our Lady is Queen of Heaven and earth, but she is more Mother than Queen.”

Before we examine Marian dogmas, teach Marian prayers, chronicle her apparitions, number her feasts, list her sacred titles, or reveal her many virtues, we must proclaim Mary’s motherhood, for all of us understand the power of a mother’s love. We begin with the heart, and from there, the rest will follow.

Indeed, Mary is first and foremost the Mother of God. It is from this role that she is also then the Mother of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, and by extension, our very own loving mother.

Up to this point, the Church has officially declared four Marian dogmas, a truth revealed by God through the Church that must be accepted. They are Mary’s Divine Maternity, Mary’s Perpetual Virginity, Mary’s Immaculate Conception, and finally, Mary’s Assumption into Heaven. Of these, the greatest and most sublime is Mary’s Divine Maternity—which means that Mary was chosen by God to be His mother; we celebrate this every year on Christmas, as well as to start off the New Year on January 1.

Holy Mother Church declares this teaching of Mary’s Divine Motherhood on the foundation of Sacred Scripture. We read that she gave birth to Emmanuel—*God With Us*—at the Nativity, and in the months before this, her cousin Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, called her “the mother of my Lord” (Lk 1:43). Later, at the feast of Pentecost, considered the birth of the Church, Mary is there praying with the apostles

in the Upper Room when the Holy Spirit descends upon them like fire. By our baptism, we became members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, and Mary is our mother in the order of grace.

To understand the importance of this motherly role that Mary plays, consider the role of motherhood in the natural order. Who could deny the importance of a mother in the life of her child? Why, then, would God, who calls himself “Our Father,” and who gives us our Christian brothers and sisters to walk with in this life, leave us motherless in the spiritual order? What family is whole without a mother?

Archbishop Fulton Sheen posed this question once, asking, “Can religion do without motherhood? It certainly does not do without fatherhood . . . and since motherhood is as necessary as fatherhood in the natural order—perhaps even more so—shall the devoted religious heart be without a woman to love?”

Bishop Sheen went on to say, “If fatherhood has its prototype in the Heavenly Father, who is the giver of all gifts, then certainly such a beautiful thing as motherhood shall not be without some original Mother, whose traits of loveliness every mother copies in varying degrees.”¹

Let us return to the importance of mothers in the natural order. A mother has basic and innate qualities. First and foremost, the nature of a mother is to give life to the child that she carries in her womb and, second, to nurture the child once he has left the womb. Third, a mother is intent upon clothing her child to protect him from the cold and from sickness. Fourth, a mother protects her child from danger and the possibility of getting hurt. Fifth, a mother is intent upon educating her child, physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Sixth, a mother will treat her child’s wounds and tend to him when he falls ill. Seventh, a mother listens to her child whenever he wants to open up and express what is in the depths of his heart. Eighth, a mother has the courage to correct her child when he has made some error or is moving in a dangerous direction. Ninth, a mother comforts her child by her warmth, tenderness, concern, compassion, and care. And finally, tenth, the most important and characteristic note of an authentic mother is that she loves her child with all her heart. It is a love without limits, irrespective of where the child is and what the child has done—her love is as vast as the ocean!

All of these maternal qualities can be attributed to Mary our mother on a higher and more sublime plane. Let us now look at these motherly attributes and apply them to Mary as our heavenly mother.

¹ Fulton Sheen, *The World’s First Love*.



The Immaculate Conception / Pinturicchio, Bernardino di Betto /
Photo © Fine Art Images / Bridgeman Images

Mary Gives Life

Mary is *full of grace* from the very moment of her Immaculate Conception in the womb of her mother, Saint Anne. Grace is the supernatural life of the soul. Mary prays for us so that we will attain grace beginning with our baptism. She prays for us so that this grace will grow and abound during our entire life. Finally, she prays for us to have the grace of all graces, and that is to die in the state of grace so that we will be saved for all eternity. Mary, my mother, attain for me life and life in abundance!

Mary Nurtures Our Spiritual Life

Through a fervent prayer life in which we speak often and confidently to Mary, our loving mother, she attains for us growth in our spiritual life. Once again, Mary, *full of grace*, attains for us

special insights in our intellect and touches of grace in our soul so that we may grow and flourish like a healthy tree growing alongside an abundant and gushing stream.

Mary Helps to Clothe Us

Adam and Eve, after committing the original sin, recognized their nakedness. On a spiritual plane, when we are imbued with sanctifying grace through Baptism, we are spiritually clothed with the most exquisite garment. As our mother, Mary prays that we will always be clothed with this garment of grace, and if we lose it due to mortal sin, Mary prays that we will recover grace through a good Sacramental Confession.

Mary Watches Over Her Children to Protect Them

Mary is keenly aware of the many dangers that her children are exposed to from within and from without. The devil, the flesh, and the world are in constant pursuit

of our attention, as well as our soul. Mary has her careful, attentive, and watchful eyes gazing upon us with love, and she warns us through grace and through inspirations of the dangers that encroach upon us.

Mary Educates Us

As a good mother strives to provide a good education for her children, so does Mary. Father Robert Fox, a true expert on Our Lady, most especially Our Lady of Fatima, pointed out that Our Lady of Fatima came in a very special way as a teacher. The words and messages of Our Lady of Fatima turn out to be a superb and excellent teaching, an excellent catechism, a clear and poignant signpost on how to arrive at what is most important—our eternal salvation. Jesus and Mary are the best of teachers; let us listen to them and obey their advice!

Mary Heals Her Wounded Children

If a child falls off a bike into a mud puddle and cuts his knee, his mother is the first one to run and succor the child. Lifting the child out of the mud, kissing the child, embracing the child, cleansing the child and changing his clothes, dressing the child's wound, and finally giving the child some hot chocolate—these are all gestures of a loving mother. When we are wounded, Mother Mary comes to us speaking words of wisdom: *Do not worry. I am here to bring you healing.* We should bring our gaping wounds to both Jesus, the Wounded Healer, and Mary, the mother of Jesus the Wounded Healer!

Mary Listens to Us

A true mother is ready to listen to what is in the heart of her child. On a much loftier plane, Mary is always ready to listen to us, to respond to our problems, to help us in our needs. The beauty of Mary as *listener* is the simple but all-consoling fact that Mary is never too tired, occupied, absorbed, or if you like, too busy to listen to us whenever we want to talk to her. We should get in the habit of talking to Mary as often as our heart desires. Mary's ears are always attentive to the supplication of her children. Moreover, she listens to us not only with her ears but also with her Immaculate Heart, and she understands us perfectly!

Mary Corrects Her Wandering Children

A loving mother is not bashful or slow to correct an errant child. If there is a wandering and hungry wolf outside, the mother will keep her child inside and lock the door, especially if that child is curious and tends to wander. Fraternal correction indeed is a dimension of the theological virtue of charity, which Saint Thomas Aquinas defines as “willing the good of the other.” An example of Mary correcting her children comes

to us, again, in the Fatima messages. Mother Mary warned that most souls are lost due to sins of the flesh and that many souls are lost due to a lack of prayer and sacrifice. Gently, but firmly, Mary exhorts us, her children, to intensify our prayer life, to be willing to live a more sacrificial life, and to strive to live a life of greater purity. This reminds us of the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the pure of heart; for they will see God” (Mt 5:8).

Mary Comforts Her Children

In the midst of the many sufferings, trials, tribulations, afflictions, and setbacks in this short life on earth, which is merely a short pilgrimage on the highway to heaven, Our Lady ardently desires to comfort us as a loving mother. Among the many consoling titles of Mary is Our Lady of Consolation. Still more, the Marian prayer that we say to conclude the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary is that of the Hail Holy Queen. This consoling prayer starts with these words: *Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope!* Beyond a doubt, these few words are like a gentle dew descending upon the dry and parched desert of our soul. Indeed, in the

My Mother, My Confidence!

O Mary Immaculate, the precious name of Mother of Confidence,
with which we honor thee,
fills our hearts to overflowing with the sweetest consolation
and moves us to hope for every blessing from thee.

If such a title has been given to thee,
it is a sure sign that no one has recourse to thee in vain.

Accept, therefore, with a mother's love, our devout homage,
as we earnestly beseech thee to be gracious unto us in our every need.

Above all do we pray thee to make us live in constant union
with thee and thy Divine Son, Jesus.

With thee as our guide, we are certain that we shall ever walk in the right
way, in such wise that it will be our happy lot to hear thee say on the last
day of our life those words of comfort: “Come then, my good and faithful
servant; enter thou into the joy of my Lord.” Amen.

My Mother, my Confidence!

sorrows, sadness, and failures that we all experience in this valley of tears, we should run to Mary as our mother to comfort us. She will come quickly to soothe our sorrows with the comfort and consolation of her loving heart!

Mary Truly Loves Us, Intensely!

A natural mother loves her children. However, human love has limits, and it often wanes, declines, and can even grow cold. This is a sad but true reality. Not so in the case of Mother Mary. The love of the most pure and Immaculate Heart of Mary never wanes, diminishes, or grows cold. It is a constant, intense, and faithful love. Mary loves

Deposition (1329) / Pietro Lorenzetti / Photo © NPL - DeA Picture Library / G. Roli / Bridgeman Images



us irrespective of where we are, what we have done, and what we have failed to do. Her love is most pure and perfect. Possibly the best way to understand to a limited degree the love Mother Mary has for you and for me would be by meditating upon the words of the Doctor of Grace, the great Saint Augustine: “If you were to take all the love, of all the mothers, of all times and places together, the love that Mary has for you is much greater!” In other words, it is impossible to fathom the inexpressible, sublime, and ineffable love that Mary has for you!

We hope and pray that starting now you will experience the extraordinary power of the presence of Mary in your life, most especially as your heavenly mother. As a mother, she will attain life—life in abundance—for you. As a mother, she will nurture and strengthen your spiritual life. As a mother, she will clothe you with the royal garment of sanctifying grace. As an attentive mother, she has her loving eyes fixed upon you at all times. As a good mother, she will educate you in the Gospel—the Good News of salvation that Jesus her Son taught. Wounded? Mary is also known as *Health of the sick*, and like Jesus, she will intercede as a physician. Never too busy, Mary will lend you an attentive ear; she is the best of listeners. If you are a wandering sheep from the fold, Mary, as mother of the Good Shepherd, and aware of the presence and danger of the wolves, will bring you back to the fold. In the midst of the sorrows and failures of life, Mary is “your life, your sweetness, and your hope.” Finally, Mary loves you intensely with her Immaculate Heart and desires that one day you will be with her forever in heaven to praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for all eternity.

The Four Marian Dogmas

A dogma of the Catholic faith is a truth declared by God which the Magisterium declares as binding. In simpler terms, this means it is a teaching of the Church we must believe to be true, without any doubt, and this belief must be reflected in our Christian witness and discipleship and the way we live our lives. A dogma of the faith is that Jesus is the Son of God, or that the Eucharist is truly His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Conversely, believing in certain miraculous events, like a Marian apparition, is not a dogma. Even though they can greatly aid our faith, we do not have to believe in these miracles to be a member of the Church.

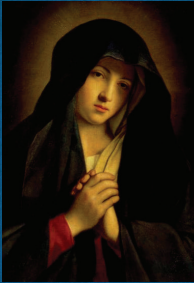
Within the Church, as we will see, there are many Marian devotions, prayers, feasts, apparitions, and other spiritual practices, all of which are powerful and important, and greatly *encouraged*, but not mandated. But there are only four Marian dogmas that we must believe as Catholics.

1. Mary's Divine Maternity



This dogma was declared at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The council proclaimed Mary as the *Theotokos*—the God-bearer. There was a theological battle between the heretical bishop Nestorius and Saint Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorius said there were two separate persons, one human and one divine, in the incarnate Christ. But Saint Cyril affirmed that Jesus Christ was both God and man—His divine nature and human nature united in one Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In this, of course, is the presence of Mary as the Mother of God, an honor we celebrate for her on January 1.

2. Mary's Perpetual Virginity



This dogma states that Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Our Lord. Tradition tells us that Mary had taken a vow of virginity, and Isaiah tells us that “a young woman shall conceive and bear a son” (7:14). Following the birth, Joseph guarded Mary’s virginity. Jesus did not have any other brothers and sisters, as some wrongly claim by misreading parts of Scripture.

The Second Vatican Council affirmed Mary’s virginity, saying, “Christ’s birth did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 57).

3. Mary's Immaculate Conception



A dogma only recently promulgated in 1854 by Pope Pius IX, it states that Mary was persevered from sin when she was conceived in the womb of her mother and remained free from sin throughout the entirety of her life. She confirmed this shortly after the declaration by Pope Pius IX at her apparitions at Lourdes to Saint Bernadette, calling herself “the Immaculate Conception.” Some

point to a passage in Scripture that says all require salvation through Christ, therefore, if Mary was sinless, she would not need saving. The Church answers this objection by pointing out that Mary did need her Son to save her, but while we are saved from our sins, she was *preserved* from sin through the foreseen merits of her Son’s saving death. The feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8.

4. Mary's Assumption



Another recent dogma defined in 1950, this time by Pope Pius XII, states that after the course of her earthly life, Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heavenly glory. This dogma is intimately tied to the Immaculate Conception, for if sin did not touch her, neither would death. We celebrate this feast each year on August 15.