



33 Days
to
Morning
Glory

Retreat
Companion

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WEEK FOUR
St. John Paul II

Prayer for Week Four — The *Magnificat*

During this last full week of retreat before Consecration Day, turn your attention to Mary's "*Magnificat*." This heartfelt prayer, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, captures Mary's joyful response to the "great things" God has done for her and her praise of his mercy. Of all the prayers we've prayed this retreat, the *Magnificat* is by far the most inspired and inspiring, because it is part of the Word of God and flowed from the Immaculate Heart of Mary herself.

As we draw closer to Consecration Day, our hearts begin to fill with praise and thanks to God for the great gift of his mercy that is Marian consecration. For three weeks, we've been pondering the powerful Marian teaching of Marian saints, and God has been doing great things for us. By reciting the *Magnificat* this week, we become even more united with Mary who, with us, is rejoicing at the approach of the beginning of a glorious new morning in our relationship with her.

The *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.

Day 22

Mary's Gift of Mercy

[Each day this week, you will (1) read the appropriate day from *33 Days to Morning Glory*, (2) pray the *Magnificat*, and (3) prayerfully answer the four corresponding questions in this *Retreat Companion*.]

- 1. In her visions at Fatima, Our Lady asked (first) for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and (second) for "First Saturday" communions of reparation.¹¹ Can you see the connection between these requests and your own consecration to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary? Explain.

- 2. The first apparition at Fatima and the shooting of Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square both occurred on May 13th at 5 p.m. John Paul II did not consider this a coincidence. What is a coincidence anyway? Have you experienced any coincidences in your life? Do you believe, as John Paul II did, that "in the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences"? If so, what do you believe God is saying through such "God-incidences" in your life? If not, what explanation do you give to others of the two instances being similar in time, circumstances, or outcome?

3. We read that Pope John Paul II solemnly entrusted the whole world to Mary’s Immaculate Heart in 1984 and that the beginning of the collapse of communism in Europe outwardly began five years later. We also read that the Pope solemnly entrusted the world to Divine Mercy in 2002, saying that Divine Mercy would prepare the world for the Lord’s final coming. (Of course, he gave no indication of when this will happen.) Why is consecration/entrustment so important to John Paul II? How is your consecration to Mary related to the consecration of the world to Mary and Divine Mercy? How does your trust in Mary reflect your trust in the love and mercy of Jesus?

4. Mary’s *Magnificat* is her personal response to the great mercy God bestowed on her. Through your consecration to Jesus through Mary, you have the opportunity to participate in her *Magnificat* by your praise of Jesus. Rewrite the *Magnificat* with your first name in it in place of the references to Mary. (Of course, the line “all generations will call me blessed” doesn’t exactly fit for us — except, perhaps, when we consider the great gift of Marian consecration, which makes us especially blessed!) Give thanks for God’s mercy to you personally.

Closing Prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.
Have mercy on us and on the whole world!*

Day 23

Maternal Mediation

- 1. Mediators “stand between” persons or parties to bring unity and agreement. They speak to each side, clarify issues, seek concessions, and urge acceptance from each. With whom and in which relationships do you act as a mediator? Or do you avoid such a role, and if so, why? Are you successful in these attempts to bring unity to two friends, co-workers, or family members? What role does mercy or charity play in your mediation?

- 2. Jesus wants Mary and all Christians to share in his mediation through “obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, 61). These four will be made easier and secure through Marian consecration. Which of the four is most difficult for you now? Which is easiest now? For whom or for what circumstances in your life are these virtues of mediation most important?

3. By this point in the preparation, we should realize Mary’s important, motherly role in our spiritual lives, and what a gift it is to entrust ourselves to her. Why do you suppose God has brought you, at this point in your life, to make or renew the consecration to Jesus through Mary? What mediation between you and God might need the motherly hand of Mary right now?

4. Mary, through her maternal intercession, brings you grace and mercy and leads you to her Son and the salvation he has won for us. What aspects of your life need her gifts of grace and mercy right now? Ask her for those gifts.

Closing Prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.
Fill my heart with praise to God for giving Mary as my spiritual mother.*

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Day 24

Mary's Retreat (Day One)

1. As Pope John Paul II teaches, God the Father was the first to entrust himself to Mary, giving her his own Son in the mystery of the Incarnation. What humility! The Creator entrusts himself to his creature. And so, we, too, imitate the Son by humbly entrusting ourselves to the care of the Mother of God. What is true humility? How humble are you? What instances in your life can you cite as opportunities for the practice of humility? Were you aware at the time that you needed to exercise humility?

Horizontal lines for writing answers to question 1.

2. Mary's motherly attentiveness to the details of the couple being married at Cana begins Jesus' public life with the miracle of the water become wine. The lack of wine has been described as a symbol of the lack of joy in human life without God's grace. What human needs might Mary be attentive to and then bring to Jesus for his miraculous intervention if she were invited to your home today?

Horizontal lines for writing answers to question 2.

3. The attentiveness of Mary to the details of God in every experience allowed her to accept each new dimension of her spiritual motherhood, her personal mediation within the mediation of Christ. When has your attentiveness to detail given you insight into what God wanted of you in a specific situation? How did the details become apparent to you? Did you give thanks to God at the time for his gift of insight?

4. When have you most powerfully experienced heart-pondering prayer during this preparation retreat for consecration to Jesus through Mary? What spiritual fruit or insight has it produced in you? Has your love of Jesus grown? How can you tell?

Closing Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.

Help me to be faithful to heart-pondering prayer, as was Mary.

Day 25

Mary’s Retreat (Day Two)

- 1. Pope John Paul II in his Cana commentary points out three important aspects of Mary’s “solicitude for human beings”: (1) Mary puts herself between her Son and mankind in their needs; (2) Mary’s mediation for the couple is that of Mother,¹² which is her right as Mother of Jesus; (3) Mary desires to see the manifestation of Jesus’ mediation freeing men and women from misfortune. How much do you desire Jesus’ mediation in present world needs? How much do you want to see Jesus acknowledged as Mediator?

- 2. Our recourse to Mary as Mother and Mediatrix will be made easier and more secure in our personal consecration to Jesus through her, which is only days away now. What signs have you had in prayer or insights or events that may have confirmed for you that God desires your consecration to Jesus through Mary?

3. Mary is “the spokeswoman of her Son’s will,” John Paul II writes. By your consecration, you will enjoy an even deeper intimacy with Mary. So, after your consecration, what situation or concern of yours will you ask Mary about first regarding Jesus’ will for you?

4. In belonging to Mary, our participation in mediation will be “wholly oriented toward Christ” because Mary is wholly Christ’s. What part of you or your relationships do you hope will become more “wholly Christ’s” by belonging to Mary?

Closing Prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.
Remind me to ask for Mary’s powerful intercession in my times of need.*

Day 26

Mary’s Retreat (Day Three)

- 1. At the close of yesterday’s retreat with Mary, we prayed for the Holy Spirit to remind us to ask for Mary’s powerful intercession. How do you remind yourself to run an errand, call someone, or mail a letter? Whom do you ask to help you to remember ordinary, daily things? Why choose those people or things like calendars, alarms, lists to remind us? Why do you need to ask the Holy Spirit to remind you to ask for Mary’s help?

- 2. According to John Paul II, the “new motherhood” of Mary “came to definitive maturity” at the foot of the Cross, at that moment when she burns with love for all those for whom Jesus suffered and died. What will be the grace that you need — what needs to be conquered in you — for you to walk with Mary to Calvary and love more fully all the souls that Jesus wants to save as he suffers? When will you ask for this grace? Now? On Consecration Day?

3. Christ appeared to his disciples after his Resurrection, and he most certainly appeared to his Mother as well. He explained the Scriptures to his disciples on the way to Emmaus, broke bread with them, and promised the Holy Spirit to remind the Apostles of all that he taught them. What personal message might he have had for his Mother in his unrecorded appearances to her, particularly about her role in his Church? Place yourself there with Jesus and Mary. Ponder how the message he gives her might, at least in part, be intended as well for those who are preparing to consecrate themselves to her. What message from the risen Christ does Mary want to share with you personally?

4. Mary’s motherly mediation between her Son and you personally is especially present when you participate in the Sacraments, such as Reconciliation and the Eucharist. How will you invoke Mary’s help and ask for her special motherly mediation in your life when you celebrate these two sacraments?¹³

Closing Prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.
Thank you for the gift of my loving Mother, Mary.*

Day 27

Marian Entrustment (Part One)

1. Where does Jesus ask us to take Mary in? You live in a physical house that has certain characteristics. You have an inner “house” of heart and soul and prayer. And you have family relationships that are a sort of “house” in which you live. How will Mary enter more deeply into these houses through your upcoming consecration? By your consecration, you’re inviting her to move into all those places.

Handwriting lines for response to question 1.

2. Mary brings us to intimate communion with Jesus. She brings us into the “hidden life” she lived in Nazareth with Jesus and Joseph. What did they talk about? How did they pray? What would you want to ask Joseph or Mary about how Jesus grew up, what made him laugh, what games he played, what chores he did? What insights might the answers give you into how you should act, work, and pray?

Handwriting lines for response to question 2.

3. How do we take Mary into the physical house where we live? Does she affect the décor of your home, how you entertain guests? Does she affect how you dress, speak, and act toward others in your home? Write some new expectations for your home now that Mary lives there.

Horizontal lines for writing.

4. In entrusting John to Mary, Jesus expected Mary to “mother” John as well as to entrust herself to his care and love. How will Mary mother you? She will be trusting you to care for her — what will you do to care for her?

Horizontal lines for writing.

Closing Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.

Prepare me to entrust myself completely to Mary so she can bring me closer to Christ.

Day 28

Marian Entrustment (Part Two)

- 1. In the same homily that's cited on pages 102-104 in *33 Days to Morning Glory*, Pope John Paul II says:

... “[H]e took her to his own home” can be taken in the literal sense as referring to the place where he lived. Mary’s motherhood in our regard is manifested in a particular way in the places where she meets us: ... places in which a special presence of the Mother is felt. There are many such dwelling places. They are of all kinds: from a special corner in the home or little wayside shrines adorned with an image of the Mother of God

Have you thought about dedicating a small corner of your home or your garden to Mary? Where would it be? Which is your favorite statue or image depicting Mary? How does it express her mercy and God’s mercy?

- 2. “Divine Love placing a limit on evil” is how Pope John Paul II defines the mercy of God. Everyone carries around past and present evils in his life, from physical limits to mental worries to sins of flesh and spirit. What limits on those evils (and the accompanying hope) do you recognize as Divine Mercy in your life?

3. John Paul II identifies the pierced Heart of Christ as the source of merciful love. At the foot of the Cross, Mary was the nearest person to His Heart. Ask her to bring you to that place at the foot of the Cross where she stood and accepted her motherhood of you. Ask for her support as you climb there, and thank her in a short prayer. If you wish, you may write that prayer here:

4. “Jesus,” Pope John Paul II says, “consecrated himself for all mankind: ‘And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.’” You are about to unite yourself to that consecration through your consecration to Jesus through Mary. Ask her to enlighten you about your participation in Jesus’ mediation between God and the world. What specific questions do you have about your prayer life, your suffering, your heart and its readiness to love others?

Closing Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.

Draw me in, with, and through Mary to the Fountain of Mercy.

SMALL-GROUP SESSION OUTLINE

~ St. John Paul II ~

A. Prayer

1. + *Magnificat*

2. *Come, Holy Spirit, and be with us. We wish to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus and Mary in our lives as we prepare for consecration to Jesus through Mary. Amen. +*

B. Personal Response

[Selections from the Pondering, Prayerful Response of Week 4. The following questions are only suggestions. Do not feel as though you have to answer every question during the small group discussion time.]

1. The first apparition at Fatima and the shooting of Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square both occurred on May 13th at 5 p.m. John Paul II did not consider this a coincidence. What is a coincidence anyway? Have you experienced any coincidences in your life? Do you believe, as John Paul II did, that "in the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences"? If so, what do you believe God is saying through such "God-incidences" in your life? If not, what explanation do you give to others of the two instances being similar in time, circumstances, or outcome?
2. We read that Pope John Paul II solemnly entrusted the whole world to Mary's Immaculate Heart in 1984 and that the beginning of the collapse of communism in Europe outwardly began five years later. We also read that the Pope solemnly entrusted the world to Divine Mercy in 2002, saying that Divine Mercy would prepare the world for the Lord's final coming. (Of course, he gave no indication of when this will happen.) Why is consecration/entrustment so important to John Paul II? How is your consecration to Mary related to the consecration of the world to Mary and Divine Mercy? How does your trust in Mary reflect your trust in the love and mercy of Jesus?
3. Mary's motherly attentiveness to the details of the couple being married at Cana begins Jesus' public life with the miracle of the water become wine. The lack of wine has been described as a symbol of the lack of joy in human life without God's grace. What human needs might Mary be attentive to and then bring to Jesus for his miraculous intervention if she were invited to your home today?
4. Our recourse to Mary as Mother and Mediatrix will be made easier and more secure in our personal consecration to Jesus through her, which is only days away now. What signs have you had in prayer or insights or events that may have confirmed for you that God desires your consecration to Jesus through Mary?
5. Christ appeared to his disciples after his Resurrection, and he most certainly appeared to his Mother as well. He explained the Scriptures to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, broke bread with them, and promised the Holy Spirit to remind the Apostles of all that

he taught them. What personal message might he have had for his Mother in his unrecorded appearances to her, particularly about her role in his Church? Place yourself there with Jesus and Mary. Ponder how the message he gives her might, at least in part, be intended as well for those who are consecrated to her. In that light, with Jesus present, what might Mary share with you?

6. Where does Jesus ask us to take Mary in? You live in a physical house that has certain characteristics. You have an inner “house” of heart and soul and prayer. And you have family relationships that are a sort of “house” in which you live. How will Mary enter more deeply into these houses through your upcoming consecration? By your consecration, you’re inviting her to move into all those places.
7. “Divine Love placing a limit on evil” is how Pope John Paul II defines the mercy of God. Everyone carries around past and present evils in his life, from physical limits to mental worries to sins of flesh and spirit. What limits on those evils (and the accompanying hope) do you recognize as Divine Mercy in your life?

Generous Additional Response (if there’s time):

Which of the seven days or pondering, prayerful responses most interested you, most inspired your prayer, or moved you to meditation?

C. Petition

[Leader] + Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

[Group response] Have mercy on us and on the whole world!

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Fill my heart with praise to God for giving Mary as my spiritual mother.

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Help me to be faithful to heart-pondering prayer, as was Mary.

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Remind me to ask for Mary’s powerful intercession in my times of need.

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Thank you for the gift of my loving Mother, Mary.

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Prepare me to entrust myself completely to Mary so she can bring me closer to Christ.

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary...

Draw me in, with, and through Mary to the Fountain of Mercy.

Individual petitions...

Response: Come, Holy Spirit, and help me. +

SESSION 5 — DVD NOTES

St. John Paul II**A. The Story Starts in Poland**

1. In 1683: Poland Rescues Vienna

2. In 1920: Miracle on the Vistula

3. In 1989: The Fall of Communism

B. The Message of Divine Mercy

1. *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy)

2. St. John Paul II's Promotion of St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy

C. It Gets Even Better with Mary

Our Lady of Fatima

Notes

