

Detail of *Christ and the Twelve Apostles*, fresco 13-14 century; Church of St. Margherita, Belluno, Laggio di Cadore, Italy; © Archivi Alinari, Firenze

"I WILL NOT
LEAVE YOU
ORPHANS."

JN 14:18



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD | MAY 14, 2023

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

NOOL.US | (303) 469-5171

MASS TIMES

MONDAY-FRIDAY

7:00 am
9:30 am (livestreamed)

WEDNESDAY SCHOOL MASS

8:15 am

SATURDAY

9:30 am (livestreamed)

VIGIL MASS

4:30 pm

SUNDAY

7:30 am
9:30 am (livestreamed)
11:30 am
5:00 pm

CONFESSION

THURSDAY:

5:00-6:00 pm

SATURDAY

8:00-9:30 am

3:00-4:30 pm

SUNDAY

30 min before Masses

OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8 am-5 pm

FRONT DESK:

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8 am-8 pm

SATURDAY: 8 am-3:30 pm

Phone: (303) 469-5171

Fax: (303) 469-5172

School: (303) 466-4177

900 W. Midway Blvd.
Broomfield, CO 80020



GOING TO THE HOSPITAL

If you're going to the hospital and need a visit from a priest or deacon, please call the front desk at (303) 469-5171.

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have any prayer requests, please contact Joanne Farver at (303) 466-8859 or at joannefarver@comcast.net.

MASS INTENTIONS

SATURDAY, MAY 13

9:30 am Nicolas Rask & Sarah McDonough wedding by Mom
4:30 pm Savio Nguyen Birthday Blessings by Thu Van

SUNDAY, MAY 14

7:30 am † Thomas Fattor
9:30 am People of the Parish
11:30 am † Gerald & Mary Coufal
5:00 pm † Marian Hire by Maria Rask

MONDAY, MAY 15

7:00 am Kenneth H. Moore's Intentions by Maria Graham
9:30 am † David & Betty Malysa by Son

TUESDAY, MAY 16

7:00 am † Bernadina VanHoudt by Paul VanHoudt
9:30 am Chuck Craig Birthday Blessings by Bobbie Craig

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

7:00 am Rafael Abrega healing by Chavez Family
9:30 am † LeeAnn McCoy by North Metro Catholic Singles

THURSDAY, MAY 18

7:00 am Kenna Knight by Parents
9:30 am † Judy Dickinson de Salomon by Kathi Carey

FRIDAY, MAY 19

7:00 am † James Gregory
9:30 am † Dwight & Irene Doyle by Denfeld Family

SATURDAY, MAY 20

9:30 am Manuel Solano Martinez by All His Children
4:30 pm † Eleanor & John Cole by Ken & Mary Ann Cole

SUNDAY, MAY 21

7:30 am † Carol Serkowski
9:30 am People of the Parish
11:30 am † Andreina Piñero by Adriana Piñero and Family
5:00 pm † Souls in Purgatory

ARCHBISHOP AQUILA'S MAY PRAYER INTENTION:

For a deep love and respect for mothers and their gift of life

Sign up on Flocknote for up-to-date information delivered directly into your inbox at:

app.flocknote.com/nool



PARISH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MAY 14

8:00 am | CL/Communion & Liberation
9:30 am | Children's Mass
11:00 am | Parishioners' Rosary
6:00 pm | GS/High School Youth Meeting

MONDAY, MAY 15

10:00 am | ENDOW
6:30 pm | Biblical School
6:30 pm | New Springtime Prayer Group
6:30 pm | Spanish Prayer Group
6:45 pm | St. Joseph Men's Prayer Group

TUESDAY, MAY 16

1:00 pm | Adult Bible Study
1:00 pm | Day Rosary Makers
6:30 pm | Venturers
7:30 pm | CLU/CL University Students

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

5:30 am | St. Joseph Men's Prayer Group
8:15 am | ENDOW
11:00 am | North Metro Singles
1:00 pm | *Jesus & Jewish Roots of Mary*
6:15 pm | Boy Scouts Tr. 766

THURSDAY, MAY 18

6:00 pm | Evening Rosary Makers
7:00 pm | Baptism Class
6:30 pm | *Jesus & Jewish Roots of Mary*
7:00 pm | Parish Council
7:30 pm | CL/Communion & Liberation

FRIDAY, MAY 19

7:30 am | Men of Emmaus
9:00 am | ENDOW
6:00 pm | American Heritage Girls
7:00 pm | GS/High School Youth Diakonia

SATURDAY, MAY 20

8:00 am | CL/Communion & Liberation
8:00 am | Marian Cenacle
8:50 am | Pro Life Rosary
5:00 pm | CL/Communion & Liberation



SAVE THE DATE:
THURSDAY-SUNDAY
AUGUST 10-13

SACRISTY LAUNDRY

Joyce Occhiato

COLLECTION COUNTERS

Mon, May 15 | 3:45 pm

Amy Skinner
Veronica Mueller
Bill McCauley
Patty Kondratko

SHE KNEW ONLY THE GOOD



The communion of Mother Mary with God is absolute, and we are called to draw ourselves ever nearer to her experience. Here we offer you an extract from the homily given by Father Paolo Sottopietra on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

In front of Mother Mary, venerated as the Immaculate, a question comes to our mind as modern men: what kind of experience did she have with things, people, and with God? It is possible to arrive at an answer only through the way of negation, because none of us knows by direct knowledge what it means to be without sin.

Saint Bernard taught his monks that the knowledge of evil is so called “knowledge” only by an outward form. In reality, he says, it is “ignorance” (*The Twelve Degrees of Humility and of Pride*) – the opposite of wisdom. We venerate the Immaculate as the Seat of Wisdom. The wisdom of Mary has this secret: she never complied with evil; she never approved of it, never justified and never committed it. She positively knew only what is good. Thus, her communion with God was absolute and continuous, and this enabled her to know things and people beginning from their truth, from the potentiality written at the core of their being by the original design of the Father, and from the fullness to which they have been destined. **Mary sees us this way even now, as she looks upon us from heaven.**

But this means, at the same time, that no one except Mary is able to measure the distance that separates every person from his truth, everything from its fullness. This is both Mary’s silent yet penetrating gaze and her suffering. Only in the Son – “the lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pt. 1:19) – was her heart at rest. At the same time, by the power of her complete extraneity from evil, Mother Mary was able, and even obliged, to share in the compassion for men that had pushed the Word of the Father to become her Son. **Perhaps we could describe Mary’s experience of virginity as an extreme proximity to men: no one like her, could anyone be so close to men, because there was no trace of complicity in evil that could separate her from them and their true being.**

“God chose us in Christ,” writes Saint Paul, “that we should be holy and blameless before him in love” (cfr. Ef. 1:4). God desires that Christ dwell in us, that we may be abounding in Christ. Only in this way, in fact, can we be what we truly are, according to how God wanted and thought of us, in view of the day in which He will be “everything to everyone” (cfr. 1 Cor. 15:28).

Mary lived this dynamic among us, and now she lives it in a definitive manner. Christ dwelt in her – not only physically, but in her whole being and in every moment of her life (because she was the Mother of Christ *mente prius quam corpore*, says St. Augustine, she was able to remain a virgin). Thus, she is a paradigm for us, who are called to imitate her. We are all called to draw near to her experience here on earth,

in order to relish it fully in heaven, when “our mortal nature will put on immortality” (cfr. 1 Cor. 15:53-54), just like that of Mary, and we will be forever liberated from evil and from sin. **Concretely, imitation of Mary means for us to consciously and courageously embrace the fight to “avoid evil and hold fast to what is good” (cfr. Rm. 12:9).**

This means that our true condition is one of danger. “We have been given hope and a foretaste of truth and liberty,” writes Saint Cyprian (cfr. *The Good of Patience*, 13), but we must await “until we finally attain the full Truth and Freedom in God.” Our life has been placed in the midst of an arena full of dust, and it is a fight that must not be underestimated, a battle that is still open-ended. We are assaulted. We are fighters who could become the victims. This is exactly what Mary saw around her, gazing at people whom she met. She worked and she prayed precisely for the favorable outcome of this battle, and she felt anxiety seeing the destiny of every man. This was the interior force that the Apostles felt and, before them, Saint Joseph. It is the force that drives everyone, like a motherly expansion of the power of her Son; it is a force that drives the whole world towards holiness.

(Extract from the homily for the temporary vows of Jennifer Anderson. Rome (Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompei, Magliana), December 8, 2020.)

SOURCE: www.sancarolo.org/en/conobbe-solo-bene



Raffaello Sanzio, *Tempi Madonna*, oil on poplar panel, 1508; Alte Pinakothek - Munich - Germany, Bavarian State Painting Collections; US PD

God wants us to be inhabited by Christ, filled with Him. Only in this way can we truly be who we are, as He wanted us and originally thought of us, looking towards the day in which He will be “all in all.”

DAILY READINGS

SATURDAY, MAY 13

Reading 1: Acts 16:1-10

Psalm: 100:1b-2, 3, 5

Gospel: Jn 15:18-21

SUNDAY, MAY 14

Reading 1: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Psalm: 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

Reading 2: 1 Pt 3:15-18

Gospel: Jn 14:15-21

MONDAY, MAY 15

Reading 1: Acts 16:11-15

Psalm: 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b

Gospel: Jn 15:26-16:4a

TUESDAY, MAY 16

Reading 1: Acts 16:22-34

Psalm: 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8

Gospel: Jn 16:5-11

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

Reading 1: Acts 17:15, 22-18:1

Psalm: 148:1-2, 11-12, 13, 14

Gospel: Jn 16:12-15

THURSDAY, MAY 18

Reading 1: Acts 18:1-8

Psalm: 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4

Gospel: Jn 16:16-20

FRIDAY, MAY 19

Reading 1: Acts 18:9-18

Psalm: 47:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Gospel: Jn 16:20-23

SATURDAY, MAY 20

Reading 1: Acts 18:23-28

Psalm: 47:2-3, 8-9, 10

Gospel: Jn 16:23b-28

PRAY THE ROSARY WITH US IN MAY

MONDAY-FRIDAY

AFTER 7 AM & 9:30 AM MASS

SATURDAY, 8:50 AM

SUNDAY, 11:00 AM

May is traditionally dedicated in a special way to honoring and seeking the intercession of Mary as the Mother of God and Mother of the Church. Special times of prayer are being offered and all are encouraged to add the Rosary into their daily routine. Come, pray the Rosary with us!



RESPECT LIFE: SPECIAL COLLECTION MAY 13-14, 2023

This weekend, there is a special Respect Life Collection. We will be giving to this collection as part of our parish tithes, but if you would like to give an additional amount, please use the envelopes in the gathering area. To give online, please use the following link:
<https://ppay.co/UUFqrxK0qP0>



DONATE

FRONT DESK HELP WANTED AT NATIVITY

Nativity is looking for part time evening help. If interested please email:
Bonnie at b.skelton@nool.us.

MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE

On Memorial Day this year, Nativity and the Knights of Columbus will hold a ceremony in honor of all deceased military veterans who were immediate family members of our current parishioners. The service will take place following the 9:30 Mass on Monday, May 29, 2023.

If there are any family members you would like recognized, please complete the form found at the link below by Monday, May 22, 2023.

WWW.NOOL.US/MEMORIAL-DAY

Questions? Please contact Steven Peixoto at stevepex@gmail.com.



"If we fail to forgive, we're rejecting our own faith."

Servant of God Fr. Emil Kapaun, military chaplain and medal of honor recipient, former POW, Korean War. He died at the hands of his captors after blessing and forgiving them.



Gifts to the Archbishop's Catholic Appeal are immediately invested in works of mercy, education, and charity. To make an immediate impact on our faith community visit www.archden.org/givetoday or call 303-867-0614.



DONATE



STEWARDSHIP
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

You may not think Mother's Day has anything to do with stewardship, but what greater gift has God given us than our children? During the month of May, we not only honor and remember our mom but also Mary, the Mother of God. She is the great symbol of motherhood and a role model for us all. Let us ask Mary's intercession, so that in our endeavors to be good stewards and to raise good stewards, to nurture in the faith those entrusted to us, she might come to our assistance and guide us with her motherly understanding. And we ask Mary on this Mother's Day to bless all mothers.

MEMORIAL DAY PARISH OFFICE & FRONT DESK CLOSURE AND A CHANGE IN MASS SCHEDULE MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023

Please note that the Parish office and front desk will be closed on May 29. All activities will be canceled.

**THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE MASS:
9:30 AM**

There will be no Mass at 7:00 am.



CALL FOR ALTAR SERVERS

SIGN UP

Dear Altar Servers and Parents, Altar Servers are needed for the upcoming solemnities:

- Sunday, May 20/21 | The Ascension of the Lord
- Sunday, May 27/28 | Pentecost
- Sunday, June 3/4 | The Most Holy Trinity
- Sunday, June 10/11 | Corpus Christi



Follow the signup link on the website:
WWW.NOOL.US/ALTAR-SERVING

"Dear Altar Servers, you are, in fact, already apostles of Jesus! When you take part in the Liturgy by carrying out your altar service, you offer a witness to all. Your absorption, the devotion that wells up from your heart and is expressed in gestures, in song, in the responses: if you do it correctly and not absent-mindedly, then in a certain way your witness is one that moves people." Pope Benedict XVI, 2006

RESPECT LIFE: NATIVITY OF OUR LORD "BABY SHOWER"

MOTHER'S DAY/MAY 14 – FATHER'S DAY/JUNE 18

To support children, new mothers, and families in need, we will be collecting donations for Marisol in Lafayette, Boulder Pregnancy Resource Center, and Marisol Family (Formerly Gabriel House) in Boulder, from Mother's Day through Father's Day. Please drop off donations in the crib in the gathering area. The following items are needed:

Diapers (Newborn – sz. 5, especially need NB and sz. 4 and 5; Wipes (unscented/sensitive skin); Baby lotions, shampoos, washes; Baby bath towels, wash cloths; Diaper rash products; Newborn nasal aspirators; Pacifiers; Bibs; Knit caps; Booties/shoes/socks (NB – age 2); Bottles; Enfamil formula; Baby clothes (boys & girls, NB-2T), specific request for summer; Burp cloths; Blankets; Swaddling/receiving blankets; Nursing pads; Nursing pillows (Boppy brand); Diaper bags; Maternity clothes, new or gently used.

All items must be *new*, except for maternity clothes, and with tags on (if applicable). Questions? Please contact Janet Carpenter: janetacarpenter@comcast.net

June 5–9, 2023
MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER VACATION

YMCA of the Rockies
Snow Mountain Ranch
Granby, CO
Cost: \$550
Open to anyone entering grades **6–9** in the fall of 2023
MORE INFORMATION: WWW.NOOL.US/middle-school

REGISTER

Totus Tuus
SUMMER CATECHETICAL EXPERIENCE

www.nool.us/totus-tuus

REGISTER

GRADES 1–6 | JUNE 26–30, 9 AM–2:30 PM
GRADES 7–12 | JUNE 25–29, 7–9 PM

Totus Tuus (Latin for 'Totally Yours') is a summer youth program dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through catechesis, Christian witness, and a ton of fun!

Register for FREE today at nool.formed.org.





EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A STEPHEN MINISTER?

Nativity of Our Lord Parish will be training another class of Stephen Ministers beginning Wednesday September 6, 2023. Stephen Ministers work alongside our clergy and religious to care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support to people who are going through a difficult time, such as divorce, grief, hospitalization, unemployment, terminal illness, relocation, chronic illness, or loneliness. If you have gifts for caring, encouragement, and listening, please begin to prayerfully consider whether you might want to be part of this exciting ministry!



If you think you might be interested, talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders:
Camille Ibsen
(720) 299-1265
or
Katie Borkowski
(703) 969-0252.

FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

*“Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;
the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”*
Proverbs 31:30

As we celebrate Mother's Day this Sunday, we remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, who intercedes for us also with a mother's heart. At the wedding feast of Cana, Mary shows concern for the couple who is running out of wine. She does not want the family to be embarrassed, so she trusts her son will help when she instructs the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” At Calvary, Jesus lovingly tells Mary to take John as her own son and also entrusts his beloved disciple John to her, “Behold your mother.” Many years later in 1531, when Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, appears to Juan Diego at Mt. Tepeyac in Mexico, she senses Juan's concerns when he is troubled about his sick uncle by saying, “Am I not here, I, who am your mother? ... Are you not by chance held in my mantle?”

We are grateful for the care of our own mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and other women who have stepped up to serve as our guardians, mentors, and friends. We trust that Mary, who we entrust the care of the United States to, will also as a mother look over our families. Thank your moms for all that they do and lift up in prayer all those who have passed away. Give yourself a treat today and celebrate moms by reading Proverbs 31:10-31 on the “valiant” woman.

For information on the Nativity chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which echoes verse 20 of Proverbs 31, by reaching out “hands to the poor” and extending “arms to the needy,” see our flocknote service at NOOL.FLOCKNOTE.COM/SVDP for meeting times and updates.

FROM THE HOPE CORNER: A MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Now is the time to pause, reflect and focus on recovery and reaching out. According to the National Institute on Mental Health, half of the adults in the United States will develop a mental illness during their lifetime and one out of every five people experience mental health conditions each year, with only less than half of them receiving treatment. It's important to remember that you are not alone. If you or someone you love has a mental health condition, be gentle with yourself and please consider using the following resources for support and education:

National Mental Health Hotline | Call 24/7 to 988 or Text the word “TALK” to 38255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline | Call 24/7 to 1-800-273-8255 or go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat

NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness | Free programs, groups, education, resources | 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or go to www.nami.org/Support-Education/Mental-Health-Education

Mental Health America | Free screenings, tips, prevention strategies, www.mhanational.org

Safe2 Tell | For students, parents and community members 1-877-542-7233 or Safe2Tell app

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness (INMI) offers education and consultation for ways to understand the importance of spirituality in recovery from mental health conditions. Visit: www.inmi.us

Substance Abuse and Addiction Hotline
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Hope Coalition-Suicide Prevention
www.hopecoalitionboulder.org

PsychHub | Education, videos, learning modules, information, podcasts | www.psychhub.com

Mental Health First Aid | Training in warning signs and mental health/addiction concerns. Visit: www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

THE HOPE CORNER is a mental health ministry committed to instilling hope and reducing stigma. Please contact The Hope Corner with any questions. If you or a family member need a referral, information or community-based resources, contact **Becky Kusick, MA, LPC** at hopecornerministry@gmail.com or 303-907-6499.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH IN LAFAYETTE IS SEEKING A FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

Immaculate Conception Parish in Lafayette is seeking a facilities supervisor to manage, monitor and maintain building infrastructure and equipment. Please visit, www.lafayettecatholic.org or call **Jenifer** at 303-665-5103x102 for more information.



The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

LEVEL 1 TRAINING AT NATIVITY 2023–2024

Method

CGS is a common religious experience involving children and adults in which the religious values of childhood, primarily those values of contemplation and enjoyment of God, are predominant.

God and the child have a unique relationship with one another, particularly before the age of six. The growth of this relationship should be assisted by the adult, but is directed by the Spirit of God within the child. Children need their own place to foster the growth of that relationship. This spiritual growth is best served through tangible but indirect means.

“If we want to help the child grow near to God, we should, with patience and courage...seek to go always closer to the vital nucleus of things. This requires study and prayer. The child himself will be our teacher if we know how to observe him.”

Sofia Cavalletti

TRAINING INFORMATION

Three 5-day sessions at 6 hours per day, 9:00 am–3:30 pm, 90 HOURS TOTAL required by the CGS National Association

TRAINING DATES

SESSION 1:

June 1-3, 5-6, 2023

SESSION 2:

May 30-31, June 1, 3-4, 2024

SESSION 3:

August 8-10, 12-13, 2024

Babysitting is available except for Saturdays. Mothers with infants are welcome to bring their infants with them to classes. Space is limited.

TUITION

The Tuition is \$600, payable in three installments of \$200 prior to each session. The Parish will pay for the Nativity teachers and Catechists committing to two years at Nativity.

Nativity Catechists with Level I training are welcome to audit at no cost.

REGISTRATION

<https://nool.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/85/responses/new>



REGISTER

CONTACT INFORMATION



Diane Irby
Director of Religious Education
Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church
303-731-0425, d.irby@nool.us





NATIVITY
FAITH & REASON

WWW.SCHOOL.NOOL.US



CALL TODAY
303-466-4177

With questions about admission or to schedule a tour, contact
Shannon Spinuzzi
s.spinuzzi@nool.us

COME & SEE!



school.nool.us/enroll

2023-2024 ENROLLMENT IS OPEN!

Nativity: Faith & Reason is the primary ministry of our parish. Serving students in preschool, elementary, and middle school, Nativity: Faith & Reason proposes the fullness of faith within an integrated curriculum, striving for academic, spiritual, artistic, and athletic excellence. Learning at Nativity is enhanced by :

- The presence of Priests of the Fraternity of St. Charles Borromeo
- The presence of Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo
- Extended care before and after school
- Interventionist
- School Counselor
- School Nurse
- Teacher Assistants in the lower grades
- Librarian
- Parish and community volunteers
- Parent Teacher Organization
- School Advisory Council
- Field Trips

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

CLUBS

- Student Council
- National Junior Honor Society
- Academic Decathlon
- Student Ambassadors
- Choir (grades 6-8)
- Art Club
- Great Books Club
- Yearbook Club
- Chess Club

SPORTS

- Cross Country
- Flag Football
- Basketball
- Girls Volleyball
- Co-ed Volleyball
- Boys Baseball

FAITH EXPERIENCES

- Middle School retreats
- Focus 11 Vocations Day
- Weekly liturgy and altar serving
- Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- Daily rosary
- Faith and academics intertwined
- Weekly Confessions available

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

- Drives - coats, canned food, shoes, toys, athletic equipment, blankets, candy tithe, etc.
- Classrooms adopt a charity
- Volunteer Opportunities: lector/serve at Mass, Broomfield Days, read/help in pre-K through first grade, etc.
- Race for Education and School
- Family Activities
- Spring Service Day

COME & SEE!





THE MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER



REDEMPTORIS MATER

On the Blessed Virgin Mary
in the life of the Pilgrim Church

Excerpts from John Paul II Encyclical Letter

[...] Mary is definitively introduced into the mystery of Christ through this event: the Annunciation by the angel. This takes place at Nazareth, within the concrete circumstances of the history of Israel, the people which first received God's promises. The divine messenger says to the Virgin: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (*Lk.* 1:28). Mary "was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be" (*Lk.* 1:29): what could those extraordinary words mean, and in particular the expression "full of grace" (*kecharitoméne*). [...] And if after the announcement of the heavenly messenger the Virgin of Nazareth is also called "blessed among women" (cf. *Lk.* 1:42), it is because of that blessing with which "God the Father" has filled us "in the heavenly places, in Christ." It is a spiritual blessing which is **meant for all people** and which bears in itself fullness and universality ("every blessing"). It flows from that love which, in the Holy Spirit, unites the consubstantial Son to the Father. At the same time, it is a blessing **poured out through Jesus Christ upon human history until the end: upon all people.** This blessing, however, refers to Mary in a special and exceptional degree: for she was greeted by Elizabeth as "blessed among women."

In the language of the Bible "grace" means a **special gift**, which according to the New Testament has its source precisely in the Trinitarian life of God himself, God who is love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8). The fruit of this love is "the election" of which the Letter to the Ephesians speaks. On the part of God, this election is the eternal desire to save man through a sharing in his own life (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4) in Christ: it is salvation through a sharing in supernatural life. **The effect of this eternal gift, of this grace of man's election by God, is like a seed of holiness, or a spring which rises in the soul as a gift from God himself, who through grace gives life and holiness to those who are chosen.** In this way there is fulfilled, that is to say there comes about, that "blessing" of man "with every spiritual blessing," that "being his adopted sons and daughters...in Christ," in him who is eternally the "beloved Son" of the Father.

[...] The divine messenger says to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High" (*Lk.* 1:30-32). And when the Virgin, disturbed by that extraordinary greeting, asks: "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" she receives from the angel the confirmation and explanation of the preceding words. Gabriel says to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (*Lk.* 1:35).

The Annunciation, therefore, is the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation at the very beginning of its fulfillment on earth. God's salvific giving of himself and his life, in some way to all creation but directly to man, reaches one of its high points in the mystery of the Incarnation. This is indeed a high point among all the gifts of grace conferred in the history of

man and of the universe: Mary is "full of grace," because it is precisely in her that the Incarnation of the Word, the hypostatic union of the Son of God with human nature, is accomplished and fulfilled. As the Council says, Mary is "the Mother of the Son of God. As a result she is also the favorite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace, she far surpasses all other creatures, both in heaven and on earth."

[...] As she goes forward with the whole of humanity towards the frontier between the two Millennia, the Church, for her part, with the whole community of believers and in union with all men and women of good will, takes up the great challenge contained in these words of the Marian antiphon: "the people who have fallen yet strive to rise again," and she addresses both the Redeemer and his Mother with the plea: "Assist us." For, as this prayer attests, the Church sees the Blessed Mother of God in the saving mystery of Christ and in her own mystery. She sees Mary deeply rooted in humanity's history, in man's eternal vocation according to the providential plan which God has made for him from eternity. **She sees Mary maternally present and sharing in the many complicated problems which today beset the lives of individuals, families and nations; she sees her helping the Christian people in the constant struggle between good and evil, to ensure that it "does not fall," or, if it has fallen, that it "rises again."**



Photo: John Paul II at the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, 1979



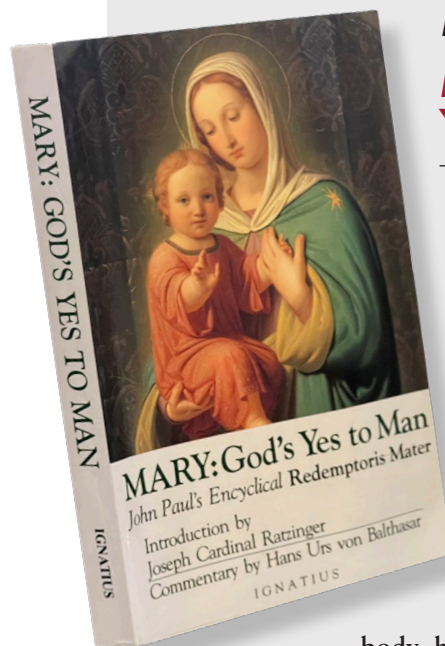
Alma Redemptoris Mater

"Loving Mother of Our Redeemer"

11TH CENTURY ANTIPHON

Mother of the Redeemer,
who art ever of heaven
The open gate,
and the star of the sea,
aid a fallen people,
Which is trying to rise again;
thou who didst give birth,
While Nature marveled how,
to thy Holy Creator,
Virgin both before and after,
from Gabriel's mouth
Accepting the All hail,
be merciful towards sinners.

Author: Herman the Cripple (1013–1054). Translated into English by St. John Henry Newman (1801–1890).



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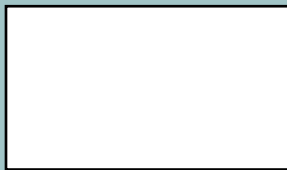
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