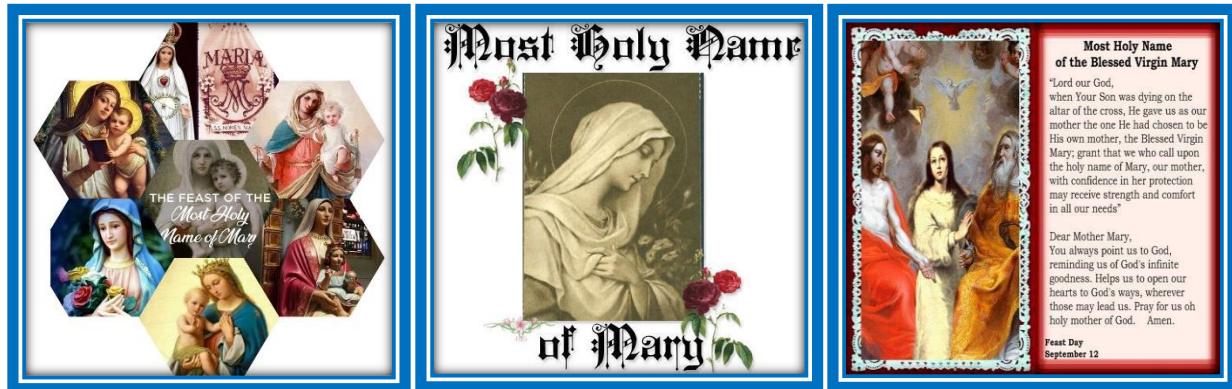


Daily Saints - 12 September



Feast of The Most Holy Name of Mary

In accordance with Jewish custom, our Lady's parents named her eight days after her birth and were inspired to call her Mary. The feast of the Holy Name of Mary, therefore, follows that of her Birthday, as the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus follows Christmas.

The feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary began in Spain in 1513 and 1671 was extended to all of Spain and the Kingdom of Naples. In 1683, John Sobieski, king of Poland, brought an army to the outskirts of Vienna to stop the advance of Muslim armies loyal to Mohammed IV of Constantinople. After Sobieski entrusted himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he and his soldiers thoroughly defeated the Muslims. Pope Innocent XI extended this feast to the entire Church in thanksgiving to God and the Blessed Virgin for the liberation of Vienna, France, and the signal victory over the Turks on 12 September 1683.

Consoling indeed are the promises of help made by Jesus Christ to those who have devotion to the name of Mary; for one day in the hearing of St. Bridget, He promised His Most Holy Mother that He would grant three special graces to those who invoke that holy name with confidence: first, that He would grant them perfect sorrow for their sins; secondly, that their crimes should be atoned for; and, thirdly, that He would give them the strength to attain perfection, and at length the glory of paradise. And then our Divine Savior added: "For thy words, O My Mother, are so sweet and agreeable to Me, that I cannot deny what thou askest."

Mary! A name so lofty, in the regal majesty of its sound and meaning – Mary, Maria, Miriam! It is a name as familiar to us as the name of our Mother, as the bells of the church, as the peaks of the mountains which send their friendly greetings to the valleys below. Mary! A thousand times we have prayed, sung, wept this name, in good and evil days. Millions of women are called by that name and it weaves a golden thread around even the plainest woman. Mary! Holding on to this name, grope the way through the darkness of life and death. It is the rosy dawn heralding the rising sun, Jesus, in the Gospels as well as in the hearts of men.

A beautiful wreath of interpretation has grown around this holy name of Mary; the name Mary is supposed to stem from the word, "yam" – sea; "mar," "mir," "mor" – bitter sea, mistress of the sea, or the best known, "star of the sea." Others find profound meaning by tracing Mary to "moras," – hope; "mar" the bitter one; "maron" the exalted one, "moren," the rising one, "marsh," the enlightener, "mor," myrrh. All these are ingenious but are not etymologically tenable. In all probability, the name Mary goes back to the Egyptian language. The sister of Moses and Aaron,

born in Egypt like her brothers, is the only woman mentioned in the Old Testament with this name. It can be derived from the Egyptian root, "mir," love, and "jam," "jahu," Yahu, Yahwe, God; so that Mirjam means "God-loving," or "beloved of God." In Mary's time it was more common to derive the name from Maron, the Exalted One, corresponding to our Madonna, Notre Dame, Our Blessed Mother, or Our Blessed Lady.

The ancient 'Onomastica Sacra' have preserved the meanings ascribed to Mary's name by the early Christian writers and perpetuated by the Greek Fathers. "Bitter Sea," "Myrrh of the Sea," "The Light Giver," "The Enlightened One," "Lady," "Seal of the Lord," and "Mother of the Lord" are the principal interpretations. These etymologies suppose that the Hebrew form of the name is Maryām, not Miryām. From the time of St. Jerome until the 16th century, preferred interpretations of Mary's name in the West were "Lady," "Bitter Sea," "The Light Giver," and especially "Star of the Sea." Stella Maris was by far the favored interpretation. The revival of Hebraic studies, which accompanied the Renaissance, led to a more critical appraisal of the meanings assigned to Our Lady's name. Miryām has all the appearance of a genuine Hebrew name, and no solid reason has been discovered to warrant rejecting the Semitic origin of the word. The Hebrew name of Mary, Miryām, (in Latin Domina) means lady or sovereign; this Mary is in virtue of her Son's sovereign authority as Lord of the World. We call Mary our Lady as we call Jesus our Lord, and when we pronounce her name, we affirm her power, implore her aid and place ourselves under her protection.

Quotes of different Saints on Our Blessed Mother Virgin Mary

- St. Bernard says, "In dangers, in perplexities, in doubtful cases, think of Mary, call on Mary; let her not leave thy lips; let her not depart from thy heart."
- "The name of Mary," says Saint Anthony of Padua, "is sweeter to the lips than the honeycomb, more delightful to the ear than a sweet song, more entrancing to the heart than the purest joy."
- "Surely," says Saint Bernard, "the Mother of God could not have a name more appropriate, nor one more impressive of her high dignity. Mary is in fact the beautiful and brilliant star which shines upon the vast and stormy sea of the world."
- St. Ephrem goes so far as to say, "that the name of Mary is the key of the gates of heaven," in the hands of those who devoutly invoke it.
- St. Bonaventure says, "that Mary is the salvation of all who call upon her."
- Blessed Raymond Jordano says, "that however hardened and diffident a heart may be, the name of this most Blessed Virgin has such efficacy, that if it is only pronounced that heart will be wonderfully softened."
- St. Bonaventure declares, "that thy name, O Mary, cannot be pronounced without bringing some grace to him who does so devoutly."
- Thomas a Kempis affirms "that the devils fear the Queen of heaven to such a degree, that only on hearing her great name pronounced, they fly from him who does so as from a burning fire."

- "O most sweet name! O Mary, what must thou thyself be, since thy name alone is thus amiable and gracious," exclaims Blessed Henry Suso.
- The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget "that there is not on earth a sinner, however devoid he may be of the love of God, from whom the devil is not obliged immediately to fly if he invokes her holy name with a determination to repent." On another occasion she repeated the same thing to the saint, saying, "that all the devils venerate and fear her name to such a degree, that on hearing it they immediately loosen the claws with which they hold the soul captive." Our Blessed Lady also told St. Bridget, "that in the same way as the rebel angels fly from sinners who invoke the name of Mary, so also do the good angels approach nearer to just souls who pronounce her name with devotion."
- "The invocation of the sacred names of Jesus and Mary," says Thomas a Kempis, "is a short prayer which is as sweet to the mind, and as powerful to protect those who use it against the enemies of their salvation, as it is easy to remember."
- "Mary means enlightener because She brought forth the Light of the world. In the Syriac tongue, Mary signifies Lady," says St. Isidore of Seville.
- "Mary means Star of the sea, for as mariners are guided to port by the ocean star, so Christians attain to glory through Mary's maternal intercession," says St. Thomas Aquinas.
- "This most holy, sweet and worthy name was 'eminently fitted to so holy, sweet and worthy a virgin. For Mary means a bitter sea, star of the sea, the illuminated or illuminatrix. Mary is interpreted as Lady. Mary is a bitter sea to the demons; to men, She is the Star of the sea; to the Angels She is illuminatrix, and to all creatures She is Lady.'" says St. Bonaventure.
- "God the Father gathered all the waters together and called them the seas or maria [Latin, seas]. He gathered all His grace together and called it Mary or Maria....This immense treasury is none other than Mary whom the Saints call the 'treasury of the Lord.' From Her fullness all men are made rich." says St. Louis de Montfort.
- "When you find yourself tossed by the raging storms on this great sea of life, far from land, keep your eyes fixed on this Star to avoid disaster. When the winds of temptation or the rocks of tribulation threaten, look up to the Star, call upon Mary!" - St. Bernard, Second Homily on the 'Missus Est'.
- "The name of Mary is a name of salvation for those who are regenerated; it is the insignia of virtue, the honor of chastity, the sacrifice agreeable to God, the virtue of hospitality, the school of sanctity, a name altogether maternal." - St. Peter Chrysologus
- "Blessed is the man who loves thy name, O Mary," exclaims St. Bonaventure. "Yes, truly blessed is he who loves thy sweet name, O Mother of God! for," he continues, "thy name is so glorious and admirable, that no one who remembers it has any fears at the hour of death."

- St. Camillus de Lellis urged the members of his community to remind the dying often to utter the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Such is its power, that none of those who invoke it at the hour of death fear the assaults of their enemies.
- Prayer of St. Bonaventure: "I ask thee, O Mary, for the glory of thy name, to come and meet my soul when it is departing from this world, and to take it in thine arms."
- "Invite everyone to become a trusting child before Mary, even as the Son of God did. Saint Bernard says, and we say with him: 'Look to the star of the sea, call upon Mary ... in danger, in distress, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary. May her name never be far from your lips, or far from your heart ... If you follow her, you will not stray; if you pray to her, you will not despair; if you turn your thoughts to her, you will not err. If she holds you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you need not fear; if she is your guide, you will not tire; if she is gracious to you, you will surely reach your destination'" (Benedict XVI, Address at Heiligenkreuz Abbey, September 9, 2007).
- "When you approach the time for reading about Mary Immaculate," wrote St. Maximilian Kolbe, "always remember that you are entering into contact with a living, loving person."