



Pius XII's prayer for the sick to Our Lady of Sorrows is on page 2.

Mary, Mother of Life is a Pro-Life message from the U.S. Bishops. Don't miss it on page 3.

Pope Leo's prayer intention for this month deals with water. On page 4, there's an article on the Theology of Water from Franciscan Media .

On September 14th, we mark the Exaltation of the Cross. For its centrality see page 7.



See what's up on page 10.



Carrying Jesus with Us

As you go forth from Mass, is Jesus still with you?

As we leave from Mass do we think Jesus is still with you? Is He really and truly present? Our Catholic faith teaches us that the Real Presence of Jesus remains in the Eucharist until the outward appearances of the Sacred Host and/or Precious Blood cease to be those of bread and wine as they are absorbed by our bodies. While there are different opinions on how long that actually is, most agree it is around 15 minutes.

Consider how that is a great reason to try and plan for a time of thanksgiving after the Mass. As we leave the church, in a very real way, we are tabernacles with Jesus inside us during that time. Edward Sri offers thoughts for meditation through the words of Pope St. John Paul II in his *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass* (Ascension Press). Sri reminds us that when we have the Real Presence of Jesus in Communion, we are very much like Mother Mary with Jesus in her womb: "John Paul II noted a profound connection between Mary carrying Jesus in her womb and the person receiving communion. . . ."

Sri writes, "John Paul then beautifully drew out the unique meaning Holy Communion would have had for the Blessed Virgin: 'For Mary, receiving the Eucharist must have **Continued on page 2**

Carrying Jesus with Us

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somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that heart which had beat in unison with hers’ What a profound insight! Imagine Mary preparing herself to be reunited with her Son in this way. Imagine the loving attention she gave to Jesus in every Holy Communion. What a joy it must have been for her to have her Son dwelling within her again! May Mary be a model for us in the way we receive the Eucharist. Let us pray that we may ardently welcome Jesus in every Holy Communion as Mary received her Son.

In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope St. John Paul II notes: “A significant consequence of the eschatological tension inherent in the Eucharist is also the fact that it spurs us on our journey through history and plants a seed of living hope in our daily commitment to the work before us. Certainly the Christian vision leads to the expectation of ‘new heavens’ and ‘a new earth’ (Rev 21:1), but this increases, rather than lessens, *our sense of responsibility for the world today*. (emphasis in encyclical)

“Many problems darken the horizon of our time,” the Pope noted in 2003 during the Year of the Rosary. “We need but think of the urgent need to work for peace, to base relationships between peoples on solid premises of justice and solidarity, and to defend human life from conception to its natural end.

“And what should we say of the thousand inconsistencies of a ‘globalized’ world where the weakest, the most powerless and the poorest appear to have so little hope! It is in this world that Christian hope must shine forth! For this reason too, the Lord wished to remain with us in the Eucharist, making His presence in meal and sacrifice the promise of a humanity renewed by His love.” +

Our Lady of Sorrows

The feast day of Our Lady of Sorrows is observed on September 15. The occasion is a time for reflection on Mary’s sorrows as the Mother of Christ and her example of perseverance through suffering. In fact, Pope Pius XII wrote a prayer consecrating the sick to Our Lady of Sorrow.

When you, a friend or loved one is sick, or perhaps for the sick of the parish, this might be a perfect prayer of consecrating them during this month to Our Lady of Sorrows.

PRAYER OF POPE PIUS XII

O kind and good Mother,
whose own soul was pierced by the sword
of sorrow,
look upon us while,
in our sickness,
we arraign ourselves beside you
on the Calvary where your Jesus hangs.

Dowered with the high grace of suffering,
and hopeful of fulfilling in our own flesh
what is wanting in our sharing of Christ’s
passion,
on behalf of his Mystical Body, the
Church, we consecrate to you ourselves
and our pain.

We pray that you will place them
on that Altar of the Cross to which Jesus
is affixed.
May they be little victims of propitiation
for our salvation,
for the salvation of all peoples.

O Mother of Sorrows,
accept this consecration.
Strengthen our hopeful hearts,
that as partakers of Christ’s sufferings
we may also share in his comfort now and
for evermore.
Amen. +

Mary, Mother of Life



When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would conceive and bear a son, Mary responded with her fiat, “May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Mary conceives Christ in her womb, becoming the mother of God, the mother of Jesus. Jesus himself tells us that he is “the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6). In becoming the mother of Jesus, Mary becomes the *mother of life*. Mary’s acceptance in this unforeseen moment demonstrates how each of us must welcome the gift of new human life, even when that gift is unexpected or calls us to make sacrifices.

Eve was called the “mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). Unfortunately, her disobedience brought sin into the world. In contrast Mary, through her obedience to God, gives birth to our Salvation. Mary becomes the New Eve—the new mother of all the living. Her fiat gives us an example of perfect docility and cooperation with the will of God.

At the Annunciation, when Mary learns that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is six months pregnant, she travels in haste to visit Elizabeth, spending the next three months at her side, even while pregnant herself. In her selfless service to Elizabeth, the Blessed Mother perfectly models how we are called to accompany expectant mothers as they prepare to welcome new life into the world.

Mary’s role as the Mother of Life extends from the Annunciation all the way to the Crucifixion. On

Oh Mary, “Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life.”

Evangelium vitae

Calvary, Mary stands at the foot of the Cross with Saint John. The Gospel tells us: “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:26-27).

With his final breaths on the Cross, Jesus entrusts Mary and the Beloved Disciple to one another, and by extension establishes a maternal relationship between Mary and the Church. Jesus’ words are addressed not only to Saint John, but to each one of us. In this moment, the physical mother of Jesus becomes the spiritual mother of the Church and all the faithful. Saint John goes on to take Mary into his home and cares for her as she advances in age, demonstrating our responsibility to continue our care for human life, from conception to natural death. Mary, who taught us how to nurture human life, becomes the recipient of that same honor and care.

The life of the Blessed Mother teaches us to respect each human life in every stage and circumstance. Mary is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life. O Mary, “Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life.”¹

Remember October is Pro-Life Month!

¹ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 105.

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United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Secretariat of
Pro-Life Activities

The Theology of Water

This article by Clifford Hennings, OFM provides fodder for contemplating this month's Prayer Intention from Pope Leo XIV*

We Catholics love symbols. Go to just about any Catholic church and you will be greeted by a legion of statues, a dazzling display of stained glass images, a prominent altar, a golden tabernacle, and loads of candles. For many non-Catholics, the sheer vastness of it all can be overwhelming. Indeed, even for many Catholics these images often go unnoticed . . . simply a part of our normal backdrop, the air we breathe.

Chief among these symbols is water. Water is such a common part of our life. Like sunlight and air, it is absolutely vital for our survival, but how often do we think about it? Unless water is scarce, we hardly think of it at all. Yet, if we were to sit down and think about water, what are the first things that come to mind? We may think of words like thirst or life or cleansing.

How about words like death or liberation? These might not be as obvious. Just as water can mean all these things for our bodies, so, too, for our souls. In God's plan of salvation, water speaks of life, death, cleansing, and liberation.

Consider the very beginning of creation where "a mighty wind [was] sweeping over the waters" (Gn 1:2). From the beginning, water has been a part of God's plan of creation. Just as we need water to live, we need God too, which is why the psalmist says, "As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God" (Ps 42:1).

As water satisfies the body, the Spirit of God satisfies the soul. And the Spirit of God has come to us through the person of Jesus Christ. He is our savior who says to us, "Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14).

Yet water can also be a terrifying thing. Anyone caught out at sea in a storm knows the frightening power of water. Water can destroy life as well as give it.

Floods and storms are a constant reality in our world. Water was used by the hand of God to rain down terrible destruction on the earth in the great flood. So, water also means death.

In the waters of Baptism, we believe we die to sin so as to be reborn in Christ. That is why many old baptisteries have three steps going in and three coming out on the other end. The plunging into the baptismal waters is a sign of death to our old ways of being.

Water also means cleansing. We use it to bathe, to wash our dishes, and to mop our floors. Water removes the dirt and grime of everyday living. So, too, do we use water to represent a spiritual cleansing.

Elisha sent Naaman to be washed in the Jordan River, where he was cleansed of leprosy. John the Baptist used those same waters as a sign of repentance and spiritual cleansing. Water is a sign of the healing powers of God, to remove the stain of our faults from us and restore our souls.

Water also means liberation. When the Israelites fled from Egypt, God parted the sea. He opened a path of liberation through those waters and brought low the mighty army of Pharaoh. When they finally arrived at the Promised Land, God split the waters of the Jordan so Joshua could lead the people into the Promised Land.

As the Israelites went through the waters to be free, we go through the waters to be free from sin. As the Israelites went through the waters to enter the land, we go through the waters to enter the kingdom of heaven. Water means all these things: life, death, cleansing, and liberation. When we use this common symbol, let us be reminded of all God has done for us. He has given us life, saved us from death, healed our hearts, and opened the path to paradise!

**Reprinted with permission of author from Franciscan Media, August 23, 2021*

“What Is the Liturgy of the Hours?”

At the August 5th General Audience, Pope Leo XIV noted: “St. Paul VI ardently desired that the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church’s daily public prayer, inseparable from the Eucharist, might deeply permeate, enliven, guide and express all Christian prayer, and effectively nourish the spiritual life of the People of God (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Laudis canticum*).

“For this desire to be fulfilled, the Liturgy of the Hours needs to be more fully embraced and lived out in the daily lives of the baptized and of the communities. To the many people who wish to learn to pray, especially catechumens, it can offer the path and the school of Christian prayer.

“Every week and every day, the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours are the breath of the life of the Church, which makes the Holy Spirit circulate through her Body. In this prayer, Christ ‘joins the entire community of mankind to Himself, associating it with His own singing of this canticle of divine praise’ (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 83). In this way, day by day, we are ever more united with the Paschal Mystery and conformed to Him.” +

Several apps are available for those who might want to see what the Liturgy of the Hours entails, including IBreviary and Laudate and others.

In *The School of Christian Perfection*, St. Alphonsus de Liguori introduces a section on Mortification with this quotation from John 12:25:

“He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal.” He continues:

“The virtue of mortification is twofold, exterior and interior. Exterior mortification consists in doing and suffering what is opposed to the exterior senses, and in depriving oneself of what is agreeable to them. In as far as it is necessary to avoid sin, every Christian is bound to practice mortification. With regard to those things which we may lawfully enjoy, mortification is not obligatory, but it is very useful and meritorious. For those, however, who are striving after perfection, mortification, even in things that are lawful, is absolutely necessary. As poor children of Adam, we must fight till our dying day. . . .

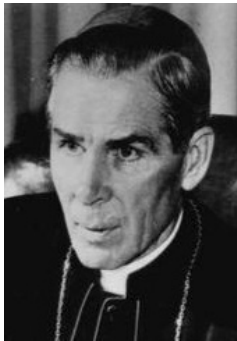
“It is proper to animals to gratify their senses; it is characteristic of angels to do the Will of God. From this a learned author concludes that we become angels when we strive to do God’s Will, but we become like animals when we seek to gratify our senses. Either the soul must subject the body or the body will make the soul its slave. Accordingly, we must treat our body as a rider treats a wild horse; he draws the reins tight, lest he should be thrown off. A physician at times prescribes medicines that are very distasteful to the patient, and he strictly forbids injurious foods and drinks, though the patient may desire them. He would be a cruel physician indeed who could be dissuaded from administering medicines because his patient objected on account of their being bitter, and who would allow the sick man to eat and drink what he pleased. How much greater is the cruelty of the sensual man who strives to avoid everything that is disagreeable or painful to his body in this life, and thereby puts both body and soul in the greatest danger of suffering incomparably greater pains for all eternity. “This false love,” says St. Bernard, “destroys the true love we should have for our body.” +





Archbishop Fulton Sheen to Be Beatified in St. Louis on September 24th

Vatican News — The late American Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895 - 1979) will be beatified at a Mass presided over by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle on September 24th in St. Louis, Missouri, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization at the Vatican.



After his heroic virtue was recognized, Archbishop Sheen was declared Venerable in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. In 2019, Pope Francis authorized a decree recognizing a miracle through his intercession. This cleared Archbishop Sheen for beatification, after which he will have the title "Blessed."

Archbishop Sheen was known for his dynamic preaching, especially on television and radio. A gifted teacher and speaker, Sheen's homilies were much appreciated. In 1930, he began participating in the Sunday radio program entitled "The Catholic Hour," which reached an estimated four million listeners at the height of its popularity.

In 1951, he began hosting a weekly television series, "Life is Worth Living," on

matters of faith that attracted some 30 million viewers. EWTN offers the shows on its network. +

Do Individual Countries and Nations Have Their Own Guardian Angel?*

It is taught by St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as many Fathers and Doctors of the Church, that every country has its own Guardian Angel. In fact, St. Clement of Alexandria goes so far as to state that whole "regiments of angels are distributed over nations and cities" (cf. Fr. Pascal Parente, *The Angels*, p. 119).

It should be noted in particular that Portugal has had a strong and deep devotion to its Guardian Angel for centuries. In fact, that nation was given approval by Pope Leo X in the 16th century to introduce a special feast day in order to honor its Guardian Angel. The feast day falls on June 10th of each year. France, similarly has consecrated itself over the centuries to St. Michael the Archangel as her patron. This consecration goes back to King Charlemagne in the early years of the 9th Century.

What's more, all Americans should be aware of the fact that a statue has been erected at the National Shrine of the World Apostolate of Fatima in Washington, NJ, in honor of the Guardian Angel of the United States. The statue stands 10 feet tall and weighs five tons. It is carved out of carrara marble by a world famous Portuguese sculptor. It was consecrated on July 4th, 1982. +

***The question and answer above is reprinted with permission from the Circular Letter: Advent 2014 of Opus Sanctorum Angelorum.**

Editor's Note: *On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, we at St. Francis Xavier have been praying the Opus Angelorum prayer to the Guardian of the United States after Mass from July 4th thru August.*

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

This Feast Day Is Celebrated on September 14

Vatican News — On 13 September 335, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (also called the Church of the Resurrection) was dedicated. The following day, the cross that Empress Helena had discovered on September 14, 320, was venerated in a solemn ceremony. In 614, the Persian King, Chosroes II, waged war on the Romans. After conquering Jerusalem, he confiscated many treasures, among which was the Cross of Jesus.

The Byzantine emperor Heraclius initiated peace negotiations, but was rejected. He then waged war and won near Nineveh, asking for the restitution of the Cross, which then returned to Jerusalem. Today, the cruelty of the Cross is not what is exalted, but the Love that God manifested to humanity by accepting death on the Cross. . . .

Stop Turning in on Ourselves

“Being Christian”, Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event”. The Gospel the liturgy offers us on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross suggests that God wants to enter into a relationship of love with everyone. This is offered in His Son, Jesus, lifted up on the Cross.

Lifting up our gaze to God expresses a very important truth: we are invited to enter back into relationship with Him. We need to stop

turning in on ourselves, uselessly nurturing a sense of guilt and forgetting that “in whatever our hearts condemn, God is greater than our hearts” (1 Jn 3:20). Let us lift up our eyes toward the stars (remember Abraham and the promise of many descendants), knowing how to cast every worry onto God.

Wonder and Gratitude

Lifting up our gaze should not enkindle fear, but gratitude, because that elevation is the measure of the love with which God loves His children, in His Son. It is the Mercy of God, therefore, which, as is the case with Nicodemus, illuminates the darkness of our lives and allows us to continue on our journey.

No Neutrality Regarding the Cross

We cannot remain neutral regarding the Cross of Jesus. Either we are with Him or we are against Him. A choice is made before every action, for the actions of a Christian are none other than the testimony of how “God has loved us so much that he gave His only Son, Jesus”.

Prayer before the San Damiano Cross

Most High glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart. Grant me an upright faith, secure hope and perfect charity.

Fill me with understanding and knowledge that I may fulfill your command. Amen.

— **St. Francis of Assisi**

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Leo XIV, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father. . .

Words of WISDOM

Quotations from the Saints whose feasts are this month . . .

“If some rich and powerful friend were to enter your home, you would quickly clean the entire house, for fear something there, might offend your friend’s eyes, when he entered. Let anyone then who is preparing his inner house for God, cleanse away the dirt of his evil deeds. . . . The Lord comes into the heart and makes His home in one, who truly loves God and observes His commandments . . .”

— **St. Gregory the Great**

“Let us ask Our Lady to give us her heart so beautiful, so pure, so immaculate, her heart so full of love and humility that we may be able to receive Jesus in the Bread of Life, love Him as she loved Him, and serve Him in the distressing disguise of the poor.”

— **St. Teresa of Kolkata**

“To love God as He ought to be loved, we must be detached from all temporal love. We must love nothing but Him, or if we love anything else, we must love it, only for His sake.”

— **St. Peter Claver**

“You cannot have God for your Father if you do not have the Church for your mother. . . . God is one and Christ is one and His Church

is one; one is the faith and one is the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body. . . . If we are the heirs of Christ, let us abide in the peace of Christ; if we are the sons of God, let us be lovers of peace.”

— **St. Cyprian**

“What is easier, sweeter, more pleasant, than to love goodness, beauty and love, the fullness of which, YOU ARE, O Lord, my God?”

— **St. Robert Bellarmine**

“We cannot live in a world that is not our own, in a world that is interpreted for us by others. An interpreted world is not a home. Part of the terror is to take back our own listening, to use our own voice, to see our own light.”

— **St. Hildegard of Bingen**

“Kneel down and render the tribute of your presence and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Confide all your needs to Him, along with those of others. Speak to Him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart, and give Him complete freedom to work in you as He thinks best.”

— **St. Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)**

“I am a Catholic and wholeheartedly do accept death for God. Had I a thousand lives, all these to Him, shall I offer.”

— **St. Lawrence Ruiz**

“Martyrdom does not consist only in dying for one's faith. Martyrdom also consists in serving God with love and purity of heart every day of one's life.”

— **St. Jerome**



Words^{OF} WISDOM

Quotations from the Saints on Our Blessed Mother' feasts this month

"Today the Virgin is born, tended and formed and prepared for her role as Mother of God, who is the universal King of the ages.

. . . Therefore, let all creation sing and dance and unite to make worthy contribution to the celebration of this day.

. . . Let everything, mundane things and those above, join in festive celebration.

Today this created world is raised to the dignity of a holy place for Him who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator."

— **St. Andrew of Crete on her Nativity**

"The day of the Nativity of the Mother of God is a day of universal joy, because through the Mother of God, the entire human race was renewed, and the sorrow of the first mother, Eve, was transformed into joy."

— **St. John Damascene**

"She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed."

— **St. Augustine**

"Therefore a certain Star has risen for us today: Our Lady, Saint Mary. Her name means Star of the sea; no doubt the Star of

this sea which is the world. Therefore, we ought to lift up our eyes to this Star that has appeared on earth today in order that she may lead us, in order that she may enlighten us, in order that she may show us these steps so that we shall know them, in order that she may help us so that we may be able to ascend. And therefore it is a beautiful thing that Mary is placed in this stairway of which we are speaking, there where we must begin to climb."

— **St. Aelred**

"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."

— **St. Thomas Aquinas**

"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."

— **St. Louis de Montfort**

"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."

— **St. Bernard**

The Month of September 2026

Monthly Theme:

The Seven Sorrows of Mary

September is dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of Mary. Devotion to the sorrows of the Virgin Mary dates from the twelfth century, when it made its appearance in monastic circles under the influence of St. Anselm and St. Bernard.

The memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows is celebrated by the Church on September 15.

Pope's Prayer Intention:

For the Care of Water

Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

Monthly Virtue: Mortification

Interior mortification consists in restraining our inordinate self-love and self-will. There is a twofold love of self, the one good and the other bad. The former spurs us on to strive for eternal life, for which God has created us; the latter prompts us to seek for the good things of this earth, to the great detriment of our immortal soul. Christ Our Lord has said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." (Matt. 16:24).