

Resources to learn more about the Virgin Mary

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

Teachings on Mary

The following are from the U.S. bishops' Website: www.usccb.org. References from Catechism of the Catholic Church are in parenthesis.

✘ **MARY:** The mother of Jesus. Because she is the mother of Jesus — Son of God and second Person of the Blessed Trinity — according to the flesh, she is rightly called the Mother of God (Theotokos) (148, 495). Mary is also called "full of grace" and "Mother of the Church," and in Christian prayer and devotion, "Our Lady," the "Blessed Virgin Mary," and the "New Eve" (722, 726, 963). See related teachings (484-511, 1154, 1674, 2132, 2676-78, 2708).

✘ **ASSUMPTION:** The dogma which recognizes the Blessed Virgin Mary's singular participation in her Son's Resurrection by which she was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when the course of her earthly life was finished. (966)

✘ **DOGMA:** A solemn declaration by an ecumenical council or by the pope that a doctrine is revealed by God and must be believed by the universal Church; such definitions are called infallible and must be adhered to with the obedience of faith. (88-100, 891)

✘ **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:** The dogma (88-100, 891) proclaimed in Christian Tradition and defined in 1854, that from the first moment of her conception, Mary — by the singular grace of God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ — was preserved immune from original sin. (490-91)

Feast days for Mary

Saturdays are dedicated to Mary as well as the month of May. October is the month of the rosary. There are three Marian holy days of obligation: Mary, Mother of God, the Assumption and Immaculate Conception. The following lists all days for Mary: (Days without a designation are optional memorials.)

✘ Jan. 1: Mary, Mother of God (solemnity)

✘ Feb. 11: Our Lady of Lourdes

✘ May 13: Our Lady of Fatima

✘ May 31: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (feast day)

✘ June 24: Immaculate Heart of Mary (*This date changes. It always falls on the Saturday after the Sacred Heart of Jesus solemnity.*)

✘ July 16: Our Lady of Mount Carmel

- ✘ Aug. 5: Dedication of St. Mary Major
- ✘ Aug. 15: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (solemnity)
- ✘ Aug. 22: Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary (memorial)
- ✘ Sept. 8: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (feast day)
- ✘ Sept. 12: Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- ✘ Sept. 15: Our Lady of Sorrows (memorial)
- ✘ Oct. 7: Our Lady of the Rosary (memorial)
- ✘ Nov. 21: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (memorial)
- ✘ Dec. 8: Immaculate Conception (solemnity)
- ✘ Dec. 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe (memorial)

Marian Shrines

According to the Marian Library's Website, "at a shrine, God's pilgrim people gather in the Lord's presence. Similar to a church, a shrine is a type of icon of God's dwelling with his people, with the Church, with the individual believer."

The library, part of the International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton, Ohio, explains that Marian apparitions in the 19th and 20th centuries gave rise to centers for prayer or Marian shrines.

Today, about 80 percent of Catholic shrines are dedicated to Mary with millions of pilgrims visiting these holy sites each year. The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City tops the list with 10 million visitors annually; followed by Lourdes, France, 6 million; Czestochowa, Poland, 5 million and Aparecida, Brazil, 4 million. To learn more go to www.udayton.edu/mary.

The Website also lists Marian shrines located around the world. In the U.S. alone, there is at least one in 38 states. To find a shrine in any state, go to www.udayton.edu/mary.

The following is a sampling of American shrines:

- ✘ Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Washington, D.C.)
- ✘ Mary, Queen of the Universe Shrine (Orlando, Fla.)
- ✘ National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows (Belleville, Ill.)
- ✘ Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe (Dallas)
- ✘ Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor (New Orleans)
- ✘ National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother (Portland, Ore.)

The Mary Page on this Website also offers information on Marian titles, poetry, prayers, devotions, art, music, movies, apparitions, traditions and much more. To find these, go to www.udayton.edu/mary.

Marian prayers

According to the "Catholic Source Book," (Father Peter Klein, Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2000) some of the most popular Marian prayers have a long history in the Church.

Hail Mary ("Ave Maria" in Latin)

This prayer joins Gabriel's greeting (Luke 1:28) and Elizabeth's greeting (Luke 1:42) to Mary. It has been widely used since the 11th century. The name Jesus was added in the 13th century and versions of the "Holy Mary" developed in the 14th century and were generally use by the 16th century.

The Rosary

This chaplet (a devotion using beads) is called the Psalter of Mary because all 15 of its mysteries with 150 Hail Marys equal the number of the psalms in the Old Testament. Praying all 15 decades together is called the Dominican Rosary.

Hail, Holy Queen ("Salve, Regina" in Latin)

This ancient prayer was used for centuries in the Liturgy of the Hours. It is regarded as anonymous but was likely composed by Hermannus Contractus (died in 1054). Today many people say this prayer at the end of the rosary.

Memorare ("Remember" in Latin)

The Memorare has been attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Claude Bernard, the "Poor Priest" popularized it (1588-1641).

Litany of the Blessed Virgin (Litany of Loreto)

This litany was approved with indulgences attached in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V. It is a compilation of older Marian litanies from the 12th century. Many titles for Mary came from this litany.

Mary's Canticle ("Magnificat" in Latin, Luke 1:46-55)

This is Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting at the visitation. Magnificat comes from the opening words: "My soul magnifies ..." or "proclaims." This prayer is said each day in the Liturgy of the Hours' Evening Prayer.

Marian books and other resources

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing Office has many educational resources for purchase on its Website www.usccb.org. The following are some highlights:


"Mary in the Church," Forward by Father Arthur Kennedy

This is a compendium of documents issued in recent years by the U.S. bishops and the papal Magisterium on the teachings on the Blessed Virgin Mary.


"Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions and Answers"

In this booklet, the bishops respond to common questions about popular devotional practices


and their proper function in the life of the Church.

 "Book of Mary"


This collection of prayers includes the Angelus, the Regina Caeli, the Salve Regina and the Magnificat.

 "On the Most Holy Rosary (Rosarium Virginis Mariae)," Pope John Paul II

This apostolic letter broadens the rosary to include the "mysteries of light" — five reflections on Christ's public ministry between his baptism and his passion.

 "Novena for Justice and Peace"

This novena prayer includes nine days of prayer, reading and reflection, in the promotion of justice and peace throughout the world.

 "The Source" (Videotape)

The story of St. Bernadette Soubirous and the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1858 are the basis for this video, which also explore healing, faith, conversion and reconciliation to today's society.

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