

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother; to you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Praying and focusing on this one prayer throughout the entire year will allow you to come to know Mary and her special role in God's plan as the Mother of Jesus and our Spiritual Mother. The following resources are meant to foster this process. As you pray the Memorare every day, it would be helpful to occasionally, such as once a week, look over one aspect from the resources below to help you go deeper in your understanding of this prayer.

God's love for us

For God so loves each one of us, "that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) God prepared a beautiful and sinless Woman to be the Mother of Jesus, our Savior. When Jesus was dying on the Cross for our sins, He gave us Mary, His Mother, to be our Spiritual Mother. Mary wants to lead each of her children to her Son, Jesus. She listens with great love and concern as we speak with her. We can talk with her at any time about anything. This is part of God's plan that we go to Mary.



Why do we want to pray the Memorare daily?

- 1) We want to call to mind the Person of Mary on a daily basis and
- 2) Develop / deepen a relationship with Mary as the Mother of Jesus and our Spiritual Mother and
- 3) Understand that we can go to Mary with our problems, desires, intentions and
- 4) Allow Mary to lead us closer to Jesus.

The Meaning of the Words

- **Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,**
Most gracious is the superlative for gracious and means someone who is very compassionate: who loves much, who is willing to help in any way possible; shows kindness and courtesy; is merciful.
- **that never was it known**
Never means not at any time or place in the entire world.
- **that anyone who fled to your protection,**
It is to say that anyone who asked Her for protection
- **implored your help,**
You are asking Mary to watch over you, to look over you, to keep you safe,

- **or sought your intercession**

Mary intercedes for you with God – to pray for your intention to God

- **was left unaided.**

Every person who has asked our Blessed Mother for help has received help. She has never abandoned anyone who has asked for help in such things as coming away from sin, for a particular intention etc.

- **Inspired by this confidence,**

For this reason, you can be confident that she will also help you.

- **I fly unto you, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother;**

You go to Mary quickly for her help at any time. Mary is the most pure one. She is the Spiritual Mother of each person because Jesus gave Her to all of us and us to Her at the foot of the Cross.

- **to you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.**

You come to Mary as a sinner because each person sins. You come to Her sorry for your sins.

- **Mother of the Word Incarnate,**

The Bible informs us that Jesus is the Word as seen in the Gospel of John 1:1-2:

“In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God’s presence, and the Word was God. He was present to God in the beginning.” And the Word took on flesh, which is the Incarnation.

This is also in John 1:14: *“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father.”*

Therefore, we call Jesus the Word Incarnate. Mary is the Mother of Jesus and therefore Mother of the Word Incarnate.

- **despise not my petitions,**

You can implore Mary: I am your child and so please listen to me. The heart of your Blessed Mother is always ready to listen, forgive, and love you. She always hears your prayers.

- **but in your mercy hear and answer me.**

Mary, listen with favor, good will, good disposition. Please give me what I am asking of you. you ask her with great ardor and insistence.

- **Amen.**

I believe that you will answer me.



Activities for Learning the Words

- Pray the *Memorare* every day and at every opportunity.
- Seek to pray with your heart; in other words think about Mary to whom you are speaking, not just rattling words. “Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of her ‘to whom we speak.’ In the *Memorare*, you are speaking with the Blessed Virgin Mary, our spiritual Mother.
- When thinking and praying about the life and role of Mary, look at Sacred Art pictures, such as the Annunciation - the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the Mother of the Savior and other Mysteries of the Rosary. **Google** Mary, or the Blessed

Virgin Mary or something similar. When it opens up then click on **Images**. It is important to then click on **Settings**. Then click on **Advanced Search** and set the **usage rights** to: free to use, share or modify even commercially, if you plan to print an image.

- After praying the *Memorare*, allow time for silence to journal regarding your thoughts, feelings, desires, problems, intentions etc.
- When at Church pray the *Memorare* before a statue or stained glass window of Mary and then allow time for silence so that you can speak with Mary.
- Make a request of Mary for a specific need. When a prayer is answered, it makes faith come alive and will help you to develop a relationship with Mary. You don't want to just ask for good things from Mary with no desire to speak with her and develop a friendship with her. Jesus honored His Mother. You are also called to honor her with a special devotion. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 971)

Learning the Principles

- The *Memorare* is a Catholic prayer seeking the intercession and help of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is appropriate to pray at any time, but especially appropriate during times of difficulty or distress.
- Mary is the Mother of Jesus and the Spiritual Mother of each of us. You can turn to Mary and tell her about your problems. She will understand. You can learn from Mary how to be good; to be a disciple – a committed follower – of Jesus. She always did what God wanted her to do and she never sinned. If you are tempted to do something wrong, ask Mary to help you, and to pray with and for you. She will pray for you.
- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745)
- “Adoration” is the worship that is deserved and rightly offered to God, the Creator, alone. The adoration of Jesus is firmly rooted and grounded within the heart of the Church before any secondary veneration of Mary is progressively inspired and evoked by the Holy Spirit. “Veneration”, that is, the special honor, devotion, reverence, and recognition of excellence we give to Mary, God’s creature, deepens and points us toward a more perfect homage of God Himself. In appreciating and honoring Mary, the masterpiece, we give greater honor and glory to God, the Divine Artist. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* hereafter CCC, paragraph 971)
- The Blessed Mother knows and loves all humanity. More profoundly, she loves each one of us individually. Perhaps this can best be pondered and understood in her tender and maternal words spoken to St. Juan Diego under her title of “Our Lady of Guadalupe”. The tone and timbre, the delicate sensitivity, of her caring message to him is meant for you. May you appreciate the strength and gentleness of this message given by her, letting it seep into your mind and heart as you ponder it frequently and allow it to become your very *own*:



“Listen and let it penetrate your heart, do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. **Am I not here who am your Mother?** Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?”

- The teaching that Mary is your Spiritual Mother is clearly stated in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, hereafter *LG*) from the Second Vatican Council when it declares:

“Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a Mother to us in the order of grace.” (*LG* 61)
- Significantly, this relationship with your heavenly Mother is not “general” or “collective”, in the sense that it is a gift for *all* humanity, but *very personal* to each one of us. Pope Saint John Paul II explains:

Motherhood always establishes a unique and unrepeatable relationship between two people; between mother and child and between child and mother. Even when the same woman is the mother of many children, her personal relationship with each one of them is of the very essence of motherhood. For each child is generated in a unique and unrepeatable way. (*Mother of the Redeemer*, no. 45)
- The following Church teachings on Mary are available in one-page handouts at the Diocesan website: diolc.org/evangelization/questions
 - Mary as Mother of God
 - The Immaculate Conception
 - The Perpetual Virginity of Mary
 - The Assumption of Mary into Heaven, Body and Soul



Spiritual Comprehension

- The Memorare is the prayer that you will want to know by heart and with good understanding before you decide to go deeper with another prayer. Plan to spend an entire year praying the Memorare every day.

Encountering Our Blessed Mother Mary in Prayer

- Pray the *Memorare* aloud. Take notice of a word or phrase that stood out for you. Allow some time of silence to think about why the word or phrase stood out for you.
- Pray the Memorare very slowly, and take some time of silence to reflect on each of the phrases, which takes it to the next level of a deep personal encounter.
- Take some time to quiet down interiorly and pray the Memorare very slowly. Pick out a phrase or two from the prayer. For example: “Anyone who fled to your protection.” Repeat these words over and over again slowly. Think about how these words relate to Mary and her love and care for you. Have a heart-to-heart conversation with Mary. This takes prayer to the next level of a deep personal encounter. Another helpful step is to write down some notes about the prayer experience to keep for future reference

- Allow times of silence in the church/chapel, where you may pray the *Memorare* or one of the following Scriptures - Luke 1: 26-38; Luke 1: 39-56; Luke 2:1-20; John 2: 1-11; John 19:25-30

in the following manner:

1. Read the words slowly and thoughtfully, 2 or 3 times
2. Consider the meaning of the words and does it remind you of something in your life? (In other words, ponder how this relates to your life)
3. Notice what word or phrase stood out for you and why (Conversation with God).
(The first three steps above are considered meditation.)
4. Repeat silently a word or phrase several times slowly and then rest in God (This step is considered contemplation – being still and resting in God’s presence).
5. Take a few minutes to journal.



Jesus gave Mary to St. John and St. John to Mary. St. John represents you.

Scriptural Passages on Mary’s Role in God’s Plan for Salvation

- Mary is your Spiritual Mother. The principal Scriptural basis for the doctrine of Mary as Spiritual Mother of all humanity is found in John 19:26-27: “When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother’”.

The “beloved disciple” in this Scriptural passage is John. The beloved disciple John is a symbol of all humanity and, in a special way, of every person who likewise seeks to be a “beloved disciple” of Jesus. This has been confirmed throughout history, including Pope Saint John Paul II who expresses “Mary’s motherhood as a personal gift which Christ gives to John, *and beyond John to every individual.*” (*Mother of the Redeemer*, no. 23, 45; italics added)

Resources

- YouTube video of the *Memorare* sung by [Danielle Rose](#) with pictures of Mary (4 min.)

The origin of the *Memorare*

- The prayer was first popularized by Fr. Claude Bernard (1588-1641). Fr. Claude Bernard, known as the "Poor Priest", tirelessly dedicated his life to the preaching and aiding of prisoners and criminals condemned to death. Placing those in his care under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fr. Bernard prayed the *Memorare* extensively in his work of evangelization to great effect. Many of the criminals came to know and love God through his efforts. He also distributed over 200,000 leaflets printed with the *Memorare* in various languages so that people would seek the intercession of Mary. The *Memorare* is known to be part of a much longer 15th century prayer.