

Questions to Promote Reflection

1. Design a program to promote knowledge of Mary in your Community. What would it look like? What would be your organizing themes?
2. What connects the Marian apparitions (e.g., the Miraculous Medal) and the teaching about Mary in the Bible? What do they teach?
3. Vatican II put the instruction on Mary within the teaching on the Church (Lumen Gentium). How do you explain that reasoning?
4. What aspect of Mary is most attractive to you? Why? How can you begin to grow in appreciating her?
5. What is the place of Marian devotion in your life? In your community?
6. Mary prayed the Magnificat in her meeting with Elizabeth. What does your Psalm of Praise sound like? What brings it forth?
7. Reflect on how Mary's total gift of herself to the Lord in the Annunciation shows us the manner in which a missionary makes this same commitment to the Lord and God's people.

Some documents of the Church on devotion to Mary:

Paul VI, Marialis Cultus: Apostolic Exhortation for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, February 2, 1974.

John Paul II, Redemptoris Mater: Mother of the Redeemer: Encyclical Letter, March 25, 1987.

John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae: Apostolic Letter, October 16, 2002.

And, of course, Lumen Gentium.

Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 21 November 1964. para. 52-69.

Delgado, Corpus, *Marian Spirituality and the Vincentian Charism*. Vincentiana 2002:4-5. pp. 328-351.

Dodin, A. *Le culte de Marie et l'expérience religieuse de M. Vincent de Paul*. Vincentiana 1975. pp. 207-225.

Maloney, Robert P. *Five Faces of Mary*. Vincentiana 1999:2. pp. 127-136)

———, *The Spirituality of the Magnificat*. FamVin.

Martinez, B., *The Virgin Mary according to St. Louise*, Echoes (Sept 1983).

Mary and Vincentian Spirituality: The NT and the Congregation



C.49.--'1.--We should also show special devotion to Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church. According to the words of St. Vincent, she, more than all other believers, penetrated the meaning and lived out the teaching of the gospel.

'2.--We should express our love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary in many different ways, celebrating her feasts with devotion and praying to her frequently, especially through the rosary. We should make widely known the special message expressed through her maternal care by the Miraculous Medal.

Internal Seminary
Germantown, Philadelphia
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III. MARY IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

a) The Annunciation

1. A Thoughtful Person

"She was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be."

2. Not Afraid to Question

3. Surrenders Self Freely

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you say."

b) The Visitation

1. Knowledge Leads to Action

2. Trust Comes from Not-Knowing All the Answers

3. Mary is Angel for Elizabeth

4. Mary (like Jesus) Comes not to Be Served but to Serve

5. Praise of God's Action

6. Magnificat

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.*

*For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.*

*The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

i. The first element in prayer is "Praise."

ii. The second element in prayer is "Joy"

iii. The third element in prayer is "Hope."

c) The Birth of the Lord

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. (Lk 1:15-19)

"Belonging to the Church with Mary" International Retreat for Sister Servants May 18, 2013

I. Mary in Documents of the Church

"[Mary] is hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity." (LG 53)

II. Mary as the Model of the Perfect Christian in the Church

1. At the Annunciation: Bringing Christ to the World

2. At the Visitation: Service and Worship

- Mary prays out of her own experience.
- Mary's immediate response to God's actions is praise.
- Mary finds her prayer in service and community
- Mary finds joy and hope in God.

3. At Cana: Service and Obedience

4. At Instruction of Jesus: Hear and do the Word of God

5. At the foot of the Cross: Mary in Suffering and Fidelity

6. With the Church on Pentecost: The Community at Prayer

7. Fidelity to the Teachings of her Faith

III. The Mission of the Church

"You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

IV. The Place of our Charism in the Mission of the Church

"The local community [is] a living cell of the Church." (C. 81)

"Take good care of the service of the poor. Above all, live together in great union and cordiality, loving one another in imitation of the union and life of Our Lord. Pray earnestly to the Blessed Virgin, that she may be your only Mother." (LdM, SW p. 835; A49)

“An Undivided Heart: Holy Mary, Good Mary”

“I rejoice and praise God for the consolation His goodness has given you I pray that this consolation might touch not only your senses, but that it might be seed sown in the good earth of your hearts, and that it might bear abundant fruit for your future needs for you must be strong women.” (LdM, Spiritual Writings, L. 319. p. 252)

1. Mary and Everyday Goodness

2. Mary and Goodness in Community

a) In Community:

“I praise God with all my heart for the blessings His goodness bestows on your little community. This is evident in the support, union and cordiality which exist among you. I hope that your fidelity will cause this same goodness to continue.” (LdM, SW, L. 611. p. 632)

b) In Working with Others:

3. The Goodness of Mary as Proclaimed in our Prayer

a) The Hail Mary

b) O Mary Conceived without Sin

4. The Goodness of Mary as Reflected in her Prayer

a) The Annunciation

b) The Magnificat

c) The Silent Prayer of the Cross
—she joins her prayer to that of Jesus

d) The Presentation

Mosaic Law of purification brings Mary & Joseph with infant Jesus to Jerusalem; they encounter Simeon in Temple: *[Simeon] took [Jesus] into his arms and blessed God . . . The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* (Lk 2:28, 33-35)

e) The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Only story giving a glimpse of Jesus as a teenager:

When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced (in) wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

Three Starting Points:

1. First of all, the New Testament is not about Mary, it is about Jesus. Anything said about Mary serves the message and person of Jesus
2. Most of the books of the New Testament do not mention Mary.
 - a) Paul does not refer to Mary by name in any of his letters; we learn nothing about Mary from him.
 - b) The Acts of the Apostles places Mary with the disciples around the time of Pentecost (Acts 1:14).
 - c) The Book of Revelation contains the passage about “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1).
 - d) No other NT book, other than the Gospels, mentions Mary.
3. Each of the Gospels was written for a particular community. The way in which Mary is presented is in keeping with that context.

“TO BE JOYFUL WITNESSES OF DEEP FAITH”

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

The Magnificat is a song expressing the faith of the poor of Israel. Mary is the lead singer. She represents those marginalized by society.

Pope John Paul II writes eloquently in *Redemptoris Mater*.

Drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith expressed in the words of the Magnificat, the Church renews ever more effectively in herself the awareness that the truth about God who saves, the truth about God who is the source of every gift, cannot be separated from the manifestation of his love of preference for the poor and humble, that love which, celebrated in the Magnificat, is later expressed in the words and works of Jesus.

I THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAGNIFICAT

The Magnificat is a mosaic of Old Testament expressions . . . but it also voices the faith of the New Testament community.

II CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPIRITUALITY OF THE MAGNIFICAT

1. *Her thoughts, her meditation, her life are rooted in scripture.*
2. *She believes in a personal God who acts in human history and in her own life.*
3. *She prays in praise and gratitude.*
4. *Knowing God as mighty, holy, merciful, and faithful to his promises, she has exuberant confidence in him.*
5. *She recognizes her own powerlessness and sees herself as completely dependent on God.*
6. *She believes that God can turn the world upside-down.*

Mary sings out with joy, with praise, and in firm solidarity with those marginalized by society. It is meant to be our hymn too. Luke calls Christians to join Mary, in this vibrant freedom song of the poor.

“Devotion to Mary in the Company”

Echoes, 2011:5. pp. 435-447.

COMMON RULES OF THE CM (May 17, 1658)

We should likewise have special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Confreres, therefore, both individually and collectively, should, with God's help, try to carry this out perfectly: (1) by specially honoring every day this preeminent Mother of Christ, who is also our Mother; (2) by putting into practice, as far as possible, the same virtues as she did, particularly humility and chastity; (3) by enthusiastically encouraging others, whenever opportunity and means permit, to show her the greatest reverence and always to serve her loyally.

1. Mary as “The first Christian”: The Rosary

Mary constantly sets before the faithful the “mysteries” of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary. (John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 11)

2. Mary as “The Immaculate One”: The Miraculous Medal

The sacrament of Reconciliation, an encounter of love with the Lord who forgives, brings to the spiritual life renewed impetus and growth in grace. Motivated by such a conviction, the Sisters have frequent recourse to it, in accord with the directives of the Church. (C. 20)

3. Mary as “Totally Open To The Spirit”: The Angelus

In the prayer of the Angelus, they (the Daughters of Charity) contemplate the mystery of salvation, of which Mary became the humble servant. (Statute 7c)

4. Mary “hears the Word of God and keeps it”: The Bible

On this road, in an eminent and truly heroic manner--indeed with an ever greater heroism of faith--the “obedience” which [Mary] professes to the word of divine revelation will be fulfilled. (John Paul II, Redemptoris Mater (1987) 14)

“The Virgin Mary and Formation”
Echoes. 2011:3. pp. 254-265.

Lord, my God, I, NN., in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, vow that I will faithfully dedicate myself, in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, with the help of your grace, I vow chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute. (C. 58.2)

1. Openness to the Will of God

Bible introduces us to Mary in Gospel of Luke as completely open to will of God in her life. No phrase characterizes her better than one which we find in Annunciation: “Behold the servant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”

2. Service of Others

Immediately following her surrender of self to God, Mary makes her journey to visit Elizabeth to provide her young strong arms to help in the months ahead—the Gospel tells us that she remained with Elizabeth for three months.

3. Meditation and Prayer

Repeatedly recounted about Mary is her ability to “treasure things in her heart.” From her heart, she prays the Magnificat.

4. Involving Others in Service

A particular gift which characterized Mary, and certainly part of the inheritance which Jesus received, was attentiveness to needs of others, then a desire to involve others in this service.

5. Fidelity to the End

Mary’s acceptance of her call from God was not defined solely for a good beginning. Her fidelity extends to the end—and not just of the life of Jesus but of her own life.

**“MARIAN SPIRITUALITY
AND THE VINCENTIAM CHARISM”**
Corpus Delgado, C.M.

1. The Immaculate Conception

Within the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, St. Vincent saw the humble and chaste Virgin, **emptied of herself so as to welcome God** and allow herself to be filled with God. These are fundamental dispositions for those desiring to empty themselves and clothe themselves in the spirit of Jesus Christ: “(God) foresaw then that, since His Son had to take human flesh through a woman, it was proper that He take it from a woman worthy of receiving Him, a woman outstanding in grace, free from sin, filled with piety and far removed from any harmful affections.”

Welcoming God, being filled with God, clothing oneself with Christ, self-emptying, as did the Immaculate one: that is the first event that Vincent de Paul stressed regarding the Virgin Mary.

2. The Annunciation

Like Mary, in the Annunciation, we must give ourselves to God to accomplish his work. “It is said then: we must seek the Kingdom of God. We must seek. This is but one word. Yet it seems to me to say much. It means that we should place ourselves in such a state as always to aspire after what has been recommended to us, to labor unceasingly for the Kingdom of God and not remain in a languishing and inactive state.... Seek: Seek, this implies care; this implies action.”

3. The Visitation

“They shall honor the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin who went to visit her cousin cheerfully and promptly.” Whatever road we take, Monsieur Vincent, without fail, guides us towards the poor. Our life, like Mary’s, is totally given to God for the service of the poor.

The Miraculous Medal

*O Mary conceived without sin,
Pray for us who have recourse to you.*

The Blessed Mother continues to give us this medal and this message. I would like to encourage you to talk about that gift.

A Person: St. Catherine Labouré

1. A Daughter of Charity
2. A Good Life
3. Hand in Hand

"I then bounded to the steps of the altar, knelt and let my hands rest on the knees of the Blessed Virgin. . . .



A Place: Chapel of the Miraculous Medal, rue du Bac, Paris

1. The rue du Bac
2. The Chapel of the Miraculous Medal
3. Paris

A Thing: The Miraculous Medal

Consider the medal itself. What does it teach us?

1. Our Faith
2. Two Hearts
3. A Snake Underfoot



CONCLUSION

Let us talk about Mary and the Miraculous Medal in our homes and among our people. They continue to be gifts given to us and, hopefully, through us, to our world. They are no less important or needed today than in 1830. We can never ask too much or too consistently:

*O Mary conceived without sin,
Pray for us who have recourse to you.*

“The Significance of the Word ‘Yes’.” Echoes of the Company March-April. 2011:2. pp. 91-100.

1. Yes to Life

The child who begins to take form within Mary’s womb by the power of the Holy Spirit is the author of life. Mary says “yes” to life itself, and Jesus now shares in her breath, in her nourishment, in her life. As she lives, so does he.

2. Yes to Service

Mary responds: “behold the handmaid of the Lord.” With these words, she promises to do whatever she needs to do to carry out God’s will. These are words of action. She takes on the role of active service.

3. Yes to Suffering (Yes to the unknown)

Mary’s “yes” also includes a willingness to accept uncertainty and suffering in her life. She says “let it be done to me according to your word.” Mary thus accepts whatever is to come her way in the carrying out of God’s will. She can say: I accept all these things over which I have no control as your will.

“Humble yourselves before God, that is your affair, and be ready to accept whatever duties Divine Providence may send you. I cannot recommend this enough to you, Sisters.”

SVdP, October
18, 1655 “On the
End of the Com-
pany;” Instruc-
tion, p. 189,
AN63).

