

RCIA
Prayer & Worship
Session 11

"Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray. Through a living transmission (Sacred Tradition) within 'the believing and praying Church,' the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God how to pray."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church
#2650



THE CHURCH: A WORSHIPING COMMUNITY

GRACE

What is Grace?

The NT expresses frequently and in many ways the amazement, the deep appreciation and the gratitude which the early Christians felt for God's salvation in Christ. One of these expressions is the term "Grace", applied to God's loving concern, to the gifts God gives, as well as to humanity's thankful response. But in these NT occurrences, 'grace' is not yet a technical term. The biblical writers are not trying to reserve one special word to denote a sharply conceived, distinctly Christian phenomenon. The Christians use the words they have in the traditions they know in order to record what has happened to them and to express their reactions to it.

Early Christians express themselves grateful for God's choice of Israel, for God's giving the Gentiles a share in Israel's election, for the forgiveness of sins, for the newness of life in Christ and in the Spirit, for the presence of the indwelling Spirit, for the joy and peace that is theirs, for the new world of love now opened to all, for the anticipated transformation of the world and the return of Christ in glory to consummate God's gifts in a final fulfillment of all promises. But there is little evidence that they ever consciously tried to sum these things up in a single concept. NT writings on these themes shows awareness of being in continuity with the hymns of praise which Israel had long been singing to God for their election, for the promises, for the gift of the Law, for the security of God's embracing love.

Our English translations show the NT writers using the word grace and variations thereof, as when they speak of their gifts as graces, or give glory and thanks to God's grace, or say they live in the grace of God or have been saved by grace. Behind the translated word, grace, lie different Greek words (with their own histories and relations to still other sets of Hebrew words and expressions.) But in every place where an English NT now says "grace" some other term or terms, such as 'favor' or 'kindness' or 'gift' or 'thanks' or 'for the sake of' could plausibly be substituted, even in the letters of Paul.

The developing understanding of grace

ACTUAL GRACE: divine assistance given for a particular need or action. Following the Council of Trent (1545-63), treatises on grace were divided into two parts: *sanctifying or habitual grace* (the inner, permanent transformation of the human person or soul), and *actual grace* (the divine assistance that moves the person to do good). Disputes ensued (lasting until Vatican II), regarding the existence, necessity, and gratuity of actual grace, its further subdivision, its compatibility with human freedom, and the notion of merit.

The theology of actual grace attempted to preserve the twofold teaching of the Church that grace is absolutely necessary for every salutary human act. (This developed in response to Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism) and yet that grace can be resisted (responding to Jansenism). The danger was that grace gradually came to be viewed as a quantity through which God moves or elevates the human soul, rather

than as the relationship between God and the human person. Contemporary theologians note that the mystery of grace comprises both God's self-gift and God's enabling human beings to be open to, and faithful to, that relationship.

Other terms or definitions of grace you might run across are: *Cooperating Grace, Habitual Grace, Operating Grace, Sacramental Grace, Sanctifying Grace*. Each of these terms describing grace, used at one time in the Church history, are the human attempt to explain the mystery of God working in our lives. The theology and understanding of Grace has developed over the centuries, arriving at the current understanding of grace after Vatican II.

Grace is a special gift from God consisting of a deeper relationship or union with God.

The word grace means gift or favor. Some have falsely pictured grace as a type of spiritual liquid pouring into us and filling us. In simple terms, grace deepens our relationship with God. Just as two people who love each other experience a deepening of their love relationship each time they share in love through everyday life, so grace is simply a deeper experience of loving as we share with God through our daily lives. Through our prayers, our good works, our loving concern for our neighbor, we are deepening our relationship with God. We say that people grow in grace as they share more deeply in a loving union with God.

In speaking to his disciples, Jesus tells them that they now have a special relationship with Him. They are no longer slaves to sins, but they are friends who have the special gift (grace) of knowing Him and the Father. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to His disciples, "You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father." (John 15:14-15)

The gift of a deeper relationship with God is a gift freely given to us by God.

God freely chooses to share this gift with us. Even when we act in a way pleasing to God, we still do not have a right to this grace. God does not have to share this love with us, but out of God's goodness God has freely chosen to do this. The writer of the first letter of John shows an admiration of God's love when he writes: "this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when He sent His Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away." (1John 4:10) True love is recognizing the grace of God, namely that God first loves us. This is freely given. In writing his letter to the Ephesians, Paul tells us: "For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Paul goes on to write: "You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light, for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth." (Ephesians 5:8-9).

A person sharing in God's grace is often prompted to perform more good works.

A person who deeply loves his or her spouse will often strive for ways to show this love. Since grace is a love relationship with God, a person who shares in this love will also strive to find some way to

express this love for God. Each time a person acts out of love, this love relationship deepens and the person grows in grace.

PRAYER – COMMUNAL AND PERSONAL

Christian's Prayer **To become intimate with God is to develop a life of prayer, as part of daily living.**

Prayer needs to be seen as part of the rhythm of day to day experiences. It is grasping the prayerful moments and being united in love with God. One makes use of the times in which one is moved to enlarge oneself and see life in its deeper dimensions. One prays when one needs to expand oneself and relate to a greater being than oneself. And so a prayer might be whispered when one sees an Olympic skater fall in a competition, at the sight of a gorgeous sunset, when you hear an ambulance shrieking to an emergency, when your child is late coming home, when you have a huge test upcoming.

Prayer happens when one opens oneself to the Divine realities in life. Prayer releases inner tensions and provides a person with solace in time of distress. Everyone can pray. No previous experience is required, although one becomes more adept and comfortable with practice. Prayer comes naturally because people recognize that there are some things in life over which we have no control. When our human limits are exhausted, we open to Divine help and assistance.

Prayer is as varied as human creativity. In order to communicate meaningfully with God, we adopt a prayer style with which we feel at ease and one which aids toward deeper spirituality. Catholics have been accustomed to praying in union with others, reciting prayers, and using prayer books. In expanding our spiritual horizons, it is most helpful to consider a variety of prayer forms.

Kinds of Prayer, I

Liturgical: Mass, sacraments, and the Liturgy of the Hours – Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy refers to these prayers as "The source and summit of Church activity and power."

Para-liturgical: Prayer lacking full liturgical form as determined by the Church – i.e. Liturgy of the Word with Communion.

Devotional / Communal or Public: Christian family gathered formally.

a. Group Prayers in the church setting – i.e. Penance services, Lenten devotions, Rosary, Stations, Novenas, Prayer services, etc.

b. Shared prayers are groups gathering outside of church for prayer – Jesus said that where two or three were gathered in His name, He is in their midst. In praying with one another and listening to each one expressing his or her prayer, supports each other and leads to insights about how the Lord works

in everyone's life. i.e. prayer groups in homes, National day of prayer, prayer around the flag pole, etc.

c. Charismatic Prayer – The charismatic prayer is characterized by praise and honor of God in joyful proclamations. It is dynamic and enthusiastic in its expression. Someone who prefers quiet prayer may find charismatic prayer too loud.

Personal / Private: Prayer in "secret" as prescribed in Mt. 6:6. Person alone.

Peak Experiences: There are times when the Lord breaks into our lives with the suddenness and violence of a summer monsoon. This peak experience is a moment when one is totally at one with the Lord. It may come at those special moments: at the birth of a child, at a stirring religious ceremony such as Christmas Midnight Mass, or at one's quiet prayer time. All reality blends perfectly, we feel so at one with everything and everyone around us. Since we cannot travel through life on mountain peaks, these experiences come only rarely. Peak experiences cannot be programmed, nor can they be repeated. They are God's special gifts, given when God's wisdom deems.

Kinds of Prayer, II

Direct Address (conversing)

Petition – please God

Thanksgiving – Thank you God

Reparation – I'm sorry God

Adoration – I love you God

Meditation (seeking)

Considerations and reasoning on a religious truth. Also known as *discursive prayer* or (reflective), characterized by reflections of the mind (thoughts). Would include such things as divine knowledge, self-understanding, life direction and meaning.

Contemplation (discovering /enjoying)

Awareness of God with love and admiration. Also known as *Intuitive Prayer* characterized by affective sentiments of the will (feeling). When we speak of prayer, we usually think of our efforts to reach God. True, when we speak, God listens. But prayer is reciprocal. When God speaks, we must listen. "Be still and know that I am God" the psalmist advises. It is like the quiet sustained relationship of two people who have spent a lifetime together and have grown old in love. Time together is not spent in endless babble, but in being present to each other. They may pass an entire evening and not say a word. They do not need to. They are dynamically present to each other. There are no words, only love. This is the prayer of quiet. We are present to the Lord, basking in the warmth of His love, no words, no favors, no action, just quiet. It requires discipline and effort. It takes time and patience. It is the way an old friend prays – "I say nothing. I look at God and He looks back at me."

Prayer

In general:

1. The Catholic community gathers for Mass, communion services, or prayer services and for other types of devotions.
2. 2559 "Prayer is the raising up of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. Humility is the foundation of prayer." 2567 "As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation." 2650 Through a living transmission within 'the believing and praying Church,' the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God how to pray."
3. 2655 "Prayer is always prayer *of the Church*; it is a communion with the Holy Trinity." 2663 "In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to its faithful, according to its historic, social, and cultural context, a language for prayer; words melodies, gestures, and iconography. The Magisterium of the Church has the task of discerning the fidelity of these ways of praying to the tradition of apostolic faith; it is for pastors and catechist to explain their meaning, always in relation to Jesus Christ.
4. 2699 "Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative [2723 a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire], and contemplative [the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love)."

Sacred Space

- A. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship for the worshipping community.
- B. Common in all Catholic Churches:
Vestibule or entryway

Holy water fonts

The main body has:

Pews or chairs

An area for the **choir** either in front or in the back

Sacred Art- stained glass windows, statuary, etc.

Some churches are in the shape of a cross. Some churches have separate chapel for personal prayer or smaller devotional

gatherings

Stations of the Cross are usually found divided on either side of Church. (not required)

Confessionals

Sanctuary

Crucifix or cross

Repository for the holy oils

Candles. The **Pascal Candle** is kept near the Baptistry

Tabernacle where the consecrated hosts are held.

Ambo or pulpit for the Liturgy of the Word

Chairs for the priest and the servers

Sacristy where the accoutrements of the Mass are kept.

DEVOTIONS IN CATHOLIC TRADITION

The Mass: the source and culmination of the whole Christian life.

Eucharistic Adoration:

Devotions toward the Eucharist are strongly encouraged when celebrated according to the regulations of lawful authority. In the arrangement of devotional services, the liturgical seasons should be taken into account. Devotions should be in harmony with the sacred liturgy in some sense, take their origins from the liturgy, and lead the people back to the liturgy.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament – A religious devotion in which the consecrated host is displayed for worship of the faithful. The host is placed in a monstrance upon the altar or above the tabernacle. The devotion arose from the desire of the faithful to focus their eyes and attention upon the host as a means of fostering interior communion with the Lord and of contemplating the mystery of Christ's presence. It probably became popular due to the decreased participation of laity in Mass and communion during the middle ages. As such, this practice is an extension of the custom, originating in the 13th century, of the priest's elevating the bread, then the cup, after reciting the words of consecration.

Exposition has been part of Forty Hours Devotion, First Friday devotions, holy hours of adoration, perpetual devotions, Benediction, and Corpus Christi processions. The liturgical renewal of Vatican Council II, however, promoted an **active lay participation in the Mass, including Communion**. The result has been a decreased need and desire for exposition.

Forty Hours' Adoration - This devotion of the Blessed Sacrament commemorates the forty hours Jesus was entombed. It originated at Milan in 1534 and was propagated by the Jesuits under St. Ignatius. It spread to many countries by the end of the 18th century. St. John Newmann (1801-1864) is credited with establishing it in the U.S. Where it is more feasible, the 40 hours are interrupted for the night and extended over three days: The first and third days include liturgies of the Blessed Sacrament; the second day, a liturgy for peace; the solemn closing of Forty Hours included the Litany of the Saints with procession and benediction of the blessed Sacrament.

Visit to the Blessed Sacrament – “real presence” during Mass “abiding presence” outside of Mass. This has taken different forms, depending on the culture, era, and personal preference. It acknowledges the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist outside of Mass. The genuflection or deep bow is a traditional gesture of respect, as is a bow or tip of the hat while passing a church, which used to be taught and practiced, prior to Vatican II.

Adoration one of the highest attitudes of prayer. It is a religious act performed by the whole person, body, mind, and soul, wherein God alone is praised as the supreme source and object of all that exists. Before Vatican II adoration pertained principally to eucharistic devotion. It was the gazing in reverence upon the exposed or elevated eucharistic bread or wine. Adoration was a component of every Eucharist when the consecrated bread and cup were elevated during the Eucharistic Prayer and before communion. Some vowed religious communities practice a “perpetual Adoration”. During the late Middle Ages, the theology of Eucharistic adoration became quite influential. Religious piety centered on the practices of “ocular communion” receiving Christ through the eyes, if not upon the tongue. The adoration of Christ in his manifestation in the eucharistic elements has been ecumenically troublesome. The 16th century Reformers objected that the Eucharist was instituted by Christ for eating and not for worshiping, that Christ was in heaven and not upon the altar. The Catholic Church teaches that every Eucharist is ordered toward the worship of God and the communion of the faithful, and ultimately, toward salvation in God. Eucharistic adoration can be viewed as a prolongation of the time of Christ’s most intimate presence to the Church. However, adoration of the Real Presence must always be secondary to its reception as spiritual nourishment.

Benediction has been popular since the Middle Ages. A service of exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, concluding with a blessing of the people with the Sacrament. This practice reflects the shift

from a symbolic to a realistic understanding of Eucharist, which began with the eucharistic controversies of the 9th century. Such theological developments were manifestations of a change of mentality that also displayed itself in ritual and devotional changes and the proliferation of legends concerning miraculous hosts. Benediction itself may well have grown out of the older practice of blessing people at the end of a rite with a cross or a relic, or in the case of Communion of the Sick, with the Eucharist itself.

Eucharistic processions – the most common here is when the Blessed Sacrament is moved from the sanctuary to a side altar during Holy Week. It is very ceremonial, with a hymn in Latin sung. The priest does not touch it directly with his hands but instead wears a humeral veil (a long silk cloth). He prostrates himself after depositing the Blessed Sacrament.

Liturgy of the Hours –

Ancient prayers of the universal Church. Originated in early monasteries by monks who were devoted to prayer and service.

Means “times of community prayer.” The most common now are Morning Prayer (Lauds), Daytime Prayer (Martins, though retains the character of nocturnal prayer), Evening Prayer (Vespers), Night Prayer (Compline, to mark the close of day), and the longest of all – the Office of Readings which can be prayed any time of day:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Psalmody – 2 of 150 Psalms are prayed
3. Canticles – from Hebrews in Morning prayers between two psalms, and Evening Prayers from epistles or Revelation after the two psalms.
4. Readings – largest amount during Office. From all parts of the Bible except the Gospels.
5. Intercessions – in Morning for consecrating or commending the day to God; and Evening Prayers for the various needs of the Church and the world.
6. The Lord’s Prayer for Morning and Evening prayer, or a Concluding Prayer like the opening prayer of Mass corresponding to the day, the hour, the feasts, or season of celebration.
7. Dismissal – either with a formal dismissal at Morning and Evening prayers consisting of a blessing and dismissal or in the case of other hours, with the brief conclusion “Let us praise the Lord. And give Him thanks.

Devotional Feasts

Devotions (evolving historically, admitting of great pluralism depending on times, places, and people), have dotted the Catholic year:

<i>Benediction</i>	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>	<i>Various Novenas</i>
<i>St. Mark's Day Procession</i>	<i>Nine First Fridays</i>	<i>May Devotions</i>
<i>First Saturdays</i>	<i>May Crowning</i>	<i>Candlemas Day</i>
<i>Rogation Days</i>	<i>St. Blaise</i>	<i>Forty Hours</i>
<i>Ember Days</i>	<i>First Communion Ceremonies</i>	
<i>St. Joseph Day</i>	<i>Corpus Christi Procession</i>	
<i>Lenten Devotions</i>	<i>Sacred Heart Devotions</i>	

Plus innumerable personal devotions (to various saints) that embellished private prayer.

Stations of the Cross

Yesterday's Christians were no different from today's in that they yearned to walk the same steps as Jesus, and to witness the holiest of places: where Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Thus the stations of the Cross began as pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

The 'Way of Sorrows', or road to Calvary, is said to have been first traversed by Mary, but it is not until the 4th century that we have sufficient records of people venerating important places associated with Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Among the first documented pilgrimages to the Holy Land are those of a Bourdeaux pilgrim, in 333 A.D. and the Lady Egeria in 380 A.D. Their narratives describe the veneration of certain places in Jerusalem, especially Mt. Calvary, where Jesus died, and the tomb where Jesus was buried. In the early years of the 4th century, the Roman Emperor Constantine erected shrines at other holy places. The most important shrine, the church of the Holy Sepulchre, was built at the burial place of Jesus.

As the desire to walk the Way of Calvary increased in the succeeding centuries, so too did the need to replicate the experience, an alternative pilgrimage, so to speak, for those who couldn't make the arduous journey. Thus, imitations of more important shrines in Jerusalem sprang up in various places. The earliest set of imitative shrines outside of Palestine was erected in the 5th century at the Monastery of San Stefano in Bologna. Imitations became more common, as the devotion was promoted by veterans of the Crusades who had visited the Holy Land. By the 14th century, "Little Jerusalems" could be found all over Europe.

By the 15th century, the Stations of the Cross reached another stage in its development: an arrangement of carvings in stone or wood popularly known as the "Seven Falls" with the intention of recalling the events of the Passion story.

The stations did not always consist of 14 stations. As late as the 17th century, sites irrelevant to Jesus' death and resurrection were mixed in with those venerated as part of the Passion. The narratives of early travelers suggest that stations were added a few at a time. The last four, Jesus being nailed to the cross, Jesus' death, Jesus being removed from the cross, and Jesus being placed in the tomb, came directly from

scripture. The meeting with Mary, Simon helping Jesus, and the weeping women of Jerusalem pop us in the late 13th and early 14th century. Veronica and the offering of her veil appears later in the 15th century. It is unclear as to when the first two falls, the sentence of Pilate, and the stripping of the garments were added.

The number 14 first appeared during the 16th century. The number and sequence of the stations, however, was set by Pope Clement XII in 1731. When Franciscans took over custody of the shrines in the Holy Land in 1342, they saw it as part of their mission to promote devotions to these places and to the Passion of Christ by way of the Stations of the Cross. Members of the Franciscans order were knows as official promoters of the Stations. In the mid 18th century, Stations were allowed inside churches. The Stations became a familiar feature in Catholic churches. In the 1960's, it became popular to add a 15th station representing the end of the journey: the resurrection.

The purpose of the devotion of the Stations of the Cross is to enrich our life of prayer and faith, and to turn us to Christ Crucified. The Way of the Cross is an invitation to gaze on the sufferings of the man from Nazareth, our Lord and Redeemer. As aids to sorrowful contemplation, the 14 scenes or halting places help us remember and honor the Passion of our Lord. The devotion is practiced today by meditating on 14 chosen representations of the sufferings of Christ on his way to Calvary. Typically used during Lent but many use them as a form of prayer and meditation throughout the year. There are many different forms of this type of substitute pilgrimage.

The First Station:	Jesus is condemned to Die
The Second Station:	Jesus Carries His Cross
The Third Station:	Jesus Falls the First Time
The Fourth Station:	Jesus Meet His Mother
The Fifth Station:	Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross
The Sixth Station:	Veronica Wipes Jesus' Face
The Seventh Station:	Jesus Falls the Second Time
The Eighth Station:	Jesus Meet the Women of Jerusalem.
The Ninth Station:	Jesus Falls the Third Time
The Tenth Station:	Jesus is Stripped
The Eleventh Station:	Jesus is Nailed to the Cross
The Twelfth Station:	Jesus dies on the Cross
The Thirteenth Station:	Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross
The Fourteenth Station:	Jesus is Laid in the Tomb
The Fifteenth Station:	The Resurrection

Penitential Services -

1. History from early times
2. We now have penance services during Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday where we receive the sign of the cross in ashes from palms of the previous year's Palm Sunday masses. We are told to "turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel." (Mark 1:15) We wear this cross of ashes as a visible sign of our penance.
3. Allows us to reflect upon our lives and where they need to improve or change.
4. There are two types:
 - a. Opportunity to confess individually during a prayer serviceCommunal penance and absolution in times of community crisis

The personal sacrament of reconciliation with a priest is also available at given times or by appointment.

NOVENAS

These are prayers in imitation of the apostles who prayed for nine days before Pentecost. A novena (from the Latin for "nine") consists of nine successive days of prayer for a special intention. The significance of nine is traced to the tradition that Mary and the disciples spent nine days in continuous prayer between the Ascension of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Continuous prayer underlines the importance of persevering in prayer. The succession of nine may consist of continuous days (9 days prior to a special feast), specific weekdays (9 Mondays), or specific days of the month (9 first Fridays.)

This practice arose in France and Spain in the early Middle Ages as a preparation for Christmas, though novenas of mourning were known much earlier.

Novenas can be made individually or in a group. In addition to the daily prayers of petition, it is recommended that the novena-maker attend Mass and receive Communion frequently during that period, daily if possible. Booklets, and sometimes prayer books, contain texts for popular novenas made to Jesus, Mary or the saints. Among the best known are those to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Jude – Saint of Impossible causes, and St. Anthony of Padua, the Wonder Worker.

Since the theological reforms of Vatican II, there has been a strong vigilance with regard to novenas. Novenas, more than most Catholic practices, are seen as having a dangerous propensity toward superstition because of the many extraordinary effects that have been attributed to some, and because the number nine is central to these devotions.

However, like other forms of popular piety, novenas are beneficial as prayer tools of the faithful when done within the proper context, in such a way

that they “harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, and lead people to it...”

MAY CROWNING

The Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit honors the Blessed Virgin Mary, in whom the King of Ages took human flesh, as our Lady and our Queen. Out of reverence for her great dignity, one of the signs of honor that has become customary is the placing of a regal crown on images of Mary that are the objects of special veneration by the faithful.

After the new liturgical books had been published, the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship decided that it was opportune to revise the rite of this crowning, in order that it would be in keeping with the spirit and the norms of the reformed liturgy and would most completely express the meaning and point of the coronation of Marian images.

Pope John Paul II has approved the new Order of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In brief it states:

* The church has on many occasions asserted that it is lawful to venerate images of Christ, his Mother, and the saints.

* Coronation is one for of reverence

* Both East and West practice of depicting the BVM wearing a regal crown came into use in the era of the Council of Ephesus (431).

* It is especially from the end of the 16th century that in the West the practice became widespread

* The growth of the custom led to the composition of a special rite for crowning images of Mary, and in the 19th century this was incorporated into the Roman liturgy.

* By means of this rite the Church proclaims that the BVM is rightly regarded and invoked as queen

* Mary is the Mother of the Son of God – Mary is the Mother of Christ – Mary is the Mother of the Son of David

* Mary is the chosen companion of the Redeemer.

* Mary is the perfect follower of Christ

* Mary is the foremost member of the Church,

* It is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, together with the local community, to decide on the opportuneness of crowning an image of the BVM. But for a sufficient period before the celebration of the rite, the faithful should be instructed on its meaning and purely religious nature, so that they will take part in the rite to good effect and with a correct understanding.

* The crown that will be placed on the image should be fashioned out of material of the kind that will symbolize the singular dignity of the BVM.

LITANIES

Litanies were a form of praying in pagan religions and among the Hebrews (see Psalm 135). During the Middle Ages, they became a popular way of praying to saints. The Litany of the Saints is the most common. Its form is very simple: addressing saints by name followed by the petition "We beseech thee to hear us" or "Pray for us". In the later Middle Ages, local versions, with endless lists, were popular. Even though there is one version for the universal church, local churches and national conferences may and often do have their own. The Litany of Saints is used at ordinations, at the Easter Vigil for the blessing of baptismal water, and at Forty Hours Devotions.

The name is derived from the Greek word for "Prayer". This is a prayer in the form of short invocations, said alternately or as petitions with responses. Originally it was applied to any prayer of supplication repeated often; later it was introduced into the liturgy with the clergy leading and the people responding. The use of litanies was also introduced into processions and certain ceremonies. We have an example, in shortened form, in the Prayer of the faithful of the Mass. Although there are many litanies, only five have been sanctioned for public devotions. These are: The litany of the Blessed Virgin, Litany of the Saints, Litany of the Holy Name, Litany of the Sacred Heart, and Litany of St. Joseph. All litanies begin with an invocation of the Trinity.

PERSONAL PRAYER

Personal prayer is that said in solitude, on your own or it can be shared prayer with others. Other names for personal prayer – Quiet prayer, traditional recited prayer, shared prayer, spontaneous prayer, contemplative prayer, devotional prayer.

Elements of prayer and spirituality:

Prayer needs to be seen as part of the rhythm of day to day life

- a. favorable time, place, circumstances,
- b. intimate, need to be yourself, to be personal
- c. A source of spiritual growth, God's forgiveness, faith-building, Christ's guidance
- d. Feel a "failure" when you have (distraction, resistance, temptation, complaining, sleepiness, not good enough/ want to do better.)
- e. Need perseverance

Types of personal prayer

- a. Thanksgiving – offering our prayers in return for God's gifts
- b. Confession – telling God about our sins, failures, sharing these to experience forgiveness.
- c. Praise - worshiping in the highest, most personal way God's greatness and love.
- d. Petition (ask for self) our needs of health, strength, faith

- e. Intercession (ask for another) the sick, our enemies, those who witness to Christ and those who need Christ
- f. Guidance – asking God to teach us to live as Christians, help us solve problems – WWJD what would Jesus do?

Prayer fulfills a Christian's need to be personal with God

- a. reveals ourselves (who we are)
- b. shares ourselves (Life)
- c. grow in relationship with God
 - SPIRITUAL – Communion with God fills a need in the soul that cannot be met in any other way.
 - EMOTIONAL – God can calm our hearts when our own strength fails
 - MENTAL – Sharing our thoughts with God brings divine guidance to problem solving
 - PHYSICAL – Faith has always been the strongest of all paths to bodily health.

Prayer can't be OVERDONE

Pray at special times such as religious holidays of remembered joy

Pray at time of tragedy or need

Pray in fellowship with your congregation, in prayer groups, at home with your

family *"Where two or more are gathered in My name"*

Pray alone when you have time for personal meditation

Pray in spontaneous "flash" prayers during the day.

Pray anytime *"God doesn't have office hours!"*

DIVINE DYNAMIC:

Prayer adds nothing to God

Prayer is God at work in us

Prayer is a wager of faith – will interpret reality, transform life, reveal God.

HUMAN DYNAMIC:

Life is shaped by prayer!

The more we spend time with God in prayer, the more we need to.

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS:

Aspirations

Short prayers that can be said throughout the day. i.e. "Jesus help me overcome my despair."

Rosaries (see session on Mary)

Marian Devotions – prayer sequences, prayers for the five first Saturdays, saying 3 Hail Marys per day, or the Little Office of the Compassion of Our Lady

First Fridays - Mass or communion for 9 consecutive months

Angelus – Repeated morning, noon and evening. A series of invocations and responses based on Scripture, each followed by 3 Hail Marys, and concluding with a prayer. By the 14th century, it became customary to ring church bells to remind the faithful to pray in honor of Mary and to remember the mystery of the Incarnation. The tradition of the Angelus imitates the ancient monastic call to prayer by ringing the church bells. It is still popular today in many parishes. You may note the bells ring at St. Marys at 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m.

Devotions to the Saints – Chaplets to Saints said on beads, often the rosary beads. Also, asking a particular saint to intercede for you - i.e. St. Christopher for safe travel.

Devotions to the Sacred Heart - of Jesus and Mary.

Pilgrimages – penitential, aesthetic – leaving behind the world voluntarily, seeking spiritual guidance or direction, and in petition to God for a special request or thanksgiving

1. May be as simple as the walking the Stations in Church
2. Must believe that God responds to prayer
3. Must have the conviction that God is present at holy sites
4. Must have the desire to make a sacred journey to a holy site

Angels

The first prayer many parents teach their children to pray is to their Guardian Angel:

*"Angel of God, my guardian dear,
To whom God's love commits me here.
Ever this day/night be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."*

Guardian Angels: A longtime tradition in the Catholic Church. They command their own Feast day, October 2. In the readings for the feast, we are reminded: "For God commands the angels to guard you in all of your ways" (Psalm 91:11). And Jesus says: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father" (Matthew 18:10). Catholic tradition has long taught that each person is assigned a personal guardian angel.

Angels receive veneration because of their spiritual nature and because of their special link to God as attendants surrounding the throne of God praising Him night and day. (Psalm 91:11, Matthew 18:10, Revelations) In the biblical terminology they are viewed as members of a heavenly host surrounding the throne of God.

The three archangels – Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael – formerly had separate feast days, but since the calendar of saints was revised, they share a single one, Sept. 29th. This date coincides with the anniversary of the dedication of a Roman basilica to Michael, and in many places is known as Michaelmas Day.

Belief in angels is belief in the existence of beings who are purely spiritual, though in their mission to earth, they may take on human form. Angels are recognized as coming from God.

Archangels have been sent as messengers of God. El was one of the names of God and is seen in the names of each archangel.

Gabriel, meaning God is my strength, is the angel of the Annunciation, the “one in rapid flight” and the Angel of the day of Judgment, blowing his horn for the assembling of the nations.

Raphael meaning God is my Health. Represents Jesus priesthood; instructor of Tobit and guardian of Tobias; the angel who moved the waters of the pool when Christ worked a miracle in Jn 5: 1-4. Chief of guardian angels

Michael meaning who is like God, is the Angel of God’s power; leader of the heavenly hosts who cast Lucifer and fallen angels from heaven. He was regarded by Jews as a special protector of Israel and by Christians even today as protector of the Church. Leader of the archangels; considered to be the angel who will execute the decision on each person’s eternal destiny on Judgment day.

Uriel, God is my light - is mentioned in Jewish apocryphal writings. Interpreter of prophecy; guarded Jesus’ tomb; appeared to Ezra in a dream.

Furthermore other names and material evolved out of tradition and are gleaned from Jewish apocryphal books (e.g. Enoch). The “Seven” of Tobit (12:15) refers not necessarily to that specific number, but symbolically to all those who minister who are entitled to stand before God, ready to do his bidding.

Jophiel. Meaning the beauty of God, represents God’s splendor, and drove Adam and Eve out of Eden.

Chamael, Angel of God’s wrath, wrestled with Jacob and appeared to Jesus in Gethsemane.

Zadkiel, The righteousness of God was the Angel of God’s justice who stopped Abraham from sacrificing Issac.

Jophkiel, meaning the purity of God guided the Jews in the wilderness.

A 6th century Syrian monk wrote “The Celestial Hierarchy” arranging the nine choirs of angels into three groupings. References for each are found in various scripture passages:

1. First Hierarchy – *Counselors (Angels of the Presence)* Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones.
2. Second Hierarchy – *Governors (Angels over forces of nature)* Dominations, Virtues, and Powers.
3. Third Hierarchy – *Messengers (angels ministering directly to men)* Principalities, Archangels, and Angels

Belief today – throughout history great works of Christian Literature have been written about angels. Today, there are many books and other writings about angels acting in people's lives.

APPARITIONS

An apparition is a vision or supernatural manifestation that God permits and that thus is seen by the person witnessing. It may be called corporeal; that is, it strikes the senses as a reality, or it may be sensible, that is, appearing real because of luminous qualities. In both these senses it is not to be considered as a ghost or preternatural manifestation, but is rather a mystical nature as arising from God.

These are not to be accepted as articles of faith, even though the Church has approved certain appearances and honors them with feasts or celebrations.

Apparitions may be an appearance by Jesus, Mary, saints or angels to individuals or groups. The church thoroughly investigates claimed apparitions and approves a few of them that bear the marks of being authentic. Church approval of apparitions, shrines, and public veneration surrounding them does not make them official doctrine. Nor are their messages public revelation for church membership. Approval or disapproval begins on the local level by the bishop of the diocese. Most claims are rejected after study by church authority. Despite church disapproval, devotees often continue to believe in them and make pilgrimages. Most recently, the authenticity of visions of Mary at Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, have been in the news. The Church has endorsed devotion to our Lady of Medjugorje but has not officially endorsed the apparition.

Devotion to Mary in the late 19th century and the 20th century became more pronounced through popular belief in her apparitions, especially at Lourdes and Fatima. These devotions fall into the category of private revelation and are not required to be believed as doctrines. However, one cannot ignore or dismiss such occurrences, especially in their role of keeping faith alive.

These devotions, though, ought not to overshadow the scriptural role of Mary in salvation history. There may seem to be a dwindling of showy processions and lengthy novenas, but the Second Vatican council has restored true devotion by calling Mary, "Mother of the Church." Our theology of Mary today needs to stress her link with salvation events and the ideal woman of faith, who lived the gospel response most perfectly. "Mary shines forth... as a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God."

Apparitions of Mary

960 – Our Lady of Evesham – said to appear to a herdsman. Told to ask the Bishop of Worcester to build a shrine in her honor in the forest where she appeared.

??? - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel – Aylesford, Kent. Appeared to Saint Simon Stock. She gave him the Brown Scapular as the sign of her protection for all her

children

1061 – Our Lady of Walsingham – Widow Richeldis de Faverches saw Mary and founded the shrine of the Annunciation there to dimensions of the Holy House at Nazareth. Destroyed in 1538. Restored in 1934 as Slipper Chapel.

1480 – Our Lady of the Rock – Locarno, on border between Switzerland and Italy. Virgin Mary appeared to Brother Bartolommeo d'Ivrea on the feast of the Assumption and confirmed her desire to consecrate the mountain in her honor.

Mid 1500's – Our Lady of Copacabana – appeared to fishermen caught in a terrifying storm. She led them to safety.

1531 – Our Lady of Guadalupe – appeared to Juan Diego, a poor Indian convert, on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico. Her image was on his cloak made of grasses, as rose petals fell from it after he collected other flowers that appeared in the hillside despite the off – season. (1 of 3 officially declared authentic.)

1586 – Our Lady of Chiquinquirá – an Andean town, appeared to a man praying before a tattered painting of the Madonna. Mary appeared and left behind her image on the canvas.

1651 – Our Lady of Coromoto – appeared to the chief of the Cospe Indians living near the village of Gurare in Venezuela. In later apparitions, asked the Indians to receive baptism and gave them a painting of herself with the Infant King Jesus in her arms, venerated for over 200 years in Guarare.

1800 – Our Lady of La-Vang, Vietnam – established because of a reported vision. Thousands of pilgrims visit each year.

1830 – Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal – Paris, France. Mary appeared to St. Catherine Laboure of the Daughters of Charity. She asked that the Miraculous Medal be issued with the inscription "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Ten years later in 1840 Novice Justine Bisqueyburu was given the revelation of the Green Scapular. It has a picture of the BVM on one side and the image of her Immaculate Heart on the other.

1846 – Our Lady of La Salette- a tearful Mother of God appeared to 2 children on 9/9 near Grenoble, France. She complained of the people's irreligious ways and their working on Sunday. People were to revise their ways and be reconciled to God.

1858 – Our Lady of Lourdes – appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France 18 times. She called herself the Immaculate Conception and requested a chapel be built on the spot where people might come in procession and request prayerful penance. Many validated cures have occurred. (Another designated official by Church)

1871 at Pontmain – The vision of Our Lady of Hope at Pontmain, France was silent, but the following words appeared on a banner at her feet: "But pray, my children." "god will hear you in a little while." "My Son allows Himself to be touched."

1876 – Our Lady of Pellevoisni, France – appeared 15 times to Estelle Faguet who was suffering from tuberculosis. She was cured and was introduced to the Scapular of the Sacred Heart. "Nothing would be more pleasing to me than to see this livery on each of my children; see the graces I will pour on those who will wear it with confidence."

1879 – Our Lady of Knock, Ireland – appeared to a group of villagers with Saint John the Evangelist and St. Joseph on the face of a church wall in the parish courtyard.

1917 – Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal – Appeared many times between 5/13 and 10/13/17 to three small children appealing for prayer and penance, urged to consecration of Russia to her Immaculate heart, observance of First Saturdays in reparation for sins. (Last one designated official by Church)

1932-33 (Nov.-Jan) Our Lady of Beauraing, Belgium – appeared to five children of two families 33 times. Mary asked that a chapel be built in her honor, sacrifices be made for sin, and that people pray always.

1933 – Our Lady of Banneaux, Belgium – appeared eight times to the 11 year old Mariette Beco. Mary asked the child to build a little chapel by the side of the stream "reserved for all nations, for the sick." "Pray hard." Many miracles attributed.

1973-75 – Our Lady of Akita – Sister Sasagawa Katsuku, received visions of Our Lady. She was asked to pray for the conversion of all sinners, while adoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Sacred Blood. The statue of Mary shed tears intermittently for eight years 101 times ending on the feast of Our Ladies of Sorrows, 9/15/81. Messages lasted about 1 ½ years emphasizing reparation for the sins of humanity through prayer, penance, and sacrifice.

1976 – Our Lady of Betania – several in March over several year, to Maria Esperanza at a grotto on her farm in Betania, Venezuela. On 3/24, 1984 over 1000 people witnessed the Blessed Mother bathed in a brilliant light and the fragrance of roses.

Devotions – Sacramentals

(exercises, prayers, methods of meditation, services, rituals, gestures, postures, objects)

The Roman Rites were favorable for devotions to root and flourish. Official ritual was restrained and utilitarian. Ritual prayer spoke about emotions but in a distant and abstract manner; emotions were concepts more than experiences. Official worship was also celebrated in a language that was not intelligible to most, Latin.

Devotions compensated for a deficit in the ability of the official Roman liturgy to engage the emotions of believers. During ritual services, and outside official prayer, something had to be done to engage or occupy the people.

Devotions develop from popular piety; they are related to, but not in official rites; they are recognized and recommended for people to lead to worship and promote the liturgical seasons, but not a part of the Church's liturgy. Devotions can be experienced and engaged in by individuals, groups, (family, religious communities, 3rd order), a parish, a region (country), and universally. There is no definitive list of devotions. Examples include:

Types of Devotion:

Stations of the Cross

Pilgrimages

Use of Images – Medals – Scapulars

Rosary

Vigil – Votive Candles

Holy Water

Processions

(Eastern Blessing) Easter Basket

Angelus

Pious Practices (penances, fasting, alms)

Devotions to Persons (Jesus, Mary, saint):

Various Novenas

Various Marian Devotions

1st Fridays

1st Saturdays

Litanies

Patron Saint Devotions

Devotion to Themes:

Divine Mercy

Eucharistic Devotions:

Forty Hours

Benediction

Holy Hour (exposed Blessed Sacrament)

Visit to Church (Blessed Sacrament not exposed)

Eucharistic Procession

Eucharistic Congress

Genuflection

SACRAMENTALS / FALL FEASTS (Sept. Oct.)

Sacramentals are sacred signs, which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.

Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man. They can also respond to the needs, culture, and special history of Christian people of a particular region or time.

Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. For well disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and Sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and Sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely any proper use of material things, which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church #s 1667-70*)

MEDALS

The custom of wearing medals is an ancient one, traced back as far as the time of the catacombs. Religious medals are flat metal discs, usually in the form of a coin, which are struck or cast for a commemorative purpose. Religious medals are enormously varied and are used to commemorate persons (Christ, the Blessed Mother, the saints), places such as famous shrines, past historical events, or personal graces such as First Communion, Ordination etc. Medals are often concerned with ideas, such as the mysteries of our faith, and some serve as badges of pious associations.

Medals are worn around the neck or on the person and serve as a reminder as does a photograph or other relic of a loved one. Medals should be regarded in the same way as any other image; they are merely signs of the prototype inscribed thereon and in themselves have no efficacy. To consider them otherwise would be superstition. The medal is to be used as a reminder to honor the subject displayed on the medal, and a reminder of the need to advance in Christian perfection. The benefit of the medal used as a sacramental is the blessing called down from God on the wearer. Indulgences have sometimes been attached to various types of the innumerable medals struck.

The use of amulets in pagan antiquity was widespread. These were talismans worn about the neck. It is possible that the early Church tolerated an analogous practice.

Christians sometimes wore *phylacteries* containing relics or other devotional objects, and in Africa ancient molds for crosses have been found. The wearing of these phylacteries and *encolpia*, or *pectoral crosses* soon lent itself to abuses when magical formula began to join the Christian symbols. Thus we find record of protest from many of the Church fathers from the 4th century on. There are some early medals, which have been found in the catacombs.

Sometimes, regular coins were overprinted with a Christian symbol and holes were drilled so the medals might be hung around the neck. There is no way of telling, however, how popular the custom was prior to the Middle Ages. By the 12th century there was a custom at well known places of pilgrimage of casting tokens of lead and sometimes other metals, which served the pilgrims as souvenirs, objects of piety, and a proof that a pilgrim had reached his destination. These pilgrim's signs were cast in a variety of forms and worn prominently on the hat or breast. By the 16th century, these had begun to be replaced by medals cast in bronze or silver with more artistic work on them. Beginning in the 13th century, *jeton*, or counters, began to be used for religious purposes. These were flat pieces of metal, generally of a form of brass but later more precious metals, used as vouchers for attendance at ecclesiastical functions, or given as souvenirs.

Commemorative medals began in the last years of the 14th century. The first ones were elaborate works of art, and therefore restricted to the wealthy. *Papal Jubilee medals* began as early as 1417.

During the 16th century, the custom began of giving papal blessing to medals. One of the first of these was a medal worn by the Spaniards during the revolt of the Gueux in Flanders in 1566. This medal bore an image of Our Lord on one side and an image of Our Lady of Hal on the other. Pope Pius V granted an indulgence to those who wore this medal on their hats. This vogue soon spread throughout Catholic Europe, and soon each city had craftsmen of its own.

Plague medals were struck and blessed as a protection against pestilence. Popular subjects for these are St. Sebastian, St. Roch, and shrines of the Virgin, sometimes with a view of a particular city on them. These medals often carried letters or abbreviations for prayers or mottoes.

Eucharistic miracles were often commemorated with medals, especially on jubilees or centenaries. These were issued in the different places where the miracles were believed to have happened, and some carry picture stories of the miraculous event.

There is a large class of private medals, which were struck to commemorate incidents in the life of individuals and were distributed to friends. *Baptism medals* often contained precise details of the date of birth so that a child's horoscope could be calculated.

The cross of St. Ulrich of Augsburg is an example of medals commemorative of special legends. Supposedly an angel brought a cross to St. Ulrich so that he might carry it into battle against the Huns in 955. More than 180 examples of this one commemoration have been found.

Papal medals, especially in conjunction with the opening and closing of the Holy Door during jubilee years, have been struck since 1417. Almost all major events of the reigns of the popes since that time have been commemorated in medals. Other semi-devotional medals have been struck by religious associations such as the Knights of Malta, and by abbots in commemoration of their abbots.

Many medals are blessed and are Sacramentals, intended as “portable” miniatures. Their use in the Church is very ancient, probably derived from the eastern icons.

THE SCAPULAR-The History

The scapular, derived from the Latin *scapulae*, meaning “shoulders,” evolved from a kind of apron worn as part of the religious habit by monks during manual labor. The first scapular was a narrow piece of cloth, less than 20 inches in width, with a large opening for the head; it hung over the monk’s shoulders, down the front and back of his habit. This apron like cloak was standard apparel for a Benedictine monk, as is described in the *Rule of St. Benedict* – the 16th century monastic code attributed to Benedict of Nursia, Patriarch of monasticism in the Latin West. The scapular was later adopted by other religious orders, such as the Dominicans and the Carmelites.

The scapular was introduced to devout laity in the 13th century with the formation of fraternities and 3rd orders of penance – groups of lay persons who associated themselves with a religious order of monks, imitating the spirit of the order by practices of prayer and poverty. As a token of the person’s participation in the order, it became customary for the monks to present the lay person with a scapular of the same color as the religious habit, to signify the garment worn by the order.

The scapular with the rest of the habit of which it is a part, keeps before the mind of the individual religious what his order represents – its ideals, traditions, and the holiness of life achieved by many, perhaps who have been clothed in the same uniform. As part of a uniform it is also a sign of a special bond of charity that unites those who wear and have worn it. (The New Catholic Encyclopedia)

However, this symbolic scapular was different in form than the cloak of earlier times. It usually consisted of two pieces of cloth connected by strings or tape over the person’s shoulder. One piece of cloth was to be worn on the chest; the other on the back.

The scapular was further reduced in the 15th century when what was known as the “small scapular” came into use by laity. These scapulars – consisting of two pieces of cloth that were no bigger than two-inch squares – were worn by tertiaries of third orders, but also by lay persons who participated in the prayers and practices of certain order but did not observe the rule of a third order confraternity.

The small scapular given o tertiaries or oblates is the sign of their admission into a kind of fellowship with the religious of an order and is meant to encourage their participation in the prayer, activities, and spirit of the order. Moreover, it is a pledge of some measure of participation in the merits of the order.

(New Catholic Encyclopedia)

Unlike the third order scapular, which was usually plain and simple, the small scapular was often embroidered with the image of Mary, a saint, or an object of special devotion. These elaborate pieces of cloth came to represent different monastic orders and confraternities as types of emblems.

The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, or the Brown Scapular, is primarily responsible for certain claims regarding the spiritual benefits gained by wearing the scapular. The reason for this dates back to 1251, when according to

Carmelite legend, the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite, at Aylesford in Kent, England. In this vision, she showed him a brown scapular, and declared that whoever wore it devoutly would be assured of eternal salvation. She made this scapular the sign of her protection.

However, the promise attributed to the scapular in this vision presents some theological problems, and must be understood in conformity with the teaching of the Church regarding the uncertainty of salvation. As with religious medals, it is wrong to attribute magical efficacy to the scapular itself; the scapular is only a channel of grace in so far as it disposes the effects of the sacraments. It is a symbol that recalls the believer to his or her faith.

The Carmelite Scapular is not a magical charm to protect you; an automatic guarantee of salvation; or an excuse for not living up to the demands of the Christian life...It is a sign of Christian faith and commitment; it points to a renewed hope of encountering God in eternal life with the help of Mary's protection and intercession.

Theology of the Scapular

Among the symbolic meanings attached to the scapular is that of *the yoke of Christ*. Because it was first worn as part of a monk's religious habit during manual labor, the scapular was thought to be a kind of cross carried on the shoulders. To wear the scapular meant to follow Christ and take up one's cross; it became a symbol of the life of penance and poverty.

Scapulars, as mentioned earlier, also began to symbolize the particular *spiritualities of the religious orders* that they represented. For example, the Brown Scapular symbolized the special dedication of Carmelites to the Blessed Virgin and expressed the Order's trust in her motherly protection. The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel became a sign of Mary; to this day, it represents the desire of those who wear it to be like Mary in her commitment to Christ and to others.

The Scapular Today

Although as a devotion the use of scapulars, and especially the Brown Scapular, is far less popular than it was before the Second Vatican Council, scapulars exist today as legitimate sacramentals. Again according to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* the scapular and other sacramentals are "sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects.... Which are obtained through the Church's intercession."

There are nearly twenty scapulars for devotional use. Among the most popular are the Brown Scapular, The Scapular of the Holy Trinity, the Scapular of Our Lady of the Seven Dolores, the Scapular of the Passion, and the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception.

FALL FEASTS – Sept. Oct.

September 14th Triumph of the Cross

Our crucified and risen Lord has redeemed us. 1 Corinthians tells us "We preach Christ crucified – a stumbling block to Jews, and an absurdity to Gentiles; but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and wisdom of God." We must glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

September 21st Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Born at Capernaum, St. Matthew was working as a tax collector when he was called by Jesus. He wrote his gospel in Hebrew and is said to have preached in the East.

September 27th St. Vincent De Paul

St. Vincent de Paul was born in Gascony in 1581. After completing his studies he was ordained a priest and went to Paris where he served in a parish. He founded the Congregation of the Mission to supervise the formation of priests and give support to the poor. With the help of St. Louise de Marillac, he also founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity. He died at Paris in 1660.

September 29th St. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

"The sea grew turbulent and the earth trembled when Michael the archangel came down from heaven." (Daniel 12: 1) Suddenly Michael, a prince of the angels, came to my aid." "The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and said: Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John." " The angel Gabriel spoke to Mary and said: You will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." "I am the angel Raphael, I stand in the presence of the Lord; as for you, bless the Lord, and proclaim His wonderful deeds." Tobit 12 "The Lord sent the angel Raphael to heal Tobit and Sarah."

October 1st St. Therese' of the Child Jesus of Lisieux

St. Therese' was born at Alencon in France in 1873. While still a young girl, she entered the Carmelite monastery at Lisieux. There she lived a life of humility, evangelical simplicity and trust in God. By word and example she taught these virtues to the novices of the community. Offering her life for the salvation of souls and the growth of the Church, she died September 30th 1897.

October 2nd Guardian Angels

In the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus advises his followers to become like little children. "take care that you do not despise one of these little ones," He says, "for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven." His words are one source for the belief, held since the days of the earliest Christians, that every human has a guardian or protecting angel.

"Angel" means messenger in Greek. Angels are mentioned often in scripture, where they are not only messengers but defenders, companions, guides and guardians. The letter to the Hebrews describes them as spirits whose work is service. Guardian angels have a special task, to assist human beings in their journey towards God.

All the angels used to be remembered on the feast of Michaelmas (Sept. 29th), but people wanted a day to honor their own special protectors. The joy of this day is based on our sure knowledge of all the ways that God lovingly cares for us.

October 4th Francis of Assisi

St. Francis was born at Assisi in 1182. After a carefree youth, he renounced his paternal wealth and committed himself to God. He led a life of evangelical poverty and preached the love of God to all. He

established a rule which a number of his companions followed and which gained the approval of the Holy See. Subsequently, he founded an order of nuns and a society of laypersons who practice penance while living in the world. He died in 1226. Francis had an understanding of the unity of all creation that was way ahead of his time. He addressed every created thing as Brother or Sister and treated everything with reverence. Francis is a patron saint of Italy. In 1979 he was also named patron saint of ecologists and all people who work to protect the environment as well as patron saint of pets.

October 18th Luke, Evangelist

St. Luke was born of a pagan family. Converted to the faith, he became a fellow worker of the apostle Paul. From St. Paul's preaching he compiled one of the gospels. He handed down an account of the beginnings of the Church in another work, the Acts of the Apostles, which tells of events up to the time of St. Paul's first sojourn in Rome. It is believed St. Luke was a physician and possibly knew and attended Mary.

Halloween

Each part of the year has its own special atmosphere. It is this atmosphere that causes traditions to arise among the people. These traditions in turn affect the atmosphere of the season. Autumn is one such time. In the cycle of the church year it occurs during Ordinary Time. There is no extraordinary theme or feast to celebrate and, consequently, no particular popular religious traditions within this part of the church year. Yet, a considerable number of traditions have evolved. Some of them are connected with the seasonal transition as summer departs and fall arrives. There is the theme of harvest or bounty as farmers reap the benefit of their spring and summer work. The fall equinox is a reminder that darkness will soon rule again. These themes introduce a seasonal reminder about the reality of death in nature and among people.

Two days in the fall have a particular atmosphere surrounding them, which has given rise to popular traditions only indirectly connected with Christianity. These are Halloween and Thanksgiving Day.

Halloween is observed the night of October 31. It takes its name (All Hallow e'en) –from being the eve of the holy day of All Saints on November 1st (All Hallows Eve). Halloween has its origin in Pre-Christian times and there is no direct connection between this day and any Christian tradition. Traditional practices associated with Halloween are delightful and earthy, but they are not Christian practices. There is no reason, however, why they should not be enjoyed by young and old alike.

The Celts in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and Brittany in northwestern France celebrated New Year's Day on November 1st. Among the Celts, under the influence of the religious leadership of the Druids, a festival was held the evening before to honor Samhain, their lord of death. This celebration ushered in the winter season, the season cold, darkness, death, and decay in nature. This time of the year was also symbolic of the mystery of human death.

The Celts believed that Samhain allowed the souls of the dead to return to their earthly homes during this night. Sinful souls who had died during the year, and who were imprisoned in the bodies of animals, could be freed for heaven through gifts and sacrifices. Human sacrifices were also common. Men, usually criminals, were shut up in wicker cages shaped like animals and burned. The Roman conquerors forbade this practice.

On the eve of November 1st, the people would extinguish their hearth fires and the Druids built large sacred bonfires, often on hilltops. From these fires people would re-ignite a New Year's fire for their homes. It was hoped that these new fires would rejuvenate for sun and ward off evil spirits.

There are several possibilities for the origin of the tradition of giving treats as part of trick or treating. It was a belief among the Celts that on this night evil spirits, demons, and witches roamed freely to greet their season of winter darkness. These would threaten, scare, and play tricks on people. The only way to be safe was to bribe them with treats or to pass as one of them by dressing and acting like them. The more probable origin lies in the pagan New Year celebration among the Celts. It was thought that the ghosts who roam freely that night would be satisfied with a banquet table laid out in homes. For a while after Christianity arrived in Celtic lands, there was an attempt to transfer this custom to the eve of All Souls Day (November 2). Masked children would go from door to door to pray for departed loved ones in return for a treat.

Halloween customs survived into contemporary times with hardly any change. They were not widely observed in this country until the potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s caused a massive migration of the Irish, a Celtic people. The traditions include outlandish costumes, carving jack-o-lanterns, trick or treating for sweets, and ghost stories. Costumes have changed with the times, however, and some tend to be "cute" rather than "scary." Children's motives might be different than in ancient times. Instead of acting out fears connected with agents of evil, children take the opportunity to fill bags of treats with a party atmosphere.

The tricking tradition originated when Halloween was observed as "Mischief Night." Tricks could be blamed on ghosts and other similar creatures. This tradition has turned into "Devil's Night," observed the night before Halloween, in some places with harmful intent.

The ever popular pumpkin jack-o-lantern originated in the practice of Irish Children to carve faces in rutabagas, turnips, and potatoes. They would place a candle inside to add a dimension of festivity to Halloween gatherings. It is also possible that the jack-o-lantern is a leftover symbol, combining the night's traditional atmosphere of evil with the Halloween New Year fire lit by the Druids.

Some parishes have incorporated Halloween practices into their holy day eve Mass on October 31st, with children attending in costume. Other parishes organize pageants at this time of the year to depict, by way of costumes, popular saints. It is also becoming popular to organize group parties for children to prevent the dangers associated with roaming the streets in the dark.