

Prayer Service on the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel

Order of Service

Hymn: (*suggested*) “Gentle Woman”, “Holy is His Name” (or other singing of the Magnificat) or “Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly.”

Leader: As patroness of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, Our Lady of Good Counsel guides our work “For God and Canada.” We trust that she will be with us now as we unite our hearts to pray in her honour.

All: *League Prayer*

Left: It is truly fitting, Mary, that we should honour you, for God chose to honour you by making you the mother of His Son.

Right: The prophets of old spoke your praises and called you “the glory of Israel” and “the glory of womanhood.”

Left: The angel bowed in reverence as he addressed you, who was chosen to be the mother of God.

Right: And all generations have called you blessed.

Left: So joyfully, Mary, we praise you.

Right: We praise you in your spotless chastity, which made you worthy to bear the saviour of the world.

Left: We praise you in your virginity, which you kept so precious together with your motherhood.

Right: We praise you in your openness to God’s will for your life, and in your perfect following of that will.

Left: We praise you in your courage in facing hardships, misunderstandings and criticisms your vocation brought upon you.

Right: We praise you in the honour you have brought to motherhood throughout the ages and for the example you give to mothers.

Left: We praise you in your motherhood, which by God’s decree has made you the mother of us all.

Right: Yes, always and at all times and in all places, we will praise and bless you, Holy Mother of God, ever Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55

Leader: As a response to Mary's beautiful words, let us pray five decades of the rosary asking God to give us the openness to accept his desire for our life as Mary did.

All: *(Pray the Rosary)*

O Lord, our God, by Your love and mercy, help us to imitate our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Make us humble and generous in all we do for You. Teach us to give and not count the cost, to serve others and not to ask for reward save that of knowing we have done Your will. Let the joy of Your grace overflow in our hearts and grant that we each will be builders of peace and of Your kingdom. We ask this through Our Lady of Good Counsel. Amen.

Leader: Let us join our hearts as we recite the League Promise.

All: **For the glory of God and the good of God's people, I promise as a Catholic woman to honour, invoke and imitate our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. I promise to be a loyal member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and to promote its interest and growth in every way. I promise to cooperate with League officers and conform, to the best of my ability, to the bylaws of the organization in all League activities.**

Hymn: *(suggested):* "Hail, Holy Queen" (Salve Regina), "Immaculate Mary," or "On This Day, O Beautiful Mother."

Litany of Our Lady of Good Counsel

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us. Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God,

have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,

Pray for us

Holy Mother of God,

Pray for us

Holy Virgin of Virgins,

Pray for us

Mother of Good Counsel,

Pray for us

Daughter of the Heavenly Father,

Pray for us

Mother of the Divine Son,

Pray for us

Spouse of the Holy Spirit,

Pray for us

Temple of the most Holy Trinity,

Pray for us

Dispenser of graces,

Pray for us

Gate of heaven,

Pray for us

Queen of Angels,

Pray for us

Honour of patriarchs,

Pray for us

Glory of prophets,

Pray for us

Counsellor of apostles,

Pray for us

Counsellor of martyrs,

Pray for us

Counsellor of confessors,

Pray for us

Counsellor of virgins,

Pray for us

Counsellor of all saints,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the afflicted,

Pray for us

Counsellor of widows and orphans,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the sick,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the sorrowful and of prisoners,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the poor,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the needy,

Pray for us

Counsellor in all temptations,

Pray for us

Counsellor of penitent sinners,

Pray for us

Counsellor of the dying,

Pray for us

In all affairs and necessities,

Give us good counsel

In all doubts and perplexities,

Give us good counsel

In all afflictions and adversities,

Give us good counsel

In all dangers and misfortunes,

Give us good counsel

In all undertakings and concerns,

Give us good counsel

In all our needs,
In all crosses and sufferings,
In all temptations and snares,
In persecution and calumny,
In all wrong suffered,
In all dangers of soul and body,
In all the events of our life,
In all sickness and infirmity,
In the hour of death,

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Our Father...

In all anxiety and trouble.

Prayer: O God the giver of all good and perfect gifts, let us, who seek refuge with Mary, obtain in all our wants, troubles and affairs, good counsel, help and assistance for the sake of Jesus Christ Your Son. Amen.

Bishop F.J. Klein, National Director CWL

Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel
Give us good counsel

Spare us, O Lord.
Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Have mercy on us.

Bring us good counsel, O Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Litany of Loreto

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ hear us.

God the Father of heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, One God,

Holy Mary,

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of virgins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of the Church,

Mother of Divine Grace,

Mother of Hope,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amiable,

Mother most admirable,

Mother of good counsel,

Mother of our Creator,

Mother of our Savior,

Virgin most prudent,

Virgin most venerable,

Virgin most renowned,

Virgin most powerful,

Virgin most merciful,

Virgin most faithful,

Mirror of justice,

Seat of wisdom,

Cause of our joy,

Spiritual vessel,

Vessel of honour,

Singular vessel of devotion,

Mystical rose,

Tower of David,

Tower of ivory,

House of gold, .

Ark of the covenant,

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

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Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Solace of migrants,
Comfort of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,
Queen of Confessors,
Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,
Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen assumed into Heaven,
Queen of the most Holy Rosary,
Queen of families,
Queen of peace.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

Let us pray.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we Your servants, may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body; and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, may be delivered from present sorrow, and obtain eternal joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Originally approved in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V]

**Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.
Pray for us.**

**Spare us, O Lord.
Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Have mercy on us.
That we may be made worthy of
the promises of Christ.**

History of the Picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel

In the small Italian village of Genazzano, some 30 miles from Rome, is the shrine of this Marian painting. This old sanctuary, which probably dated back to the 4th century when a church to Our Lady of Good Counsel is said to have been first built, was given by Prince Colonna to the Augustinians in the 15th century. By that time, it had fallen into disrepair and the monks set about rebuilding their church.

A wealthy woman named Petruccia came to their support in the restoration of the old church, Our Lady of Good Counsel. The work ran into difficulty, when Petruccia ran out of funds, and the villagers mocked the efforts of the monks. Before her death; however, Petruccia saw the opening of the church on April 26, 1467, at which time the picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel was unveiled.

The people stood in wonder before its beauty! Mostly peasants, they were convinced it had come from paradise. It is not clear from the historical record and the multiple versions of the story, exactly when and how the image came to be in the church in Genazzano. All agree that the image is in the style of a fresco, and most that it was not part of the rebuilding. Some say that the image was revealed when a statue of Madonna and Child was removed along with the wall behind it. Others say that it just appeared and was not attached in any way to the church itself.

To explain the appearance, many of the versions of the story then take the listener to Scutari, Albania, a short time before the image appeared in Genazzano. The Christians in Albania were being overrun by the Muslim Turks. The last stronghold, Scutari, was on the brink of falling and two men went to the local church to pray to a venerated image of the Blessed Mother and Child. To their amazement, the image came off the wall and floated above the town. The men followed the image all the way to Rome, where they lost sight of it. A few days later, they heard about the miraculous appearance of a beautiful painting in the church in Genazzano. They sought out the church and picture and confirmed it was the one they had followed from Scutari! The people of Genazzano were reluctant to accept the story that the beautiful fresco had come from the walls of a church in Scutari. There are some stories that Pope Paul II ordered an investigation into the story about the image coming from Scutari and that the investigators did find some evidence to support it. They say that when the investigators arrived at the church in Scutari, there was a blank space in a fresco there that was the same size and shape as the image now in Genazzano and descriptions from local people matched it as well.

A 20th century restoration on the painting adds more interesting details and seems to support the Scutari connection.

Restoration work was done on the famous painting by Professor de Compos between 1957 and 1961. At the time, letters were noticed on the edge of the child's robe that seemed to be a signature. They were deciphered as reading – "A. Vivaini made this." De Compos concluded that the fresco was the work of the illustrious Antonio Vivaini, a master of the Venetian school of art in the first half of the 15th century. His family's workshop did paintings in churches all along the Adriatic

coast, so Scutari could certainly have been one such location. The picture reflects the formative period of the master's work and was probably painted between 1437 and 1440.

The original picture of the Mother and Child is painted on light plaster measuring 18" x 15". The style is oriental and Byzantine and shows evidence of moving away from the stylized rigidity of the east.

The original was brilliant and brightly coloured, the faces simple, pure, compassionate and devotional. The infant is so close to his mother that his simple and loving gesture draws us all to Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel. The discovery of the signature confirms the authenticity of the artist.

The modern image of Our Lady of Good Counsel [*picture of modern image*] was painted by a 19th century Franciscan friar, Pasquale Sarullo.

The Perpetual Help Story

“Holy Mary of Perpetual Help” is the title that, according to an ancient document, the Blessed Virgin herself used in bringing her picture into the devotional life of Rome in the closing days of the 15th century. Thus, the perpetual help story is the story of a picture of Mary and her Divine Son, our Redeemer, and of the devotion to them which developed around it.

According to ancient documents, the icon was originally enshrined in a church on the island of Crete where it was famous for many miraculous favours. How it arrived in Crete and who painted this picture is uncertain.

What we do know is that, around the year 1450, the miraculous icon was stolen by a merchant of Crete and smuggled in his luggage by ship to Rome.

Some time after the merchant arrived in Rome, he fell seriously ill. On his deathbed he confessed his crime and begged a Roman friend in whose home he was staying to have the stolen picture given to a church where it could be enshrined for public veneration.

The friend agreed. But, after the death of the merchant, his friend’s wife refused to surrender the picture. Even after the Blessed Virgin herself appeared to merchant’s friend on four different occasions, he was unable to persuade his wife to give up the picture.

Eventually, he also died. Again the Blessed Mother appeared to his young daughter on two occasions and told her that the Blessed Mary of Perpetual Help wanted her picture to be enshrined in the church of St. Matthew on Via Merulana, between the Basilicas of St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. After the second apparition, the girl’s mother relented.

And so it was that on March 27, 1499, the miraculous icon of perpetual help was placed in the Augustinian church of St. Matthew in Rome. There, it was venerated for the next 300 years. ... There were many liturgies, impressive conversions, even miracles, so much so that the picture came to be called the miraculous image of perpetual help. However, in 1798 Napoleon’s army began the occupation of Rome. In the following five years, besides carrying off the pope into exile, they ordered the destruction of some 30 churches. Among these was St. Matthew’s. The Augustinian [monks] moved to other monasteries, and the miraculous picture went with them into obscurity. In time, the memory of the glorious days was all but forgotten. But not quite.

An old Augustinian brother named Augustino Orsetti had a favorite altar boy, named Michael Marchi, who came to serve mass at the monastery of Our Lady in Posterula. There, the brother, who had once been at St. Matthew’s, often pointed to a picture in the sacristy and told Michael that it was the famous Madonna, made homeless by the army of Napoleon. “Remember, Michael,” he would say.

Michael remembered. He grew up, became a priest in the community of the redemptorists... who had just bought property in Rome (1855) and built a church in honour of their recently canonized founder, St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori.

In tracing the history of their property, the redemptorists soon came upon the startling discovery that they had taken the place of old St. Matthew's and their church was now the "little church between the two great basilicas?"-the very spot chosen by "Mary of Perpetual Help."

Now, if only they could find the missing Madonna. And, wonder of wonders, there was among them Father Michael Marchi, erstwhile altar boy, who had the answer.

After a year of prayer, Father Nicholas Mauron, redemptorist superior general, petitioned Pope Pius IX for permission to have the miraculous picture enshrined in their church of Sant' Alfonso. [The pope, who had great devotion to Our Blessed Mother, agreed - with the provision that the redemptorists make her name known throughout the world.] The holy father was so pleased that he wrote the directive there and then to the Augustinians to arrange for the transfer of the picture from St. Mary's in Posterula to Sant' Alfonso.

Consequently the Augustinians and the redemptorists got together, and a great celebration was planned to welcome the picture home. A festive procession through the streets with a follow-up triduum was planned.

The date was set for April 26, 1866. Newspapers and wall posters throughout the city carried the announcement of the event and invited the faithful to participate.

The day dawned bright and beautiful and the line of march was aglow with flowers and banners and colorful tapestries. As the procession wound its way through the streets, crowds gathered to catch a glimpse of the picture being borne on a carrier lavishly decorated with flowers.

Along the way, many wonderful favours - even miraculous cures - were recorded. And once the picture was enthroned above the high altar at the church of San Alfonso, the miraculous favours continued.

... The redemptorists began shortly thereafter to preach on the history and meaning of the picture. In an amazingly short time, devotion to Mary under her title of perpetual help spread into northern Europe and here in America.

[This adapted version of the story comes from the website of St. Patrick Parish (Toronto, Ontario) and is used with permission.]

The Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe

On December 9, 1531, in Mexico City, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, an Indigenous man and early convert to the Catholic faith. He was walking from his village home to a church in the nearby city. As he was passing Teyapac hill, he heard beautiful music and saw a radiant cloud. Within the cloud was a beautiful woman who looked and was dressed like an Aztec princess. In his native language, the lady greeted him and told him that she was the mother of God and mother of all humanity. She asked Juan Diego to go to the bishop of Mexico—a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. She wanted the bishop to build a chapel on Teyapac Hill, where she had appeared and where she said, “I will show and offer all of my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to my people.”

Juan Diego went to the bishop and, through an interpreter, told him of the request from Our Lady. The bishop was skeptical and sent Juan Diego away. The next morning, Juan Diego again saw the beautiful lady and told her the bishop had not believed him. She asked Juan Diego to go again with the same request. Juan Diego spoke to the bishop, who this time asked him to bring a sign that would prove the message was really from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On December 12th, Juan Diego again saw the Blessed Virgin and told her that the bishop wanted a sign from her. She told Juan Diego to go up the hill, gather the flowers that were blooming there and take them to the bishop. The flowers were Castilian roses and were a miracle, blooming there on a frosty morning in December on land where only thistle and cactus grew. She helped Juan Diego arrange the flowers in his tilma (poncho) and told him to show them to the bishop.

Juan Diego brought the roses to the bishop, who was amazed at seeing them. Even more amazing was that right before their eyes, an image of Our Lady appeared on the cloth of the tilma where the roses had been. The bishop fell to his knees. He had the church built, as Our Lady had requested.

The image was very significant to the Indigenous people who had continued to resist the Spanish conquistadores after the fall of the Aztec Empire and the Catholic missionaries’ efforts to convert them to the Christian faith. Within seven years of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, there were more than six million conversions in the former Aztec empire.

Our Lady of Lourdes—Lourdes and St. Bernadette Soubirous

In Lourdes, France, in 1844 a baby girl named Bernadette Soubirous was born. Bernadette's family was very poor, and Bernadette was responsible for looking after and caring for her brothers and sisters.

Bernadette was a good natured girl with dark eyes and a round face. The only education Bernadette received was the Catholic teachings which she studied faithfully in the evenings.

At the age of 13, Bernadette was preparing for her first holy communion. One of Bernadette's chores was to collect wood for the fire. On a cold day in February 1858, Bernadette and [two] companions headed off to the Gave River to collect pieces of wood. The companions ran ahead and left Bernadette struggling to keep up. As Bernadette was taking off her shoes to make her way through the river, she was startled by a peculiar wind and rustling sound.

Bernadette looked up towards the grotto and the caves on the riverbank. Near the opening of the grotto, Bernadette glanced and noticed the cave was suddenly filled with golden light. Lifting up her eyes, she saw a lady of great beauty, dressed in a pure white robe with a blue sash, a veil over her head, a rosary clasped in her hands and yellow roses at her feet. Bernadette rubbed her eyes. What a beautiful lady! But where did she come from? And what was she doing here?

The beautiful lady smiled at Bernadette and asked her to say her rosary. Bernadette said her prayers and when she was finished she looked up, the lady had vanished. Bernadette caught up to her friends and discovered that they were upset with her. What have you been doing? Playing in the river, while we are out here collecting wood? Bernadette told them about the vision she had just witnessed. The girls told Bernadette she was silly and probably just seeing things.

Bernadette felt drawn to the grotto and returned there on the next Sunday. Again, Bernadette saw the beautiful lady. The third time Bernadette went to the grotto, the lady spoke to her. The beautiful lady asked Bernadette to come here every day for fifteen days. She said that she wanted Bernadette to tell the priests to build a chapel there. [At the ninth visit, the lady told Bernadette] to drink water from the stream. [But there was no stream. Bernadette scraped in the gravel and dirt until water began to seep through.] The lady also told Bernadette to pray for the conversion of sinners. Bernadette followed the requests.

[At the 13th visit, the lady told Bernadette to tell the priests to build a chapel at the spot and for people to come in procession there.]

On March 25th, the Lady finally told Bernadette, ["I am the Immaculate Conception"]... .

Bernadette's daily visits to the grotto caused quite a stir in the countryside. Crowds of people began to gather and watch Bernadette as she examined the cave and obediently did the things the lady asked of her. They watched Bernadette scrape away soil beside the grotto until a spring of water started to trickle out. ...

At first, the priests, the town's folk, and the families doubted Bernadette's visions and the purpose in her activities. But Bernadette was stubborn and determined to follow Mary's plans for her. Eventually everyone did believe Bernadette and the grotto at Lourdes became a place of worship and the Lourdes holy water was sacred for performing miracles.

At the age of 22, Bernadette became a nun and devoted her life to Mary, to praying for the conversion of sinners and to the service of God. Bernadette died on April 16, 1879, at the age of 36.

... More than [three] million visitors, pilgrims and tourists come each year to the Grotto of Massabielle, where the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette 18 times in 1858.

[Four years after the apparitions, the local bishop officially recognized them as authentic. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was defined in 1854 by Pope Pius IX. [Fewer than 70 miracles have been attributed to Lourdes.]

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The Story of Fatima

The Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima

During World War I, Pope Benedict XV made repeated but forlorn pleas for peace, and finally in May 1917, made a direct appeal to the Blessed Mother to intercede for peace in the world. Just over a week later, Our Lady began to appear at Fatima, Portugal to three shepherd children: Lucia dos Santos, age 10, and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, ages [nine] and [seven]. Fatima is a small village about 70 miles north of Lisbon.

The Angel of Peace

[However, in the spring of the previous year, 1916, the children had their first supernatural encounter as a means of preparing them for their meetings with the Queen of Heaven.] As they were looking after their sheep one day in the spring, a dazzlingly beautiful young man, seemingly made of light, appeared and told them, “Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace.” He invited them to pray with him...

[Later on in the summer,] the angel appeared to the children again... . He encouraged them to pray and make sacrifices as a way of drawing down peace on their country... .

The angel came a third time in the autumn. He appeared before them holding a chalice in his hands. A host was suspended above it, from which drops of blood were falling into the chalice. The angel left the chalice suspended in the air and prostrated himself before it in prayer. He taught them a prayer of Eucharistic reparation... . He then gave the host to Lucia and the chalice to Francisco and Jacinta, saying: “Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.”

The angel fell prostrate to the ground... and disappeared. [The children did not tell anyone about these visits of the angel, feeling an interior necessity to keep quiet about these events.]

May 13, 1917

On May 13, 1917, the three children took their flocks out to pasture in the small area known as the *Cova da Iria* (Cove of Peace). [After lunch and the rosary] they suddenly saw a bright flash of something akin to lightning, followed quickly by another flash in the clear blue sky.

They looked up to see, in Lucia’s words, “A lady, clothed in white, brighter than the sun, radiating a light more clear and intense than a crystal cup filled with sparkling water lit by burning sunlight.” [The children stood there amazed, bathed in the light that surrounded the apparition as] the Lady smiled and said: “Do not be afraid, I will not harm you... .” [Lucia, as the oldest, asked her where she came from. The Lady pointed to the sky and said:] “I come from heaven.”

[Lucia then asked her what she wanted. “I have come to ask you to come here for six months on the 13th day of the month at this same hour. Later, I shall say who I am and what I desire. And I shall return here yet a seventh time.” Lucia then asked if they would go to heaven and was told “yes,” she and Jacinta would go to heaven, but Francisco would need to say many rosaries first.

The Lady then said:] “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?”

Lucia, speaking for all three, said, “Yes.” The Lady replied, “Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.”

Lucia recounted that at the same moment [she said these words, the Lady] opened her hands and streamed an intense light [on the children that allowed them to see themselves in God. The Lady finished with a request:] “Say the Rosary every day to bring peace to the world and the end of the war.” She then began to rise, moving towards the east until she disappeared.

[The children got together and tried to think of ways they could make sacrifices as the Lady had asked, resolving to go without lunch and to pray the full rosary. Francisco and Jacinta received more support from their parents than Lucia, but the attitudes of the local inhabitants ranged from skepticism to utter contempt, and the children thereby suffered many insults. They would have much to suffer, just as the Lady had told them.]

June 13, 1917

About 50 people turned up at the *Cova da Iria* at noon on June 13 [as the three children assembled near the holm oak tree where the Lady had appeared.] The children saw a flash of light followed immediately by the apparition of Mary, as she spoke to Lucia: “I want you to come on the 13th of next month, to pray the Rosary every day, and to learn to read. Later, I will tell you what I want.”

[Lucia asked Mary to take them to heaven and was reassured in this way: “I will take Jacinta and Francisco shortly, but you will stay here for some time to come. Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wishes to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart throughout the world. I promise salvation to whoever embraces it. These souls will be dear to God, like flowers put by me to adorn his throne.” This last sentence is found in a letter written in 1927 by Sister Lucia to her confessor.]

... Lucia was sad at [the first part of this reply] and asked, “Am I to stay here alone?” Mary replied: “No, my daughter. Are you suffering a great deal? Don’t lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

[One of the witnesses to this apparition, Maria Carreira, described how Lucia then cried out and pointed as Mary departed. She herself heard a noise like “a rocket a long way off,” and looked to see a small cloud a few inches over the tree rise and move slowly towards the east until it disappeared. The crowd of pilgrims then returned to Fatima where they reported the amazing things they had seen, thus ensuring that there were between two and three thousand people present for the July apparition.]

July 13, 1917

On July 13th, the three children assembled at the *Cova* and again saw Our Lady over the holm oak tree. [Lucia asked what she wanted, and Mary replied: “I want you to come here on the 13th of next

month and] continue to pray the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war, because only she can help you.”

[Lucia then asked her who she was and for a miracle so everyone would believe: “Continue to come here every month. In October, I will tell you who I am and what I want, and I will perform a miracle for all to see and believe.”

[Lucia made some requests for sick people, to which Mary replied that she would cure some but not others, and that all must say the rosary to obtain these graces during the year. And she continued:] “Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say many times, especially when you make some sacrifice: ‘O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.’”

The First and Second Parts of the Secret: A Vision of Hell and Prophecies

As she spoke these words, Mary opened her hands and rays of light from them seemed to penetrate the earth, revealing to the children a terrifying vision of hell full of demons and lost souls amid indescribable horrors. This vision of hell was the first part of the three-part secret of Fatima, [which was unknown until the writing of Sister Lucia’s third memoir, dated August 31, 1941.] The children looked up to the sad face of the Blessed Virgin, who spoke to them kindly:

“You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”

[This concludes the second part of the secret. The third part was not made public until the year 2000 at the beatification ceremonies of Jacinta and Francisco Marto.]

[Mary specifically told Lucia] not to tell anyone about the secret at this time, apart from Francisco, [before continuing:] “When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: ‘O my Jesus! Forgive us, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.’” [After assuring Lucia that there was nothing more, Mary disappeared off into the distance.]

August 1917

As August 13th approached, the story of the apparitions had reached the anti-religious secular press, and while this ensured that the whole country knew about Fatima, it also meant that many biased and negative reports were circulating. The children were kidnapped on the morning of the 13th by the mayor of Vila Nova de Ourem, Arturo Santos. They were interrogated about the secret... [but] despite his threats [and promises of money], they refused to comply or divulge the secret... . [In the afternoon they were moved to the local prison and threatened with death but determined that they would die rather than reveal the secret.]

Late in the afternoon of August 19th, the Virgin appeared to the children in a place called Valinhos, near Fatima. She told them to continue to say the rosary every day, and again promised a miracle in October, stating the miracle would have been greater had they not been kidnapped. Looking very sad, she said, "Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them."

With that, she rose into the air and moved towards the east before disappearing.

By now the children had thoroughly absorbed Mary's plea for prayer and penance and did everything they could to answer it. They prayed for hours while lying prostrate on the ground and went long days without drinking in the [burning heat of the Portuguese summer. They also went without food as a sacrifice for sinners to save them from hell, the vision of which had so profoundly affected them.] They even knotted some pieces of old rope around their waists as a form of mortification, [not removing them day or night.]

September 13, 1917

On September 13th, very large crowds began to converge on Fatima from all directions. Around noon, the children arrived. After the customary flash of light, they saw Mary on the holm oak tree. She spoke to Lucia: "Continue to pray the rosary in order to obtain the end of the war. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. St. Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world. God is pleased with your sacrifices." [He does not want you to sleep with the rope on, but only to wear it during the daytime.]

[Lucia then began to put forward the petitions for cures, to be told: "Yes, I will cure some, but not others. In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe." Then Our Lady began to rise as usual and disappeared.]

October 13, 1917 – the Miracle of the Sun

The prediction of a public miracle caused intense speculation throughout Portugal and the reporter, Avelino de Almeida, published a satirical article [on the whole business] in the anti-religious newspaper, *O Seculo*. People from other parts of the country descended by the tens of thousands on the Cova, despite the terrible storm that lashed the mountain country around Fatima on the eve of the 13th. Many pilgrims walked barefooted, reciting the rosary as they went, all crowding into the area around the Cova. By mid-morning, [the weather again turned bad and] heavy rains began

to fall... . The children reached the holm oak around noon and then saw the flash of light as Mary appeared before them. [For the last time,] Lucia asked what she wanted:

“I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.”

Lucia made some requests for cures, conversions and other things. Mary responded: “Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.”

[Sister Lucia tells us that at this point, Mary] grew very sad and said: “Do not offend the Lord our God anymore, because He is already so much offended.” Then, opening her hands, she made them reflect on the sun and, as she ascended, the reflection of her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself. After she disappeared, as the people witnessed the predicted miracle, the children saw the visions foretold during the September apparition.

The Promised Miracle

The greatest miracle to occur since the resurrection is also the only miracle ever precisely predicted as to date, time of day and location. While popularly known as “The Miracle of the Sun,” October 13, 1917 has come to be known as “The Day the Sun Danced”

[The solar phenomena included the dancing of the sun, its fluctuations in colour, its swirling and its descending toward the earth. There was also the stillness in the leaves of the trees, despite the howling winds. The complete drying of the rain-soaked ground and the restoration of clothes all wet and covered with mud so that, as eyewitness Dominic Reis, put it, “They looked as tho they had just come back from the cleaners.”]

Many physical cures of the blind and the lame were reported. The countless unreserved public confessions of sin and commitments to conversion of life attest to the authenticity of what they saw. The miracle is reported to have been seen from as far as 15-25 miles away, thus ruling out the possibility of any type of collective hallucination or mass hypnotism. ... Doubters and skeptics had become believers. Even the on-site report, Almeida, [now reported affirmatively and] stood by his story later on in spite of harsh criticism.

Adapted from “The Story of Fatima: The Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima.” World Apostolate of Fatima, USA. bluearmy.com/the-story-of-fatima/

**Our Lady of Good Counsel,
Patroness of The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel:
filled with the Holy Spirit,
you were a faithful disciple of Jesus, your Son.

Intercede with your Son for us
that we may be faithful to our baptism,
fervent in prayer,
and generous in the service we give
to our sisters and brothers.

May the spirit of the living God,
who graced you with the gift of counsel,
lead us in the way of truth and love.

With the help of your prayers,
may we come to rejoice forever
with you and the great company of saints
in the kingdom of heaven.

Amen.

Mary's Way of the Cross

By Rev. Richard G. Furey, C.Ss.R.

First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Leader: “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get” (Mt 7:1-2).

Reader 1: It was early Friday morning when I saw my Son. That was the first glimpse I had of Him since they took Him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks. Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted my Son executed. All around me they shouted, “Crucify Him!” I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew this had to be. So I stood by and cried silently.

All: **Lord Jesus, it is hard for me to imagine the anguish Your mother felt at Your condemnation. But what about today, when I hold a grudge...? “Crucify Him!” When I judge others...? “Crucify Him!” Doesn’t this bring tears of anguish to both You and Your mother? Forgive me, Jesus.**

Second Station: Jesus Takes His Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Then the King will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you gave Me clothing, I was sick and you took care of Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.” Then the righteous will answer Him, “Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? And when was it that we saw You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and gave You clothing? And when was it that we saw You sick or in prison and visited You? And the King will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me” (Mt 25:34-40).

Reader 2: Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my Son stumbled out, the guards laughing behind Him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on His shoulders. Then they shoved

Him down the road. My pain for Him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from Him and carry it myself. But I knew this had to be, so I walked on silently.

All: **Lord, Jesus, I beg You to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to Your cross by closing my eyes to the pain and loneliness of my neighbour. Forgive me for gossiping about others and for always trying to find excuses to avoid certain people who wish to talk with me. Help me to be more like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.**

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ (Gal 6:2).

Reader 3: I followed close behind my Son as He stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see Him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into His shoulders. My heart dropped when I saw Him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on His back. For a moment I thought my beloved Son was dead. Now, my whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked Him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped Him. I wanted to protect Him with my own body. But, I knew this had to be, so I walked on and wept silently.

All: **Lord, how often have I seen You fall, and, unlike Mary, have left You there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and laughed at them? How often do I find myself getting angry when someone does things differently than I? Mary offered You her support through Your entire passion. Help me to do the same for You by the support I give to others. Lord, have mercy on me.**

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Leader: My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing (Jas 1:2-4).

Reader 4: I managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my Son. I called to Him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Our eyes met, mine full of tears and anguish, His full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then His eyes said to me,

“Courage! There is a purpose for this.” As He stumbled on, I knew He was right. So I followed and prayed silently.

All: **Lord Jesus, forgive me for the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me the times I brooded over little inconveniences or became discouraged and did not heed Your call to courage! Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times, but fruitlessly.**

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him (Heb 5: 8-9).

Reader 5: I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my Son as He tried to carry His heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be His last. I felt His every pain in my heart and I wanted the whole thing to end. Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my Son’s load. He asked the guards why this had to be. I knew, and so followed silently.

All: **Lord Jesus, I have many times refused to help You. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned Your Word. Don’t let me remain like Simon, but help me to be like Your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.**

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favour and good repute in the sight of God and of people (Prov 3:3-4).

Reader 6: As I continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil, and began to wipe my Son’s sweating, bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back. Her face seemed to say, “Why are you doing this to Him?” I knew, so I walked on in faith, silently.

All: **Lord, this woman gave You the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to**

You by giving to others—but I pass them by. My Savior, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to You.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of Your deliverance (Ps 51:12-14).

Reader 7: Again my Son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that He might die. I started to move toward Him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my Son fall, get up again, and continue on was bitter anguish to me. But, since I knew this had to be, I walked on silently.

All: **Lord, of all people Mary was Your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for You. I have many times turned away from You by my sins and have caused others to turn away from You. I beg You to have mercy on me.**

Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks to the Women

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law. I live as an alien in the land; do not hide Your commandments from me (Ps 119:18-19).

Reader 8: I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw Him stop. Some women were there crying for Him and pitying Him. He told them not to shed tears for Him. They had the opportunity to accept Him as the Messiah; like many others, they rejected Him instead. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears that would bring their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and His walk to death. I did, and as He walked on, I followed silently.

All: **My Savior, many times I have acted like these women, always seeing the faults of others and pitying them. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked Your pardon. Lord, You have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.**

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: “You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord (Lev 19:17-18).

Reader 9: This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had He fallen on the rocky ground again, but now He was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at Him and abused Him, almost dragging Him the last few steps. My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to Him next. But, I knew this had to be, so I climbed the hill silently behind Him.

All: **My loving Jesus, I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people but when it became inconvenient or painful to me I left them, making excuses for myself. Help me, Lord, to be like Your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.**

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your ‘Yes’ be yes and your ‘No’ be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation (Jas 5:11-12).

Reader 10: With my Son finally relieved of the weight of the cross, I thought He would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip His clothes off His blood-clotted skin. The sight of my Son in such pain was unbearable. Yet, since I knew this had to be, I stood by and cried silently.

All: **Lord, in my own way I too have stripped You. I have taken away the good name of another by foolish talk, and have stripped people of human dignity by my prejudice. Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended You through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see You in all people.**

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before” (Mt 5:11-12).

Reader 11: As they threw Jesus on the cross, He willingly allowed Himself to be nailed. As they punctured His hands and His feet I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There He was, my Son, whom I love so much, being scorned as He struggled for the last few moments of earthly life. But I knew this had to be, so I stood by and prayed silently.

All: **Lord, what pain You endured for me. And what pain Your mother went through, seeing her only Son die for love of me! Yet, both You and she are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me, Lord, to turn away from my sinfulness.**

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Then the disciples approached and said to Him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what You said?” He answered, “Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted (Mt 15:12-13).

Reader 12: What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes! I, who had brought this Saviour into the world and watched Him grow, stood helplessly beneath His cross as He lowered His head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever. Yet, this had to be and I had to accept it, so I stood by and I mourned silently.

All: **My Jesus, have mercy on me for what my sins have done to You and to others. I thank You for Your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down your life for your friends. Let me always be Your friend. Teach me to live my life for others, and not fail You again.**

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken from the Cross

Leader: We adore You O Christ and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, so that You may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with Him is great power to redeem. It is He who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. (Ps 130).

Reader 13: The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of Our Saviour, my Son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my Son, but it had also brought life to all of us. I knew this had to be, and I prayed silently.

All: **Lord, Your passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over You. I have done my part in Your crucifixion and now, my Saviour, I beg Your forgiveness with all my heart. Help me to live a life worthy of You and Your mother.**

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Leader: As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love (Jn 15:9-10).

Reader 14: We brought Jesus' body to a tomb and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving Son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before I left, I thought, I knew this had to be... it had to be for you! I would wait in faith silently.

All: **Yes, my Lord, this had to be because You love me, and for no other reason. All You ask is that I live a good life. You never said such a life would be easy. I am willing to leave sin behind and live for You alone, in my brothers and sisters.**

Used with permission of the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province.

A Day of Prayer and Reflection: Embracing Mary, Our Patroness and Mother

Evaluation Form

Please help us understand how we did in planning and executing your day by check marking your favourite parts of the day.

Morning Session _____

Woman's visit with Mary _____

Morning activity with pictures _____

Mary's Way of the Cross _____

Flower making activity _____

Counting your blessings _____

Please answer the following questions with a "Yes" or "No":

Did the day meet your expectations? _____

Will you rethink anything because of today? _____

Will you take any new thoughts or ideas home? _____

Would you come to another such day? _____

Any suggestions for the planning committee?

Thank you!