



Blessed Miriam Teresa
LEAGUE OF PRAYER BULLETIN



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AD SUM
(Here I am)



APOSTOLIC POSTULATION

for the cause of Canonization of the Blessed

Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, SC
of the

Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth,

His Eminence

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Mary is a woman for all women – and men. Each one of us can look to Mary as model and intercessor with God. Conceived without sin, Mary spent her whole life in the service of God and neighbor. She knew both the joys and sorrows of her intimate life with Jesus and Joseph. From the cold crib in Bethlehem to the cruel cross on Calvary, Mary cared for Jesus in all the events of His life. On the cross Jesus gave Mary as mother to us all. Like Mary we are called to care for the world and all who call it home.

Care for the earth and all who live in it is the message of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*. During this Pentecost time let's ask Blessed Miriam Teresa to inspire in us ways that we can make the world a better place for all creation. Each day we can do something to honor Mary by prayer and actions that promote peace and harmony on earth.

~ Sister Mary Canavan, SC



THE BLESSED MIRIAM TERESA LEAGUE OF PRAYER BULLETIN

Purpose of the League: To honor the Blessed Trinity through the Immaculate Heart of Mary by spreading the knowledge of Blessed Miriam Teresa's life and mission, and by working for her cause.

President.....Sister Maureen Shaughnessy, SC

TEAM

Sister Mary Canavan, Sister Maureen Corcoran, Doctor Mary Mazzarella and Sister Rita O'Farrell. Consultants: Sister Barbara Connell, Father Terrence Moran and Sister Noreen Neary.

Obligations: 1. Daily recitation of 26 Glorias in honor of the Most Holy Trinity for the success of the cause. (an Our Father may be substituted.) 2. A small sacrifice daily.

Spiritual Privileges: for the intentions of League Members.
1. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered 100 times each year. 2. Special private prayers are offered every day by the Sisters of Charity.

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THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: Inspiration for all Women

by Sister Meg McCann, SC

For over two thousand years, people have been praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary for solace and guidance, beseeching her aid in times of turmoil and in times of peace. Throughout the ages, men, women and children have approached Mary with fervor and sincerity of heart, but for now, we will look at ways in which Mary serves as guide and inspiration for women in all walks of life: be they married, unmarried, mothers, women religious, refugees, unwed women expecting a child with nowhere to turn, and women running from danger in the middle of the night.

Indeed, we may say that Mary is a beacon of light for all women, and, as such, let us consider how Mary inspires women in various stations of life, in conjunction with certain works of art which essentially depict Mary as a model, guide and inspiration for all women.

In the Gospel of St. Luke, we first read of Mary in the Annunciation, wherein the Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary: “The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women...You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name of Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High...and his reign will be without end.” (Luke 1: 28-32).

No other woman has received higher honor than to be



The Annunciation (1898)

by Henry Ossawa Tanner

called the mother of the Most High, and yet many women can relate to the singularity of the Annunciation. If you are a woman who is used to praying alone, in the silence of your own heart, and you have suddenly been imbued with an awareness of God’s plan for you, then you can relate to Mary during the Annunciation. If you, like Mary, have ever said, in your own way: “I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say,” then you are a woman who can relate to Mary during the Annunciation.

Just as Mary ran with haste to spread the Good News of her Annunciation, so do women today spread the Good News of their own special mission from God, as teachers, as doctors, as nurses, and in whatever profession or enterprise to which they have been called. Yet Mary learned early in life that joy and suffering can intersect, which was the case when she realized that the mystery of the Incarnation would be

met with confusion and consternation on the part of Saint Joseph, her betrothed, who would be shocked upon learning that Mary was with child. While following God's divine plan for her, Mary knew that she could be exposing herself to societal rejection and misunderstanding on the part of Joseph, her family and her friends.

Accordingly, unmarried women who find themselves with child are likewise subject to misunderstanding and rejection. Yet if, like Mary, they place their trust in God and they believe that Divine Providence will intervene on their behalf, then fear will give way to courage and they will be strengthened by following Mary's example of fortitude in the face of apparent crisis.

Trust in God reaps its own reward, as Mary discovered upon the birth of Jesus, heralded with joy by the angels, but anguish soon followed when Joseph learned in a dream that Herod was "searching for the child to destroy him" (Matthew 2: 13). This prompted Mary and Joseph to flee with the Child Jesus into Egypt in the middle of the night, to live for years as refugees, in absolute exile, alienated in a strange land. By the same token, refugees today can take heart when they follow the example of Mary and realize that the terror of fleeing from the land of one's birth can lead to a deeper union with God, if one trusts that light is greater than darkness and that the definition of home far exceeds the circumference

of geography.

If refugees and people experiencing homelessness can relate to Mary, so too can women relate to Mary who have lost their children or who feel alienated from their children by the way that their children speak to them. Consider the loss of the Child Jesus when Mary and Joseph looked for their son but could not find him anywhere. After three days of agonizing search, they finally found Jesus in the Temple, preaching to the elders. When Mary asked Jesus why he had done this to them, he replied: "Why did you search for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2: 49-50).

Mothers, who are astonished at their children's behavior or confused by the words which come out of their children's mouths, can take courage when they realize that Mary experienced the same thing from her own son, but, by keeping an open heart and accepting the fact that she could not understand everything taking place in her own life or in the life of her son, Mary grew in wisdom and in her love for God. Mystified by her child's words and feeling alienated from him, ultimately led to a deeper intimacy with Jesus as she placed all her trust in God, something that mothers today would be wise to remember when faced with the baffling behavior of their own adolescent children.

Like mothers everywhere, Mary did not have all of the answers, but she knew that loving her child was

more important than being able to answer all of the questions pertaining to her child's life. Women today, who refer to Mary when overwhelmed by the challenges of motherhood, will feel a deepening of their faith in God, and will recall that what they are experiencing as mothers, Mary experienced in so many ways with her son, Jesus.

Another group of women who relate to Mary would be consecrated women religious. Indeed, there is something about Mary which draws women religious to her like the proverbial moth to the flame, perhaps because like Mary, once we knew we were called, we hastened to consecrate ourselves to God with purpose and a certain spring to our step. In *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, we read of the child Mary's Presentation into the Temple: "Mary would not take the hands held out to her; to the admiration of all, she ran eagerly and joyfully up the steps without stumbling." Despite her humility, Mary was profoundly self-reliant, and her streak of independence sprang from her intimate union with God. Women religious today, whether we are young, middle-aged, or elderly, are likewise self-reliant because, like Mary, we are grounded in God, and thus we walk with a simplicity and a serenity similar to Mary's. Like Mary, the more we are focused on God, the more certain we are of our footing.

Like the Sorrowful Mother Mary, women religious are set apart by virtue of our consecration, and yet at the same time, we are immersed in the lives of those around us more than mere words can convey. Like Mary, we are steeped in the confusion of the day, and yet we listen to the small stirrings of God's voice in the stillness and in the silence of our hearts, yearning to know what God wants us to do for him. Like Mary, our capacity to suffer is extraordinary. When we behold the sorrows of the human race, we realize that the passion of Christ is renewing itself and tears will stream down our faces, just as tears streamed down the face of Mary as she beheld Jesus on the road to Calvary.



© *The Tears of Our Lady Chaplet*
(Luisa Piccarreta
1865-1947)

In addition, women religious know what it is like to feel that Jesus has died; that he is no longer with us; that we have totally parted ways from one another and that we may never see him again. This is the same suffering that Mary would have felt when she kissed Jesus goodbye in the tomb during his burial on Good Friday. Whether we feel that Jesus is alive to us or that Jesus has died to us, our love for Jesus, like Mary's love

for her only-begotten Son, will never die. Like Mary, we realize that the Resurrection follows the Crucifixion, that darkness gives way to light and that this cycle is part of the everyday work-a-day world which unites us to the humanity of Jesus.

In conclusion, we have seen how women can relate to the life of the Blessed Virgin Mother and how Mary serves as guide, model and inspiration to women in all stations of life. A panoramic view of Marian art reveals not only certain highlights in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but also – metaphorically speaking – distinct milestones in the lives of many women today, milestones which make us realize how much we have in common with the mother of Jesus, and how much the mother of Jesus has in common with us.



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PRAYERS FOR DECEASED



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MARY AND MARTHA

by Sister Maureen Corcoran, SC

What could have been a tug-of-war for Blessed Miriam Teresa became a graced awareness of the relationship between contemplation and action.

While she was still a young child Miriam was blessed with the understanding of the meaning of life given to her by Our Lord. To her and to all of us the meaning of life is truly found in doing God's will in each of our endeavors. This realization raised her up from merely being a gentle and obliging child to seek to do God's will and leading her to a closer intimacy with our God.

Blessed Miriam Teresa received her mission early in the twentieth century when modernism was making great strides. This was a movement which attempted to modify classical forms and traditional beliefs and sought to adhere to and abide by the values and experience of industrial life. Blessed Miriam, rooted deeply in her faith, offered an alternative to this philosophy by holding fast to the spirituality she deeply embraced.

Our world today is challenged by another philosophy known as secularism. This philosophy seeks to base its principles on the values of the material world and is devoid of any religious influence. This would be so foreign to Blessed Miriam that her living example could show us a way to live faithfully, regardless of



how other segments of society valued ambition, money, power or prestige. For her, union with God was present at the beginning, throughout every daily experience and not just at the end of life.

Blessed Miriam Teresa clearly understood that it was through prayer that she came to understand her mission in life:

“As I understand it, God’s purpose in my life is this in general: to teach men that Our Lord’s promise, ‘If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him’ (John, XIV, 23) is held out to every single soul, regardless of calling; and is the perfect realization of His prayer and ours, Thy Kingdom come.”

*(Letter of Sister Miriam Teresa,
August 15, 1926)*

Throughout her four years as a student at the College of Saint Elizabeth (now a University), she frequently reflected on the gospel passage of Martha and Mary and wondered which style of living ought to be hers—a contemplative like Mary, sitting at Jesus’ feet and listening to his every word or engaged in “doing for others” as Martha was.

Blessed Miriam Teresa was drawn to the Carmelite way of life (contemplation) but the question was put before her, “Would it not be better to foster and enable your talents to give glory to God in an active religious community?” Answering this question was a struggle for her since her attraction to be a contemplative deepened as her spirit of prayer and mortification had intensified.

A moment of truth emerged for her when she had the first inkling of the real reason God called her to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth: to teach them that Martha draws all her strength from Mary. (from a letter of Sister Miriam Teresa dated August 25, 1926)

Each one of us, like Blessed Miriam Teresa, is urged to be truly Christ-centered, allowing our prayer and ministry to be integrated – that what we do flows out of our prayer. Our prayer life is our underpinning – supporting all we are about in the name of Christ Jesus.

Blessed Miriam Teresa is an authentic bearer of the Gospel

message—as she gave herself to God’s Will and God’s Way for her and finding great joy and delight in the giving; May each of us do the same. May we allow ourselves to be more and more conformed to God’s Will, growing stronger in faith and holding nothing back from God. This ultimate choice will lead us to our eternal destiny.

Like Mary and Martha, Blessed Miriam Teresa exemplifies for us not two opposing spiritualities but the two-sided facets of religious life and the faith journey of all Christians: to be united in prayer with our God who sustains us as we minister making the world a more sacred place for all God’s People. Mary was told by Jesus that there was only one thing necessary and you have chosen the better part; yet Martha was busy about the holy work of hospitality – being with Jesus in your heart while you are in the midst of your preparations.

These three women, Mary, Martha and Miriam Teresa, were faithful disciples of Christ Jesus and were firmly planted in Jesus’ promise to them and all of us, “I am with you always” (Matt 28). The question that follows is: “Will you be with me?” Mary’s response was a “Yes”; Martha’s response was a “Yes”; Miriam Teresa’s response was a “Yes.” Is your response a “Yes?” That is the one thing necessary as we live our daily lives and journey to our eternal life with God.

GREATER PERFECTION

by Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, SC

Religious Humility

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways” Prov 8:22

One of the important feasts of the Church is that of "the Nativity of the holy Virgin Mary, whose glorious life is the ornament of all the churches. Sprung from a royal race, sprung from the seed of Abraham, from the tribe of Juda, and from the noble lineage of David, Mary shines forth to the world".¹ This is she of whom Solomon in prophetic vision sang: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?"² This is she, the peerless one, the powerful one, the mighty woman God had in mind when denouncing the serpent in the garden of Eden: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel".³

No wonder the Church rejoices with boundless joy in this happy festival which is in truth the beginning of our salvation. No wonder the Church shouts with exultation in the Introit of the Mass of the Nativity of Our Lady: "Hail, holy Mother! giving birth to thy Child, thou didst bring forth the King, who ruleth the heavens and the earth forever and ever."⁴ Truly St. Anne in bringing forth the Morning Star brought forth through her the Sun of Justice, Christ, Who is our God. And if our joy be not so great as that of the Church, it is only because we do not understand the greatness of the mystery that has come to pass.

Because of the Word, Him "Whom the whole world availeth not to contain",⁵ Mary figured in the plan of creation from all eternity. She was

to bear the Creator of all things; she was to bring forth Him Who made her, Who "being made man shut up Himself within her womb".⁶ For this reason it is said of her: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old, before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived".⁷ Ah, yes, Mary owes all her glory, all her marvelous privileges to her Divine Son, her Saviour and Redeemer and ours. From all eternity she alone, because of the dignity to which God was to raise her, was exempt from the curse of Adam by virtue of the anticipated merits of the Word. Her Immaculate Conception accounts for all her graces and dignities, her joys and sorrows. In itself it contains all her feasts, because the Lord possessed her from the beginning. Her nativity is so glorious only because of the splendor of her conception.

Some of us are too apt, however, in venerating the Blessed Virgin - and who among the creatures of God is deserving of higher honor? - to overlook one thing, very important, and recognized most clearly by Mary herself. She gave expression to this thought in her sublime hymn of praise and thanksgiving when she said: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me".⁸ Why, we may ask? The answer comes back: "Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid".⁹ Unlike Mary, we are too prone, in our admiration of the gifts, even the gifts we perceive in her, to forget the Giver, the bountiful Father of all. Mary

never forgot. Mary never forgot because she was humble. It was this very humility that drew forth the Eternal Word from the bosom of the Father to repose Incarnate in the bosom of Mary. What an ineffable reward for profoundest humility! And now His delight is to be with the children of men, with us, for whom He is our sole hope of happiness and peace.

For us who are religious, who have left all things in the sole aim of seeking and finding in Him our fill of happiness and peace, must also be realized the truth of these words: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways".¹⁰ They shall, if like Mary, we clearly understand and sincerely acknowledge that "He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name".¹¹ Arriving at this truth, we shall have begun to quench our spiritual thirst in the bottomless well of humility, from which thereafter we can quaff deep, refreshing draughts, for "he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever".¹²

Let us consider these great things. God created us. But for His loving thought of us, we should never have been. Do we appreciate the wonderful gift of life? God did more. He called us from earliest infancy to become His children by the grace of adoption. We were baptized, and received the gift of faith. We could just as easily have been born of semi-barbarous parents in the wilds of Africa, or of these super-civilized modern pagans. But God in His preventing mercy gave us the Church for our Mother. Have we ever thanked Him for this stupendous gift, lavishly bestowed? God did still more. He provided for us by means of a truly Christian and Catholic education that the virtues instilled into us at baptism

might thrive and bring forth fruit. But for God's love, all this might just as readily never have happened. Even then God was not satisfied. God did yet more. He whispered to us "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow me".¹³ This, too, was not enough. We heard the call. We could have stopped our ears, and like the Jews of old, complained: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?".¹⁴ In our blindness and pride we might have turned aside. Ah, but God's love for us knows no bounds. So He gave us the courage to leave all, father and mother and brethren, for His sake. What an excess of love! Surely "the Lord hath possessed me in the beginning of His ways",¹⁵ for He had me in view from all eternity and counted out with generous hand the numberless benefits He was to pour out on me, a beggar.

In another sense, the novitiate is for you "the beginning of His ways".¹⁶ He does not leave you in doubt as to what they are. He called you from the world that you might give yourselves wholly, unreservedly to His love and service. He called you to live the Christian life perfectly. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me".¹⁷ And He adds: "Now, therefore, ye children, hear me: blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. . . He that shall find me, shall find life".¹⁸

NOTES

¹ Antiphon I Vesp. of Feast of Nativity of B.V.M.

² Cant. of Cant. vi, 9

³ (Gen. iii, 1 5)

⁴ Introit, Mass of Nativity of B.V.M.

⁵ (Gradual - Mass of Nativity of B.V.M.)

⁶ (Gradual - id.)

⁷ (Prov. viii, 22-24)

⁸ (Luke i, 49)

⁹ (Luke i, 48)

¹⁰ (Prov. viii, 22)

¹¹ (Luke i, 49)

¹² (John iv, r 3)

¹³ (Matt. xix, 2 r)

¹⁴ (John vi, 6 I)

¹⁵ (Prov. viii, 22)

¹⁶ (Prov. viii, 22)

¹⁷ (Luke ix, 23)

¹⁸ (Prov. viii, 32, 33, 35)

FAVORS REQUESTED

FOR the cure of cancer (8), prisoners (3), successful pregnancy (2), special intentions (8), souls in purgatory (1), cure of seizures (1), healing eye diseases (6), healing heart disease (1), to find a home (1), direction for my vocation (1), cure of drug addiction (1) the homeless (1), my family (11), a successful surgery (1), government officials (3), Franciscan Brothers and Sisters (1), success of my Chaplaincy (1), the deceased (2), confirmation of an apparent miracle of healing (11)

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We hope you enjoy receiving the *Blessed Miriam Teresa Bulletin*. We are presently trying to update our mailing database. We are asking for your help with a few things:

1. Change or update an address
2. Add an E-mail address
3. Add someone to our mailing list
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5. Prefer an electronic copy of the Bulletin

These changes can be made on the envelope that is included with this Bulletin.

An electronic file of the *Bulletin* can be found on SCNJ.org in the dropdown menu under Blessed Miriam Teresa.

If you need assistance with any of the above, please e-mail us at escharity@scnj.org. Thank you for your assistance and for your continued support.



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