Catholicism turns instinctively to help the Mother of God in times of trouble and the difficult years of persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. Christians prayed the Salve Regina. This simple prayer was written, in form, as the Litany of Lourdes, before the year A.D. 210. It is a great voice to the Christian faith in the Blessed Virgin. We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all dangers. O Salve Regina. 

The prayer bears testimony to the Church’s faith that Jesus Christ is God and Mary is the Mother of God and the mother of Christ’s disciples (John 19:25-27). Her maternal relationship to Christ and to all the members of his body in the foundation of Christians’ confidence in her ability to help her children on earth who face any danger. From the foundation of the United States of America, our bishops have expressed great trust in Mary’s motherly protection. In 1942, in America, America’s first Roman Catholic bishop, the Most Rev. John Carroll of Baltimore, chose the Blessed Mother as the patron of the United States and entrusted the newly created nation to her care. On May 13, 1846, the bishops unanimously chose Mary, under the title of “The Immaculate Conception,” as the patron of our land. When the Bishops of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was dedicated in Washington, D.C., in 1959, the bishops again solemnly entrusted the country to her. Their prayer is well worth our consideration:

Most Holy Trinity, Our Father in heaven, who chose Mary as the favorite of your daughters, Blessed Virgin, who chose Mary as your sacred God Son, who chose Mary as your Mother, in union with Mary, we adore your majesty and accept your royal dominion and authority.

Most Holy Trinity, we pray for the United States of America into the hands of Mary Immaculate in order that she may present the country to you. Through her we wish to thank you for the great resources of this land and for the freedom which has been its heritage. Through the intercession of Mary, keep the American people united as one peace. Honor mercy on our president and all the officers of national offices, in keeping us in the path of peace and charity. Honor mercy on capital and industry and labor. Protect the family life of the nation. Guard the practice and charity. Have mercy on capital and industry and the responsibility of all to care for the disabled and the poor. Ask Mary to call them to herself. They are the other needs; but these alone point to the importance of prayer and personal discernment.

Mary helps us, on so much, to stand in awe before the mystery of human personhood, the beauty of virginity, spousal love and motherhood—a motherhood that Christ extended to the entire human race.

Throughout her life and most especially as she stood with him on Calvary, Mary cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of salvation of all mankind in the garden of Eden. And so, Mary is the image and model of the Church as virgin, bride and mother. She teaches all Christians the meaning of discipleship. Her passing from this life to the happiness of their true home in the arms of her Son, bright rays of light cascaded from her hands into the world. St. Catherine asked her: Please tell me, what is this light? The Blessed Virgin responded, The light is the grace of my Son. Catherine was truthful because some rays of light did not flow into the world. She asked what this meant Mary said. These are given people fail to seek from the light. Here is a wonderful secret of prayer: Christ wants us to go humbly to his Mother in search of his help. This is precisely what we are doing in the Novena to the Mother of God for the Nation. Everyone who joins in these nine days of prayer has his or her own needs. Each person should remain to pray for the intentions of all. Through the charity of EWTN, a great multitude of people will gather with confidence to pray for the assistance of the Mother of God and, with her, to work for the Father, and the unity and the holy peace and justice, the beatitude of the human family, the peace of heaven through Mary’s hands.

The Assumption of Mary Into Heaven


Throughout her life and most especially as she stood with him on Calvary, Mary cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of salvation of all mankind in the garden of Eden. And so, Mary is the image and model of the Church as virgin, bride and mother. She teaches all Christians the meaning of discipleship. Her passing from this life to the happiness of their true home in the arms of her Son, bright rays of light cascaded from her hands into the world. St. Catherine asked her: Please tell me, what is this light? The Blessed Virgin responded, The light is the grace of my Son. Catherine was truthful because some rays of light did not flow into the world. She asked what this meant Mary said. These are given people fail to seek from the light. Here is a wonderful secret of prayer: Christ wants us to go humbly to his Mother in search of his help. This is precisely what we are doing in the Novena to the Mother of God for the Nation. Everyone who joins in these nine days of prayer has his or her own needs. Each person should remain to pray for the intentions of all. Through the charity of EWTN, a great multitude of people will gather with confidence to pray for the assistance of the Mother of God and, with her, to work for the Father, and the unity and the holy peace and justice, the beatitude of the human family, the peace of heaven through Mary’s hands.

The Assumption of Mary Into Heaven

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God.
Despite not our prayers in our necessities, But ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Reflection
Since God created an immortal and through the conjugation of man and woman, the conception of every person is clearly not just a body, but a union of his spirit — even when the conception is an act of her violence.

When the Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother, God created her immortal soul and filled her with the divine life. In the Immaculate Conception, God uniquely redeemed Mary by preserving her from Original Sin through the intercession of the Virgin, her mother.

From the first moment of her life, Mary was wholly beautiful. Full of grace (Luke 1:48), without any trace of evil, she was, in the words of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin as a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.

The good news of the Immaculate Conception is that there is more love in Mary’s soul than there is evil in the world. In her Immaculate Conception, God empowered Mary to say Yes freely to his plan of salvation in Christ and to help us in our own sacrifices of Christ and to help us in our own sacrifices.

Prayer
God, almighty Father, at the moment of your conception, you mercifully revealed that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her most holy mother — the mother of your Son — in safety from the first moment of her existence — in the safety of her mother’s womb. Blessed Pope Pius XI proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in these words: “We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

The good news of the Immaculate Conception is that there is more love in Mary’s soul than there is evil in the world. In her Immaculate Conception, God empowered Mary to say Yes freely to his plan of salvation in Christ and to help us in our own sacrifices of Christ and to help us in our own sacrifices.

Additional Suggestions
1. Attend Mass and recite Holy Communion each day of the year.
2. Receive the sacrament of penance.
3. Read Scripture and pray the Rosary each day.
4. Make a donation or do something practical to help the poor.
5. Pray the Magnificat as many as possible to participate in the novena.

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despite not our prayers in our necessities, But ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Reflection
Long before the angel Gabriel brought Mary the message that God had chosen her to be the Mother of her Son, she had resolved to give herself entirely and exclusively — in the gift of perpetual virginity. Mary knew that God had ordered into a covenant — a family bond — with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai. Although the Lord had remained faithful to the covenant promises, Israel had not. By repeatedly breaking the covenantal obligations of God, her people had shown herself to be an adulterous spouse. Mary, painstakingly aware of the history of Israel, as told by the prophets, yearns to make reparation for the sins of her people by loving God as her faithful bride.

Here is Pope John Paul II’s description of Mary’s desire to remain a virgin throughout her life:

“Mary herself wanted to be the personnal image of that absolutely faithful bride, totally devoted to the divine Bridegroom, and, therefore, she became the beginning of the New Israel in her virgin heart. She confirmed and strengthens a consecration already in effect, which becomes the faithful condition of her life. She, in fact, replies to the Angel of the Annunciation: ‘How can this be, since am a virgin’ (Luke 1:34) as if to say, I am a virgin devoted to God, and I do not mislead my spouse, because I do not think that God wills it — be who is no sinner of Israel, be no sinner with anyone who betrays him, no pervert in his moral call to recollection and Mary in all her real awareness of her infidelity, and she wants personally to be a wife who is faithful to her most beloved Divine Spouse.”

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth to tell Mary that he had accepted her desire to belong exclusively to him and, in fact, was the source of that desire. Mary’s longing for a life of virginity was, in a sense, a response to God’s faithful love. The angel tells Mary that she would conceive God’s Son as a virgin through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. She is to be simultaneously a virgin, bride and mother. Her freely chosen virginity amounted to Mary being totally to Christ as his Mother and totally to each of us as our mother loving. The Blessed Virgin Mary witness- ness that the bounteous of value of virginity is always for the sake of the soul of love and mother love.

Prayer
Almighty and ever-living God, Mary gaveth herself to you unreservedly through the gift of her virginity. As she loved Jesus with an undivided heart, she continues to love and serve all of her children on earth. Through her example, infill all of the members of your Church a deeper appreciation of the value of virginity. Help all to understand that virginity is the perfect gift that spouses give to each other on their wedding day. Inspire many young men and women to embrace a life of consecrated celibacy or virginity in the priesthood and consecrated life. Teach us all the meaning of your Son’s words: “Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8). We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, I have no husband?”

— Luke 1:34

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word!”

— Luke 1:38

CONTINUES ON PAGE C1

THE ARTWORK IN THIS ISSUE IS COURTESY OF JOHN BENJAMIN PUBLISHING CO., NATIONTAL CATHOLIC REGISTER, SEPT. 29, 2012 NatioNal CatholiC Register, septembeR 29, 2012
Oct. 2 / Day 4: The Visitation

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, 0 holy Mother of God. Despite not our prayers in our necessities, yet deliver us from all dangers, 0 glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Reflection
Mary, carrying the mysteries of God in her womb, went with haste to visit her aged relative Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah. The angel Gabriel had told Mary that Elizabeth and her husband were to become parents, and Mary, making the journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth, as the true Ark of the Covenant — the new dwelling place of God among his people.

Here are some points of comparison. When Jewish people came into the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, they would set out a joyful and holy tent, a certain holy place reserved exclusively to honor God's presence in the ark. When Mary entered her cousin Elizabeth's house and greeted her, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry: Elizabeth talked about the exact words that King David had used when he realized the significance of the ark coming to his house: "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

In these days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a city of Judah, to Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah. The angel Gabriel had told Mary that Elizabeth and her husband were to become parents, and Mary, making the journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth, as the true Ark of the Covenant — the new dwelling place of God among his people.

Prayer
Almighty and ever-living Virgin, the Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant. During the nine months of her pregnancy, the Son of God made-man resided in her virginal womb. From his royal throne, Christ began to bring his people salvation. After his birth, which did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity, he continued to dwell in Mary through grace and charity with an unparalleled intimacy. Father, we beg you to save Mary to us, through the United States, calling all to Christ's people of God and consecration of oneself to Christ. May she help us all to understand that the conception of Christ in Nazareth and her child's birth child at Bethlehem point to the irremediable mystery of the Incarnation: the mculation and birth. May she help those women who have abortions to find God's forgiveness and healing. Father, we beg you to help all the hearts of all the Advocates of contraception and abortion.

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church** connects the first Octave of the Visitation and the solemnity of October 23, 2002, to the visitation. On the occasion of the Visitation, the Church remembers the meeting of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, the mother of the Lord, that is, the visitation of the Word of God to the home of a woman in the substance of her womb.

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." Her mother said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it." Now, six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out and bring it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine — and did not know where it came from among the servants who had supplied the liquor — he called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now! This, the first of your signs, which you performed at Cana in Galilee, manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

---

Oct. 3 / Day 5: The Divine Motherhood of Mary

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, 0 holy Mother of God. Despite not our prayers in our necessities, yet deliver us from all dangers, 0 glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Reflection
Cardinal James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore from 1877 to 1921, explained in a homily in Baltimore that Jesus, as a rabbi, a kind of professor of the Torah. Seeing the signs, he believed in him. Before the miracle, the apostles thought of his identity as Messiah. Seeing the signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him. Father, we beg you to help all the hearts of all the Advocates of contraception and abortion.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church connects the first Octave of the Visitation and the solemnity of October 23, 2002, to the visitation. On the occasion of the Visitation, the Church remembers the meeting of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, the mother of the Lord, that is, the visitation of the Word of God to the home of a woman in the substance of her womb. In like manner, as far as the ultimate mystery of the Incarnation is concerned, the mother, the mother of all families. Amen.

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." Her mother said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it." Now, six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out and bring it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine — and did not know where it came from among the servants who had supplied the liquor — he called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now! This, the first of your signs, which you performed at Cana in Galilee, manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

---

Oct. 4 / Day 6: The Wedding Feast of Cana

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, 0 holy Mother of God. Despite not our prayers in our necessities, yet deliver us from all dangers, 0 glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Reflection
Lo, the star which the Wise Men had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly and greatly, and going into the house, they saw the Child with the Virgin who brought Him up. And they fell down and worshipped Him.

The comparison which we have to make is that the first Wise Men were tanks, who fell down and worshipped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they brought gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:11
OCT. 5 / DAY: T — MARY OF CALVARY

Prayer
We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but answer us speedily in time of our distress. Amen.

Reflection
As Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, she suffered more than any other soul, but she suffered most of all when her Son had suffering everything that he had suffered in his heart. God had preserved it for her faithful servants. Now that she is reigning in heaven, she no longer has this loving care for her children on earth: women to Christ.

O Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.