



HELP OUR LADY REACH OUT TO MILLIONS OF FAITHFUL SOULS

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## Mary's Love for God

by St. Alphonsus de Liguori

**S**t. Anselm says that *"where we find the greatest chastity, there we find also the greatest charity."* The more pure a heart is and the more empty of itself, the more it is filled with love for God. Because Mary was thoroughly humble and thoroughly unselfish, She was filled with divine love. *"Her love for God surpassed that of all men and angels,"* writes St. Bernardine; St. Francis de Sales beautifully calls Her *"the Queen of Love."*

God has indeed given man the command to love Him with his whole heart: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart" (Mt. 22:37). However, St. Thomas declares: "This commandment will be fulfilled by men fully and perfectly only in Heaven, not on earth. On earth it is only fulfilled imperfectly." On this subject Blessed Albert the Great remarks that, in a certain sense, it would be unfitting for God to give a commandment that could never be perfectly fulfilled. But this would have been the case if Our Lady had not fulfilled it perfectly. The saint says: "Either someone fulfilled this precept, or no one did. If anyone did, it must have been the Blessed Virgin."

Richard of St. Victor confirms this opinion when he says: "The Mother of our Emmanuel practiced all virtues as perfectly as possible. Whoever fulfilled

the First Commandment the way She did: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart?* Divine love burned so ardently in Her that no defect of any kind could come close to Her." St. Bernard says: "Divine love penetrated and filled the soul of Mary to such an extent that no part of Her was left untouched. She loved with Her whole heart, with Her whole soul, with Her whole strength, and She was full of grace." Therefore, Mary was in a position to say: "My beloved belongs all to me and I to him" (Cant. 2:16). "Even the Seraphim," according to

Richard, "might have come down from Heaven to learn how to love God from the heart of Mary."

God, who is love, came on earth to kindle the flame



**"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. This commandment will be fulfilled by men fully and perfectly only in Heaven, not on earth. On earth it is only fulfilled imperfectly,"** declared St. Thomas.

of His divine love in the hearts of all men. But in no other heart did He kindle so much love as in the heart of His Mother. Her heart was entirely free from all earthly loves and fully prepared to burn with this precious flame.

St. Sophronius says that divine love inflamed Her so much that nothing earthly could enter Her heart. She was, so to speak, incandescent with divine love. The heart of Mary became all fire and flames, as we read of Her in the sacred Canticles (Cant. 8:6); fire burning within through love, as St. Anselm explains it; and flames shining without by the example She

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gave in the practice of virtue. When Mary was in this world and held Jesus in Her arms, She could well be called "fire carrying fire"; and with far more reason than the woman spoken of by Hippocrates who was called this because she carried fire in her hands. St. Ildephonsus says: "The Holy Spirit heated, inflamed, and melted Mary with love, as fire does iron; so that nothing was seen in Her but the flame of this Holy Spirit and nothing was felt but the fire of the love of God." St. Thomas of Villanova says that the bush seen by Moses, which burned without being consumed, was a true symbol of Mary's heart. And St. Bernard rightly says that Mary was seen by St. John clothed with the sun: "And a great sign appeared in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun" (Apoc. 12:1). She was so closely united to God by love, continues the saint, and She penetrated the abyss of divine wisdom so deeply, that apart from personal identification with God, it would seem impossible for a creature to have a closer union with Him.

St. Bernardine of Siena maintains that the most Blessed Virgin was never tempted by hell. He says that "as flies are driven away by a great fire, so too the evil spirits were driven away by Her ardent love. They did not even dare to approach Her." Richard of St. Victor says: "The Blessed Virgin was such a terror to the princes of darkness that they did not dare to come near Her. The fire of Her charity kept them away." Our Lady revealed to St. Bridget that She never had any thought, desire, or joy in this world, but only in and for God: "I thought of nothing but God; nothing pleased Me except God." Since Her blessed soul almost continually contemplated God while on earth, the acts of love She performed were innumerable. Father Suarez writes: "The acts of perfect charity Mary performed in this life were without number. Practically speaking, Her whole life was spent in contemplation, and while She was in that state, She constantly repeated acts of love."

A remark of Bernardine de Bustis pleases me even more. He says that Mary did not repeat acts of love as other saints do; Her whole life was one continual act

of love. As a royal eagle, She always kept Her eyes fixed on the divine Son of Justice. As St. Peter Damian says: "The duties of an active life did not prevent Her from performing Her duties." That is why St. Germanus says that the altar of propitiation, on which the fire was never extinguished day or night, was a symbol of Mary.

Sleep was no obstacle to Mary's love. St. Augustine asserts: "The dreams of our first parents, when sleeping in their state of innocence, were as happy as their lives were when they were awake." And if they had such a privilege it certainly was not denied to Our Blessed Lady, as Suarez, the Abbot Rupert, and St. Bernardine fully admit. St. Ambrose also holds this opinion. He says: "While Mary's body rested, Her soul watched." She verified in Herself the words of the Holy Spirit: "At night Her lamp is undimmed" (Prov. 31:18). While Her blessed body found its necessary repose in sleep, according to St. Bernardine, Her soul freely winged its way to God. In fact, She was then wrapped in more perfect contemplation than the average person when awake. And so She could well say with the spouse in the Canticles: "I was sleeping, but My heart kept vigil" (Cant. 5:2). "She was as happy in sleep as when awake," says Suarez. In short, St. Bernardine asserts, that as long as Mary lived in this world She continually loved God: "The mind of the Blessed Virgin was always wrapped in the ardor of love." The saint adds, moreover: "She never did anything except what divine Wisdom revealed as pleasing to Him. She loved God as much as She thought He should be loved by Her."

As a matter of fact, according to Blessed Albert the Great, we can say that Mary was filled with such great love for God that no mere creature on earth could possibly possess any more. St. Thomas of Villanova maintains that Mary, by Her ardent charity, became so attractive to God, that He was captivated, as it were, by Her love and descended into Her womb to become man. This thought caused St. Bernardine to exclaim: "See the power of the Virgin Mary! She wounded and captured the heart of God!"

But since Mary loves God so much, there is nothing



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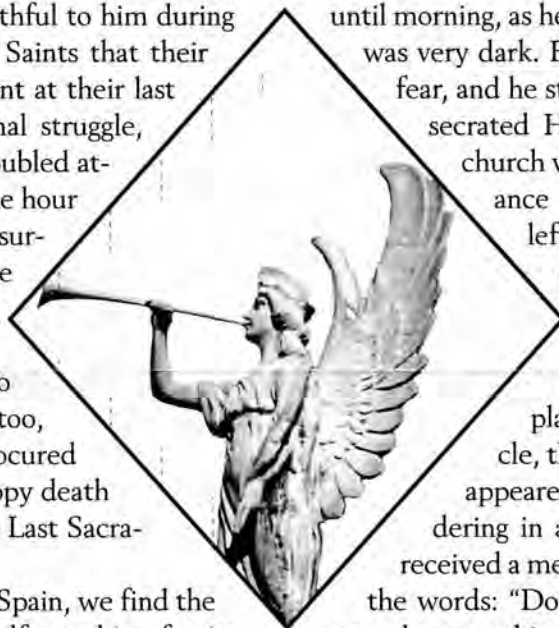
# Our Guardian Angels Assist Us at the Hour of Death

Especially at the hour of death, when the wicked enemies redouble their assaults in order to win the decisive battle for eternity, our Guardian Angel will assist us if we have been faithful to him during life. We read in the lives of many Saints that their Guardian Angels were visibly present at their last hour, comforting them in their final struggle, strengthening them against the redoubled attacks of hell, announcing to them the hour of their death and giving them the assurance that they would be heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. Not a few of the Saints at their death were seen being carried by exultant Angels into the heavenly Paradise. Frequently, too, the holy Guardian Angels have procured for their protégés the grace of a happy death by calling a priest to administer the Last Sacraments.

In the acts of St. John of Avila of Spain, we find the following incident, the Saint himself vouching for its truth:

In the year 1585, the Rev. Father Centenares, a mem-

ber of St. John's community, was awakened one stormy night and requested to take Holy Viaticum to a dying person. At first the priest hesitated and thought to wait until morning, as he did not know the way and the night was very dark. But the love of God triumphed over fear, and he started out, taking with him two consecrated Hosts. But scarcely had he left the church when two youths of heavenly appearance placed themselves at his right and left side. They held burning candles, which were not extinguished by the falling rain, and accompanied the priest to the sick person and back again to the church. When he had placed the Sacred Host in the tabernacle, they vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. While the good priest was wondering in astonishment at this occurrence, he received a message from St. John which contained the words: "Do not be astonished at what has happened to you this night. It is quite certain that the two youths whom you saw were Angels sent by God to reward your zeal ..."



## Apostolate Happenings

### Holy Pilgrimages

In October we took a group of pilgrims to Portugal, Spain & Lourdes. We attended the candlelight vigil at the shrine of Our Lady in Fatima celebrating the apparition of the Miracle of the Sun. Father Gruner traveled with the group to Fatima and met with a number of other pilgrimage groups from around the world. He has been invited to Ireland by those he met to give a series of talks which we are currently planning for early 2003. Feedback from those that attended was positive and they felt they had participated in a wonderfully spiritual experience.

The pilgrimage team explored the possibility of going to Guadalupe in December, however due to current costs it is not going to be feasible for 2002. We will again look into the possibility of going in 2003.

Our plans for next year are to return to Fatima, in addition to exploring the possibility of a pilgrimage

to Ireland as we have received many requests to hold a pilgrimage there.

### Protesting Blasphemous Play

In November, we sent out a notice to volunteers and supporters in Boston and the surrounding area, asking them to join us in a novena of Rosaries and a phone call campaign of protest, voicing their objection to the showing of a blasphemous play on Dec. 6th and 7th in the Somerville Theater in Somerville, MA. These assaults on our faith are becoming more numerous with passing time. Please remember to pray for the conversion of sinners, including homosexuals and blasphemers, when praying the Rosary.

### The Devil's Final Battle

We recently mailed out several thousand copies of the preview copy of *The Devil's Final Battle*. Since that time, our staff and volunteers have been extremely busy taking orders for copies of the published first edition of this book, which is now available.



THE *International*  
**FATIMA**  
*Rosary Crusade*  
**Readers' Mail**



Dear Father Gruner,

There is one Christmas Carol that always baffled me. What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

Here is the answer:

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.

Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit — Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Piety, Fortitude, Counsel, and Fear of the Lord.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were nine fruits of the Holy Spirit — Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

— Received anonymously

**Prayer to Holy Angels**

*We have received, O Lord, the divine mysteries, rejoicing in the festivity of Thy holy angels; we pray that we be continually delivered by their protection from the snares of our enemies and fortified against all adverse powers. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**MARY'S LOVE FOR GOD**  
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She wants us to do more than to love Him as much as we can. This is what She told Blessed Angela of Foligno one day after Holy Communion: "Angela, may you be blessed by My Son. And on your part, may you endeavor to love Him as much as possible." She also said to St. Bridget: "Bridget, if you want Me to love you, love My Son." Mary desires nothing more than to see Her beloved, who is God, loved.

Novarinus asks why the Blessed Virgin begged the angels to make known to the Lord the great love She had for Him in the words of the spouse in the Canticles: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find My beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love" (Cant. 5:8). Was God not aware of how much She loved Him? "Why did She try to show the wound of love to Her beloved, since it was He who had inflicted it?" He answers that Mary wished to make Her love known in that way to us, not to God. She wanted us also to be wounded with Divine Love, just as She was wounded. He continues: "Because Mary was all on fire with love of God, all who approach Her and are close to Her are also inflamed with this same burning love, for She makes them like Herself." This is why St. Catherine of Siena called Mary "the bearer of fire," meaning the bearer of the flames of divine love. If we want to burn with this blessed flame, let us try always to draw nearer to Mary by our prayers and our devotions.

O Mary, Thou art the Queen of love. Of all creatures, Thou art the most lovable, the most beloved, and the most loving, as St. Francis de Sales said. My own sweet Mother, Thou wert always and in all things inflamed with love for God. Give me at least a spark of Thy fervor. Thou intervened with Thy Son on behalf of the spouses at Cana. "They have no wine" (Jn. 2:3), Thou said. Will Thou not also pray for us who are so wanting in the love of God, whom we are under such great obligation to love? Say of us: "They have no love," and obtain for us this love that Thou hast for Jesus, graciously hear and pray for us. *Amen.*

**To reach us:**

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