

prayer, we call Our Lady many beautiful names which we know are most dear to her, asking her after each one to pray for us. We address her first by names reminding her that she is the Mother of God and has therefore great influence with her divine Son. We say: Mother of Christ, Mother of Our Creator, Mother of Our Redeemer, etc., pray for us. Next, we remind her that she is a virgin and should take pity on us who are exposed to so many temptations against holy purity. We call her virgin most pure, virgin most chaste, etc., and again ask her to pray for us. Lastly, we call her all those names that could induce her to hear us. We say: health of the weak, refuge of sinners, help of Christians, pray for us.

In addition to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin we have the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament, the Litany of the Sacred Heart, the Litany of St. Joseph, and many others - all made up in the same form. We have also the Litany of all the Saints, in which we beg the help and prayers of the different classes of saints — the apostles, martyrs, virgins, etc.

Blessed Alan de la Roche said: "Let everyone who loves you, oh most holy Mary, listen to this and drink it for the sweetness of this blessed salutation is so great that there are no words to explain it adequately, and even when its wonders have been sung, we still find it so full of mystery and so profound that its depths can never be plumbed. It has but few words but is exceeding rich in mystery; it is sweeter than honey and more precious than gold. We should often meditate upon it in

our hearts and have it ever upon our lips so as to say it devoutly again and again."

Now, if we say the Hail Mary properly, is not this a way to love, bless and glorify Jesus and Mary? In each Hail Mary we bless both Jesus and Mary: "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus."

By each Hail Mary we give Our Lady the same honor that God gave her when He sent the Archangel Gabriel to greet her for Him. How could anyone possibly think that Jesus and Mary, who often do good to those that curse them could ever curse those that bless and honor them by the Hail Mary?

Who could possibly understand the graces and blessings which the greeting and tender regard of Our Lady effect in us? From the very first instant that Saint Elizabeth heard the greeting that the Mother of God gave her, she was filled with the Holy Spirit and the child in her womb leaped for joy. If we make ourselves worthy of the greeting and blessings of Our Lady we shall certainly be filled with graces and a flood of spiritual consolations will come down into our souls.

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## The Angelic Salutation, and other Marian prayers

***Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.***

Next in beauty to the Lord's Prayer comes the Hail Mary prayer. It is made up of three parts:

**"Hail, full of grace! the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women"** was composed by the archangel Gabriel for these are the words he used when he came to tell the Blessed Virgin that she was selected to be the Mother of God (Luke 1:28). All her people knew that the Redeemer promised from the time of Eve down to the time of the Blessed Virgin was now to be born and many good women were anxious to be His mother. They believed the one who would be selected would be the most blessed and happy of all women.

**"The Lord is with thee"** by His grace and favor and since you are the one that He loves best. He is with all His creatures but He is with you in a very special manner.

After the visit of the angel, the Blessed Virgin went a good distance to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth, who was the mother of St. John the Baptist (Luke 1:39). When St. Elizabeth saw her, she, without being told by the Blessed Virgin what the angel had done knew by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit what had taken place and said to the Blessed Virgin: "Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." That is "blessed" because of all the women that have ever lived or ever shall live, you are the one selected by God to be the mother of His Son and Our Redeemer and blessed is that Son Himself. This is the second part of the prayer. The third part from "Holy Mary" to the end, was composed by the Church.

**"Hail."** This was the word used by the people of that country in saluting one another when they met. We say when meeting anyone we know, "Good-day," or "How do you do;" or some such familiar expression used by all in salutation. So these people instead of saying, "Good-day," etc., said "Hail," i.e., I wish you health, I greet you, etc. The angel did not say "Mary," because she was the only one present to address.

**"Full of grace."** When anything is full it has no room for more. God's grace and sin cannot exist in the same place. Therefore, when the Blessed Virgin was full of grace, there was no room for sin. So she was without any sin and gifted with every virtue.

**"Holy Mary,"** because one full of grace must be holy.

**"Mother of God,"** because her Son was true God and true man in the one person of Christ, Our Lord.

**"Pray for us,"** Because she has more power with her Son than all the other saints.

**"Sinners,"** and therefore we need forgiveness.

**"At the hour of our death"** especially, because that is the most important time for us. No matter how bad we have been during our lives, if God gives us the grace to die in His friendship, we shall be His friends forever. On the other hand, no matter how good we may have been for a part of our lives, if we become bad before death and die in that state, we shall be separated from God forever and be condemned to eternal punishment. It would be wrong therefore, to live in sin, with a promise that we shall die well, for God may not give us the grace or opportunity to repent and we may die in sin if we have lived in sin. Besides this, the devil knows how much depends upon the state in which we die and so he perhaps will tempt us more at death than at any other time; for if we yield to him and die in sin, we shall be with him forever—it is his last chance to secure our souls.

Besides the Hail Mary there is another beautiful prayer on the same subject, called the **Angelus**. It is a little history of the Incarnation and is said morning, noon, and evening in honor of Our Lord's incarnation, death, and resurrection. It is

made up of three parts. The first part tells what the angel did, viz.: "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit." After saying these words, we say one Hail Mary in honor of the angel's message. The second part tells what Mary answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy Word." We say another Hail Mary in honor of Mary's consent. The third part tells how Our Lord became Man, viz.: "And the Word was made flesh. And dwelt among us." The "Word" means here the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; and "made flesh" means, became man.

Then another Hail Mary is said in honor of Our Lord's goodness in humbling Himself so much for our sake. After these three parts we say: "Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ"; and, finally, we say a prayer in honor of Our Lord's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection.

This beautiful prayer is said three times a day in all seminaries, convents, and religious houses. The time for saying it is made known by the ringing of a bell called the "Angelus bell." In many parishes the church bell rings out the Angelus. In Catholic countries the people stop wherever they are and whatever they are doing, bowing their heads, say the Angelus when they hear its bell. It is a beautiful practice and one most pleasing to our Blessed Lord and His holy Mother. Good Catholics should not neglect it.

I might mention here another kind of prayer often said in honor of our blessed Mother. It is the **Litany**. In this form of