

Rosary of Our Lady of Discernment

Mother of Discernment, we come before You today. Allow us to be in Your loving presence with a humble and contrite heart. We come to renew our mind and our heart. We beg You to bring us the presence of the Holy Spirit, asking for the Gift of Discernment.

Thank You, Mother, for Your loving presence that fills us with peace and joy. We are Your children whom, as in Pentecost, are here before You. We believe that You have chosen us to be Tabernacles of Discernment, but we need Your strength to discover the Will of the Father in our lives.

We come before You to beg You to take away everything that prevents us from doing the Will of the Father. You taught us that the most important thing is to do His Will. Many times, we live in darkness and we cannot see clearly. That is why we ask You, today, to heal all our wounds. All those wounds that make us turn away from You and Your Beloved Son. We feel ashamed before Your presence, but we know that You love us and that You are always ready to help us. Therefore, we ask You, in a very special way, to give us discernment in our lives and to restore our Will. That Will that through sin is often weakened.

Enlighten our senses, but above all, we ask You to give us the Gift of Discernment through the Holy Spirit who dwells in You. Illumine the path of our journey. Fill us with peace and joy to serve You.

We are gathered together as a community of brothers and sisters. We are Your believers. Thank You, Mother, for making Yourself present to enable us to understand Your messages. We believe that You are present in our midst and that today You will grant us special graces. Amen.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

**Come, Holy Spirit, come!
And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine!
Come, Father of the poor!
Come, source of all our store!
Come, within our bosoms shine.**

**You, of comforters the best;
You, the soul's most welcome guest;
Sweet refreshment here below;
In our labor, rest most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.**

O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of yours,
And our inmost being fill!
Where you are not, we have naught,
Nothing good in deed or thought,
Nothing free from taint of ill.
Heal our wounds, our strength
renew;
On our dryness pour your dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:
Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.
On the faithful, who adore
And confess you, evermore
In your sevenfold gift descend;
Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end.
Amen.

Creed

Our Father

First Mystery: Mary Most Holy, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit.

Reflections:

Solemnity of Pentecost - BENEDICT XVI

REGINA CAELI

St Peter's Square Sunday, 23 May 2010

“Thus, there is no Church without Pentecost. And I would like to add that there is no Pentecost without the Virgin Mary. This is how it was at the beginning, in the Upper Room, where the disciples "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren", as the *Acts of the Apostles* says (1: 14). And this is how it always is, in every place and in every time. I witnessed it a short time ago at Fatima. What did that great multitude on the square in front of the Shrine experience, where we were truly all of one heart and one soul? It was a renewed Pentecost. In our midst was Mary, the Mother of Jesus. This is the typical experience at the great Marian sanctuaries Lourdes, Guadalupe, Pompeii, Loreto or even in the smaller ones. Wherever Christians gather in prayer with Mary, the Lord grants his Spirit.”

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Three Wonders

Monday, 23 January 2017

Indeed, the Pope recalled the Lord's words as recounted by Mark, "Truly, I say unto you, all will be forgiven the sons of men" — and we know that the Lord forgives everything if we open our hearts a little, everything! — "the sins and whatever blasphemies they utter" — even the blasphemies will be forgiven! "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin." And so, this person, when the Lord returns, will hear this phrase: "Follow me!" This is because, the Pope explained, "the great priestly anointing of Jesus was done by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. In the ordination ceremony, priests are anointed with oil; and we always talk about priestly anointing." And "Jesus, as high priest, received this anointing" in the first anointing in "the flesh of Mary through the work of the Holy Spirit." So, one who "blasphemes about this, blasphemes the foundation of God's love, which is redemption, the re-creation; blasphemes the priesthood of Christ."

"The Lord forgives everything," explained Francis, "but whoever says these things has no forgiveness, doesn't want to be forgiven, doesn't allow himself to be forgiven." And "this is the terrible thing about blaspheming the Holy Spirit: not allowing oneself to be forgiven, because it denies the priestly anointing of Jesus through the Holy Spirit."

On the small beads 7 times:

Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, increase the Gift of Discernment in my life.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be.

Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You.

Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Second Mystery: Heart of Mary, permanent cenacle of God.

Reflections:

True Devotion to Mary by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort:

“For this reason, the *more* he finds *Mary His* dear and inseparable *spouse* in a *soul*, the *more* powerful and effective he becomes in producing Jesus Christ in that *soul* and that *soul* in Jesus Christ.”

St. John Paul II - GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 28 May 1997

Mary prays for outpouring of the Spirit

“In the Church and for the Church, mindful of Jesus’ promise, she waits for Pentecost and implores a multiplicity of gifts for everyone, in accordance with each one’s personality and mission.”

POPE FRANCIS HOMILY June 8, 2013

Learning from Mary to keep the Word of God

Vatican Radio

Like Mary, we must learn to receive and keep the Word of God safe in our hearts. Marking the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary at morning Mass Saturday, Pope Francis pointed out that Mary assimilated the Word of God into her life, by meditating it and pondering what message the Lord had for her through His Word. This, he said is what safekeeping means. Pope Francis developed his homily around the two themes of astonishment and safekeeping, starting from the Gospel of the day Luke chapter 2. It recounts the astonishment of the teachers in the Temple listening to Jesus and Mary’s keeping the Word of God safe in her heart. Astonishment, the Pope observed, “is more than joy: it is a moment in which the Word of God comes, is sown in our hearts.” But, he warned, “we cannot always live in wonder,” this should be “kept in our hearts” throughout our lives. And this is precisely what Mary does, when she is “astonished” and keeps the “Word of God” in her heart:

“Keeping the Word of God: what does this mean? Do I receive the Word, and then take a bottle and put the word into the bottle and keep it there? No. Keeping the Word of God means that our heart opens, it is open to that Word just like the earth opens to receive the seed. The Word of God is a seed and is sown. And Jesus told us what happens with the seeds: some fall along the path, and the birds come and eat them; this Word is not kept, these hearts do not know how to receive it.”

Others, he said, fall into a stony soil and the seed dies. Jesus says that they “do not know how to keep the Word of God because they are not constant: When a tribulation comes they forget.” The Pope said that the Word of God can often fall into a soil that is unprepared, unkept, full of thorns. And he asked, what are the thorns? Jesus pointed them out when He spoke of “attachment to riches, vices.” Pope Francis said “keeping the Word of God means constantly meditating on what this Word says to us and what happens in our life.” And this “is what Mary did,” she “pondered and assimilated it.” This, said Pope Francis, “is a truly great spiritual work.”

“John Paul II said that, because of this work, Mary had a particular heaviness in her heart, she had a fatigued heart. But this is not the same as tired, it is *fatigue*, this comes from *effort*. This is the effort of keeping the Word of God: the work of trying to find out what this means at this moment, what the Lord wants to say to me at this time, this situation of questioning the meaning of the Word of God is how we understand. This is reading our life with the Word of God and this is what it means to *keep it in our hearts*”.

Pope Francis added that memory also safeguards God’s Word. “It helps us to preserve it, to remember everything the Lord has done in my life.” He continued: “it reminds us of all the wonders of salvation in His people and in my heart. Memory safeguards the Word of God.” The Pope concluded his homily urging everyone to think “about how to keep the Word of God in our hearts, how to safeguard this astonishment, so that it is not eaten by the birds, suffocated by vices:”

“We would do well to ask ourselves: ‘With the things that happen in life, I ask myself the question: what is the Lord saying to me with His Word, right now?’ This is called *keeping the Word of God*, because the Word of God is precisely the message that the Lord gives us in every moment. Let us safeguard it with this: safeguard it with our memory. And safeguard it with our hope. We ask the Lord for the grace to *receive* the Word of God and keep it, and also the grace to have a heart that is fatigued in this effort. So be it.”

On the small beads 7 times:

Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, increase the Gift of Discernment in my life.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be.

Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Third Mystery: Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in Her heart.

Reflections:

JOHN PAUL II - GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 28 May 1997

Mary prays for outpouring of the Spirit

“In the nascent Church she passes on to the disciples her memories of the Incarnation, the infancy, the hidden life and the mission of her divine Son as a priceless treasure, thus helping to make him known and to strengthen the faith of believers.”

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Basilica

Sunday, 1st January 2017

“Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart! (Lk 2:19). In these words, Luke describes the attitude with which Mary took in all that they had experienced in those days. Far from trying to understand or master the situation, Mary is the woman who can treasure, that is to say, protect and *guard* in her heart, the passage of God in the life of his people. Deep within, she had learned to listen to the heartbeat of her Son, and that in turn taught her, throughout her life, to discover God’s heartbeat in history. She learned how to be a mother, and in that learning process she gave Jesus the beautiful experience of knowing what it is to be a Son. In Mary, the eternal Word not only became flesh, but also learned to recognize the maternal tenderness of God. With Mary, the God-Child learned to listen to the yearnings, the troubles, the joys and the hopes of the people of the promise. With Mary, he discovered himself a Son of God’s faithful people.

In the Gospels, Mary appears as a woman of few words, with no great speeches or deeds, but with an attentive gaze capable of guarding the life and mission of her Son, and for this reason, of everything that he loves. She was able to watch over the beginnings of the first Christian community, and in this way, she learned to be the mother of a multitude. She drew near to the most diverse situations in order to sow hope. She accompanied the crosses borne in the silence of her children’s hearts. How many devotions, shrines and chapels in the most far-off places, how many pictures in our homes, remind us of this great truth. Mary gave us a mother’s warmth, the warmth that shelters us amid troubles, the maternal warmth that keeps anything or anyone from extinguishing in the heart of the Church the revolution of tenderness inaugurated by her Son. Where there is a mother, there is tenderness. By her motherhood, Mary shows us that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong. She teaches us that we do not have to

mistreat others in order to feel important (cf. *Evangelic Gaudian*, 288). God's holy people has always acknowledged and hailed her as the Holy Mother of God.

To celebrate Mary as Mother of God and our mother at the beginning of the new year means recalling a certainty that will accompany our days: we are a people with a Mother; we are not orphans.

Mothers are the strongest antidote to our individualistic and egotistic tendencies, to our lack of openness and our indifference. A society without mothers would not only be a cold society, but a society that has lost its heart, lost the "feel of home." A society without mothers would be a merciless society, one that has room only for calculation and speculation. Because mothers, even at the worst times, are capable of testifying to tenderness, unconditional self-sacrifice and the strength of hope. I have learned much from those mothers whose children are in prison, or lying in hospital beds, or in bondage to drugs, yet, come cold or heat, rain or draught, never stop fighting for what is best for them. Or those mothers who in refugee camps, or even in the midst of war, unfailingly embrace and support their children's sufferings. Mothers who literally give their lives so that none of their children will perish. Where there is a mother, there is unity, there is belonging, belonging as children.

To begin the year by recalling God's goodness in the maternal face of Mary, in the maternal face of the Church, in the faces of our own mothers, protects us from the corrosive disease of being "spiritual orphans". It is the sense of being orphaned that the soul experiences when it feels motherless and lacking the tenderness of God, when the sense of belonging to a family, a people, a land, to our God, grows dim. This sense of being orphaned lodges in a narcissistic heart capable of looking only to itself and its own interests. It grows when we forget that life is a gift we have received – and owe to others – a gift we are called to share in this common home.

It was such a self-centered orphanhood that led Cain to ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (*Gen 4:9*). It was as if to say: he doesn't belong to me; I do not recognize him. This attitude of spiritual orphanhood is a cancer that silently eats away at and debases the soul. We become all the more debased, inasmuch as nobody belongs to us and we belong to no one. I debase the earth because it does not belong to me; I debase others because they do not belong to me; I debase God because I do not belong to him, and in the end, we debase our very selves, since we forget who we are and the divine "family name" we bear. The loss of the ties that bind us, so typical of our fragmented and divided culture, increases this sense of orphanhood and, as a result, of great emptiness and loneliness. The lack of physical (and not virtual) contact is cauterizing our hearts (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 49) and making us lose the capacity for tenderness and wonder, for pity and compassion. Spiritual orphanhood makes us forget what it means to be children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, friends and believers. It makes us forget the importance of playing, of singing, of a smile, of rest, of gratitude.

Celebrating the feast of the Holy Mother of God makes us smile once more as we realize that we are a people, that we belong, that only within a community, within a family, can we as persons find the "climate," the "warmth" that enables us to grow in humanity, and not merely as objects meant to "consume and be consumed." To celebrate the feast of the Holy Mother of God reminds us that we are not interchangeable items of merchandise or information processors. We are children, we are family, we are God's People.

Celebrating the Holy Mother of God leads us to create and care for common places that can give us a sense of belonging, of being rooted, of feeling at home in our cities, in communities that unite and support us (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 151).

Jesus, at the moment of his ultimate self-sacrifice, on the cross, sought to keep nothing for himself, and in handing over his life, he also handed over to us his Mother. He told Mary: Here is your son; here are your children. We too want to receive her into our homes, our families, our communities and nations. We want to meet her maternal gaze. The gaze that frees us from being orphans; the gaze that reminds us that we are brothers and sisters, that I belong to you, that you belong to me, that we are of the same flesh. The gaze that teaches us that we have to learn how to care for life in the same way and with the same tenderness that she did: by sowing hope, by sowing a sense of belonging and of fraternity.

Celebrating the Holy Mother of God reminds us that we have a Mother. We are not orphans. We have a Mother. Together let us all confess this truth. I invite you to acclaim it three times, standing [*all stand*], like the faithful of Ephesus: Holy Mother of God, Holy Mother of God, Holy Mother of God.

On the small beads 7 times:

Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, increase the Gift of Discernment in my life.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be.

Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Fourth Mystery: Mary bearer of discernment in the cenacle.

Reflections:

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THE 8th MARIOLOGICAL COLLOQUIUM**

Friday, 13 October 2000

God the Father "gave his Only-begotten Son to the world only through Mary" and "wishes to have children through Mary until the end of the world" (*ibid.*, nn. 16, 29). God the Son "became man for our salvation but only in Mary and through Mary" and "wishes to form himself and, so to speak, incarnate himself every day in his members through his dear Mother" (*ibid.*, nn. 16, 31). God the Holy Spirit "has communicated his unspeakable gifts to Mary, his faithful Spouse" and "wishes to form elect for himself in her and through her" (*ibid.*, nn. 25, 34).

POPE FRANCIS - MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION FOR March 2018

Evangelization: Formation of Spiritual Discernment.

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

Discernment is not merely for priests or religious. All vocations are best discerned carefully, in prayer and in dialogue with a trusted spiritual advisor. While vocations to marriage, to a profession, to religious life, or the clerical state certainly require such reflection, groups can also practice communal discernment. May our Lord grant his Church and all individuals and groups within it the gift of discernment. This is a very Ignatian or Jesuit intention, recognizing the importance of discerning (seeing) the will of God. It is a skill that can be taught and improved with practice. As a Jesuit, the Holy Father clearly recognizes the importance of

formation in discernment of vocations and apostolates both for individuals and in communities. Phil 1:9-11. And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

On the small beads 7 times:

Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, increase the Gift of Discernment in my life.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be.

Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Fifth Mystery: “Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor.”
(Lk 1,30)

Reflections:

**Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 33rd World Youth Day
Palm Sunday, 25 March 2018**

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (Lk 1:30)

In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, *discernment* becomes necessary. It allows us to bring order to the confusion of our thoughts and feelings, to act in a just and prudent way. In this process, the first step in overcoming fears is to identify them clearly, so as not to find yourself wasting time and energy by being gripped by empty and faceless ghosts. And so, I invite all of you to look within yourselves and to “name” your fears. Ask yourselves: what upsets me, what do I fear most in this specific moment of my life today? What blocks me and prevents me from moving forward? Why do I lack the courage to make the important choices I need to make? Do not be afraid to face your fears honestly, to recognize them for what they are and to come to terms with them. The Bible does not ignore the human experience of fear nor its many causes. Abraham was afraid (cf. *Gen 12:10ff*), Jacob was afraid (cf. *Gen 31:31; 32:7*), and so were Moses (cf. *Ex 2:14; 17:4*), Peter (cf. *Mt 26:69ff*) and the Apostles (cf. *Mk 4:38-40; Mt 26:56*). Jesus himself, albeit in an incomparable way, experienced fear and anguish (cf. *Mt 26:37; Lk 22:44*).

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (*Mk 4:40*). In admonishing his disciples Jesus helps us to understand how the obstacle to faith is often not *scepticism* but *fear*. Thus understood, the work of discernment identifies our fears and can then help us to overcome them, opening us to life and helping us to calmly face the challenges that come our way. For us Christians in particular, fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God... and in life! This means believing in the fundamental goodness of the existence that God has given us and trusting that he will lead us to a good end, even through circumstances and vicissitudes which often bewilder us. Yet if we harbor fears, we will become inward-looking and closed off to defend ourselves from everything and everyone, and we will remain paralyzed. We have to act! Never close yourself in! In the Sacred Scriptures the expression “do not be afraid” is

repeated 365 times with different variations, as if to tell us that the Lord wants us to be free from fear, every day of the year.

On the small beads 7 times:

Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, increase the Gift of Discernment in my life.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be.

Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Sixth Mystery: The Fiat of Mary Most Holy.

Reflections:

Pope Francis: Do we say 'yes' to God the way Mary did?

Homily April 4, 2016

Speaking during the homily at morning Mass the pope asked those present to ask themselves the question whether they are men and women who respond to the Lord's call or whether they look the other way to avoid answering. Celebrating Mass at the Casa Santa Marta for the first time since the Easter break, the pope took his cue from the April 4th Feast of the Annunciation which tells of Mary's "yes" to God and opens the door to the "yes" of Jesus. Pope Francis focused his homily on the chain of affirmative answers that run through the Scriptures. He spoke of Abraham who obeyed the Lord and left his land without knowing his destination and he recalled that "humanity of men and women"—even though many were elderly like Abraham or Moses—"who said 'yes' to hope offered by the Lord." The pope also mentioned those who initially refused or hesitated — like Isaiah or Jeremiah — but ended up saying "yes" to the Lord. And reflecting on the Gospel reading of the day, Pope Francis said it marks the end of "this chain" while opening the door to yet another "yes." Mary's "yes"—he explained—allows God not only to look over humanity and walk with us, but to become one of us and take on our flesh. "Mary's 'yes' opens the door to Jesus' 'yes': I have come to do your will, this is the 'yes' that Jesus carries with him throughout his life, until the cross," he said. And Pope Francis pointed out that Mary's affirmative answer contains the whole history of salvation. "Today," he said, "is a beautiful day in which to thank God for showing us that path, but also for thinking about our lives." With a special word for some of the priests present who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of their ordination, the pope said, "every day each one of us is called to say 'yes' to God." And he asked them to think of how many times they may have chosen to pretend they hadn't heard, and he encouraged them to persevere in always listening to the Lord's voice. Finally, Pope Francis said, it is God's 'yes' that creates and re-creates the world and man: "It is God's 'yes' that sanctifies us and keeps us alive in Jesus Christ." He concluded inviting the faithful to thank God for all of this and prayed the Lord to give us the grace to always say 'yes' to his call.

On the small beads 7 times:

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Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Seventh Mystery: Mary Most Holy in vocations.

Reflections:

Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 33rd World Youth Day Palm Sunday, 25 March 2018

Discernment is indispensable when searching for one's vocation in life. More often than not our vocation is not obvious or evident at first but rather something we come to understand gradually. Discernment, in this case, should not be seen as an individual effort at introspection, with the aim of better understanding our interior make-up so as to strengthen us and acquire some balance. In such instances the person can become stronger but is still confined to the limited horizon of his or her possibilities and perspectives. Vocation, however, is a *call from above*, and discernment in this context principally means opening ourselves to the Other who calls. Prayerful silence is therefore required in order to hear the voice of God that resounds within our conscience. God knocks at the door of our hearts, as he did with Mary; he longs to establish friendship with us through prayer, to speak with us through the Sacred Scriptures, to offer us mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to be one with us in the Eucharist.

It is also important to dialogue with and encounter *others*, our brothers and sisters in the faith who have more experience, for they help us to see better and to choose wisely from the various possibilities. When the young Samuel hears the voice of the Lord, he does not recognize it immediately. Three times he runs to Eli, the older priest, who in the end proposes the right response to give to the Lord's call: "If he calls you, you shall say: 'Speak Lord, for your servant hears.'" (1 Sam 3:9). In your doubts know that you can rely on the Church. I know that there are very good priests, consecrated men and woman and lay faithful, many of whom are also young, who can support you like older brothers and sisters in the faith. Enlivened by the Holy Spirit, they will help you to make sense of your doubts and understand the plan of your own vocation. The *other* is not only a spiritual guide, but also the person who helps us open ourselves to the infinite riches of the life that God has given us. It is important to create spaces in our cities and communities to grow, to dream and to look at new horizons! Never lose the enthusiasm of enjoying others' company and friendship, as well as the pleasure of dreaming together, of walking together. Authentic Christians are not afraid to open themselves to others and share with them their own important spaces, making them spaces of fraternity.

On the small beads 7 times:

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Ejaculation: Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Discernment. Take me to the depths of my being, take me to the desert, come to heal this restless heart of mine — worried, hurt, sad and hardened. Give me discernment and calmness to listen to the Will of God. Give me Your breath of encouragement, give me Your water that cleanses and renews. Mother of Discernment, my poor heart entrusts everything to You. Today, I surrender and bring down all the walls that surround me. I submit myself to discernment.

Recitation of the Holy Rosary
For the conclusion of the Marian month of May
ADDRESS OF HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
St. Peter's Square
Friday, 31 May 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This evening we have prayed together with the Holy Rosary; we have retraced several events of Jesus' journey, of our salvation, and we have done so with the One who is our Mother, Mary, the One who guides us with a sure hand to her Son Jesus. Mary always guides us to Jesus.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her kinswoman Elizabeth. I would like to meditate with you on this mystery which shows how Mary faced her life's journey with great realism, humanity and practicality.

Three words sum up Mary's attitude: listening, decision, action. They are words that point out a way for us too as we face what the Lord asks of us in life. Listening, decision, action.

1. Listening. What gave rise to Mary's act of going to visit her relative Elizabeth? A word of God's Angel. "Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son..." (Lk 1:36). Mary knew how to listen to God. Be careful: it was not merely "hearing", a superficial word, but it was "listening", that consists of attention, acceptance and availability to God. It was not in the distracted way with which we sometimes face the Lord or others: we hear their words, but we do not really listen. Mary is attentive to God. She listens to God. However, Mary also listens to the events, that is, she interprets the events of her life, she is attentive to reality itself and does not stop on the surface but goes to the depths to grasp its meaning. Her kinswoman Elizabeth, who is already elderly, is expecting a child: this is the event. But Mary is attentive to the meaning. She can understand it: "with God nothing will be impossible" (Lk 1:37). This is also true in our life: listening to God who speaks to us, and listening also to daily reality, paying attention to people, to events, because the Lord is at the door of our life and knocks in many ways, he puts signs on our path; he gives us the ability to see them. Mary is the mother of listening, of attentive listening to God and of equally attentive listening to the events of life.

2. The second word: decision. Mary did not live "with haste", with breathlessness, but, as St Luke emphasizes, she "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). Moreover, at the crucial moment of the Angel's Annunciation, she also asks: "how shall this be?" (Lk 1:34). Yet she does not stop at the moment of reflection either. She goes a step further: she decides. She does not live in haste but "goes with haste" only when necessary. Mary does not let herself be dragged along by events; she does not avoid the effort of making a decision. And this happens both in the fundamental decision that was to change her life: "I am the handmaid of the Lord..." (cf. Lk 1:38), and in her daily decisions, routine but also full of meaning. The episode of the wedding of Cana springs to my mind (cf. Jn 2:1-11): here too one sees the realism, humanity and practicality of Mary who is attentive to events, to problems. She sees and understands the difficulty of the young married couple at whose wedding feast the wine runs out; she thinks about it, she knows that Jesus can do something and decides to address her Son so that he may intervene: "they have no more wine" (cf. v. 3). She decides. It is difficult in life to make decisions. We often tend to put them off, to let others decide instead, we frequently prefer to let ourselves be dragged along by events, to follow the current fashion; at times we know what we ought to do, but we do not have the courage to do it or it seems to us too difficult because it means swimming against the tide. In the Annunciation, in the Visitation and at the wedding of Cana Mary goes against the tide.

Mary goes against the tide; she listens to God, she reflects and seeks to understand reality and decides to entrust herself totally to God. Although she is with child, she decides to visit her elderly relative and she decides to entrust herself to her Son with insistence so as to preserve the joy of the wedding feast.

3. The third word: action. Mary set out on a journey and “went with haste” (cf. Lk 1:39). Last Sunday I underlined Mary’s way of acting: in spite of the difficulties, the criticism she would have met with because of her decision to go, nothing could stop her. And here she leaves “with haste.” In prayer, before God who speaks, in thinking and meditating on the facts of her life, Mary is not in a hurry, she does not let herself be swept away by the moment, she does not let herself be dragged along by events. However, when she has clearly understood what God is asking of her, what she has to do, she does not loiter, she does not delay, but goes “with haste.” St Ambrose commented: “There is nothing slow about the Holy Spirit” (*Expos. Evang. sec. Lucam*, II, 19: PL 15,1560). Mary’s action was a consequence of her obedience to the Angel’s words but was combined with charity: she went to Elizabeth to make herself useful; and in going out of her home, of herself, for love, she takes with her the most precious thing she has: Jesus. She takes her Son.

We likewise sometimes stop at listening, at thinking about what we must do, we may even be clear about the decision we have to make, but we do not move on to action. And above all we do not put ourselves at stake by moving towards others “with haste” so as to bring them our help, our understanding, our love; to bring them, like Mary, the most precious thing we have received, Jesus and his Gospel, with words and above all with the tangible witness of what we do.

Mary, the woman of listening, of decision, of action.

Mary, woman of listening, open our ears; grant us to know how to listen to the word of your Son Jesus among the thousands of words of this world; grant that we may listen to the reality in which we live, to every person we encounter, especially those who are poor, in need, in hardship.

Mary, woman of decision, illuminate our mind and our heart, so that we may obey, unhesitating, the word of your Son Jesus; give us the courage to decide, not to let ourselves be dragged along, letting others direct our life.

Mary, woman of action, obtain that our hands and feet move “with haste” toward others, to bring them the charity and love of your Son Jesus, to bring the light of the Gospel to the world, as you did. Amen.

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At the end of the celebration the Holy Father addressed this greeting to the faithful:

I thank you for this Rosary together, for this communion round the Mother. May she bless us all and make us brothers and sisters who are closer to each other. Good night and have a good rest!