

‘The Church Prayed Fervently’

We have entered the Marian month of May, popularly devoted to Mary our Blessed Mother. In the light of the ravaging pandemic which is haunting the entire world and our own country endlessly, the importance of the Marian month has gained special significance. The Holy Father has invited the Sanctuaries around the world (Shrines) to prayer of supplication imploring an end to the pandemic. He quotes Acts 12:5, “the Church prayed fervently to God” and has entrusted **thirty** sanctuaries from around the world – representing the Universal Church - to animate this devotion each day and cover the whole month of May. In India, Friday **14, May 2021** will be the Rosary Day in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Health (Vailankanni). I earnestly ask every one – parish, institution, community – to join from your own place in this very special initiation of the Holy Father. It would add more piety if the ‘Marialaya’ is decorated with some garland and light many candles as possible on this particular day. I also bring to your kind attention: CBCI has announced Friday 7, May 2021 as a day of fast and prayer for the Church in India.

An important feature in the prayer of the Holy Rosary is the Marian Litany, known as the Litany of Loreto – it was first used in 1531 at the Grotto of Loreto (Italy). The structure of Litany is such that it portrays the characteristic features of the person of Mary. It begins with the affirmation of the **Sanctity** of the person, the Virgin chosen to be the Mother of God, one whom the Lord called “a green olive tree, fair and fruitful” (Jer 11:16). She is “blessed” among all. The litany then goes on to praise her as the **Mother** in 14 advocations – 7 describing her maternal role and 7 about her maternal virtues. These are pure admirations of the Woman who “gave birth to her first born son” (Lk 2:7).

Nextly, there are 6 advocations hailing Mary as the **Virgin**. “The Virgin will conceive and bear a Son” (Mt. 1:23); she was found with child through the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18). This section not only praises her virginity, rather the efficacy of her virginity is highlighted.

We proceed further to praise Mary as the **Model**, the *exemplar par excellence*. In 13 symbols taken from Old Testament images, Mary’s profound role in the redemption of humanity, our own salvation is upheld in high esteem. Mary is the co-redemptrix, the mediatrix of all graces and the advocate who pleads on behalf of the human race. Very rightly then, she is the **Helper** who went with haste to Elizabeth, intervened during the crisis at the wedding in Cana, walked with her Son to Calvary. She is an everlasting inspiration for spiritual and corporal works of mercy towards the sick, sinners, afflicted, migrants and Christians.

The litany culminates with 13 titles of Mary as the **Queen**. She is the first, the epitome, the crown of God’s new creation, the one ‘lifted up’ from lowliness to the throne of the most High and placed at the centre of the Church’s mission entrusted to the apostles.

In the prayer of the Holy Rosary, as the chanting of the litany goes on, we are invited to understand that through her many titles, Mary shares the history of each human person, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles, and she constantly surrounds us with God’s love. In the many Sanctuaries (Shrines) around the world, often linked to her name, she brings together her children who struggle to come to see her and be seen by her. From her gentle ‘gaze’ they find strength to bear the weariness and the sufferings in their lives. Mary, with her maternal comfort and love whispers in their ears: “let your heart not be troubled...am I not here...your Mother?”

Let us unite together to implore her maternal intercession for the end of the pandemic; let us look to her and ask her to help us to be witnesses of hope amidst the gloom spread by the pandemic. With Mary at our side, let us advance in our pilgrimage of faith with humility, mercy and closeness to the suffering humanity and keep the joy of the Gospel shining bright even during hardest times, in moments of darkness. Mary is the Mother of Joy!



+Eugene Joseph

MARIAN MONTH

ROSARY MARATHON

Day	Shrine List	Daily Prayer Intention
	<i>Vatican Basílica</i>	For the entire world wounded by this pandemic
1	<i>Our Lady of Walsingham (England)</i>	For all the deceased
2	<i>Jesus the Saviour and Mother Mary (Nigeria)</i>	For all those who have not been able to say goodbye to their deceased loved ones
3	<i>Our Lady of Częstochowa (Poland)</i>	For all those infected with the corona virus and all the sick
4	<i>Basilica of the Annunciation (Israel)</i>	For all expectant women and their unborn babies
5	<i>Blessed Virgen del Rosario (South Korea)</i>	For all children and adolescents
6	<i>Our Lady of Aparecida (Brazil)</i>	For all young people
7	<i>Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage (Philippines)</i>	For all families
8	<i>Our Lady of Luján (Argentina)</i>	For all communication workers
9	<i>Holy house of Loreto (Italia)</i>	For all seniors
10	<i>Our Lady of Knock (Ireland)</i>	For all people with disabilities
11	<i>Virgin of the Poor (Belgium)</i>	For all the poor, the homeless, and the economically distressed
12	<i>Our Lady of Africa (Algeria)</i>	For all people who live alone and those who have lost hope
13	<i>Blessed Virgen del Rosario (Portugal)</i>	For all prisoners
14	<i>Our Lady of Health (India)</i>	For all scientists and medical research institutions
15	<i>Our Lady Queen of Peace (Bosnia)</i>	For all migrants
16	<i>St. Mary's Cathedral (Australia)</i>	For all victims of violence and human trafficking
17	<i>Immaculate Conception (U.S.A.)</i>	For all world leaders and for all heads of international organizations
18	<i>Our Lady of Lourdes (France)</i>	For all doctors and nurses
19	<i>Mother Mary's House (Turkey)</i>	For all people at war and for world peace
20	<i>Our Lady of Charity of Copper (Cuba)</i>	For all pharmacists and health care personnel
21	<i>Our Lady of Nagasaki (Japan)</i>	For all social workers
22	<i>Our Lady of Montserrat (Spain)</i>	For all volunteers
23	<i>Our Lady of Cap (Canada)</i>	For all law enforcement and military personnel and for all firefighters
24	<i>To be confirmed</i>	For all those who provide essential services
25	<i>Basilica of the Blessed Virgin of Ta'Pinu (Malta)</i>	For all teachers, students and educators
26	<i>Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico)</i>	For all workers and entrepreneurs
27	<i>Mother of God (Ukraine)</i>	For all the unemployed
28	<i>Black Madonna of Altötting (Germany)</i>	For the Holy Father, bishops, presbyters, and deacons
29	<i>Our Lady of Lebanon (Lebanon)</i>	For all consecrated men and women
30	<i>Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii (Italia)</i>	For the Church
31	<i>Vatican Gardens</i>	For the end of the pandemic and the resumption of our social and economic life

By: Pontifical Council for Promotion of the New Evangelization

INTERCESSIONS IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

With all our hearts and minds, let us pray to the Lord, believing God hears our prayers and sees our tears.
Our response: **Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

God of eternal love, this Covid-19 pandemic opened a Pandora's Box of deadly virus causing untold suffering to the world. Look with compassion upon your people. Heal the sick, save the dying, give eternal rest to the dead and comfort the bereaved.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of all creation, you meant us to be a single people; ruled by love, justice, freedom and peace. Break down the walls of our disunity that we may build bridges of understanding, harmony and solidarity. Knit us to be one body in one Spirit. Help us to realize that in these times of pandemic, we are all in need of each other's encouragement and assistance.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for the doctors, nurses and all medical and health care workers who are on the frontlines of the battle against Covid-19. Cover them with divine protection and give them the double portion of your strength as they care for the sick, thereby exposing themselves to the virus and risking their health and the health of their families.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for the scientists, the immunologists, and the pharmaceuticals fraternity, that they may continue working untiringly to discover effective and risk-free medicines and vaccines. Give them wisdom and humility to seek divine guidance and tap into divine intelligence from the One who created the world and everything in it.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for the elderly, those with pre-existing health issues, and children who are most vulnerable to viral infections. Enable them to take extra precaution through physical distancing and hygienic behaviour that will strengthen their immunity systems.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for the leaders in our government that they may set aside political partisanship and work in harmony for the common good. Help them to listen to the cries from the grassroots that their hearts may burn with compassion for the suffering people. Enable them to make wise and just decisions, choosing public health over private profit.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for religious leaders, and all those in authority, that they may be one even as you and Christ are One. In these times of pandemic, help them to care for one another and to share God's love in the words they speak and in the works they do.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who follow social distancing, wearing masks, frequent hand washing and all other safety precautions to avoid spreading the virus and halting infections. Help us to embrace suffering as discipline, knowing that "suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray that the Reign of God will be on our lips and in our hearts spreading not the deadly virus of hate and selfishness but a life-giving virus of love, mercy and compassion. Unleash not your judgment O Lord but your forgiveness that we may incline our hearts to keep your law and love one another as Jesus loved us. May this pandemic unite us to be the kind of people that you want us to be. All these we ask in the name of Jesus Christ who holds all things together and who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

