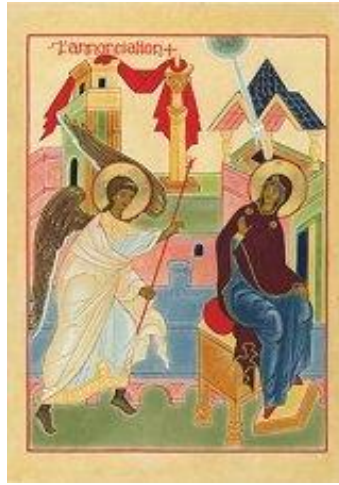


Day 1

August 6



FIDELITY

Mary's path of hope opens with the Annunciation. It is a simple narrative, but it divides history. Here we see the fidelity of God, the fidelity of Jesus and the fidelity of Mary - a fidelity explained in three words by the angel to Mary, "Rejoice, fear not!" Nothing is impossible for God.

Fidelity is a central attitude of this first stage of Mary's path of hope. In reality, it is the first and essential attitude of the whole life of Our Lady. Everything started at the moment when she says "yes" to God. It is a radical and definitive "yes", but in the obscure light of faith. It is also in faith that she accomplished her journey. This makes her "yes" closer to the exigencies and limits of our own "yes". It was sufficient for her to rely on a triple security - God loved her with predilection, God asked for this consent, for God nothing is impossible. Mary's fidelity is lived in poverty, trust and availability.

Let us ask Mary for the grace to constantly place with confidence our fidelity on God's fidelity.

(silent reflection)

Prayer

Lord our God, we give you thanks for the mystery of the Annunciation. Our hearts have been enlightened through the angel's message and Mary's total trust. May the good news of your salvation be announced to all, and may it be received with faith and gratitude, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Day 2

August 7



POVERTY

Poverty is another trait of Our Lady during her whole life, but we want to underline it from the beginning of her journey. All paths taken suppose and demand poverty. It is impossible to go on a journey if we are loaded with too many things. A journey is always a detachment from persons and things.

The poverty of Mary was a progressive detachment, a mysterious insecurity and a dark premonition. Her poverty fulfills perfectly the messianic ideal of a “humble and modest” people, the anawim who remain faithful and who seek refuge in the name of the Lord. Jesus thought of her above all, when he proclaimed, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Jesus did nothing but describe Mary when he proclaimed the beatitudes.

Thanks to this radical and evangelical poverty, Mary lived in total simplicity, open to the Word of God and in joyful dependence to His will.

(silent reflection)

Prayer

Lord God, with love you look at the humble and the poor and You reveal to them, as you revealed to Mary, the presence of your Son. By your Spirit, allow us to see in them the sacrament of your visit, through Jesus Our Lord.

Amen.

Day 3

August 8



CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation is an essential and permanent trait of Mary. At the birth of Jesus, when the shepherd spoke and narrated all that had been said to them about “the Child,” Mary carefully kept all these words and meditated them in her heart.

The Magnificat is an obvious fruit of Mary’s contemplative spirit. When we want to penetrate into the prayerful soul of Our Lady, let us meditate the Magnificat. It is the song of gratitude, of joy, of praise of Mary, “the poor one.” All throughout the history of salvation, Mary, in deep contemplation, celebrates the fidelity of God towards his servant Israel and the marvels accomplished in his poverty as servant.

In Mary, contemplation is the work of the Holy Spirit who, in her, brought the Word of God to life. From the serene depths of this contemplation, Mary simultaneously perceives the presence of God in her and the imperatives of serving her brethren. “Mary left in haste...”

(silent reflection)

Prayer

Blessed are you, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, the Rising Sun and Victorious Light, You come to visit us. Grant us to recognize your coming, and with Mary, we shall exult on this day and forever and ever.

Amen.

Day 4

August 9



SERVICE

Mary's attitude of service appears, above all, in the wedding at Cana. Mary, "the contemplative," is the first one to discover the problem of the young couple and she involves herself in their service. "They have no more wine." "Do whatever He tells you." These words of Our Lady, born from her deep faith in her Son and from a delicate love for the young couple, express the realism and fecundity of contemplation. It is always like that - when contemplation is real, it creates in us a great aptitude for service. Only contemplatives have this special capacity to immediately discover the problem of others, the inexhaustible capacity for giving. Mary's service, through the mysterious detachment of her whole life, goes up to the generous gift of her son for the evangelization of men and women and as an offering of reconciliation to the Father.

(silent reflection)

Prayer

God of Love, You made a humble woman of our race to be the mother of your Son. Through Mary's intercession, grant us to recognize the Christ in each of our brothers and sisters and live serving one another until that day when together, we shall sing your praise forever and ever.

Amen.

Day 5

August 10



LISTENING TO THE WORD

Listening is another trait proper to Our Lady in her long path of silence during which she accompanies the apostolic and missionary work of her Son. The evangelist Luke presents to us two instances of Mary “listening” attentively to the Word of God. On one occasion where Jesus was preaching to the crowd who followed him, someone said: “Your mother and your brothers are here to see you.” He replied, “My mother and my brothers are those who listen to the Word of God and put it into practice.” (Lk. 8, 19-21). Here Jesus establishes the real parental bond with Mary. Mary was able to give us Jesus in the flesh because first of all, full of faith, she welcomed Him in her heart.

Mary is “happy” because she gave us Jesus, the Son of God made man. But this was made possible because “the humble servant of the Lord” knew how to say “yes” to the Word she received. To live listening to the Word of God means possessing a great contemplative capacity. Only the poor in spirit are capable of it.

(silent reflection)

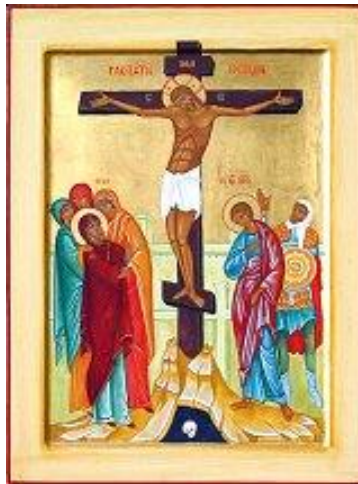
Prayer

Lord God, at every moment you await our response of faith. Grant us to allow the Word that took flesh in Mary to bear fruit: the Word, who is Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Day 6

August 11



AN OFFERING

Let us contemplate Mary as she offers her Son to the Father. It is a providentially powerful moment when Mary feels Jesus is truly her own. He is not only her Son, but also her Redeemer. “At the foot of the Cross stood His Mother” (Jn.19 : 25-27).

Mary understands and feels the rending pain of her offering; but she also experiences her mysterious fruitfulness. Never has she ever felt so alone - her Son dies. But never also has she ever felt accompanied and even more fruitful. The Church is born. “Behold your son” (the Church, humanity).

The world cannot live without Christ. “God so loved the world that He gave his only Son.” Today the world cannot live without “the Church, the Body of Christ.” Everything is fruit of the love of the Father; but everything, too, is fruit of the generosity - so serene and strong, painful and fruitful - of Mary.

(silent reflection)

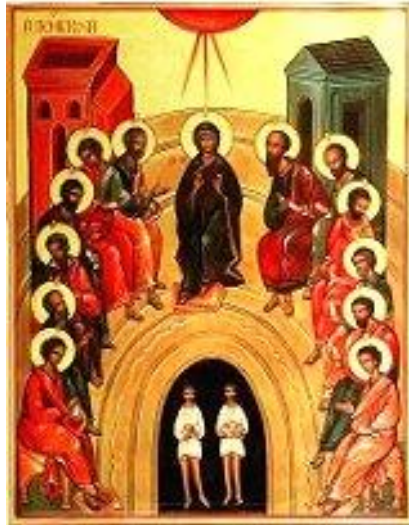
Prayer

Lord, you willed that the mother of your Son, standing by the Cross, be one in his sufferings. Grant that your Church be also united with the passion of Christ in order to participate in His resurrection. We make this prayer through your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

Day 7

August 12



COMMUNION

At the Cenacle we see Mary presiding over the community of apostles and disciples with love and prayerful hope. Mary's presence is fundamental for communion. Mary is there in the missionary beginnings of the Church, as she was at the start of the evangelical activity of Jesus. It is good for us to think of Mary, Mother of Jesus, belonging to this community of faithful disciples, listening with docility to the apostles and participating in their Eucharistic celebration.

In our journey of hope with Mary, this attitude of communion is fundamental. Mary lived it in silence, prayer and the experience of the cross. Communion demands detachment and death. It demands encounter and reconciliation. Above all, it demands a total fidelity to the Word of God.

The total mystery of Mary is a mystery of communion - between heaven and earth, between God and humanity, between contemplation and service - because her whole life was a pure obedience of faith to the Father's will. Mary's fidelity renders communion possible. Communion, in reality, is a concrete expression of fidelity.

(silent reflection)

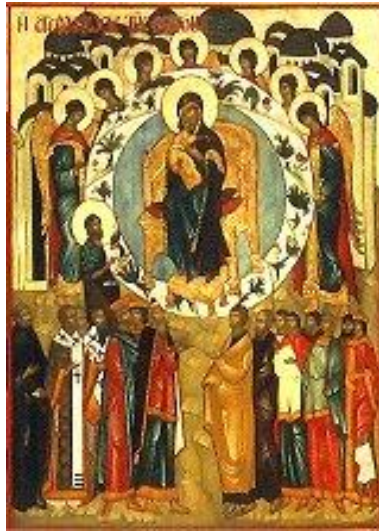
Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God! The Virgin, full of grace, was total availability to your Word. Through her intercession, open our lives to Him who wants to be born in us as he was one day born in her, Mary, the mother of your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

Day 8

August 13



MISSION

The Church that manifested itself at Pentecost is essentially missionary. By the power of the Spirit, the first Church grew and was shaped, built up by the Word and the Eucharist, but the Church continues to be born daily in the faithful heart of Our Lady. She is born in the contemplative silence of Mary, given flesh by the Word to be contemplated. Mission demands ardor and transparency from one who gives testimony, fidelity and courage from the prophet, serene strength from the martyr. Because of this, mission demands contemplation, interior coherence, and serenity before the cross.

Mary's contemplative silence made the Church grow from within. Her perfect docility to the Spirit assures interior unity in the Church and effectivity in her missionary expansion.

(silent reflection)

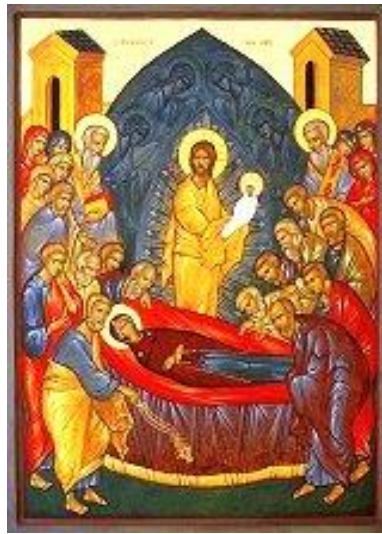
Prayer

Father, through your liberating Spirit, you transformed the apostles. Through Mary's intercession, spread out this same Spirit on your Church praying for the world. May she be today the sign of a new freedom, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

Day 9

August 14



HOPE

Mary's path, especially after Pentecost, becomes a path of hope. It is a path taken essentially in the company of the Risen One.

From Pentecost, her path is that of silence and witnessing of the early Christian community until, tradition tells us, her peaceful dormition and glorious assumption into heaven. Here we behold the plenitude of the mystery of Mary: her Paschal mystery.

The mystery of the Assumption of Our Lady is essentially a mystery of hope, because it teaches us to look at and to ardently desire what is definitive. Our world needs hope -- a hope that needs to move into what is truly good, towards God's good pleasure, towards encounter and unchanging communion, towards the building of a truly new society, towards the possession of the new heaven and the new earth where justice reside. Mary accompanies us in our own journey of hope towards the encounter with the Lord. We are sure that she constantly gives us to Jesus, that she helps us to discover in our daily life the face of her Son and makes us count on his fidelity, that she prepares us in view of the encounter with Him and that she will show us at the end of our pilgrimage, the blessed Fruit of her womb.

(silent reflection)

Prayer

Hail Mary.....