



# Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Fall 2021

*Dear Family and Friends,*

## **Fortitude: A Cardinal Virtue and a Gift of the Holy Spirit**

Fear is a basic emotion, and living in difficult and uncertain times can easily provoke this human response. Fear easily arises when faced with the unknown, or the possibility of the loss of something we love, such as freedom, self-determination, or lacking the sufficient strength to deal with the situations currently facing us. It seems to me that Fortitude is the virtue and gift we need most right now. Life is getting more and more difficult by the day, dealing with difficult circumstances, trying to keep it together when tired, in pain, sick, or in a somber mood. Not to mention feeling as if we are up against what may appear a losing battle in terms of Faith and Morals. As followers of Christ, we know that the difficulties we face each day, both big and small are the crosses Jesus tells us we must pick up if we want to be His follower. The virtue and the gift of Fortitude enable us to do just that. While fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs, it is also the virtue of a personal toughness; an ability to endure or overcome pain, discomfort, inconvenience, and disappointment. Often, we fail to be cheerful or charitable or heroic when tired or inconvenienced and it may be that Fortitude is what we lack.

We hear a lot about martyrdom these day with the systematic killing of thousands of Christians in many parts of the world. "A servant is not greater than his master," Jesus said. "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." But fortitude is also the virtue of those fighting the good fight in striving for holiness right now. Fortitude allows us to overcome fear and to remain steady in our will in the face of obstacles, physical and spiritual. Every day we need to call upon the virtue and gift of fortitude to help us to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow Jesus.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines Fortitude as the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. "The Lord is my strength and my song." "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The moral life is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

How can I practice the virtue of fortitude in every day circumstances...? How can I embrace the Cross and not just tolerate it? See chart below.

**Fortitude:** ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. (CCC 1837) Allied to it are three categories of virtues:

<b>Greatness of soul:</b>	heroism ambition	generosity charitableness	unselfishness cheerfulness	nobility
<b>Patience:</b>	courtesy	forgiveness	sympathy	compassion
<b>Constancy:</b>	firmness faithfulness	courage self-reliance	endurance	perseverance

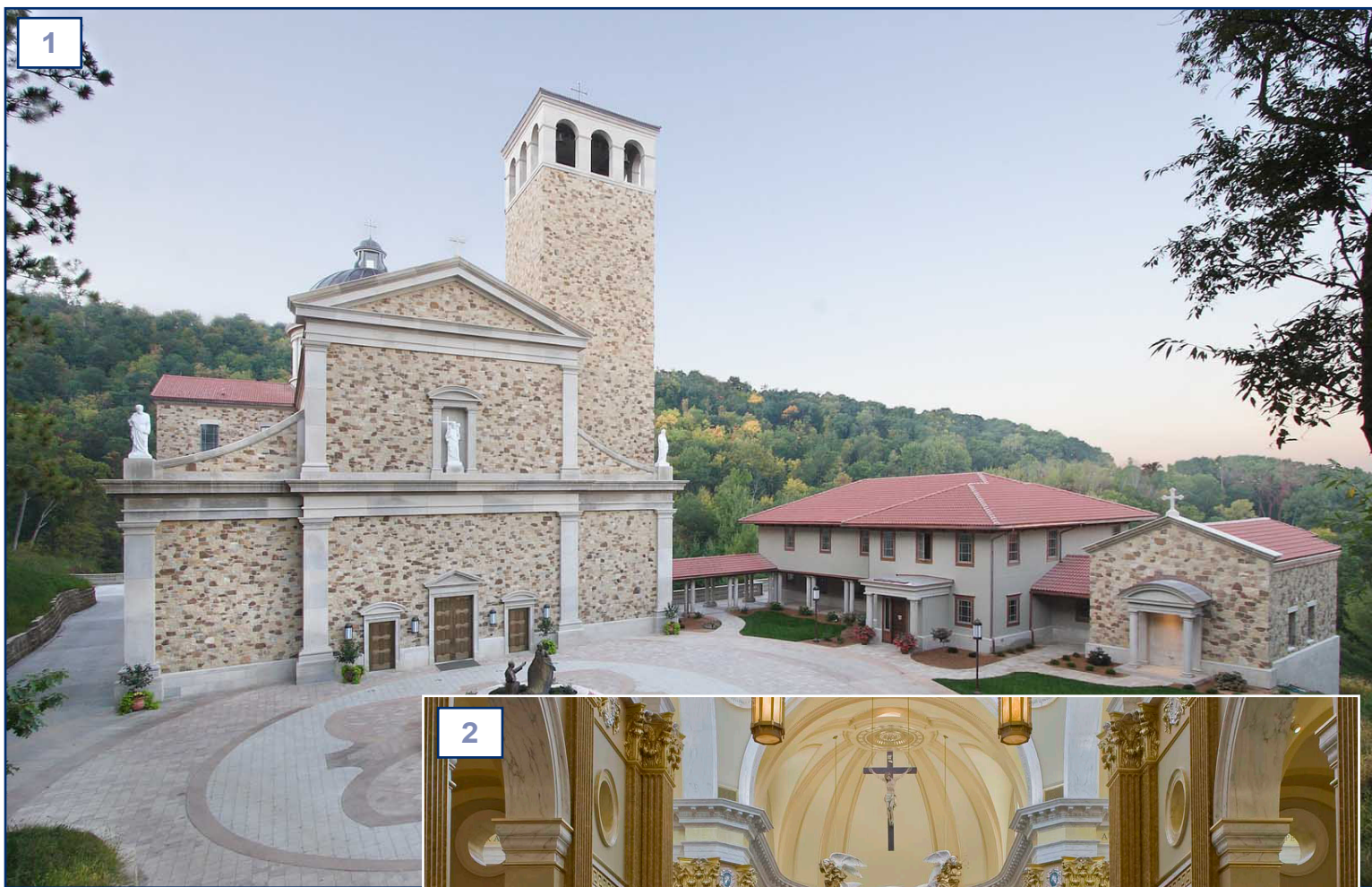
Sincerely, in the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

*Mother Mary Magdalene . IHM*

Mother Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM  
General Superior

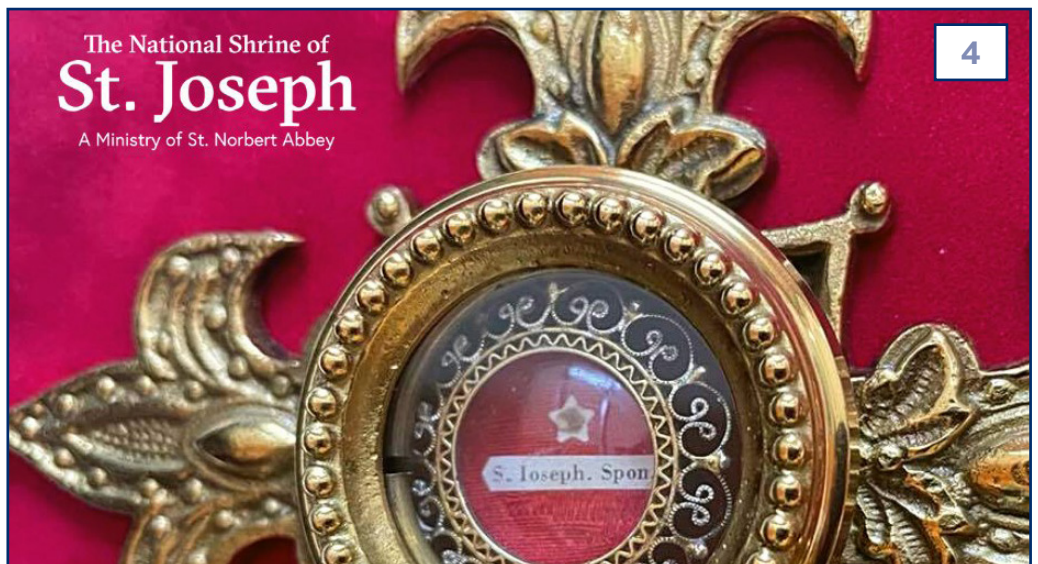
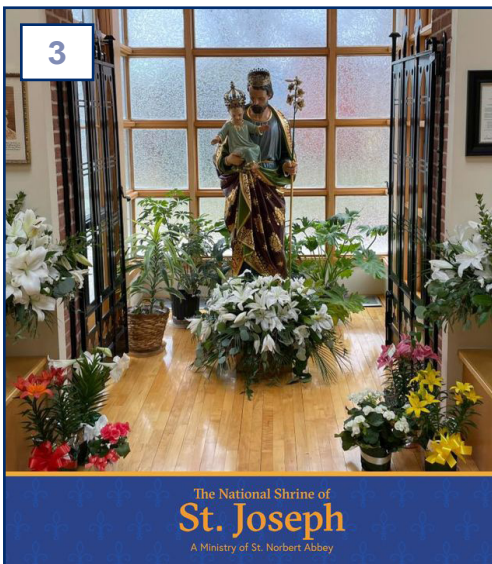
## *IHM Pilgrimage to Shrines of St. Joseph and Our Lady*

This past summer 11 of the Sisters were able to accentuate the Year of Saint Joseph with a pilgrimage; heading north they visited the Marian Shrines of Wisconsin and the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in La Crosse and the National Shrine of Saint Joseph in De Pere. The first stop was the Cathedral, entrusting all of our travels and time to Saint Joseph and His Most Chaste Spouse.



**All the images of the shrines were taken from their individual web sites.**

**1 & 2:** *Exterior and interior of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine. Settled amidst the bluffs of southwestern Wisconsin, the Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe, with its many devotional areas, provided a stunningly beautiful place of quiet prayer. (The Shrine Church was completed and dedicated in 2008; the architect was Mr. Duncan G. Stroik.)*

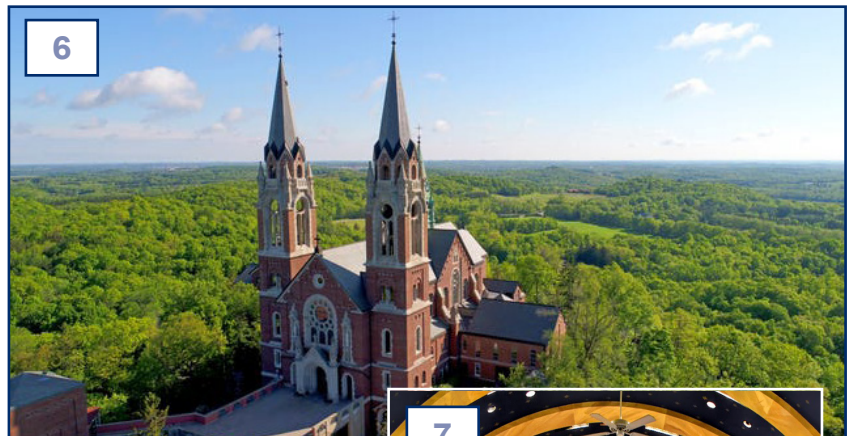


**3 & 4:** *Traveling from southwest Wisconsin to the northeastern region, the third stop on the pilgrimage was to the National Shrine of Saint Joseph at St. Norbert College in De Pere. Declared a National Shrine by Pope Leo XIII in 1892, it houses a lovely statue of St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus. Near the statue the Sisters discovered a relic of St. Joseph's mantle and, impressed by his nearness, the Sisters couldn't resist touching their rosaries to the reliquary.*

**5:** *From there the Sisters traveled to the nearby shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the only approved apparition site of Our Lady in the United States. The Shrine is very simple and humble but fitting and very conducive to prayer. It is a wonderful experience to be where Our Lady has deigned to come.*



**6 & 7:** *Heading south, the last stop on the pilgrimage, outside of Milwaukee, was to Holy Hill Basilica, the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. The setting was magnificent and the views stupendous! The unique Chapel to Our Lady Help of Christians was a great encouragement and reminder of Our Lady's loving concern and desire to be active in our lives.*



**8:** *IHM pilgrims from left to right, front row: Sister John Marie, Sister Maria Cabrini, Sister Maria Kolbe, Sister Mary Francesca, Sister Mary Catherine; back row: Mother Mary Magdalene, Sister Mary Faustina, Sister Julian Marie, Sister Marie Bernadette, Sister Veronica Marie, Sister Cecilia Marie.*



## *Sister Mary Teresa Laville, IHM, Professes Perpetual Vows*

On August 22, 2021, Sister Mary Teresa Laville, IHM professed perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience in the hands of Mother Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM. In the same celebration, Sr. Mary Elizabeth Boede, IHM observed her silver jubilee, 25 years of fidelity to Christ through religious consecration. The ceremony took place in Sacred Heart Church in Colwich.

As the entrance hymn began, Sr. Mary Teresa led the community of Sisters in the entrance procession; each carried a lit candle as a reminder of their Baptism, on which the religious consecration is founded, and to signify their union with Christ the Light of the World. The Church was filled with family members and community friends who had gathered to celebrate this joyful and momentous occasion. The Sisters were followed by the altar servers and several priests who reverently proceeded to the altar of sacrifice. Bishop Carl Kemme was the main celebrant.

After the Gospel was proclaimed in which the congregation fittingly meditated on the mystery of the Annunciation to Mary, Bishop Kemme gave a beautiful homily, reflecting on the mystery of Mary in the context of religious profession: "Why was Mary assumed into heaven and why was she crowned as Queen?...The answer to these questions, I believe, can be found in the events that happened to her and because of her on the day of the Annunciation....In her absolute and unaltered freedom, she said 'fiat: may it be done to me according to your word..'.... As Queen, she is the highest honor of our race. The glorious life she now enjoys will one day be yours and mine if we also give our 'fiat,' however imperfectly we do so in contrast to hers." Here, the Bishop encouraged each member of the Church to imitate Mary's immediate, total, and loving response to God's will. Later on, he continued, speaking more directly to the Sisters: "Today, you [Sr. Mary Teresa] will receive a ring, espousing yourself forever to the holy Bridegroom of your soul, Jesus Christ....as a way to continually live in this world as Mary lived in this world.... Sr. Mary Elizabeth, you have lived in this manner for 25 years; no small commitment given today's culture and world in which we live. No doubt, it was your cooperation with God's many graces that had inspired you 25 years ago and inspires you today to remain faithful and true..."

After the homily, Bishop Kemme determined Sr. Mary Teresa's readiness to dedicate herself to God by asking questions such as "Are you resolved, with the help of God, to undertake that life of perfect chastity, poverty, and obedience chosen for themselves by Christ our Lord and His Virgin Mother, and to persevere in it forever?" to which Sr. Mary Teresa whole-heartedly responded, "I am!" Sr. Mary Teresa concretized this verbal assent a few moments later when she professed her perpetual vows in the hands of her superior. She then signed a written copy of her vows on the altar which was placed under the corporal during the Liturgy of the Eucharist, symbolizing the divine reality of Sr. Mary Teresa's union with Christ forever! Then, Bishop Kemme said the solemn prayer of consecration followed by the blessing of the ring which Sr. Mary Teresa now wears as a reminder of her eternal espousal to Jesus her Bridegroom.

After Holy Communion, Sr. Mary Elizabeth publicly renewed her vows as an act of love and gratitude toward her Divine Spouse. Mother Mary Magdalene also presented her with a Papal Blessing and a Jubilee Crucifix.

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This sacred participation in Christ's redemptive sacrifice of the Mass and the joyful recognition of the gift of Mary, our Queen Mother, was accentuated by the dual celebration of the perpetual profession of Sr. Mary Teresa and the silver jubilee of Sr. Mary Elizabeth. Like them, may Jesus and Mary, the Source and vessel of grace, ever inspire each of us to echo in our lives the fiat of Our Lady, uniting us to God and His holy will.



*Sister Mary Teresa kneels before Mother Mary Magdalene and professes the perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.*

# *Sister Mary Teresa Laville, IHM, Professes Perpetual Vows*



**1:** *The Community gathers with family and friends for the perpetual profession of Sister Mary Teresa and the Silver Jubilee celebration of Sister Mary Elizabeth.*

**2:** *The document of profession is signed by Sister Mary Teresa on the altar of sacrifice, formally uniting her sacrifice with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*

**3:** *The Most Reverend Carl A. Kemme extends his hands over Sister Mary Teresa, solemnly consecrating her as a Bride of Christ forever.*

**4:** *Sister Mary Teresa beams after receiving her ring, the sign of her eternal spousal relationship with Jesus.*



# *Sister Mary Teresa Laville, IHM, Professes Perpetual Vows*



**5:** Sister Mary Elizabeth Boede, IHM, Silver Jubilarian, Bishop Carl Kemme, and Sister Mary Teresa Laville.



**6:** Before the final blessing, Sister Mary Elizabeth Boede, IHM, in celebration of her Silver Jubilee, renewed her vows, after which Mother Mary Magdalene presented her with a Papal Blessing and a jubilee crucifix.

**7:** Sister Mary Teresa's family from left to right: her step-mother, Angie Laville, her sisters Nina and Betsy, Sister Mary Teresa, her father Gordon, and her brother Elie.



# Remember the Sisters

## MY EPIPHANY MOMENT

BY MRS. BRONWEN LEWIS

Epiphany is a familiar word that describes a rare experience. Sometimes we refer to epiphanies—small or large—as “Eureka moments” or “A-ha! Moments.” This common usage of the word comes from a moment of profound importance to the Catholic faithful: the Feast of the Epiphany, celebrated at the end of the Christmas season on January 6th, when we mark the visit of the Magi to Mary, Joseph, and their newborn Son. We are so familiar with images of exotic and colorful robes (rich purples, blues, and greens) and precious gifts (gold, frankincense, myrrh) associated with the Adoration of the Magi, that perhaps we can miss the important symbolism of the moment. Epiphany comes from a Greek word that means “appearance” or “revelation.” What was happening in that moment was that a pagan world, represented by wise men from the East, was able to witness for the first time the manifestation of their Salvation, the fullness of God’s grace, in the person of the infant Jesus. Most of us descend from pagan ancestors, and this beautiful moment that we celebrate together every year should fill our hearts with gratitude for the chance to know Christ’s love and His Salvation.

I recently had my own epiphanic moment while reflecting on, ironically, an image of the Epiphany. I was attending Mass in Oklahoma City at Christ the King Catholic Church. In front of me was a gorgeous and colorful stained-glass window depicting the three Magi kneeling in adoration in front of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. I marveled at the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose expression, and the way she was holding the infant Jesus seemed to ask, “Would you like to hold your King?”

I was incredibly moved by this image. It made me think about how our Sisters, each and every day, invite all of us, through Mary, to hold Jesus in our hearts, just as Mary seemed to invite the Magi to hold her infant child. I thought most particularly about the students the Sisters teach receiving this gentle invitation. I reflected on the humility and joyousness of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. I carry them in my heart to Mass each day in prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude, just like I do for my family, because I feel as if they truly are my family.

We have in our Sisters a group of religious women who daily consecrate themselves—their work, their joys, their sufferings—to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They strive to be like Mary—to reflect Mary—so that in this reflection the world can see Mary and not simply the religious Sister herself. The Sisters begin each day in prayer, with the intention of reflecting Mary in their daily lives—in Morning Prayer before Mass, in the prayers of the Mass, in their prayers at breakfast before leaving for school.

In this way, I saw the Sisters reflected in that stained glass

window at Christ the King Catholic Church in Oklahoma City some 160 miles away. Looking at the stained-glass scene of the Epiphany, of the Mother of God presenting the infant Christ to a new world, I could see the Sisters entering their classrooms in the morning and greeting their students. Returning home to Wichita and observing the Sisters, I was reminded of the window in the way they pray, in the way they teach, in the way they live their lives.

It is every teacher’s joy to witness their students having “Eureka moments,” little epiphanies. These moments of sudden understanding are beautiful to witness, just as all our epiphanies are profound experiences. This is what we have seen for almost 50 years as we watch the Sisters teach our students, holding up a love of the Catholic faith for them, like Mary did for the Magi, and sparking hundreds of moments of revelation for our children and grandchildren every day. These epiphanies are what keep faith alive in our communities, the sparks that keep the passion of faith alive in all of us. Perhaps Bishop Jackels said it best a few years ago when he commented, “The IHM Sisters have shown themselves a great powerhouse of prayer.” He further stated, “The best teacher cannot give what an IHM Sister gives in a school... that is the religious witness that comes from their consecration that is supported by their community life and by their personal prayer.”

I have had the joy of hearing stories of how the Sisters have helped so many children, students, families, and adults come to know Jesus through Mary, as if she has said to all of them, “*Would you like to hold your King?*”

When you give, when you begin thinking about giving, I would encourage you to listen to the stirrings of your heart as you think about how the Sisters are reflections of Mary and about how, as educators of the Catholic faith, they live the Feast of the Epiphany in their daily lives. I truly hope this article will help you spark your own epiphany, so that you will be the one reaching out and saying to others, “Don’t you want to give to the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary?”

The Sisters’ presence in our community is a cause for thanksgiving, rejoicing, gratitude, and, yes, singing! With your help, we will have a beautiful gift to give to future generations...the building of the first Motherhouse in over 150 years. I pray that if you, like me, find yourselves moved by the reflection of Mary that is visible in the Sisters, that you will find a way to make a gift, like the Magi, in gratitude for the faith that they reflect to us and, more importantly, to our children.

# THE GUARDIAN ANGELS: THOSE TO WHOM GOD'S LOVE ENTRUSTS US

*Nowhere in the Bible – our source of knowledge regarding angels – are we given the impression that angels are fairy-type creatures. God, especially through the Old Testament, reveals that there are different kinds of angels. Some, such as the seraphim and cherubim, whose sole and lofty purpose is to adore the Triune God, are described as burning like fire, having six wings and four faces, as well as wheels or spheres for feet! This is not the modern depiction of a cute baby head with attached wings, actually, instead, it is rather frightening. Likewise, the appearance of angels who more directly interact with man, that is, the archangels and guardian angels, are also intimidating figures.*

Angels are pure spirits with an intellect and will, no body, who must assume an appearance when necessary to carry out God's will and deliver His messages. The appearance suits the mission but leaves no doubt of the angels' authority and ability to carry out the Lord's will, for as St. Augustine says, the angels are "the mighty ones who do His word."

Whether they were delivering a message from God or assisting the Chosen People on their journey through the wilderness, whether they were commanding in battle or guiding and accompanying a traveler, whether they were protecting God's chosen ones in the fiery furnace or in the lions' den, whether they were strengthening Jesus in His agony or freeing the apostles from prison, no where do we find them depicted as effeminate creatures with flowing garments or feathery wings.

Exactly the opposite, in fact. Perusing the many instances of angelic appearances and interventions throughout Scripture two common reactions are noted. The human person's most frequent response to the angelic person's presence was either one of dropping to the ground and worshipping, mistaking the angel for God Himself, or one of fear at the daunting, powerful presence. Often the angels' first words were either, "Do not worship me, I am a fellow servant of the Most High," or "Do not be afraid." Why? Because their appearance and presence, reflecting their nature, conveyed a might and an authority, the power and strength of the One Who sent them. These are no sentimental, wispy figures or cute little "cherubs".



We are given angels to help us as really, truly, and even as dramatically as they did the people of Biblical times. The angels are a gift to us, flowing from God's love, to help us along our way to eternity. It has long been thought that the guardian angels' primary duty towards their human charge was to help them stay in the state of grace. For those not in the state of grace the angel's primary duty is to keep them physically safe until they are returned to the state of grace. Being our protectors, they are concerned for both our spiritual and physical well-being; however, as emissaries of God,

our holiness is their primary concern. And for this they are willing to fight for us, to protect us from the fallen angels' influence and from our own sinful tendencies. Our Father in Heaven so desires our eternal communion with Him that He has provided us with the sure and steady assistance of a heavenly, powerful companion. We should never underestimate their abilities; "the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels" (CCC 334).

# THE GUARDIAN ANGELS: THOSE TO WHOM GOD'S LOVE ENTRUSTS US

With all of this in mind, perhaps it would behoove us to consider again the Guardian Angel Prayer that so many of us learned in our earliest of years.

*Angel of God, my guardian dear,  
to whom God's love entrusts me here.  
Ever this day be at my side  
to light and guard,  
to rule and guide.*

He is always ready and always willing to assist us. The key word there is ALWAYS. Fostering a good and healthy relationship with your own personal guardian angel can only benefit you. Our angels are not God. They do not have infinite knowledge or, necessarily, the intimate knowledge of our thoughts. We need to communicate with them and let them communicate with us... and then be docile to the subtle nudges to do good, those inspirations that we cannot otherwise explain. I think it just as imperative to thank our angels after we sense their assistance, and, perhaps, at the end of the day for all of the times they helped us unnoticed.

Not only do our guardian angels enlighten us, protect us and lead us along the true and sure path, they also intercede for us. In iconography, angels often carry a sword to indicate their role of protector or a staff of authority and power. Also in icons, they may have wings indicating the swiftness of their movement of ascending and descending to God and man, as described in the dream of Jacob's ladder. An angel's hand, or hands, extended indicate their intercession for us before the Throne of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us, "From infancy to death human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession" (CCC 336). Angels really are our best friends, never sleeping, and constantly looking out for our best interests, namely our sanctification. We can always count on their assistance.

Knowing that, what have we to fear? Shouldn't we trust and treasure the gift of the angels? The Letter to the Hebrews says, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). With the angels helping us, protecting us from the evil one and his minions, we can be confident and strong in our daily battle. The virtue and gift of the Holy Spirit, fortitude, is supported and built up with the ever-present guidance and protection of our guardian angel. How comforting to know that, as Saint Thomas Aquinas says, "The angels work together for the benefit of us all" (as cited in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 350).



## *Prayer to the Guardian Angels*

*Saints Michael,  
Gabriel, Raphael, and  
all guardian angels,  
especially the angels of  
our Holy Father, of our  
Bishops, of our priests,  
and of all those we teach,  
intercede for us, protect  
us from the snares of the  
evil one, and carry our  
prayers to the Triune  
God.*

*Mary, Queen of the  
angels, pray for us.*

## Saint Joseph: A Man of Fortitude

As the “Zealous Defender of Christ” (from his Litany), Saint Joseph is a prime example of fortitude. The word “zealous” indicates an intensity that is eager, ardent, fervent, and passionate, in a word, whole-hearted. Zeal is not necessarily dramatic or vocal; for example, Saint Joseph expressed his zeal in prompt, consistent, and responsible action. The term “defender” describes someone who drives away danger from another person, whether a threat or an imminent attack. A defender may also maintain or support people, being vigilant to preserve them and keep them safe.

Saint Joseph put his whole being into his vocation as husband and father, protector and provider. Like Mary, he knew and lived the Scriptural command, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Dt 6L5). Saint Joseph’s zeal sprang from reverential love for God.

Scripture records no words of Saint Joseph, so we might have the impression that he was quiet, but he was certainly not timid. The Gospel shows him to be prudent, discerning, and courageous; whenever God manifested his will, Saint Joseph responded with prompt and decisive action. Like Mary, Saint Joseph communicated his own whole-hearted “Fiat” repeatedly. By his actions he said, “Behold I am the servant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” Pope Francis notes in his recent apostolic letter *A Father’s Heart*: “At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the Child and His mother, and does what God commanded him” (Patris Corde, 5). Saint Joseph lived his vocation with unwavering dedication in whatever situation he found himself.

For the good of his family, he responded swiftly and responsibly to unfamiliar circumstances, regardless of the inconvenience or discomfort to himself. Most notably, Saint Joseph took the Child and His Mother by night, fleeing to Egypt, providing for them in a foreign land until God told him to return to Israel. He faced many situations beyond his control, with great composure and whole-



hearted virtue. He zealously put his strength, intelligence, and will at the service of the Father, the Child Jesus, and his beloved wife Mary. Pope Francis points out, “Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive ... Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments” (PA, 4).



## *Saint Joseph: A Man of Fortitude*

When Saint Joseph faced challenges in zealously defending Christ, perhaps he recalled the Scripture: “Be firm and steadfast. Do not fear or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9). Like Mary, Saint Joseph must have pondered these things in his heart drawing strength from the Word of God to faithfully guard and protect the Messiah.

Even today, to be a faithful Catholic requires fortitude. Pope Benedict testifies to the power of Christ’s presence in our lives: “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which give life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (Deus Caritas Est, 1). This we are called to share with those we encounter! Just as Saint Joseph zealously defended Christ in even the most dire and ominous of circumstances, we, too, whether we are comfortable in doing so or not, must give to others what we ourselves have found to be true: Pope Francis says, “In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without Him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others” (Evangelii Gaudium, 121).

We need not apologize for what we believe, or be afraid of offending someone by the communication of what we, through faith, know to be true; we must – with fortitude – share it, so that others may come to know what ... that is, WHO, we know, and His saving grace. Why would we want to keep the Good News of Salvation from anyone? In fortitude, in charity and truth, it is an act of love to introduce others to the Truth. Simply by mentioning His name He can change lives.

Even in his silence, Saint Joseph courageously defended Jesus. By our faithful living of and witness to the Gospel message we too can defend Him and introduce Him to others; with the virtue and gift of fortitude we are even enabled to use words to do the same!

### PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH, GUARDIAN OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Blessed Joseph, husband of Mary, be with us this day.

Thou didst protect and cherish the Virgin;  
Loving the Child Jesus as thy Son,  
thou didst rescue Him from the danger of death.

Defend the Church, the household of God,  
purchased by the blood of Christ.

Guardian of the Holy Family,  
be with us in our trials.

May thy prayers obtain for us the strength  
to flee from error and wrestle with the powers of corruption,  
so that in life we may grow in holiness  
and in death rejoice in the crown of victory. Amen.

*Thank you for all the prayers!  
Keep reciting those Memorares!*

4, 845, 396

*Memorares  
for Our Lady  
to Date*

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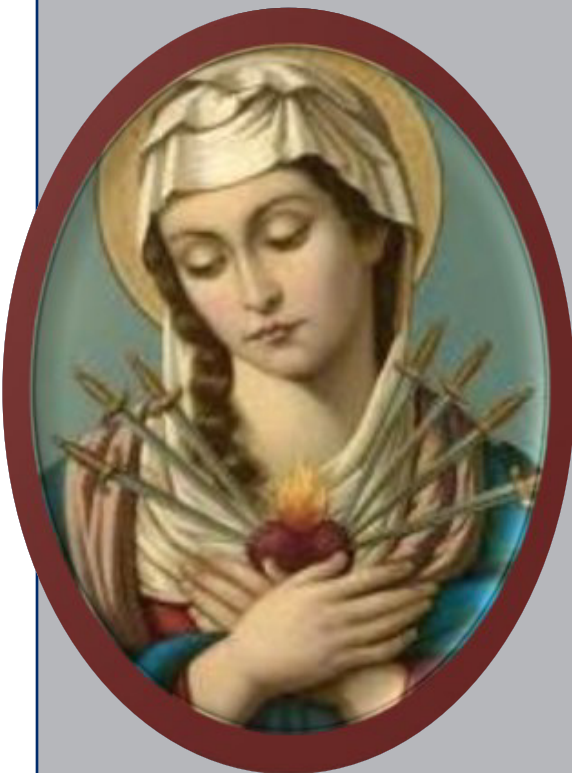
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