

MI Monthly Formation (3)

In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality

Dear MI friends,

May grace and peace be yours in abundance through knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

In **March** our spiritual goal, following the example of Mary, is to enable us to recognize Christ in each person we meet, especially in those who are poor, sick or abandoned. We know very well how difficult it is to accept and to appreciate those who live or work with us; but we also know that *"the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."*¹ For this reason, **we can love as Jesus loves us**, if we believe in this presence and power of God's Spirit within us. This was the power and the secret of the sanctity of our **Blessed Mother** Who also opened her entire being to the Holy Spirit and Who was never separated from Him. *"At the Annunciation Mary entrusted herself to God completely, with the 'full submission of intellect and will,' manifesting 'the obedience of faith' to him who spoke to her through his messenger. She responded, therefore, with all her human and feminine 'I,' and this response of faith included both perfect cooperation with 'the grace of God that precedes and assists' and perfect openness to the action of the Holy Spirit, who 'constantly brings faith to completion by his gifts.'"*²

As Catholics we are living the **Lenten Season**. Lent, a time for spiritual renewal, is a favorable time for our salvation. It is an opportunity to meet with God Who reconciles and brings us renewed life. It is a time for becoming more conscious of the gifts received from God; a time for verifying how faithful we are to our baptismal promises; a time for giving thanks for a new life. Lent is also a penitential time that suggests a journey of conversion and penance. In particular, it is a special opportunity to exercise charity to the poor. Prayer and fasting during Lent are means that lead us naturally to a greater charity. In fact, Lent consists of: **a sign** (ashes), **a time** (forty days), **a commitment** (reconciliation). The ashes are a sign of something which once was alive but is now dead. A branch that has been cut loses vital contact with the sap, becomes dry, is burnt and turns into ash. The ash evokes death and nothingness. Therefore, scattering ashes or sitting on them was adopted as a penitential sign³. Today receiving ashes at the beginning of the Lenten Season is an expression of extreme poverty and humility. With this act we show our willingness to fulfill a journey of conversion, responding in love to the gift of grace.

This journey takes time to be fulfilled. That is the reason for the forty days, according to biblical tradition. More than a mere mathematical number, forty days indicate a time during which something decisive takes place. It is a time of grace (kairòs), a unique opportunity that we should exploit with the greatest care. The forty days are a precious time, an occasion for growing in holiness. We should not waste them or take them lightly.

Finally, reconciliation is a gift of God in Christ. It is He Who reconciles us, Who arouses in us the desire to return to Him with all our hearts. For our part we have to cooperate with His grace, as the Blessed Mother did, by improving our spiritual life and dedicating ourselves anew to greater works of charity.

In this way, having achieved a dedicated and fruitful Lenten journey, we will enter into the **Easter Season** with a joyful and deep appreciation of the peace that the Risen Son gives us. The Easter Season invites us to meditate on the joy of the Resurrection of the Lord and on the desire of God to remain with us always through the institution of the **Eucharist**, the source and summit of evangelization. Therefore, we have to pay particular attention and care to the Eucharist and to Sunday, the day of the Risen Christ. It is a special day of faith and a gift of the Holy Spirit, truly the Easter of every week. Every baptized person should consider Sunday Mass an inalienable chance to meet Christ personally: in the Word, in the Eucharist and in the Assembly. The Eucharist links Christians to one another through love, charity and reciprocal help.⁴ Don't waste such an opportunity for grace!



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¹ Rom 5:5

² RM 13

³ Cf. Jon 3:6; Job 2:8

⁴ Cf. Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI), NN. 35 and 36 quoted in the box

THE WAY OF HUMILITY

MARCH Prayer Intention:

That we may know and love Jesus Who rises to a new life in every person crucified by poverty and injustice.

The poor: those in whom Christ is chiefly present

Aim: to commit ourselves more fully in some charitable work for the poor

Begin the meeting with prayer as in your customary. The suggested reading for this month is a reading from the holy Gospel according to

Matthew 25: 31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit upon his royal throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. Then he will separate them into two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep he will place on his right hand, the goats on his left. The king will say to those on his right: 'Come, You have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the just will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?' The king will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.' Then he will say to those on his left: 'Out of my sight, you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was away from home and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to comfort me.' Then they in turn will ask: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or away from home or naked or ill or in prison and not attend you in your needs? He will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it to me.' These will go off to eternal punishment and the just to eternal life."

As we suggested last time, contemplating on the Word of God, following the method illustrated for January and February, would be very helpful. See it in the box reported in last month's formation.

Hints for contemplation

This excerpt from Matthew is not a parable but a solemn description of the last judgment. The King has separated the Nations into two groups, one on His right and the other on His left. For each group there is a different verdict: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father" and "Depart from me, you accursed"⁵. Following is the explanation: You did or didn't help Me when I needed it. In answer to the spontaneous question: "Lord, when did we see you ..." ⁶ the reply is: "Whatever you did or didn't do for one of these least brothers of mine, you did or you didn't do for me."⁷

The lesson given to us is old and new at the same time. In the Bible, indeed, the just man is he who cares for the poor, who gives food to the hungry and shelter to the weak. But the major point of this text is that **in serving the poor we serve the Lord Himself**. At the end of our lives we'll be judged according to how we have treated the poor, His "*little ones*." As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches⁸, "God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: 'Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you'; 'you received without pay,

⁵ Mt 25:34, 41

⁶ Mt 25:37-39

⁷ Mt 25:40.45

⁸ CCC 2443-2444. Could be very helpful to read and consider together as a group all the numbers of this part VI: from 2443 to 2449

give without pay⁹. It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.¹⁰ When 'the poor have the good news preached to them,' it is the sign of Christ's presence.¹¹ 'The Church's love for the poor... is a part of her constant tradition.' This love is inspired by the Gospel of the beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor.¹² Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to 'be able to give to those in need.'¹³ It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.¹⁴

This is because **everyone is another Christ**. The first great commandment is the same as the second,¹⁵ because Jesus Himself became One of us, and He is always with us, seen as the Crucified Who dwells in all the suffering and the poor throughout the world. Jesus during His life on earth became one of the poor announcing to them the coming of the Kingdom.¹⁶ He Himself became poor to do the will of the Father. He shared the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; He experienced hunger, thirst, and privation.¹⁷ Jesus identified Himself with the poor of every kind and made active love toward them the condition for entering His kingdom.¹⁸

Therefore, **to welcome the poor is to welcome Christ Himself**. In loving the poor we love God Himself, because "If anyone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."¹⁹ The entire Law is love the Lord and our brothers with the same act of love, because God became our neighbor and brother in Christ.

The final judgment will be based on our care toward the least. Those with whom Christ identifies Himself: the hungry, the thirsty, the outcast, the naked, the sick, the prisoner, the old, and children and women deprived of their dignity and human rights, the handicapped, the physically and mentally disturbed. During the Last Judgment we'll understand that they will be the first because "the stone rejected by the builders has be-

come the cornerstone."²⁰ Consequently, the love of God doesn't consist merely in words; but it is shown in an active and tangible commitment toward our poor brethren, the immigrants and the oppressed, in whom Christ continues to live until the final victory over self and evil.

The principle by which we verify that we are with Christ is **charity**. It means sharing with those who do not have the necessities of life (*feed the poor and offer drink to the thirsty*); with those who have no work (*to clothe the naked*); with those who are homeless (*to shelter the homeless*); with those who have no one to defend them or have lost their human dignity (*to visit the prisoner*). When we want to know if we really love God, we must ask ourselves how we practice **the works of mercy**, first of all the corporal works. Otherwise, we risk being like those who say: "Lord, Lord" without doing His will.²¹

The **life of Our Lady** is a perfect example of how to put these teachings into practice. Immediately after the narration of the Annunciation, St. Luke guides us in the footsteps of the Virgin of Nazareth toward "a city of Judah."²² Mary arrived there "in haste," to visit Elizabeth her kinswoman. The reason for her visit is found in the fact that at the Annunciation Gabriel made special mention of Elizabeth, who in her old age had conceived a son by her husband Zechariah, through the power of God.²³ Mary went to the house of her relative moved by charity, to help Elizabeth during her pregnancy and delivery.²⁴ When Elizabeth greeted her young kinswoman, Mary replied with the *Magnificat* that ceaselessly re-echoes in the heart of the Church down the centuries, by its daily recitation in the liturgy of Vespers and at many other moments of both personal and communal devotion. "In these sublime words - wrote the Pope²⁵ - which are simultaneously very simple and wholly inspired by the sacred texts of the people of Israel, Mary's personal experience, the ecstasy of her heart, shine forth. In them shines a ray of the mystery of God, the glory of his ineffable holiness, the eternal love which, as an irrevocable gift, enters into human history." "The Church's love of preference for the poor is wonderfully inscribed in Mary's *Magnificat*. The God of the Covenant, celebrated in the exultation of her spirit by the Virgin of Nazareth, is also he

⁹ Mt 5:42; 10:8

¹⁰ Cf. Mt 25:31-36

¹¹ Mt 11:5; cf. Lk 4:18

¹² *Centesimus annus* 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22; Mt 8:20;

Mk 12: 41-44

¹³ Eph 4:28

¹⁴ Cf. *Centesimus annus* 57

¹⁵ Cf. Mt 22:36-40

¹⁶ Lk 4:18; Mt 5:3

¹⁷ Cf. Mt 21:18; Mk 2:23-26; Jn 4:6-7; 19:28; Lk 9:58

¹⁸ Cf. Mt 25:31-46

¹⁹ 1Jn 4:20

²⁰ Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10

²¹ Cf. Mt 7:21

²² Lk 1:39

²³ Cf. Lk 1:36-37

²⁴ *Marialis Cultus* (MC) 7

²⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, Encyclical Letter, 03/25/198736, RM 36

who 'has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly, ... filled the hungry with good things, sent the rich away empty, ... scattered the proud-hearted ... and his mercy is from age to age on those who fear him.' Mary is deeply imbued with the spirit of the 'poor of Yahweh,' who in the prayer of the Psalms awaited from God their salvation, placing all their trust in him (cf. Pss 25; 31; 35; 55). Mary truly proclaims the coming of the 'Messiah of the poor' (cf. Is 11:4; 61:1). Drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith expressed in the words of the Magnificat, the Church renews ever more effectively in herself the awareness that **the truth about God who saves, the truth about God who is the source of every gift, cannot be separated from the manifestation of his love of preference for the poor and humble, that love which, celebrated in the Magnificat, is later expressed in the words and works of Jesus.**


The Church is thus aware - and at the present time this awareness is particularly vivid - not only that these two elements of the message contained in the Magnificat cannot be separated, but also that there is a duty to safeguard carefully the importance of 'the poor' and of 'the option in favor of the poor' in the word of the living God. These are matters and questions intimately connected with the **Christian meaning of freedom and liberation.** 'Mary is totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him, and, at the side of her Son, she is **the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe.** It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission.'²⁶


As you may have noticed, in the *Magnificat* Mary shows us God Who cherishes the dignity of every man, Who cannot tolerate violence and abuse of power, Who prefers the poor and takes the part of those whom no one loves. He showed an example of this by choosing Mary of Nazareth to become the mother of His beloved Son. Besides, Mary in Her *Magnificat* shows us that God loves especially those who are poor in spirit, who await salvation that only He can give and those who have "fear of the Lord." Instead, He rejects those who believe they can rely only on their own strength, power and riches, in a word, on idols.


In Lk 1:51-54 Mary describes the biblical history of salvation by outlining the seven actions by which God transforms human errors into justice. She describes these actions using


the past tense of the verbs because in agreeing to become the Mother of God, She fulfilled the promises that God made to Israel. The *Magnificat* is the hymn that demonstrates how God has worked in the past and always will.


For Personal Reflection

 Do I recognize Jesus in the poor whom I meet on the street or in the stranger who knocks on my door, or in the prisoner who is serving his sentence? How do I welcome them?


 As a group, what are we doing to help the least living in our area? Is it enough? Or during this Lenten Season is God inviting us to a greater sharing?


 Lent is a privileged time to develop a missionary spirit. How can our group support to a larger degree the work of our foreign missionaries or of the missionaries who are working in our Country?

 How can I offer my sufferings and difficulties in union with Christ for the cause of evangelization?

 Do I believe that Christ arose from the dead, is alive and present among us? Am I able to describe the ways by which Christ is truly present today? What is my experience?

Apply it

 Perform an act of charity this week for someone you know or for a stranger.

 Invite someone who is suffering in a special way with a physical handicap or a permanent disability or a terminal illness to join his/her sufferings with Christ and Mary as a "*Knight at the Foot of the Cross*". Though often unable to actively evangelize because of such infirmities, *Knights at the Foot of the Cross* generate untold graces as they link their sufferings with those of Christ and Mary. If you need more information about participating in this special group, send for the free brochure "*Knights at the foot of the Cross.*" By e-mail contact: MI@consecration.com; by phone call Br. Paschal at: (847)-367-7800, Fax (847)-367-7831.

²⁶ Ibid., 37

Texts for further reflection

Mt 7:12-14; 22:34-40; Lk 16:19-31;
Rom 13:8-10 1Cor 12:12-13:13; Jas 2:1ff
CCC 2443-2449; 2544-2547;1033;1038-1041; 1937;
MC 18
SK 1205; 101; 97; 46;²⁷ SK 1197; 1075;²⁸

Dates to Remember

19	Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Solemnity
24	Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
25	In the US, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is postponed to April 8
28-30	Easter Tridium
31	Easter Sunday

March 25 is the 10th Anniversary of the Pontifical Approval of the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata Institute. We invite you to join us in praying for the continued growth in holiness and development of our missionary community, especially in this Country. Moreover, if you are interested in further information or know of someone seeking a Marian and missionary vocation, please contact the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries in California at E-mail: FKMinCAL@Aol.com or Phone: (626)-917-0040 / Fax (626)-917-0900

St. Maximilian Kolbe's Writings

"Love of God is the unique font of sincere love of neighbor. Let us therefore do away with the struggles of classes to draw mankind together to happiness as much as is possible on this earth. We will then taste that happiness to which we naturally tend: infinite happiness in God, in Paradise." (SK 1093)

"Hate divides, separates and destroys. On the contrary, love unites, gives peace and edifies. It is not strange then, that only love can make mankind perfect. And so, only that religion which teaches love of God and love of neighbor can help mankind be more perfect." (SK 1205)

²⁷ "Stronger than Hatred", New City Press, New York, 1991, pages 95-97.

²⁸ "The Kolbe Reader", Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL, page 36: "Finally, love for one's neighbor..."

From the MI General Statutes

Art. 10 The fronts of action for the militia member of the Immaculate are three: oneself, one's surroundings, and the world. Indeed, the one who chooses to belong to the M.I.:

1# begins his or her mission by conversion and personal sanctification: the conquest of self for God is his or her first indispensable act;

2# discerns, then, in family, in neighbors, in the field of his or her work or free time, the providential terrain to evangelize by example, a good word and a dissemination of printed matter (SK 1127);

3# finally, since the M.I. is a Movement with an ecclesial dimension, the member opens up his or her heart to every person and to the entire world.

"For two thousand years, Christian time has been measured by the memory of that 'first day of the week' (Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1), when the Risen Christ gave the Apostles the gift of peace and of the Spirit (cf. Jn 20:19-23)... Precisely by celebrating his Passover not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church will continue to show to every generation 'the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads.'" (NMI, 35)

"Following Dies Domini, I therefore wish to insist that sharing in the Eucharist should really be the heart of Sunday for every baptized person. It is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life...The Sunday Eucharist which every week gathers Christians together as God's family round the table of the Word and the Bread of Life, is also the most natural antidote to dispersion. It is the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, the Lord's Day also becomes the Day of the Church, when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity." (NMI, 36)

Abbreviations

- NMI John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Apostolic Letter, 01/06/2001
CA John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, Encyclical Letter, 5/1/91
CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 10/11/1992
MI-GS MI General Statutes, MI International Center, Roma, 10/16/1997
MC Paulus VI, *Marialis Cultus*, Apostolic Exhortation, 02/02/1974
SK Scritti Kolbe, Fr. Kolbe's writings. See: "Stronger than Hatred", New City Press, New York, 1991. Or: "The Kolbe Reader", Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL, 1987

PRAYER TO TRUST IN GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE
(Preparation for Confession)

OPENING HYMN: (choose a Lenten Hymn)

LEADER: God made you in His image and likeness: a free person, able to choose, able to love. God is showing you your true identity: you are sons of God, born to love and to be loved. This is your freedom, this is your happiness. God sent His Son to tell you that He loves you, that He forgives you, that He awaits you; to tell you that sin has disfigured you, has wounded you, but He can cure your wounds, untie the chains of selfishness and fear that bind you. Jesus is the light who can enlighten the darkness of your heart. Jesus is the strength Who can reinforce your weakness. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

READING from the Holy Gospel according to St. **Luke 5:27-32**

PRAYER *"O Jesus, how much you have loved me!"*

ALL: **Lord, be merciful!** (or: Kyrie Eléison)

READER: O Jesus, how much you have loved me!
You did not remain in Heaven to enjoy the perfection of Your Paradise,
You became man to meet me!
For my benefit you have known fatigue, toil, fear, anxiety.
For my benefit you accepted insults, misunderstanding, suffering.
For me You died!

ALL: **Lord, be merciful!**

READER: From me You accepted nails and You gave me forgiveness.
From me You accepted thorns and You gave me hope.
From me You accepted insults and You gave me understanding and mercy.
From me You accepted violence and You gave me Your kindness.
From me You accepted indifference and You gave me pardon.
From me You accepted injustice and You gave me peace and joy.
From me You accepted death and You gave me everlasting life.
From me You accepted sin and You gave me innocence.

ALL: **Lord, be merciful!**

READER: You have loved me very much, and many times I turned away from You searching for happiness elsewhere. Now I understand that the infinite love that I was searching for can be found only in Your heart and in Your glance.
I am poor, Jesus,
I am not able to love You as You love me,
But I want to offer You what I am:
I offer to You my desire to love, my dreams of freedom and happiness;
I offer to You my weakness and my hypocrisy, I offer to You my sin.
I give all of them to You as the bread and wine which at the altar You change into Your body.
I beg You, Jesus, take my sin and change it into Your pardon!

ALL: **Lord, be merciful!**

LEADER: Today is the favorable day: God is calling us to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to tell us that He has forgotten our sins, and to tell us that He loves us more than before.
Today the mercy of God descends upon us. From this day on our lives can be changed. The love of God can make us new persons.

PSALM 85 *Show us Your Kindness*

READER: *I will hear what God proclaims; the Lord - for he proclaims peace. To his people, and to his faithful ones, and to those who put in him their hope.*

ALL: **Show us Your kindness, O God**
 READER: *Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven.*

ALL: **Show us Your kindness, O God**
 READER: *The Lord himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase. Justice shall walk before him, and salvation, along the way of his steps.*

ALL: **Show us Your kindness, O God**

LEADER: God does not expect us to be perfect. He loves us as we are. He expects us only to accept His love, to let us be loved as we are in our weakness and frailty. In our sin we can encounter the mercy of Christ and His infinite tenderness. He waits to embrace us. Let us offer our prayers to God.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: Lord, my sin has deceived me: I thought that by satisfying the desires of my body, mind and heart I would find happiness.... Instead I found only a momentary joy, which satisfied only for a little while the emptiness that I felt within me and leaving me even more empty and disgusted.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: Lord, my sin is big. I am ashamed to stand before You. Perhaps You cannot pardon my sin. And even if You do, I already know that I will fall again.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: O Lord, sometimes I feel bound by my own selfishness. I would like to escape and reach out towards others, but the fear of suffering overcomes me. I am not able to give up my own comfort, my securities, my laziness.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: Lord, you have said: "Love one another as I have loved you." I tried to love, but without success. I, instead of seeking your help, Lord, thought such love was impossible. Now I beg for Your help: help me to begin again, help me to love!

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: Lord, it is difficult for me to believe in Your love when I am suffering, when I feel sad, when I am afraid. I often look for security in my own strength or in people or in things instead of abandoning myself to Your goodness. Help me to see Your presence beside me and to believe in Your aid which never abandons me.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**
 READER: Lord, I often act only to be admired by others, to demonstrate to others and myself that I am important, and that I use the admiration and esteem of others to make me feel alive. Help me to understand that only Your love can satisfy my longing for love and happiness. Teach me not to exploit others, but to seek their good. Help me to share with them the love which You give to me.

ALL: **Lord, have mercy!**

SONG: (choose one from your list for Lenten Season)

PSALM 130 *In the Lord I have found mercy*

SOLOIST: *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!
 Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication:
 If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand?
 But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered.*

I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word. My soul waits for the Lord more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

*More than sentinels wait for the dawn, let Israel wait for the Lord, for with the Lord is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption;
 And he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.*

(Inviting people to go to Confession, the leader can use these or other words)

LEADER: Don't be afraid to look at your sin, offer it to God. Sin has deceived you, but the love of God is infinitely greater than your sin. God will take your sin and burn it in the fire of His love. Do not be afraid to take off your mask, because no matter how serious your sin is, God already knows it and He waits only for you to ask His forgiveness.


(Time for personal Confession)


LEADER: After experiencing the mercy of God, sing for joy! Sing because the greatest miracle that has taken place in you always touches the Heart of the Father: you, His loving son or daughter, have been embraced by the Father, you have longed for His goodness, you have had faith in His infinite love for you!
Now, like Mary Mother of God, you too can praise the Lord because He has done great things for you!


CLOSING HYMN: *Magnificat* - Lk 1:46-55 - (or other suitable Marian song)


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CHARITY IN TEN STEPS...


 1. *Charity is giving thanks to God Who opens our eyes each morning.*


 2. *Visit Christ in the poor, because
He comes to you each day in the Eucharist.*


 3. *Don't be satisfied
with a vague feeling of charity or mere compassion.*


 4. *Look around you before speaking:
poverty is not simply what you see on the street.*


 5. *Work hard but talk little.
Charity doesn't need discussion or gossip.*

 6. *Prefer those whom no one takes care of:
the old, prisoners, and families in need or in crisis.*

 7. *Preserve interior peace:
unkind charity humiliates both the giver and the recipient.*

 8. *Don't produce dependency, for true charity
increases dignity in the one who receives it.*

 9. *Do not become content with what has already been done:
charity is creative, inventive, and resourceful.*

 10. *Praise the Lord: what you do is nothing
in comparison with what God's Providence does for you.*