
MI MONTHLY FORMATION (3)
In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality



MARCH 2007 PRAYER INTENTION:

That the commitments of our Lenten discipline allow us to deepen our spiritual growth through the Word of God and our Eucharistic nourishment.

Dear Friends and MI Members,

Last month we contemplated the gift of predilection given to Mary by God in her Immaculate Conception. In this month we celebrate the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of Mary. Mary, full of grace, is open to the continual outpouring of God's grace. There is nothing to hinder her relationship with him. When the angel Gabriel announces to her that she has been chosen by God to be the Mother of his Son, she is open, "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.*" (Lk 1:30-31) She proclaims her wonder, "*How can this be since I have no relations with a man?*" (Lk 1:34), but submits to God, "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.*" (Lk 1:38) In the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, *Mother of the Redeemer*, number 13, he writes about Mary at the moment of the Annunciation: "Mary entrusted herself to God completely, with the full submission of intellect and will, manifesting the 'the obedience of faith' to him who spoke to her through his messenger. She responded, therefore, with all her human and feminine 'I'."

Mary was in full communion with God, and, God was continually revealing himself to her. She is not God but in total communion with him. Pope John Paul II said, "the response of faith (*by Mary*) 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'." The grace that preceded was her Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit overshadowed her with the gift of the Word. Mary does not block or hinder God's grace or his will in any way whatsoever, leaving free the Holy Spirit to work in her "inscrutable" wonders – the Incarnation. "*The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.*" (Lk 1:35) Fr. Kolbe wrote, "So close is the bond between the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Virgin, that the Holy Spirit, who has so fully permeated the Immaculata's soul, exercises His influence on every human being, only through her. Oh, how very little of the Immaculate Virgin is still known!"

Can we but imagine the implications in our lives? God has poured into our souls sanctifying grace in our Baptism, opening the doors of heaven to us, a filial relationship with him and the possibility to increase that grace, communion with him. Through our total consecration, Mary teaches us to be open to God and to his ways. The Spirit can move and work in our lives. He can accomplish what may seem the impossible. God just asks our openness to his working. It is not that we have to figure him out. Mary didn't understand how she was to conceive without a human relationship, but she trusted, she trusted in God's word. This is called "obedience in faith."

Can God ask us something that doesn't make any sense to us? Can he do what he wants with and in my life? Is he free to move and work as God, or do I limit him by my need to control my life? Mary's plan and joy was to fulfill the will of God. She desired to please him in all her person, her

“femininity,” her intellect and will, and body. We are called to belong totally to God. The whole of our being (masculine or feminine) is to be sanctified, filled with his grace. We are not immaculately conceived but we have the promise of the Redeemer (Gen 3:15) who has come and redeemed us. He has sent the Spirit who roams the earth looking for souls open to his actions that our actions may truly be holy.

This Lent may Our Lady teach us the fullest response (action) to God’s loving and merciful graces in our lives. May she teach us in the simple everyday things to see his will and to accept it with our whole person in an attitude of joy.

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PERSONAL REFLECTION AND READING:

- CCC #484-486
- BIBLE meditate on the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) especially the response of Mary to God’s grace and call. How am I or am I not like Mary in my response to God in my life?
- Ask Mary to reveal to you where you are holding back on God and beg her to fill you with her “Yes” to God’s inscrutable ways.
- Lent is a good time to review that program of prayer that you wrote down in January. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your journey.
- Pope Benedict’s Lenten message can be obtained at www.vatican.va

--Pope Benedict XVI

DATES TO REMEMBER

- MARCH -

- 2** First Friday of the Month
- 3** First Saturday of the Month
- 4** 2nd Sunday of Lent
- 11** 3rd Sunday of Lent
- 17** St. Patrick, bishop
- 18** 4th Sunday of Lent
- 19** **St. Joseph, Husband of the Virgin Mary (Solemnity)**
- 25** 5th Sunday of Lent
- 26** **The Annunciation of the Lord (Solemnity)** March 25th, solemnity of the Annunciation, this year falls on the 5th Sunday of Lent and therefore has been moved to March 26.

QUOTE:

“Mary is the great believer who humbly offered herself to God as an empty vessel for him to use in his mysterious plan. She did not try to live according to human calculation but put herself completely at the disposal of God’s mysterious, incomprehensible design. All she wanted to be was the instrument and servant of the Word. Therein lies her true fame: that she remained a believer despite all the darkness and all the inexplicable demands God made on her.... Today God is still mysterious; indeed he seems to have a special kind of obscurity in store for each person’s life.”

--Pope Benedict XVI