

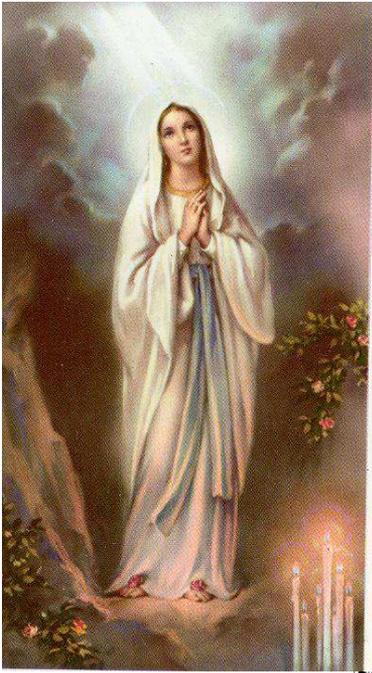
A society is characterized by the attention it devotes to those suffering and by the attitude it adopts towards them. Too many human beings in the world in which we live remain excluded from the love of the family and social community. In appearing in Fatima to three poor little shepherds to make them announcers of the Gospel message, the Blessed Virgin renewed her liberating Magnificat, speaking on behalf of "those who do not accept passively the adverse circumstances of personal and social life, and are not victims of 'alienation' -as is said today-but who with her proclaim that God is 'the avenger of the humble' and, if necessary, 'puts down the mighty from their thrones'"

5th Decade

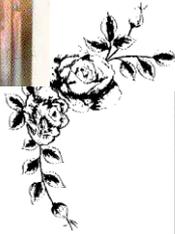
O Mary Bright Dawn of the New World

O Mary bright dawn of the new world,
Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life:
Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers
of babies not allowed to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference
or out of misguided mercy.
Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love to the people of our time.
Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel
as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives and the courage to bear witness to it
resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.
--Pope John Paul II, March 25, 1995

Hail Holy Queen



*Holy Hour in Honor
of
Our Lady of Lourdes,
The 13th World Day of the Sick and*



*The Death Anniversary
of Mother Luisita*



Apostle's Creed, Our Father, . . .

1st Decade:

Mary became the spokeswoman for other words of her Son's invitation: "Come to me, all you that labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Are the throngs of pilgrims who hasten to that blessed land from all over the world not perhaps eloquent testimony of the need for relief and comfort which numberless persons experience in their lives?

Above all, it is the suffering who feel attracted by the perspective of "relief" which the Divine Physician is able to offer those who turn to him with trust. Sometimes it is physical relief, when, in his providence God grants healing from illness, more often it is spiritual relief when the soul, pervaded by the inner light of grace, finds the strength to accept the painful weight of infirmity, transforming it, through communion with Christ, the suffering servant, into an instrument of redemption and salvation for oneself and one's brothers and sisters.

The direction to move in, on this hard road, is pointed out to us by the motherly voice of Mary, who, in the history and life of the Church, has always continued to repeat--and in a special way in our time--the words: "Do whatever he tells you".

2nd Decade

The World Day of the Sick, then, is a precious occasion to hear again and accept the exhortation of the Mother of Jesus, who, at the foot of the Cross, was entrusted with mankind. The centrality of Christ "cannot be separated from the recognition of the role played by his Most Holy Mother.... Mary in fact constantly points to her Divine Son and she is proposed to all believers as the model of faith which is put into practice"

The exemplariness of Mary is conveyed in the most lofty fashion by the invitation to look at the Crucified One so as to learn from him, who, in completely taking on the human condition freely

wished to burden himself with our sufferings and offer himself to the Father as an innocent victim for us men and for our salvation, "with loud cries and tears" (Heb 5:7). He thus redeemed suffering, transforming it into a gift of salvific love.

Illness and suffering no doubt remain a limit and a trial for the human mind. In the light of Christ's Cross, however, they become a privileged moment for growth in faith and a precious instrument to contribute, in union with Jesus the Redeemer, to implementing the divine project of salvation.

3rd Decade:

In the page of the Gospel referring to the Last Judgement, when "the Son of man comes in his glory with all his angels" (Mt 25:31), the criteria on the basis of which the sentence will be pronounced are indicated. As we know they are summarized in the solemn concluding affirmation: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me." Among these "least of my brothers" are the sick who are often alone and marginalized by society. To make opinion sensitive to them is one of the main goals of celebrating the World Day of the Sick: to be close to those suffering so that they will be able to make their suffering fruitful, also by way of the help of those who are at their side to provide care and assistance.

4th Decade

Following the example of Jesus, as "Good Samaritans" we must approach suffering man. We must learn to "serve the Son of man in men", as Bl. Luigi Orione said. We must be able to see the sufferings of our brothers and sisters with the eyes of solidarity, not "pass by", but "become a neighbour", pausing at their side, with acts of service and love aimed at the integral health of the human person.