

PCCW Monthly Journal Reflection

We hope this journal will be a continual invitation to you this year to more readily pause and take time to be with Jesus, even when there seem to be a thousand other things that so often demand our time. Jesus desires to be close to you, and the Parish Council of Catholic Women desires for you to grow deeper in relationship with Him and know His immense love for you.

To help launch use of this journal, we will provide a monthly reflection series for you to take to prayer. The focus of this year's series will be on growing our ability to imitate a life of virtue, one that is committed to following Christ and radiating His love in our daily lives. We are incredibly lucky as Catholic women to have the ultimate model of virtuous womanhood to turn to in our dear mother Mary.

There are 10 virtues of Mary as recognized by St. Louis de Montfort, a 17th century French priest, who was fiercely devoted to sharing that the more we love Mary and strive to imitate her, the more she will lead us to a greater love for Jesus. These virtues are:

1. Angelic Sweetness
2. Ardent Charity
3. Blind Obedience
4. Constant Mental Prayer
5. Divine Purity
6. Divine Wisdom
7. Heroic Patience
8. Lively Faith
9. Profound Humility
10. Universal Mortification



In September, we are reflecting on the second virtue of Mary, **Ardent Charity**. The word 'ardent' may bring to mind the words 'extraordinary passion' or 'enthusiasm'. As for 'charity', the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines it as "the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God".

There is no question that Mary not only exhibits Ardent Charity, but kicks it up a notch, more so than anyone who has ever lived (besides Jesus of course!). Consider the intense love Mary showed for her cousin Elizabeth when she traveled, *while pregnant*, to visit and tend to her in her time of need. Traveling at that time was not an air-conditioned, leather seat, cruise control experience. It was long (80 miles!) and rough. She must have been weary and weak, and yet, when she finally met Elizabeth, she joyfully said "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior." Mary spent three months with her cousin, likely serving her, helping her with her birth, and consistently putting ardent charity into action.

How successfully have we been in the last week, going beyond our comfort zone to truly love those in our lives?

What is one, small, tangible way we could make an improvement in our interactions tomorrow with our family, friends, or coworkers?

"I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love." St. Teresa of Calcutta

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray for Us!