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Cover: The painting of the Annunciation hangs over a side altar in the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. It is very close to the spot where the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become the Mother of God.

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## Dedication

*To Mary, Mother of God, who looks after all of us;  
to my sisters, Mary Sheahan and Helen Torpy;  
to Elizabeth and Paul O'Connell;  
with whom I returned to Nazareth.*

All generations will call me blessed: The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. The Church rightly honors the Blessed Virgin with a special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of Mother of God, to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs . . .

*Catechism of the Catholic Church #197*

## Introduction

This book—*Devotion to Mary, Mother of God*—is just an introduction to the Blessed Virgin. I hope that it will encourage the reader to dig deeper by reading, at least some of the books I have listed in the bibliography. So many great books have been written on Mary and so many more will continue to be written as long as time exists.

There never was a saint who did not have a great devotion to Mary. One might say, the greater devotion, the greater the saint. St Louis de Montfort said that no one could reach intimate union with Jesus unless he had the closest bonds with Mary. Pope Paul VI said: *Our Lady is the road that leads us safely to Christ*. Another time he said that Christ has come to us through Mary and we have received him from her. If we want to be true Christians we must recognize the vital relationship which exists between Jesus and Mary, and see how this union of Son and Mother is the way which leads us to him.

No matter how far we are away from Christ and his Church, Mary can bring us back. It is her mission. She wants everyone to reach salvation and is

willing to give more than a helping hand if we ask. Again St Louis de Montfort says that Mary is the mediatrix and intercessor between men and her Son, while Jesus is our mediator with the Father. (*True Devotion* #80)

In the chapter *Our Lady and Vatican II*, I show how devotion to Mary has been very much emphasized by the council. And I end the first chapter pointing out how the saints and the great spiritual writers of the Church from the very beginning have held that Mary is the channel of all graces.

If this book will help just a little to get the reader to deepen his or her devotion, and perhaps encourage others to do the same, I will be happy. For that reason, I have listed some of the devotions to Our Lady, and some of the reasons that Christ's Church encourages us to use these devotions. There are certain days when the Church celebrates the glories of Mary. Some feasts are greater than others, but the encouragement is always there. Every Saturday is set aside to give special honor to Mary, and the first Saturday of each month is a special day to honor her under the title which her Son loves—the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

We can learn so much from Our Blessed Mother. She who wants to be a mother to each of us,

is also a model for us to imitate. We can look at her virtues one by one and see how she acts. We, little by little, can follow her example. We see that her first virtue is that of obedience, when she, at the Annunciation, accepts God's will unconditionally.

Our Lady revealed to St Bridget that through the merit of her obedience she had obtained so great power that no sinner, however great his crimes, who had recourse to her with a desire to amend his ways, failed to obtain pardon.

We can see all the other virtues manifested in the Gospel passages which portray her life. Starting with obedience to the will of God, we can add virtue by virtue until we become true children of Mary and like her realize a happiness and peace which comes only by being active followers of Christ.

Mary certainly wants each of us to be happy now and hereafter in heaven. She more than any human, other than her Son, knows the true meaning of life—to know, love and serve God in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next. Our lives will have meaning when we realize this and begin to put it into practice. Mary, our Mother, can be our help. We will be able to endure the suffering that life brings, the contradictions, the failures, the crosses; and yet we will be able to put them into their true perspec-

tive and be happy. Again Our Lady shows us by her life! She had her sorrows but she accepted them as the will of God and she was happy. She is the most successful woman that ever lived. She had the greatest task of any woman and accomplished it with perfection. St Louis de Montfort tells us that Mary has given more glory to God than all the angels and saints have given him or ever will give him. We, in our ordinary lives can imitate Mary and turn all our actions into prayer.

W. Doyle Gilligan  
March 25, 1997

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## Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother

The most awesome place in the whole world is in the center of Nazareth a town in Galilee. Although Nazareth is located in the middle of the land of the Bible, it is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Now, for two thousand years it shines forth like the brightest of stars - the sun - beaoning all to come and see where God the Son was conceived - where the greatest event in history took place.

A young woman called Mary was visited by the Archangel Gabriel. He came from God to tell her that she was to become the Mother of the Savior, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, by the power of the Holy Spirit. She gave her *fiat*, her yes, to the will of God and by her obedience, as the handmaid of the Lord she conceived. *The Word was made flesh* and the great moment, which would be captured thousands of times by all the great artists from the