

## NEWS FROM THE GROTTTO

The Society of Our Lady is sorry to announce that Fr John Ssemaganda will be leaving us at the end of January 2020. We would like to Thank him for his assistance and direction during his time as Spiritual Director for the Society. We take this opportunity to wish him well in his ministry when he returns to Uganda.

The Society would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

### PRAYER FOR RAIN

*O God, Lord of all creation,  
By whose power the whole earth came to be,  
Look upon our parched land, we pray,  
And bestow upon it abundant rain,  
That pastures, fields and paddocks  
May by your goodness thrive once more.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with you  
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever, Amen*

If anyone wishes to receive their Newsletter via email, please forward us your email address to [socolol@tpg.com.au](mailto:socolol@tpg.com.au), or otherwise we will continue to post out the letter.

Donations for masses are sent regularly to the Capuchins and Divine Word Missionaries for members and deceased members of the Society.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

The Rosary is recited every Monday & Friday at 10.00am

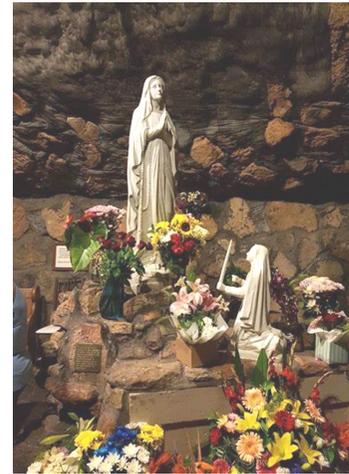
**PLEASE NOTE** each month first Friday Mass is celebrated at 10.30 am.

The next Mass and Blessing of the Sick will take place on Sunday 9 February. Reverend Fr Brian Lucas will be the Principal Celebrant.

Devotions will begin with recitation of the Rosary at 2.30 pm followed by Mass at 3.00 pm then the Blessing of the Sick. In case of rain, the Blessing will be held in the church.

**PLEASE NOTE: DISABLED PARKING** will be limited to the main drive entrance to the Grotto. Parking is also available in the surrounding streets and Council car park.

# Our Lady of Lourdes Pray for US



## The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes

Newsletter No 59 January 2020

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### Mary, a woman blessed by God to give hope to all

Whenever we think of a model of holiness, the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary comes up. She was blessed by God before she was conceived, thus graced for an immaculate conception, hence preserved from original sin that affected all humanity. Would this make her a 'super-human' who perhaps didn't even need a saviour? By the Magnificat, she acclaims "my soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in the Lord God my Saviour". It was by the prevenient grace that she was spared from the stain of original sin for a foreseen mission of divine motherhood – mother of the Saviour and redeemer. The grace of God operative in Mary was first in Eve. Grace is God's free gift for us to respond to His love. And yes, it is in this regard we hold Mary as the highest honour of our race because by her 'fiat' or YES, she surrendered her will to God, without which we can never please God. By this she merited the Blessed motherhood yet undefiled. In her YES, humanity's hope for the Saviour rested.

Although the Blessed Virgin Mary was filled with God's grace, she was not immune to apparent temptation and fear. Recall at the Annunciation in the dialogue with the Archangel Gabriel, she questioned how it would happen for a virgin to conceive. How could she have bore the thought of Joseph planning to divorce her secretly because she carried in her womb a child that was not his? What about the fears for the consequences of a pregnant unmarried woman then sentenced to death by stoning? Could Mary have felt alone? Could this feeling have prompted the long journey to Elizabeth to comfort each other?

In all these episodes, the Blessed Virgin Mary's fiat remained unmoved. Her joy was grounded in her servanthood. She surrendered her being to God that He may do with her as He willed. She trusted. She was confident in her identity – not in simply *who she was* but *whose she was*. Such is the disposition to which we are called – to live for and by God. Even when we are overwhelmed by uncertainties, we need to focus on God in every situation because He knows the

plans for us. The Blessed Virgin Mary had the interior recollection and disposition that heightened her heart to beat with God. She was able to stay in conversation with the angel even in confusion. Yet she stayed in communion with God, waiting with God.

I guess we have all had experiences of doubt, uncertainties, confusion, crisis in families, work, health, relationships... but how do we deal with the imposing situation? *Waiting for God* is different from *waiting with God*. Waiting for God presupposes a desired response to the petition offered to God. However, waiting with God calls for an interior disposition that surrenders to God with and unreserved trust to allow God's plan to unfold. He who knew us before we were born (Jeremiah 1:5) knows the plans for us as peace and future full of hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

As I finish my term with the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Society of Our Lady of Lourdes to return to my home country Uganda – Kampala Archdiocese, I wish to commend you all, children of Mary, to Our Blessed Mother. As a model of trust, may we seek to live by humility and obedience to God's Will so as to give Him perfect honour and praise. In seeking communion with God's Will above all else, may we strive for the interior disposition of holiness and purity without which we cannot please nor see God. By way of her servanthood, may we wait with God so as to delight in His promises here on earth and ultimately in the beatific vision of heaven. Amen +JMJ

*Rev John Stephen Ssemaganda*

### **THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD**

The Gospels provide few details on the Blessed Virgin. The Annunciation and the Visitation are the only two mysteries in which she appears as a central figure. We see her presenting her newborn Son to be adored by the poor shepherds and the three kings.

When Our Lord begins his public ministry, Mary almost disappears. We see her only for a moment at the wedding in Cana. We find her at last on Calvary, standing at the foot of the cross during the tragic hours of the Passion.

Finally, the Queen of Heaven shares in the Father's glory. By her divine Motherhood, the Blessed Virgin possesses indisputable rights over the Saviour.

The Blessed Virgin also has rights over the Heart of her Son, and these are inalienable. On earth as in Heaven, Jesus pays His Mother the entire respect and tenderness of a son. It is likewise impossible that He would reject our prayers if we present them in the name of the love which is due His Mother.

Let us thank Our Lady today and often for what she has done for us! This simple practice will call down upon us abundant blessings.

Once again, divine Motherhood should inspire us to unlimited confidence. Mary is all good and her prayers are all-powerful with God.

The Hail Mary is quite ingenious, for it includes the Blessed Virgin's Immaculate Conception and her sublime Motherhood. It also contains within it an act of praise addressed to the divine Son she so dearly loves. "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Our Lady cannot help but hear this prayer and be moved.

### **\*10 BEAUTIFUL LINES\***

SOMEONE HAS WRITTEN THESE 10 BEAUTIFUL LINES. READ and TRY to UNDERSTAND the DEEPER MEANING of THEM.

1. PRAYER is not a "spare wheel" that YOU PULL OUT when IN trouble, but it is a "STEERING WHEEL" that DIRECT the RIGHT PATH THROUGHOUT LIFE.
2. Why is a CAR'S WINDSHIELD so LARGE & the REAR VIEW MIRROR so small? BECAUSE our PAST is NOT as IMPORTANT as OUR FUTURE. So, LOOK AHEAD and MOVE ON.
3. FRIENDSHIP is like a BOOK. It takes a FEW SECONDS to BURN, but it TAKES YEARS to WRITE.
4. All THINGS in LIFE are TEMPORARY. If they are GOING WELL, ENJOY them, they WILL NOT LAST FOREVER. If they are going wrong, don't WORRY, THEY CAN'T LAST LONG EITHER.
5. Old FRIENDS are GOLD! NEW friends are DIAMONDS! If you GET a DIAMOND, DON'T FORGET the GOLD! To HOLD a DIAMOND, you ALWAYS NEED a BASE of GOLD!
6. Often when WE LOSE HOPE and THINK this is the END, GOD SMILES from ABOVE and SAYS, "RELAX, SWEETHEART; it's JUST a BEND, NOT THE END!"
7. When GOD SOLVES your PROBLEMS, you HAVE FAITH in HIS ABILITIES; when GOD DOESN'T SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS, HE has FAITH in YOUR ABILITIES.
8. A BLIND PERSON asked GOD: "CAN THERE be ANYTHING WORSE THAN LOSING EYE SIGHT?" HE REPLIED: "YES, LOSING YOUR VISION!"
9. When YOU PRAY for OTHERS, GOD LISTEN to YOU and BLESSES THEM, and SOMETIMES, when you are SAFE and HAPPY, REMEMBER that SOMEONE has PRAYED for YOU.
10. WORRYING does NOT TAKE AWAY TOMORROW'S TROUBLES; IT TAKES AWAY today's PEACE.

