

A Vincentian's Look at the Hail Mary

May is the month of mothers. Our thoughts turn to our own mothers and remember the small and large endearments and duties they performed that show us their love. We pause to remember mothers who live in hovels or without enough food for their children. Sometimes all they have is their love and they wait for better times to come, often disillusioned by many in their lives. We lift our eyes and our hearts to our Mother Mary. She loved and lived as we do. The one difference is that she is the mother of God. During May we remember our Mother, the mother of all mothers, the mother of God. Mary loved and said yes. Her yes was for all of us. We honour her now with her special prayer and reflection for Vincentians.

Hail Mary

Hi Mary, here I am again. Finally, I have a moment to myself and I need to talk to someone who understands. Who better than you? When I turn to you, you are always there. Oh Mary I do call out to you, but perhaps not enough. I look to you as my Mother, my friend, the mother of our Lord and a woman who cared for the poor. Hail Mary pray for the servants of the poor.

Full of Grace

Oh Mary, God has given you this special grace as the mother of God. I used to think this made you untouchable, far removed from my own life. We are called to be like you, but I saw you as one so perfect that I could neither relate to you, nor imitate you. Now I put aside my childish fears and I know you needed God's graces just as I do. You asked for His help always and you said yes when He called and that made you holy. Now, as I go to Him before I serve the poor, or sit through this meeting, who knows, maybe I too can follow in your footsteps? You are our patron and we call on you to pray for us, that we may be full of grace.

The Lord is with you

Surely Mary, you turned to God asking Him to help you through the mundane tasks of your daily life. Your life was different than mine, but I realize that you had those days like I have. Days when everything seems to go wrong! And when everyone wants your attention. Sometimes my prayer is squeezed in and I only have time to say, "Help me through this day, Lord", or a short psalm. Mary, the Lord is with you and you are our model, Mother. Mary pray that the Lord be with us and all that we serve the poor. I pray the Lord be with me.

Blessed are you among women

Yes, you are closer to Him than any other, but that shouldn't put you so far from me! I am the one that pushed you away. It has taken me so long to see you are real and walked this earth as I do. You too struggled to understand the poor and wondered why these things are happening. But you accepted also, and trusted in God's plan. Maybe someday I can become more like you in that way. Pray for me that I am blessed among the poor, that your Son blesses me with love for the poor.

And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus

Thanks Mary, for saying yes, even when you had no idea of all you were saying yes to! How often I think of you now, when I want to control my life. I hadn't planned on all the twists and turns my life has taken; the moves, deaths, job changes and pressures of family. I have had to put a lot of things on hold as I watch the family change and grow. But look at the poor! Look at their pressures and changes and look at the pressures in Blessed Frederick Ozanam's life. Your unconditional Yes, has brought a change into all our lives. You, the mother of God, give us hope, and you give the poor hope. Pray for us Blessed Mother.

Holy Mary

Mary, you are holy indeed. Frederick Ozanam knew you and asked for your prayers. He had a deep love for you. He was holy, too. I have trouble thinking I could ever be holy. You were one of the chosen few to be so close to Jesus. But wait a minute! I too can be close to Jesus. You brought Him to life for all of us. You were human, you were real. I now have new hope! It is within my reach to emulate your life on earth. Your prayerful life Holy Mary, pray for us.

Mother of God

What an awesome task! God place into your womb and hands His only begotten Son. You did this for us. He was born for us. My task sometimes too, is pretty awesome. Sometimes it is so scary. How often I hear that God doesn't give you more than you can handle. Sometimes when I talk to God, usually the wee hours of the morning I do all the talking, trying to get everything in and I forget to leave room for Him to say something. You pondered His words, Mary. Help me to ponder more, Mother of God. When I do, how He calms me. Each fear is removed. He gently reminds me that I am tending His sheep, feeding His lambs. We are all on loan and will be returned to Him. Mary, do you understand how unworthy I feel? Pray for me Mother of God.

Pray for us sinners now

You showed us at Cana how important your requests were and the best wine was served. Jesus showed us at the cross, that you are the mother of us all. I like thinking of you as mother. It makes it easier to turn to you with my frustrations, my fears, worries tears and sins. Mary, help me to treasure your Son, our Lord more and to turn to Him more. He was born of you, lived a simple life, lived in poverty looking for his next meal from others, suffered, died and was buried for us. What more can anyone do? Blessed Frederick Ozanam turned to you often and I know you prayed for him and all the poor he served. What a privilege it is to have you praying for me, a sinner.

And at the hour of our death

Mary, it is overwhelming to think you will greet me when this old body dies, as you did Blessed Frederick Ozanam. To think you and the other Saints will be with me as I face your Son is awesome, utterly awesome. Thank you Mary, for being with me on my journey, and for being fully human. Thank you for helping me to see. Thank you for giving me hope. Thank you for praying for us in our time of darkness and death.

Amen

So be it, Mary. I think I'm on my way now. I'm lucky to be a Vincentian living in these times, no matter how difficult they may be. I still have my doubts and questions, but I feel like I'm setting out on a new journey with you as my guide and my model. I have Blessed Frederick Ozanam as a model and of course, your Son my beloved Jesus. Praise to you Mary, Mother of God. I ask you Mary, to continue to guide me as I serve the poor and work with other Vincentians. Pray for all servants of the poor, that we may continue God's work and see the face of your Son, Jesus in the eyes of the poor. Amen, yes, so be it.