



Seek the Lord

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Many themes emerge throughout the month of October in the life of the Church. It is Respect Life Month, so we pause to pray more intentionally in thanksgiving to God for the great gift of life and that this gift may always be safeguarded and respected from the first moment of conception until natural death. We also celebrate World Mission Day on the third Sunday of October. This is an opportunity to learn about the continued work of missionaries to spread the Gospel to every corner of the world. Finally, the Church devotes this month to Mary under the title of “Our Lady of the Rosary.” This feast day memorializes the prayers of Christians throughout Europe as they sought Mary’s intercession to protect them from invading forces in the late 16th century. At first, these might seem like disparate themes; however, reflection on the life and example of the Blessed Mother can reveal their underlying unity.

Growing up, Mary was formed in her faith through the teaching and practice of her parents. Saints Joachim and Anne instilled in Mary a great love for God and respect for the traditions of their religion. From a young age, Mary dedicated herself to God’s service, knowing that her very life was itself a means to give glory to God. She learned that this was true of every other person as well. That is why when Gabriel asked Mary to be the mother of Jesus, she didn’t fully understand, but she fully trusted that God would be with her through any circumstance, no matter how challenging. Mary firmly believed that the life of the child she was asked to bring into this world would result in great good. From the beginning there were challenges, yet she remained close to God, sought to do His will and, with Joseph at her side,

raised Jesus, sharing with Him the same values and faith that her parents had shared with her.

When Jesus began His public ministry, Mary witnessed the ways in which He cared for others, especially the poor and the outcasts. Surely He learned care, compassion and openness from His mother. As Jesus’ Divine understanding grew and He embraced the saving will of His Father, His desire for all people to be redeemed and have eternal life also increased. Jesus knew the love with which each person is created, and He spent Himself so that all might know that love and accept it fully. His disciples continued that work of spreading the faith in a God who is Love, and Mary was first among the disciples. She surely encouraged them in the beginning days of the Church, and she continues to intercede for missionaries throughout the world as they seek to bring the saving love of God to all people.

Finally, Mary is a woman of deep prayer. She constantly turned things over in her heart before God. In doing so, she discovered more and more how God works in the world and how He calls us to share in that work. In heaven, Mary continues to be a woman who prays; she intercedes with her Son on behalf of all her children. Having such a powerful intercessor is certainly something for which we ought to be grateful.

May we spend this month, then, close to Mary, learning from her the profound value of every human life, striving to bring others to know the Love of God, and praying for all those in any kind of need.