



Missionarii Sancti Joannis Baptistæ

Vox clamantis in deserto, parate viam Domini

1101 AMSTERDAM ROAD ✦ PARK HILLS ✦ KENTUCKY ✦ 41011

Blessed Mary: A Living Gift Wrap for the Gift of Jesus

MY GRANDPARENTS were especially careful when they unwrapped Christmas gifts. Having lived through the Great Depression, they tended to open their presents without doing much harm to the paper, always commenting that they could reuse it next year. The gifts were always so beautifully wrapped, often times with shimmering gold or silver paper. A wrapped gift is so much better than an unwrapped one. The care and effort taken to wrap the item made the gift more attractive and more mysterious. A special gift demands a special wrapping.

On Christmas Day, when all of those beautifully wrapped gifts have been opened and admired, all of us should reflect upon the greatest gift of all, namely, the Son of God and Son of Mary, Jesus Christ. God the Father loved the world so much that He gave His only Son as a Gift and in that Gift is the Light of the World; in that Gift is redemption and salvation; in that Gift is hope, peace, and eternal life. Like any good parent, however, God the Father made sure that His Precious Gift to us was wrapped in a most beautiful vessel that was truly worthy, appropriate, and even immaculate. To increase the mystery of the Gift - to make the Gift even more attractive - God the Father called upon a young virgin to be a sacred container for His Divine Son - to be a living gift wrap for the Gift of Jesus.

Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. God the Father carefully wrapped His Only Begotten Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary. And our Heavenly Father took the greatest care in presenting His Gift by making sure that the container was perfectly beautiful in every way; that

it was without blemish or fault, for any stain or rip in the wrapping tends to detract from the Gift Itself. God the Father, Who has always been, chose Mary and only Mary from all eternity to be the sacred vessel through which the world would receive the Savior and all His spiritual riches. The Gift of the Savior can only be opened for us through Mary, with Mary, and in Mary. No one receives the Gift of Jesus except through her hands. As the great Church Father and Doctor of Grace taught: *The world being unworthy to receive the Son of God directly from the hands of the Father, He gave His Son to Mary for the world to receive Him from her.* As Christmas approaches, the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist are most grateful for all the many gifts we have received. We thank Our Lord and Our Lady for our good bishop who has approved our religious rule and constitutions and elevated our community to the level of a Public Association of the Faithful under Canon Law. We thank the good Lord for the priests of the community, as well as our seminarians and novices. We are



also grateful for our thriving Traditional Latin Mass Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and its mission to our south known as Holy Family Chapel. We are thankful, too, for our mission band that travels around North America preaching parish missions and retreats. And yes, we are most grateful to you, our benefactors, who are so good to us. Because of your generosity, our seminarians receive training and our planned Lourdes Grotto becomes more of a reality. (Very Rev. Fr. Shannon M. Collins, MSJB, Superior General of the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist and Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish).☩



Novena for Christmas

December 16

O SHEPHERD that rulest Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep, come to guide and comfort us. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 17

O WISDOM that comest out of the mouth of the Most High, that reachest from one end to another, and orderest all things mightily and sweetly, come to teach us the way of prudence! *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 18

O ADONAI, and Ruler of the house of Israel, Who didst appear unto Moses in the burning bush, and gavest him the law in Sinai, come to redeem us with an outstretched arm! *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory...*

December 19

O ROOT of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people, at Whom the kings shall shut their mouths, Whom the Gentiles shall seek, come to deliver us, do not tarry. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory...*

December 20

O KEY of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, come to liberate the prisoner from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 21

O DAYSPRING, Brightness of the everlasting light, Sun of justice, come to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death! *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 22

O KING of the Gentiles, yea, and desire thereof! O Cornerstone, that makest of two one, come to save man, whom Thou hast made out of the dust of the earth! *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 23

O EMMANUEL, our King and our Law-giver, Longing of the Gentiles, yea, and salvation thereof, come to save us, O Lord our God! *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*

December 24

O THOU that sittest upon the cherubim, God of hosts, come, show Thy face, and we shall be saved. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...*



Our Lady needs a Niche in the Rock

Having completed the Bell Tower with your generous assistance, we are now in a position to build the Blessed Mother of God a special cave or grotto that will call to mind that sacred apparition site in Lourdes, France. What a blessing it would be for people not only to pray in our chapel before the Tabernacle, but also to visit an outdoor shrine to light candles day and night and pray before Our Lady in her niche in the wall (cf. Canticle 2:14). The times through which we are passing seem to demand just such a "hollow place" be built in her honor. No parish dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes is complete without just such a beautiful grotto and cave of refuge! Although the above drawing is only an initial sketch, we are nevertheless designing anew our Lourdes Grotto. We considered the thoughtful ideas of those who responded to the previous design and are confident we will make this Grotto look more fitting and native to our property.



Our gift to our benefactors is this: daily prayer and the offering of Holy Mass for them all on Christmas Day through its Octave.

ANOVENA is nine days' of prayer said as a preparation for some particular feast, or in order to obtain some special favor. The model and the first of all novenas was that made in the Cenacle, after Our Lord's Ascension into heaven, by the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostles in preparation for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The earliest ecclesiastical novena of which we have record is the Christmas Novena, which commemorates the nine months during which the Christ Child was carried in the womb of His Mother.

Please consider contributing to this work, making checks to:

The Missionaries of St. John the Baptist or just MSJB

May God reward you!

The Missionaries of Saint John the Baptist (www.msjb.info)

