



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 8

May 2018

Marian Devotions for May

Dear parishioners,

This month is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, mother of our Saviour. Throughout the world the faithful speak and sing their devotion to Mary. We will venerate her too with the May crowning and the a procession in her honour.

Medieval art sometimes depicts the courts of heaven. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all in human form, sit upon a stage. Myriad angels, bent in earnest adoration, surround their joint thrones. The saints: popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns and lay folk kneel in crowds innumerable. A great song is heard: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*. And a little to the side sits enthroned a young maiden. She is the queen-mother of God, and she too receives tokens of honor and praise.

After Jesus, Mary is the most wondrous creature to come from God's hands. Mary's body was the most beautiful ever shaped. Her soul was more handsome still. Not only was it never stained by any sin, original or actual, but more importantly it was filled with divine life. Grace literally spilled over at every moment of her life. Her plenitude was absolute but also incremental. Holy at the moment of her immaculate conception, she grew in holiness every moment of her life, even before she was born. God begrudged nothing when it came to making His mother. She was everything short of divine. Theologians even dare to say that she was raised so high in sanctity that she contracted a sort of affinity with God. Thus she became worthy of divine motherhood. I do not know if it is theologically correct, but piety has its own laws. Mary was such that God wished to become her Son, to nestle in her bosom, to hold her hand, to listen to her voice, to learn all about this strange world of ours from her lips. She alone, her beauty and comeliness, was sufficient reason for our redemption. Thank you, dear Lady.

Yet our devotion does not stem from mere amazement and marvel. There are other reasons, more convincing still, why we honor Our Lady.

Mary made our salvation possible, not only by her intrinsic beauty (her sanctity) but also because of the role she played in the plan of Redemption. It is a role that elevated her to the very throne of God and made Him eternally grateful, so much so that He committed to Her care

every saving grace and blessing that He won for us on Calvary.

Mary was called upon, not only to give birth to the Savior, but also to give death to Him. Her vocation was to provide God with the means of accomplishing a bloody redemption for our sins. She became thus the Mother of the Savior. But God wished her to cooperate in that redemption by freely offering up His/her Son. It was a sacrifice that bestowed upon her the bittersweet title of Queen of Martyrs.

Genesis tells the story of Abraham, called upon by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham complies, desolate, but firm in purpose. God's will be done, however contradictory and harsh it may seem. *And it was reputed to him unto justice (Rom. IV, 4)*. His story had a happy ending. An angel withheld his hand, and his son was restored to him, safe and sound.

Mary's story was different. God willed that she too offer up in sacrifice her only Son. There was no angel to withhold her hand. She was an active participant in her Son's crucifixion. Jesus willed to die. Sovereign priest, He offered Himself as a Sovereign Victim for the redemption of the world. But He willed that His mother offer Him too. Her offering had nothing symbolic about it.

It is one thing for a mother to consent to the death of her child, like St Felicity, or mother Machabee who encouraged their sons to martyrdom. It is wholly another to actively desire that one's child be slain in conformity to God's Will.

Mary's desire was similar to Her Son's. His soul was sorrowful even unto death, so was hers. He prayed: *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless...* Mary prayed in like manner.

Her privileges and splendour came with a terrible price. She was required to participate in the plan of redemption to the extent that she became co-redeemer of mankind. She offered her Child just as her Child offered Himself.

Our veneration of Mary is not, therefore, one of mere emotion and affection. It is a reverence and recognition that we owe in justice to a Lady who gave up the fruit of her womb, thus earning for us, in union with her Son, salvation and redemption.

May Our Lord help us all to better admire, love and

Socrates once wrote: “There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance.” Moral evil, he believed, results from ignorance and, as such, is involuntary. But this assertion exonerates man from any wickedness whatsoever, for the sinner would be but an instrument of sin’s true agent: ignorance.

The assertion is, at best, incomplete. And we know this in our gut. We might counter: how is it, then, that smart and well-informed people embrace evil? Is it from mere ignorance that the firefighter turns arsonist, the gynaecologist an abortionist, the priest an apostate?

Yet the Socratic claim, even if an oversimplification, has grounds. Within man’s soul, there is evident exchange between intellect and will, between reason and its appetite. The intellect is primary, insofar as it informs and directs the will. Of itself, the will is a blind faculty: volition simply pursues what the intellect presents; it functions only when fed information. In this respect, freedom and ignorance cannot coexist.

But the Father of Philosophy neglected the other half of the equation: man chooses to fix his mind on something. Though subtle, the will steadily orientates the intellect. The will influences the mind to selectively consider what the former finds pleasing. Once this influence disregards the easily accessible truth, however, it becomes patent manipulation, that is, wilful ignorance. So freedom and ignorance can coexist!

Theology views wilful ignorance as a consequence of Original Sin. Modern psychology has nothing to add on that front; nevertheless, its empirical study of the phenomenon offers a fascinating perspective into our wounded nature. To the psychologist, wilful ignorance is “motivated reasoning”. It results from the interplay between two movements of the human psyche: cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias.

Cognitive dissonance (CD) is the mental stress brought about by the

incompatibility of two or more ideas... within one’s belief structure. It usually occurs when a person is forced by circumstances into the acknowledgement of an inconsistency that has some importance to the individual, who is then motivated to resolve the dissonance. (Matsumoto, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*)

Confirmation bias (CB) emerges on that account. It is the “observation that individuals selectively seek out and attend to information which agrees with their beliefs or presuppositions while failing to seek and tending to ignore or discount information which does not agree with them.” (Matsumoto)

To fill in the picture, consider the spectacle of a football hooligan: unwavering devotion to his team can blind him to its competitive shortcomings. Confronted

with a devastating loss (CD), he more quickly conjures up a refereeing conspiracy (CB) than accept defeat. Then there is the amateurish investor: he waxes eloquent about guaranteed returns on his risky stock (CB), and this all the while its value has tumbled each year since its purchase (CD). Finally, the love-struck young lady: she dismisses her parents’ reasonable objections (CD) as coming from bigoted killjoys (CB). Her charmer’s promises are empty, but she sees them teeming with content.

The two psychological tendencies are inextricably linked and, if left unchecked, they establish what clinical psychologist Dr Jordan B. Peterson calls a “positive feedback loop”: cognitive dissonance triggers confirmation bias, which paves the way for future cognitive dissonance, the repetition only intensifying the cycle. The loop continues unto a near permanent state of willful blindness, a self-imposed intellectual prison—as regards the particular prejudice.

At bottom, motivated reasoning is a defence mechanism for the heart’s idolatries. Sight, especially intellectual sight, depends on aim “and, therefore, on value—because you aim at what you value” (Peterson, *12 Rules for Life*). Hence, a warped value-system only summons a warped world-view. In this way, motivated reasoning dominates the sinner’s pattern of thought.

Yet it vitiates our judgement as well. We are not resistant to the contagion, and we must humbly admit as much. Our energies of concentration are very often in the service of validating our frivolous affections. That said, a baptized soul—and one maintaining the state of grace—is freed from the enslaving fate of wilful ignorance. In baptism, God transforms the will. He imparts to it an orientation to Himself; He builds into it a supernatural capacity to love the Uncreated Good above all goods created. Animated by this charity, the soul is thereby radically predisposed to God’s truth.

A holy individual is, nonetheless, fallible; he will err, even stubbornly so. (Only a fully purified heart can completely rise above the CD–CB cycle.) His soul’s disordered affections—though venial—obstruct his vision at certain angles. Wealth, pleasure, honour and power darken his mind at times. The errors he accumulates, however, are only provisional. He may test some detours, but his heart is, at least, directionally correct. Directionality is all-important and is what God ultimately expects of our heavenly pilgrimage.

“Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.” (Lk 2:14) The Word of God is not sent to convince the minds of wicked men. Such is impossible, and God does not act in vain. Self-referential hearts are open to some truths but not the Truth. The dishonest will convince themselves of anything in place of Christ crucified. So God has His workaround: He rather puts “to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet 2:15) by healing their hearts (Ezek 36:26). For if God heal the heart, the head heals itself. ❖

On his way back to Jerusalem, at Miletus, St. Paul gathered together the bishops of Ephesus, and he warned them to be “alert” for teachers of heresy, saying: “I know that after I have gone, fierce wolves will come in among you, and will not spare the flock; and from among your own selves there will arise men, who will speak perverse things, to draw the disciples away after them.” What the Apostle warned them about happened shortly afterwards; and it has been happening regularly throughout the Church’s long history.

Whatever names the different heresies were called, the one thing they have in common is a refusal to accept the infallible Teaching Authority (Magisterium) of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Pope, and of those bishops in communion with him. Since Vatican Council II, there has been a whole body of theologians, even bishops, who receive massive media-coverage, because they put forward opinions that contradict the Church’s teaching. They prefer to call themselves dissidents rather than heretics; and, as a result, great numbers of Catholics have been led astray, falsely imagining that such matters as contraception, abortion and pre-marital sex are acceptable in the eyes of God.

The fundamental error of such theologians and those who follow them is that they no longer believe in the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost as Teacher and Guide of Christ’s Church through every moment of her history. After the Holy Ghost came down on the Church at Pentecost, He did not then leave her to fend for herself. Even in the natural order, God doesn’t, so to speak, wind up His creatures like a clock-work toy, and then leave them to their own devices. His act of creating us is continuous, so that He is always sustaining us by His Power. If He were ever to remove His Power, we would just cease to exist.

If God is so solicitous for us that He is continually with us to keep us alive naturally, it is inconceivable that He will not be continually with us to keep us alive supernaturally, once we “are born again of water and the Holy Ghost” in baptism. And about this He has left us in no doubt; for at the Last Supper, He said to His disciples: “I will pray the Father and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.”

At Pentecost, the very ones who had been so frightened that they locked themselves up for fear of the Jews, received courage from the Holy Ghost, so as to preach that “Jesus is Lord” - that is, truly God - and that He has saved us from our sins by His perfect obedience. From then on, we read in the Acts of the Apostles of more than fifty instances of how the Holy Ghost is the source of the vital activities in the Church and in individuals. Again and again, we see how the Holy Ghost teaches and guides devout individuals, and especially how He appoints and guides those put in authority in Christ’s Church. And He is still fulfilling that task of His today in

the Church, Christ’s Bride. So when dissidents oppose the Church, they are opposing the Holy Spirit of Jesus. They bring to mind St. Paul’s words: “From among your own selves there will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

An earlier dissident was the Catholic priest, Martin Luther. One day he asked himself: “Can it be that for sixteen centuries Catholics have been in error; and now, I, Martin Luther, have the truth?” He realized how monstrous it would be for Catholics, during all those centuries, to be in error, deprived of the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Yet, he arrogantly decided such a thought was a temptation, and went on with his false teaching. After all, he was a learned man, a professor of Scripture in a Catholic university. He would only accept the words of Scripture, and those words as he interpreted them. He would not listen to the authority of the Church - the authority of Popes and bishops - the authority of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, learned and holy men though they were.

Like him, present-day dissidents should say to themselves: “Can it be that, for all these centuries, the Catholic Church has been in error; but now, we have learnt the truth and alone are right? After all, she was teaching in the time of Lactantius (4th century) that contraception is sinful; that abortion, the destruction of the innocent, is a heinous crime. And as for pre-marital sex and homosexuality, St. Paul said those who did such things would not enter the Kingdom of God. In all these teachings, the present Pope agrees with all his predecessors. Can it be that the Church has been in error all these centuries; and that we, who dissent from these teachings, alone have the truth?”

The Gospel tells us that Our Lord breathed on the disciples and said: “Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” What an awesome responsibility is placed on every priest! When any penitent declares that in accepting a false teaching he is following his own conscience, a priest must reply: “And I must follow mine; and act as an official of Christ’s Church, whose teaching I am bound to uphold. If I do not, as Our Lord has told us, I am a blind guide and a leader of the blind, and we shall both fall into the pit of hell.”

Ever since Pentecost Day, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, guides the Church in Her teaching. She can therefore never change Her teachings because the Holy Ghost never changes His mind. The Holy Spirit has been at every dogmatic Council. He is in every confessional, and both priest and penitent must always remember that; for to them St. Paul says: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4,30). ✱

| | Liturgical Calendar May 2018 | SMS |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1 | St. Joseph the Workman | 7:15 / 19:00 |
| 2 | St. Athanasius, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor | 7:15 am |
| 3 | Feria | 7:15 am |
| 4 | St. Monica 1st Fri. - Holy Hour 18:00 | 7:15 / 19:00 |
| 5 | St. Pius V, Pope & Conf. - 1st Sat. | 7:30 / 12:00 |
| 6 | Fifth Sunday after Easter | 7:30 Low |
| | Exeat | 9:00 Sung |
| | 17:30 Vespers/Benediction | |
| 7 | St. Stanislaus, Bp. Mart. | 7:30 / 10:30 |
| | 10:30 Mass of BVM / 14:30 Procession | |
| 8 | Apparition of St. Michael | 7:15 am |
| 9 | Vigil of the Ascension - Rogations | 7:15 am |
| 10 | The Ascension of The Lord | 7:15/9:00/19:00 |
| 11 | Ss Philip & James, Apostles | 7:15 am |
| 12 | Ss Nereus, Achilleus, Domitilla, Pancras, Martyr | 7:30 / 12:00 |
| 13 | Sunday after the Ascension | 7:30 Low |
| | | 9:00 Low |
| | 17:30 Vespers/Benediction | |
| 14 | Feria after the Ascension | 7:15 am |
| 15 | Feria after the Ascension | 7:15 am |
| 16 | St. Ubaldus, Bishop & Confessor | 7:15 am |
| 17 | St. Paschal Baylon, Confessor | 7:15 am |
| 18 | St. Venantius, Martyr | 7:15 am |
| 19 | Vigil Mass of Pentecost | 7:30 / 12:00 |
| 20 | Pentecost Sunday | 7:30 Low |
| | | 9:00 Sung |
| | 17:30 Vespers/Benediction | |
| 21 | Monday in Octave of Pentecost | 7:15 am |
| 22 | Tuesday in Octave of Pentecost | 7:15 am |
| 23 | Ember Wednesday (<i>fasting, abstinence for 3rd order</i>) | 7:15 am |
| 24 | Thursday in Octave of Pentecost | 7:15 am |
| 25 | Ember Friday (<i>fasting, abstinence for 3rd order</i>) | 7:15 am |
| 26 | Ember Saturday (<i>fasting, abstinence for 3rd order</i>) | 7:30 / 12:00 |
| 27 | Trinity Sunday | 7:30 Low |
| | Exeat | 9:00 Low |
| | 17:30 Vespers/Benediction | |
| 28 | St. Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop & Confessor | 7:15 am |
| 29 | St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, Virgin | 7:15 am |
| 30 | Feria | 7:15 am |
| 31 | Corpus Christi - Procession after 9:00am | 7:15/9:00/19:00 |

WEEKLY CONFESSIONS

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

BENEDICTION & ROSARY

Sunday 18:00

EUCCHARISTIC CRUSADE

April intention:

For a greater devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

CHAPEL CLEANING

Contact WhatsApp group at 07443 657280.

Holy Hour every **1st Friday**

MAY PROCESSION

Holy Mass, picnic and procession. the parish will provide BBQ'ed meat. Please bring other food items to share.



When Jesus cried for Calvary

When Jesus came to Golgotha
 They hanged Him on a tree,
 They drove great nails through hands and feet,
 And made a Calvary.
 They crowned Him with a crown of thorns;
 Red were His wounds and deep,
 For those were crude and cruel days,
 And human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham,
 They simply passed Him by;
 They never hurt a hair of Him,
 They only let Him die.
 For men had grown more tender,
 And they would not give Him pain;
 They only just passed down the street,
 And left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them,
 For they know not what they do."
 And still it rained the winter rain
 That drenched Him through and through.
 The crowds went home and left the streets
 Without a soul to see;
 And Jesus crouched against a wall
 And cried for Calvary.

(Geoffrey Student Kennedy - 1883-1929)

*Don't forget your **Easter duties:**
 Confession and communion before Trinity Sunday.*



CHAPEL REPAINT

Saturday, 12th May

9:00 - 18:00

6 adult volunteers needed with a generous heart and minimum painting skills.

Requesting donations for materials

Contact: pbrucciani@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you to St. Anne's, Leicester, for £100 April collection box. Since Sept. 2017 St. Anne's has contributed £350 to St. Michael's School in small change. We assure them of our grateful prayers.

A New Parishioner

You have, no doubt, noticed an addition to our collection of statues. Saint Philomena is recently arrived and has taken up residence within the walls of our church. She comes to us from a convent of nuns and hopes to enter active service in answering all your prayers and in helping the parish meet the challenges of placing its school on a stable footing.

We solicit every parishioners' help, from the youngest to the oldest, in guiding St. Philomena's hand so that she become lavish in her graces. The more fervent and persevering our prayers, the more powerful her intercession. Is she not called the Wonder-Worker?

Now that we have her with us, we have no excuse not to invoke dear St. Philomena often, for our personal needs and the needs of the parish. Although she is pleased with and gracious towards any prayer, a child's supplication she can never refuse. Please help our little ones to pray to her. They must ask her to help the fathers build for them a school worthy of their innocence and their needs.

Saint Philomena, pray for St. Michael's School.

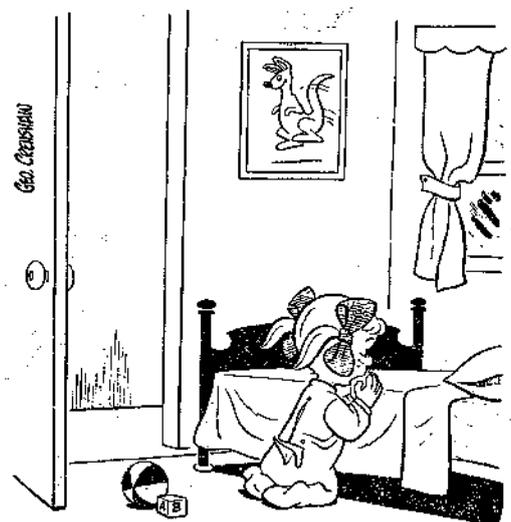
The Book of Life

If you would like to know God, look at the crucifix! If you would like to love God, look at the crucifix! If you would like to serve God, look at the crucifix! If you hope for eternal happiness, look at the crucifix!

If you wonder what you are and your worth, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much God loves you, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much He wants you in heaven, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much He will help you to get there, look at the crucifix.

If you wonder how much you should forgive others, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much you should do to help others, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much your faith requires and demands of you, look at the crucifix.

“For we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:23)



“PLEASE, LORD, TAKE CARE OF MOM, TAKE CARE OF DAD, TAKE CARE OF ME . . . BUT BE SURE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF THE MOST, DEAR LORD, OR WE'RE ALL SUNK!”



Saintly Sayings

I remember my sins, not so much as committed by me, as healed by you. *St. Augustine*

My past, O Lord, to Your mercy; my present, to Your love; my future to Your providence. *Padre Pio*

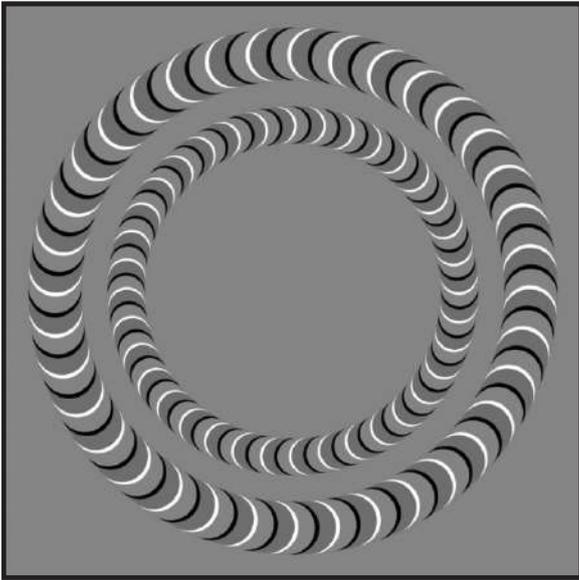
Suffering, pain, sorrow, humiliation, feelings of loneliness, are nothing but a sign that you are so close to Jesus that He can kiss you. *Mother Teresa*

The most beautiful Credo is the one we pronounce in our Hour of darkness. *Padre Pio*

The greatest grace God can give someone is to send him a trial he cannot bear with his own powers--and then sustain him with his grace so he may endure to the end and be saved. *St. Justin Martyr*

Love is the most necessary of all virtues. Love in the person who preaches the word of God is like fire in a musket. If a person were to throw a bullet with his hands, he would hardly make a dent in anything; but if the person takes the same bullet and ignites some gunpowder behind it, it can kill. It is much the same with the word of God. If it is spoken by someone who is filled with the fire of charity- the fire of love of God and neighbor- it will work wonders. *St. Anthony Mary Claret*

Optical Illusions...



Riddles...

1. You throw away the outside and cook the inside. Then you eat the outside and throw away the inside. What did you eat?
2. What can you catch but not throw?
3. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?

Sudoku Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 7 | | | 8 | | 6 | |
| | | | | 1 | | | 2 | |
| | | 8 | 4 | 9 | | | 3 | |
| | | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 8 | | |
| | | | 5 | 8 | | | | |
| | 1 | | | | 9 | | 5 | |
| 3 | | 1 | | | | | 9 | |
| 7 | 6 | 9 | | | 4 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | 3 |

1. An ear of corn 2. A cold 3. A Towel

Just for Laughs...

One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mommy?"

Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white."

The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, "Mommy, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?"

Marian Word Search Puzzle

CT Z Z A M K R F C Q X Y F L X G E N G Z F V K F M Q
 D X V N F T V D Y V L J R X R C H A S T E Z E B L A K
 E J K A I Z H T N A N E V O C E H T F O K R A L E V J
 L D U W B I V E F A J U M O S I R M B N N M Q E C E Q
 I F Y M A L U F R E W O P E M H V I D N I V P S A N O
 F O B H S M T S N D G M X M N O H B P E M K K S R E L
 E O K J O J I D V G J Y A M G T L Y T V M A F E G R T
 D J C D Z N H Y Z Y W C N E W E V E J E A O U D F A X
 N Y N K L B R T W O U U N S N O T Y P R C U G V O B Z
 U I F E X A V D U L R L M E M O V K U V U R N I L L L
 R U S H S Z G R A C W P D S V C I U C I L L I R L E T
 A S R O L U M T Z E S G U C Q A R T V R A A V G U H A
 T O R D S O E U F S V H O A V R E V A G T D O I F H C
 U S T X T H H S T N K R G P E U C H E I E Y L N O S I
 M O T H E R O F G O D V W U L G K G F N C I V L M U F
 F A E A J D Q L R I H E N L N O U E M O O N Y P N M I
 N R R N I A H K X K S E O A G F P E B I N X U T E E N
 V T B F E A X N Y O R M I R E K R V A E C E T N U D G
 N T C P K M R A R Y E M T R U C F B G N E B E L N I A
 B P G Z C H D L X M P F P U I L S T N X P N Z U Z A M
 S Y K Y L V A Y F V L S M F C O R O N A T I O N Q T E
 X B B P O C P N C S E M U M K V U V K D I Q P R H R C
 I U M A T C I M O P B A H L S J A F Y N M K O C U B T I R
 J Y A T Z D O J A Y G W S F C C T M E R N K R E T X I
 G T S C S N G P N O I T A T I S I V D E S S E L B V A
 E Y D Z P Y N X Z I T R J R S S K X Y A L W O G J G F
 M U Q Y X M W Y I E L O K U Z W E P J T S L Z Q S A H

How many of these words relating to Our Lady can you find in the letters above?

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Advocate | Helper | Our Mother |
| Annunciation | Holy | Powerful |
| Ark of the Covenant | Immaculate Conception | Pure |
| Assumption | Immaculate Heart | Queen of Heaven |
| Blessed | Loving | Refuge |
| Blessed Virgin | Magnificat | Rosary |
| Chaste | Mediatrix | Scapular |
| Clement | Merciful | Sinless |
| Coronation | Mother of God | Sweet |
| Ever Virgin | Mystical Rose | Undeified |
| Fair | New Eve | Venerable |
| Full of Grace | Our Lady | Visitation |