

# The Little Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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[From earliest times, the Church has been in the habit of reciting a set of prayers, which became known as the 'Work' or 'Office' of the Church. This was a series of prayers recited during the course of the day and was meant to be a response to Our Lord's call to constant prayer. The full Office was and still is a somewhat cumbersome and expensive book to purchase. To alleviate this difficulty, many holy souls adopted the practice of reciting a 'Little Office', in contrast to the 'full Office' and thus associated themselves with the public praise of God and the official action of the Church at prayer. This 'Little Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary' is one of those produced in this spirit and is offered to the modern pray-er in the hope that it might assist in their growth in holiness.]

Pope Pius IX, by Brief of March 31, 1876, granted to the faithful who recite devoutly and with a contrite heart, the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception an Indulgence of 300 Days each time. [Since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, this is now referred to as 'a partial Indulgence'. We must recall that God can never be outdone in generosity and Mercy.]

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

AT MATINS. This is said upon first arising from our sleep.

Come, my lips, and wide proclaim The blessed Virgin's spotless fame.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. — Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, Queen of the heaven: Hail, mistress of earth! Hail, Virgin most pure, Of immaculate birth!

Clear star of the morning, In beauty enshrined! O Lady, make speed To the help of mankind.

You, God in the depth Of eternity chose: And formed you all fair As His glorious spouse;

And called you His Word's Own Mother to be, By whom He created The earth, sky, and sea.

Amen.

(Versicle.) God elected her, and pre-elected her. (Response.) He made her to dwell in His tabernacle.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord; Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT PRIME. This is said as a Morning Prayer (after breakfast) at the first hour of the new day.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, Virgin most wise! Hail, Deity's shrine! With seven fair pillars, And table divine.

Preserved from the guilt Which has come on us all, Exempt, in the womb, From the taint of the Fall!

O new star of Jacob! Of Angels the Queen! O gate of the Saints! O mother of men!

O terrible as The embattled array! Be you of the faithful The refuge and stay.

Amen.

(Versicle.) The Lord Himself created her in the Holy Ghost. (Response.) And poured her out among all his works.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for

me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT TIERCE. This is said mid-morning at the third hour of one's day.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. — Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, Solomon's throne! Pure ark of the law! Fair rainbow! And bush, Which the Patriarch saw.

Hail, Gedeon's fleece! Hail, blossoming rod! Samson's sweet honeycomb! Portal of God!

Well fitting it was, That a Son so divine, Should preserve from all touch Or original sin;

Nor suffer by smallest Defect to be stained, That Mother, whom He For Himself had ordained.

Amen.

(Versicle.) I dwell in the highest. (Response.) And my throne is on the pillar of the cloud.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT SEXT. This is said at the noon-day hour (or sixth hour of the day).

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, virginal Mother! Hail, purity's cell! Fair shrine where the Trinity Loves to dwell!

Hail, garden of pleasure! Celestial balm! Cedar of chastity! Martyrdom's palm!

You land set apart From uses profane! And free from the curse, Which in Adam began!

You city of God! You gate of the east! In you is all grace, O joy of the blest!

Amen.

(Versicle.) As the lily among the thorns. (Response.) So is my beloved among the daughters of Adam.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord: Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT NONE. This is said at mid-afternoon or the ninth hour of one's day.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. — Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail city of refuge! Hail, David's high tower! With battlements crowned And girded with power!

Filled at your Conception With love and with light, The dragon by you Was shorn of his might.

O woman most valiant! O Judith thrice blest! As David was nursed In fair Abisag's breast.

As the saviour of Egypt Upon Rachel's knee; So the world's great Redeemer Was cherished by thee.

Amen.

(Versicle.) You are all fair, my beloved. (Response.) And the original stain was never in you.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins, that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord; Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT VESPERS. This is said as the Evening Prayer.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. — Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, dial of Achaz! On you, the true sun Told backward the course, Which from old he had run.

And that man might be raised, Submitting to shame, A little more low Than the Angels became.

You, wrapped in the blaze Of His infinite light, Do shine as the morn On the confines of night.

As the moon on the lost Through obscurity dawns: The serpent's destroyer! A lily amid thorns!

Amen.

(Versicle.) I made an unfailing light to arise in heaven. (Response.) And, as a mist, I overspread the whole earth.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord; Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

AT COMPLINE. This is said as Night Prayer.

(Versicle.) May Jesus Christ your Son, reconciled by your prayers, O Lady, convert our hearts.

(Response.) And turn away His anger from us.

(Versicle.) O Lady, make speed to befriend me. (Response.) From the hands of the enemy, mightily defend me.

(Versicle.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Response.) As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. — Amen.

Alleluia.

From Septuagesima {nine Sundays before Easter} to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said: Praise be to You, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, Mother most pure! Hail, Virgin renowned! Hail, Queen with the stars As a diadem crowned.

Above all the Angels In glory untold, Standing next to the King In a vesture of gold!

O Mother of Mercy! O star of the wave! O hope of the guilty! O light of the grave!

Through you, may we come To the haven of rest; And see heaven's King In the courts of the blest!

Amen.

(Versicle.) Your name, O Mary, is as oil poured out. (Response.) Your servants have loved you exceedingly.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and Mistress of the world, who forsakes no one, and despises no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of your beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that as I now celebrate with devout affection your holy and Immaculate Conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of Him whom you, in virginity, did bring forth, Jesus Christ our Lord; Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, in perfect Trinity, God, world without end. — Amen.

(Versicle.) O Lady, hear my prayer. (Response.) And let my cry come unto you.

(Versicle.) Let us bless the Lord. (Response.) Thanks be to God.

(Versicle.) May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

(Response.) Amen.

THE COMMENDATION. This is said immediately before retiring for sleep.

These praises and prayers I lay at your feet, O Virgin of Virgins! O Mary most sweet!

Be you my true guide Through this pilgrimage here; And stand by my side When death draws near.

(Response.) Thanks be to God.

Ant. This is the rod, wherein was neither the knot of original sin, nor the bark of actual sin.

(Versicle.) In your Conception, O Virgin, you were immaculate. (Response.) Pray for us to the Father, whose Son you did bear.

Let Us Pray.

O God, Why by the Immaculate Conception of a Virgin did make ready a meet dwelling for Your Son, we beseech You that You, who, foreseeing the death of that same Son of Yours, did keep her free from all stain, may suffer us also, with clean hearts through her pleading, to come unto You. We ask this Through the same Christ our Lord.

(Response.) Amen.

Footnote: Gedeon is also known as Gideon (see Judges 7:36-40). Abisag is also known as Abishag (see 1 Kings 1:1-4. In the Vulgate, this is 3 Kings 1:1-4.) Achaz is also known as Ahaz (see Isaiah or Isaias 38:1-8).

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