

Famous Shrines of Our Lady - Rome

Our Lady of the Wayside, (Madonna della Strada.)

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Mary is the gateway to Heaven: there is no other entrance. The saints took Mary as their Mother, but each saint developed devotion to her in an individual and personal way. Devotion to Our Lady of the Wayside today is due to St. Ignatius Loyola. When St. Ignatius first came to Rome, in 1523, he saw the picture of Our Lady of the Wayside and there and then began his lifelong devotion to Our Lady under this title. He loved it intensely; in fact his destiny, and that of the Society of Jesus which he founded, (the Jesuits) seemed in some mysterious way to be connected with the picture. Fourteen years later, when with his companions he again returned to Rome, the saint led his followers beneath the picture he so loved, and before it the foundation members of the Society of Jesus prayed to Our Lady of the Wayside, seeking her aid, counsel, and consolation.

During many years after his ordination St. Ignatius celebrated his daily Mass at the altar of the picture he loved so well.

On the completion of the first home of his newly-founded Order in Rome, such was the affection the saint bore this picture, that he resolved, if possible, to secure this picture for his church. He who cared so little for the things of earth had to do violence to himself to go and beg for this valuable picture. The picture was housed in a parochial church, which looked upon Our Lady of the Wayside as its most valued possession. The boldness of the request aroused the indignation of the parish priest, who refused to part with an object so venerated by his people. However, the wish of St. Ignatius seemed to have won the approval of Heaven, for suddenly and quite unexpectedly the parish priest, Don Pietro Codacio, changed his mind and consented to give the picture to the newly-formed Society, and not only the picture, but with it the Church in which it hung. Furthermore, he offered himself as a candidate to the newly-founded Order of St. Ignatius. Don Codacio was received into the Society, becoming the first Italian on its rolls. In recognition of his generous gift to the Society he was given the title "Founder" by St. Ignatius.

The First Jesuit Church in Rome.

The sanction and consent of Pope Paul III was obtained, also the approval of the Astalli family, who had built the church, and the Jesuits had their first public church in Rome — the sanctuary of the Madonna della Strada. Since then a tender devotion to the Madonna della Strada has been cherished by the members of the Society of Jesus. In the beginning of the Society, St. Francis Xavier prayed daily before this shrine, also Peter Faber, the first companions of St. Ignatius. At a later time came Fathers and Brothers to consecrate themselves at the feet of their beloved Queen, who had inspired them to join, the blessed Company of her Divine Son.

The promotion of devotion to Our Lady under the title of Madonna della Strada became a labour of untiring love amongst the first Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Her sanctuary became one of the

most popular in Rome. So numerous were the people coming to her shrine, that soon the church notwithstanding many additions, was too small. The erection of a new church was necessary, but St. Ignatius in his prudence considered the Society too poor and that the time had not yet come to face such a financial burden.

The Church of 'the Gesu'.

(The Church of 'the Jesus' - 'the Holy Name of Jesus'.)

Cardinal Alexander Farnese was to be the builder of this longed-for church, for through his aid, 'the Gesu' was built on the site of the old church. It began in 1568, took eight years to build, and then Our Lady of the Wayside was enthroned.

Today in the beautiful side-chapel of the left transept hangs the picture of the Madonna della Strada. In this chapel the Month of May devotion was begun by Father Muzzarelli, and since then it has spread throughout the Catholic world. In this chapel also the congregation of the "Bona Mors" (the 'Good Death') had its cradle.

The Loved Shrine.

The chapel of the Madonna of the Wayside is closely connected with the first Jesuits. Before it prayed Saints Stanislaus, Aloysius, and John Berchmans — those chosen souls who from the sinlessness and devotion of their young lives were destined to become the models of youth through ages yet unborn. At the feet of Our Lady of the Wayside Jesuit missionaries knelt in farewell prayer before they went forth along the distant and difficult way of bringing the glad tidings of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

'The Gesu' was resplendent with lights, with a shaft beaming on the silver statue of St. Ignatius, who seems about to walk upwards out of his shrine towards Heaven. I knelt at the altar of Our Lady of the Wayside, and there surrounded by the scenes of her life in glorious frescoes, I asked many things for my friends and parishioners. I went across to the world centre of the Sacred Heart Messenger and its Apostleship of Prayer to kneel among a small group who keep vigil all day at the shrine. My favourite Jesuit saint, Francis Xavier, beckoned me for a long, farewell chat.

St. Ignatius' Room.

Next door is one of the Jesuit Scholasticates in Rome, and a young man took me through the corridor with its wonderful frescoes of the life of St. Ignatius. Then up a few steps and he opened the actual door that led to the saint's room, the room in which he died. There were the cupboards he used and the simple furniture of sheer utility. The atmosphere of absolute retirement from the things of the world still pervades that little room. One sensed the drastic self-discipline of this man of iron will. The ceiling and panelling, blackened with the years, still roofs this cradle of the Jesuit Order. A window to the left is venerated, for from there the saint looked up to the starry heavens and made his meditations. But modern buildings now cut off the view of the skies. In a glass case is a model, made accurately of the saint from his dead body. He is small, thin, with large deep brown eyes, a sallow skin, a little black goatee, small hands, and big boots. On his feast day they open the glass doors and vest him in a rich chasuble, making him live again among them. The bed of St. Francis Borgia lines the wall. The robes of a Jesuit Cardinal, together with the belt of wire rings which he wore for penance are other indications of the Ignatian rule of self-discipline. The death-masks of several Jesuit saints were in the little chapel to preach to their brethren that life is short and that eternity alone is worth living for. What a helpful place to pray is this room sanctified by St.

Ignatius, hallowed by so many relics of his spiritual sons, and now the home of the Real Presence! No wonder every Jesuit hopes that one day he will have the good fortune of kneeling in that holy room from which such a stream of spirituality has flowed throughout the years. I asked the saintly Founder to bless the apostolate of Youth which his sons were engaged upon in Australia, and to shield their past pupils from the disease of materialism.

Lay-Brothers at Prayer.

As I prayed the lay-brothers came for their evening prayer. Old men stooped with years of work, middle-aged brothers, and young men learning from these old warriors that work is their price to pay for the glories that surround them in that little chapel.

On another day I visited the Curia which directs the Jesuit Order scattered throughout the world. The Procurator-General was gracious in his welcome. The chapel was so inviting, so perfect, so devotional that it was hard to leave. There the members of the Jesuit headquarters seek guidance, inspiration, and light to direct, as an army headquarters does, its sons on the front line of the conquest of men for Christ.

St. Ignatius' Love of Mary.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Wayside inspired the missionary spirit and saintly life of St. Ignatius Loyola, the Father of the Society of Jesus. Like all the founders of religious orders, he was remarkable for devotion to our Blessed Mother. In those weary hours when Ignatius the soldier lay a wounded prisoner, the thoughts of God were inseparably entwined with the thoughts of God's own tender Mother. It was before Our Lady's shrine at Montserrat, in the first fervour of his conversion, when renouncing earthly warfare for the chivalry of the Cross, that he unbuckled his sword, and, placing it on her altar, vowed eternal fealty to Mary and to her Divine Son. It was on the Feast of her Assumption, before her image in the Church of Montmartre, Paris, surrounded by his companions, that Ignatius made his first religious vows. And it was, once again, kneeling before her altar in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls that his last solemn vows were pronounced. The image of Our Blessed Lady Ignatius ever bore upon his heart, and he died with his eyes lovingly fixed upon it.

During all the years Ignatius spent in Rome, his favourite shrine was the Madonna della Strada and in her power and intercession he developed an implicit trust.

Let St. Ignatius, the soldier saint, active, ardent, indefatigable, always meditating enterprises, battles, and campaigns to spread the greater glory of God, lead us to the Madonna of the Wayside and share with us his love of Our Lady of that title. We shall get the feel of this historical picture through this man of discipline, this soldier ever on the march, this man who could steel himself to send St. Francis Xavier away from his side, even though he loved his companionship and needed his help. The soldier saint had emptied himself of self and to his spiritual sons he has bequeathed the same soldierly obedience and strict discipline.

Mary Calls for Action.

We can readily see why the picture of the Madonna della Strada captured the imagination of the soldier-saint. For many years the picture was on the walls of a house in a side street of Rome, exposed to weather and open to the jibes of the soured passer-by. It was a constant challenge to all who saw it. Its message was spoken in the open market-place. Those who saw it on their way could invite the Madonna to accompany them. Its shrine was no cloistered shelter, but right on the

cobbled street along which man wearily went his pilgrim's way of life in rain and shine. Its appeal was for activity, confident in the Madonna's power and will to help.

An appeal to the saint who wrote a prayer or fostered a devotion will help us to say the prayer better and to enter into the spirit of the devotion.

St. Francis of Assisi in his heroic renunciation of his fine feathers to don the coarse garments of the peasant farmhand, shows by his life all he meant by his prayer: "My God and my all!"

The life of St. Bernard is lived again in his prayer, the "Memorare." "Remember, O gracious Virgin Mary..."

St. Ignatius Loyola puts the soldierly call to action in every line of his prayer of self-offering: "Accept, O Lord, my total liberty. Accept my memory, my intellect, and my will." The "Anima Christi" ["Soul of Christ, My Saviour"] is full of the eager aspirations of the soldier saint. This prayer leaves nothing out.

Historical Aids to Prayer.

Similarly, historical associations help us to say a prayer better and to enter into the spirit of a devotion more intimately. The "Salve Regina" ['Hail, Holy Queen'] has meant much more to me since I learned that the crews of Columbus's ships sang the "Salve Regina" when nothing but sea rewarded them for their perilous journey. And then, one evening, they saw land ahead and a light moving, the first thing seen on the American continent by European eyes. "And after this our exile, show unto us..." — as sung with grateful hearts by the sailors of Columbus — sends its echoes charged with a new hope across the seas of time. Uncertain and anxious, Ignatius the soldier walked the streets of Rome, worrying out what he should and could do with his life and with his companions. In those moods, the lot of every pilgrim, and of every active soldier, he went daily to the picture of the Madonna della Strada to point out the way for him.

The Ancient Picture.

The picture of Our Lady of the Wayside, believed to be the work of an unknown artist in the fifth century, is one of the earliest pictures remaining of the Mother of God. It was a fresco painted on the walls of a house whose foundations dated back to the days of Imperial Rome. It most likely was one of the earliest public recognitions of Mary when the Church emerged from the catacombs. It lays claim, therefore, to be one of the oldest pictures of the Blessed Mother in existence. It is a link between the Church of the Catacombs and that of the Basilicas. For centuries the picture looked down upon one of the streets of Rome and the wayfarers venerated this little wayside shrine. The artist paints Our Lady with the Holy Child, in her arms. The Child is carrying a closed book in His left hand and raises His right hand in blessing.

The extraordinary reverence in which the picture was held in Rome inspired a member of the noble family of Astalli to build a church in its honour in the twelfth century. Hither a portion of the wall on which the picture was painted was transferred, and the church itself became known as that of Our Lady of the Wayside, "Madonna della Strada." This church was one of the first into which St. Ignatius Loyola entered when he arrived in Rome. From that day, until his death, the saint loved to pray before this venerated image of the Mother of God, and frequently said his daily Mass on the altar of Our Lady of the Wayside.

A Much Loved Roman Shrine.

His love of the picture and his desire to possess it for his infant Society urged him to boldly ask for it. I have already told you how that request was answered in an extraordinary way, so that his Society became the owners, not only of the picture, but of the church, also.

The devotion of the Roman people to their Madonna della Strada increased and the church became too small to accommodate them. Once again Our Lady of the Wayside showed her gratitude for the love and respect of St. Ignatius and his sons, by inspiring Cardinal Alexander Farnese to build the long-wished-for church of 'the Gesu' on the site of the older shrine. From that year, 1568, to this, shrines of Our Lady of the Wayside have been multiplied throughout the world, and in each of them she has been generous with her favours.

In the Jesuit church of St. Mary's, North Sydney, there is a beautiful shrine of Our Lady of the Wayside. In the dim light from the stained glass windows of this Australian shrine the picture of Our Lady of the Wayside is of unforgettable beauty.

The Picture Crowned.

The picture of Our Lady of the Wayside was one of the first to be crowned by the Pope, in recognition of the great things done through her intercession. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the shrine was rifled of its treasures by the sacrilegious robbers then in possession of Rome. But Mary's loving children soon repaired these ravages, and on the third centenary of its removal from St. Mary's to the new church of 'the Gesu' it was again solemnly crowned in the name of the Holy Father by Cardinal Howard. During the epidemic of cholera in 1837 Pope Gregory XVI, accompanied by the Roman Curia, went in solemn procession to the shrine to implore Our Lady's protection against the pestilence, the Pope afterwards celebrating Mass in 'the Gesu'. When the epidemic ceased, the Roman Senate presented the Jesuits with a golden chalice in gratitude for their zeal and charity in ministering to those stricken with the disease. At the same time some of the noblest families in Rome made an offering of six magnificent bronze candlesticks to the altar of St. Ignatius.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Wayside.

St. Ignatius, the soldier-saint, is eager to be on the march — he is a man of action and wants to get going. Daily he kneels before the picture, seeking his marching orders. Let us often invite St. Ignatius to kneel with us before the picture of the Madonna della Strada (or any other picture of Our Lady if we can't lay our hands on a copy of this famous fresco) and keep her image before us along the wayside of life's journey. The guide book the Divine Child holds in His hand is closed. We may not read it, but "He knows my way." (Job 23:10.) Only step by step will He disclose it to us, for He would have us walk by faith and not by sight. The Child gives His blessing to the travellers who walk in faith. [For many good images of Our Lady of the Wayside, do an Internet search of "Madonna Della Strada".]

Walk by Faith Not by Sight.

There were many difficulties on the way of the soldier-saint. There will be many for us. But Our Lady of the Wayside never leaves her travellers unprotected: "I will show you the path of wisdom: I will lead you by the paths of equity."

For those who pass eagerly and joyfully along life's way, caring nothing for the difficulties, "the path of the Just goes forward as a shining light." It is lit up by the presence of the Child and His Mother, and "will increase even unto perfect day," when we shall see Our Lady of the Wayside with

her Child face to face, and only then will we recognize from what dangers they have shielded us. "Without the Way there is no going." (Imitation of Christ, iii, 56.)

As long as we keep close to Mary and her Divine Child, we are on the right road and will gain the heavenly city.

The Mass of Madonna della Strada.

In 1890 Pope Leo XIII instituted the Feast of Our Lady of the Wayside on June 2, with a special Mass and Office granted to the Society of Jesus. Since then the feast day has been changed to May 24. In Australia and New Zealand the feast is celebrated on October 16 to avoid clashing with the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, the Patroness of Australia and New Zealand.

[Monsignor McMahon has here reproduced English translations of the Proper Prayers used in the Mass as laid down by Pope Leo XIII, when using the Liturgy authorised by Pope Pius V.]

The Introit. (The Entrance Antiphon.)

In me is all the grace of the way and the truth. In me is all the hope of life and of virtue. Blessed are they that are unspotted in the way, and walk in the law of the Lord. (See Ecclesiasticus, chapter 24.) [Use your imagination to picture Our Lady meditating on these words of Sacred Scripture, and then imagine her seeing them fulfilled in her own self as she enters the Heavenly courts.]

The Collect. (The Opening Prayer or the 'Collected Prayer of all the Faithful'.)

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Who are the Way, the Truth, and the Life, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Your Mother, mercifully grant that, running in the way of Your commandments, we may in the end attain to life everlasting.

The Epistle. (The First Reading of the Scriptures.)

[Usually but not always taken from one of the Inspired Letters.]

I will show you the way of wisdom. I will lead you by the paths of equity: which, when you shall have entered, your steps shall not be straightened, and when you run you shall not meet a stumbling block. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is your life. Be not delighted in the paths of the wicked, nor let the way of evil men please you. Flee from it: pass not by it; turn aside and leave it. But the path of the just goes forward as a shining light and will increase even unto perfect day. (From Proverbs, chapter 4.)

The Gradual. (The Responsorial Psalm and Verse before the Gospel.)

Come over to me all you that desire me, and you all shall be fulfilled with my generations. For my spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honeycomb. (From Ecclesiasticus, chapter 24.) Alleluia. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Alleluia. (From Elizabeth to Mary as recorded in Luke, chapter 1.)

The Secret. (The Offertory Prayer or Prayer over the Gifts.)

Do You, O Lord, mercifully regard this offering, and by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant that sinners may come back from their evil way, and the just be confirmed in Your way and Your truth, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Communion. (The Communion Antiphon.)

God has girded me with strength, and set my way immaculate. (From Psalm 17 in the Vulgate or Psalm 18 in the Hebrew.)

The Post Communion. (The Prayer after Communion.)

Grant, we beseech You, Almighty and Merciful God, that we, refreshed by these Your gifts, may by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, walk in the path of justice, and so happily attain to the glory of heaven, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Rules for Travellers on the Way.

There are so many difficulties on the way, so many enticing by-ways, and so many temptations to laze and loiter on the way that we must have constant recourse to Our Lady of the Way. She will hear and heed us provided we are wise travellers and obey the rules of going her way. The passport to travel in Mary's company is a cross. Without this no traveller can be accepted for the journey. "Whosoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Thus spoke Our Lord in St. Luke 14: 27.)

Very little luggage is allowed "for we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6: 7.) The traveller is advised to lay aside "every weight" — anything that could hinder him and prevent him from running on the way. (Letter to the Hebrews, 12: 1.) Children are especially welcome, for "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and "unless you become as little children you shall not enter." "Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me." (Thus Sacred Scripture speaks in Proverbs, 9: 4.)

Four directions of Our Lady of the Wayside must be followed, or she cannot accompany us on our way.

1. Obedience — "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do you all." (Words of Our Lady at Cana.)
2. Fidelity and Constancy — "Go not aside, neither to the right hand nor to the left. Your ears shall hear the words of one admonishing you behind your back. This is the way; walk you all in it." (Isaiah 30:21.)
3. Copy the Model — "Looking on Jesus, Who endured the Cross." (Hebrews, 12: 2.)
4. Devotion to Our Lady — "Come over to me all you that desire me." (From the Gradual and Ecclesiasticus chapter 24.)

And the final resolution which each traveller must make, and strive to keep. "In the streets and the broadways I will seek Him Whom my soul loves." (Canticle of Canticles, 3:2.)

Novena to Our Lady of the Wayside.

Say the official prayer of the Church, the Collect of the Mass of Our Lady of the Way, celebrated on May 24 by the Society of Jesus throughout the world, and on October 16 in Australia and New Zealand to avoid clashing with the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians.

"O Lord, Jesus Christ, You Who are the Way, the Truth, and the Life; grant graciously that by the intercession of Blessed Mary, Your Virgin Mother, we, running in the way of Your commandments, may attain to life-everlasting, Who lives and reigns, one God, world without end. Amen."

God has girded me with strength and set my way immaculate.

Our Lady of the Wayside, pray for us and guide us.

Then add three times — Pater, [the ‘Our Father’,] Ave, [the ‘Hail Mary’,] and Gloria, [the ‘Glory be to...’] in Mary's honour.

The Rosary of the Seven Journeys of Our Lady.

The Rosary consists of seven septets, or groups of seven, each one Our Father, seven Hail Marys and one Glory be to the Father, finishing with Hail, Holy Queen, etc.

The Gospels tell us particularly of the seven journeys of Our Lady. When we set out on any journey, then, however short, even to our daily work, let us accompany Our Lady, reciting one or more decades of her journeys, saluting her on the wayside. She is the Patroness of Travellers; many churches are dedicated to Our Lady of the Highway.

The First Journey of Our Lady was the VISITATION.

"Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Judah and she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth... and Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and returned to her own home." Great was Our Lady's exultant holy joy as she went swiftly, as on wings of gladness, through the high, lonely hill country. Tradition says that so beautiful was Our Lady in her youth and graceful modesty that the villagers could not be satisfied with seeing her and St. Joseph passing, but ran on and climbed the hills that they may see her again and watch her out of sight. The angels had special care of her in the high and craggy mountain ways.

It was a long journey—about eighty miles each way. It occupied the greater part of a week. The humble Virgin was accompanied on this errand of charity by her spouse, St. Joseph, whose duty finished at the door of Zachary. He went, away, returning again to take the Holy Virgin back to her own house, after she had heard Zachary blessing God in that great canticle .of the Benedictus, { ‘Blessed be the Lord God’} the special prayer of travellers, to "direct our feet in the way of peace."

The Second Journey of Our Lady was the NATIVITY.

“And Joseph went up from Galilee out of the City of Nazareth into Judea, to the City of David which is called Bethlehem, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife who was with child,” "and she brought forth her first born son... and laid Him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn."

Another long journey, actually the same distance as the first, but Our Lady did not complain, notwithstanding the state she was in. She cheerfully obeyed the laws of the land which ordained that a census be taken; she saw therein the most Holy Will of God. The hardships and annoyances of such a journey were patiently borne by Our Lady and St. Joseph. Even when refused accommodation they did not complain, but in the greatest humility and in the most holy poverty retired to a stable where the Saviour of the world was born.

The Third Journey of Our Lady is the PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

“After the days of her Purification, according to the Law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law, Simeon took him into his arms,” and blessed God and sang the hymn "Nunc Dimittis." [‘Now, you may dismiss me, O Lord.’]

Our Lady brought with her on this journey the offering of the poor which was two turtle doves or two young pigeons.

The Fourth Journey of Our Lady is the FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

“Joseph arose and took the Child and His mother by night and retired into Egypt.” They remained there until the death of Herod. Again he arose and took the Child and His mother and came into the land of Israel, retiring into the quarters of Galilee, and coming, he dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

This was indeed a long journey for Our Lady, upwards of three hundred miles and mostly through desert country. There is a beautiful story relating to this journey. In the south of Palestine when Our Lady was looking for water in that wilderness, a young robber led them to an oasis. He was afterwards the good thief on the cross. At Matarich near Shepherd's Hotel outside Cairo, is a well which is pointed out as the scene of the abode of the Holy Family during the sojourn in Egypt.

The Fifth Journey of Our Lady is the FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

“When the Child Jesus was twelve years old, His parents going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not, and thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey... and not finding Him they returned to Jerusalem seeking Him, and after three days they found Him in the Temple and He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them and His Mother kept all these words in her heart.”

This was an anxious journey for Our Lady. The women travelled in one group, the men in another; the Boy Jesus at that age, twelve years, could be with either group and so occurred the mystery of His disappearance. But Mary was entirely submissive to the Holy Will of God.

The Sixth Journey of Our Lady is the MARRIAGE FEAST OF CANA.

“There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee and the Mother of Jesus was there”, and Jesus also was invited and His disciples to the marriage. The wine having failed they appealed to Our Lady. She besought her Divine Son to work a miracle before His time, and she told the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you do you, all of you." He changed the water into wine at His Mother's request; this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.

Always keep the company of Our Lady in your social activities.

The Seventh Journey of Our Lady is to CALVARY.

Having followed her Divine Son in His Passion, “there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother”. When Jesus had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He says to His Mother, "Woman, behold your son." And after that He says to the disciple, "Behold your Mother" and from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

This last journey of Our Lady is the climax in the sacrifice of her Divine Son which she had already made at the Incarnation.

So you finish with the "Hail, Holy Queen" in which you ask Our Lady to be with you in every journey through life, and after your exile in this world to give you Jesus her Divine Son forever.

Outdoor Shrines to Our Lady.

In Hilaire Belloc's book, *The Path to Rome*, which describes the author's walk from Toul, in France, to Rome, in fulfilment of a vow to Our Lady, is given a description of the wayside shrines which he saw on his journey, indicative of the Catholicity of the countries through which he walked. In France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy, peasants, as they travel the roads, pause at the shrines to salute the crucifix and pray to Our Lady. In Australia, whose first name was "Australia del Espiritu Santo" (the [South] Land of the Holy Spirit) there is an inherited shyness, an English characteristic, about any parade of one's faith or piety. The open simplicity and complete lack of self-consciousness of a French or Italian peasant praying aloud, and addressing the Madonna in the intimate words of a friendly conversation, is a form of childishness to the English race, something that just is not done. Australia is slowly breaking with that tradition and more pageantry, processions, and colourful ceremonial is growing in our midst. But we have not built many wayside shrines yet. We are afraid of ridicule, or that the shrines may be decorated with empty beer bottles by some midnight party. There is that danger, but that is easily remedied. The flow of migrants from Europe will, in time, leaven the public expression of our faith, and in due course wayside shrines will appear in our bushland.

Her Image on Our Cars.

In the meantime we may honour Our Lady of the Wayside by fixing her image on our motor cars and bikes, so that she may accompany us on our way. Let us follow the example of the Apostles by asking Our Lady's blessing before we go out on any errand or journey. Mary always gives more than we ask and this is therefore a practice of great graces.

To remind ourselves that Australia is under the patronage of Our Lady, we should carry with us always the Rosary beads, and, as we travel through our bushland glory and scenic beauty, we should caress her beads and whisper a decade of the Rosary in her honour.

Carry Her Rosary Beads.

Driving a car, bus or truck we can have the little one-decade Rosary beads on a finger and say the beads as we drive. The Rosary beads and the practice of passing them through our fingers at odd moments of the day, will call Our Lady of the Wayside to our side as a travelling companion. That practice will make both the Australian city and countryside her wayside shrine. When we go hiking through the bushland in groups or alone, let us quietly make the whole bushland Mary's shrine through reciting her Rosary.

St. Ignatius Loyola asks for a culture of the imagination to get the most profit from his spiritual exercises. He calls for action as a soldier should. He won extraordinary power over men through his creative imagination. His leadership attracted outstanding men such as St. Francis Borgia, who saw in his way of acting, the master of the spiritual life. Let St. Ignatius be our guide as we pray to our Lady of the Wayside to be our companion on the road of life, to enliven our faith, to inspire our hope, and to kindle our love.

Prayer and Penance.

On earth, as in heaven, Our Lady still stays close to her devoted client, St. Ignatius. His mortal remains rest and are venerated in a chapel next to the chapel of Madonna della Strada. Even in death the saintly son has not left his Mother's side, that Blessed Mother — Our Lady of the Wayside — who so wonderfully led him along the road that ends in heaven.

Our Lady of the Wayside will do the same for us. She is constant. She does not change. Prayer and penance pleased her in the sixteenth century. At Fatima, in the twentieth century, her expressed desire was still the same — Prayer and Penance. We have only to ask her, and to slip our hand confidingly into hers. Love and sacrifice bind us to her ever more closely.

Earthly mothers, anxious that their little ones should not stray, place gentle reins around their shoulders, so that they may walk the more safely. Our Lady of the Wayside, tenderest of mothers, attaches us to her by the sweet bonds of Prayer and Penance. She will walk beside us on our way constantly obtaining graces for us from her Divine Son, so that we may at last be with them both in heaven.

Let us then say to Our Lady of the Way:

Mother, Mother, I am coming home,
Home to Jesus and to thee,
But my country's hills are far away,
And its lights I cannot see.
Mother, hearken as I pray,
Meet me, on my homeward way,
Meet me, O Mother mine, today,
Meet me, dear Lady of the way.
Often-times my skies are clouded,
I can see no sun nor star,
And the road is rough and narrow,
And the end seems very far.
Lest perchance my feet should stray,
Meet me, Mother on my way,
Meet me, O Mother mine, today,
Meet me, dear Lady of the way.
I must cross the burning desert,
I shall thirst, O Mother mine,
Fill thy vessel at the fountain,
Of thy Son's Sweet Heart Divine.
Lest I faint upon the way,
Tender Mother, stoop, I pray,
Give my soul to drink today,
Do not wait until tomorrow.
For I need thee here and now,
Wait not till I come to meet thee,
Rather, Mother, meet me thou,
Oh! in all I do or say,
Come and meet me on my way,
Mother Mary, every day.
Dear Lady of the wayside,
Let thy lights be always gleaming,
As through all the darksome ages,
For the pilgrim they have glowed.

Till they lead us o'er the desert, To the haven of our dreaming,
To thy home, O Mother Mary,
At the ending of the road.

— Brian O'Higgins.
