



"Behold the Handmaid of the Lord!"

MOTHERS' MANUAL

Helps for Mothers and Expectant Mothers

by A. Francis Coomes, S.J.

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INTRODUCTION

By a loving providence of almighty God, all motherhood has been elevated to receive a new status through the motherhood of Mary.

This relationship in grace of every motherhood with Mary's special motherhood assures all mothers that Mary has a particular regard for each of them.

The prayer aids and directives of this little manual are presented to help today's mothers in realizing and fulfilling the dignity of their state. It is hoped that these offerings will be instrumental in bringing mothers closer to the heart of Christ and will effectively join them in unity of prayer with Mary, and so help them realize something of the beautiful image of the Mother of Christ in the motherhood with which they have been blessed.

MORNING PRAYER

My Jesus, I offer this day to you — all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings — and, through you, I make this offering to our Father in heaven. Be with me through this whole day in all its particulars, and assist me that it may become a worthy offering in every way.

Be close to me in all I think and say and do. Direct your Spirit to speak to me and guide me — and help me to listen attentively when he does speak ... so that, in my response, your thoughts may become more surely my thoughts, and your ways may become my ways; so that my judgments may accord with your judgments, and that the sentiments of my heart may be most like your

very own; so that my conversation with others may be conversation I may ask you to share with us, and that my works may be works I may ask you to approve.

Help me to have the practical wisdom to look to your Mother from time to time, as I go about the duties of my day, in an effort to find the grace of a better way in my motherhood; for she is the perfect example of all virtues and is your loving gift to us as a perfect model for all motherhood.

May I know the continued grace to work *with* you in all I do, and not merely *for* you ... so that my day may become a perfect offering — lived with you and in you and through you — to be presented to our Father in joy and love.

FOR A HAPPY MARRIED LIFE

Lord, bless and preserve my cherished husband, whom you have given to me. Let his life be long and blessed, comfortable and holy; let me ever be a blessing and a comfort to him, a sharer in all his sorrows, a consolation in all the accidents and trials of life. Make me forever lovable in his eyes and forever dear to him. Unite his heart to mine in fondest love and holiness, and mine to him in all sweetness and charity. Keep me from all ungentleness; make me humble, yet strong and helpful, that we may delight in each other according to your blessed word. May both of us rejoice in you, having our portion in the love and service of God forever. Amen.

In preparation
for
Motherhood
and for
young Motherhood

TO HAVE A CHILD

Mother of Christ, you know, as no other mother can, the high dignity of motherhood. You know how immensely great is the privilege to call into this world a tiny soul destined to praise God forever in heaven.

This is the privilege I now seek, Mary!

Confidently I beg you to assist me, for I know that motherhood is so precious in your sight. And confidently, too, I hope for this blessing through your divine Son, since Jesus is the lover of the little children and has said that we should allow them to come to him.

It is for this blessing that I beg you to join to my petitions your own holy intercession, that I might be



*Mother of the Infant Christ,
Speak to Jesus for me.*

privileged to bring to Jesus a little one such as he so dearly loves, that he may bless it, that he may bless me, also, in my motherhood, and that he may then make us both grow in the wonders of his divine life.

*Mother of Mothers,
Pray for me!*

THANKSGIVING FOR CONCEPTION

I rejoice in my conception, Lord, and I give thanks that my husband and I have been chosen to share in the work of your love. In your great and tender wisdom, you do not wish to multiply the human family by your power alone. You allow us, your humble creatures, to share in your creative might. The soul of our tiny babe will be your work alone;

its body will be your work and ours, too, for we are its father and mother. But, soul and body, it will be our possession forever as well as yours. May this child ever remind us that you and we have worked lovingly side by side.

How can I ever return sufficient thanks for this great honor? I offer humbly my homage and heartfelt devotion.

THANKSGIVING FOR MOTHERHOOD

Accept my humble gratitude, most holy Trinity!

Thanks be to the Father, who manifested unlimited power within me by drawing forth from nothingness another human soul and giving it to my care.

Thanks be to the Son, who has revealed his eternal wisdom within me by fashioning another flame of human life so delicate that it can neither be seen nor heard, so strong that it will live forever.

Thanks be to the Holy Spirit, who has shown his everlasting love within me by forming another human heart to spend its days on earth in praising God and returning love for love.

Omnipotent triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — receive my humble thanks and my undying devotion.

FOR AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

Dearest Mary, I look to you now for the help of your maternal love.

You understand my trials as an expectant mother. You bore Jesus in your womb. You know the doubts and anxieties that beset me; you know the bodily suffering I endure. Like you, may I turn all these sorrows into joy. You overcame anxiety by a loving trust in God; you overcame doubt by gentle resignation to his will. Your motherhood lifted your mind above earth and kept it close to God.

So speak to Jesus now with me, beloved Mother, as I seek prayerfully to learn to bear the trials of motherhood with joy.

*Mother of Perpetual Help,
Pray for me!*

THOUGHTS FOR AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

What must have been your joy, Mary, when the angel announced that you were to become a mother, the true mother of God's own Son! You were so happy — yes, far happier even than I am, and your heart burst forth in a song of praise: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior."

Did you often think of the wonderful Son whom you would bear? Mary, think now of our dear child, my husband's and mine, and watch over it always. During those months before the first Christmas morn, how reverently you guarded that precious treasure within your body. Now I carry within me a precious treasure,

our child. Your son was the son of God, and our child will soon become an adopted child of God when the waters of baptism make its soul godlike and beautiful.

Mary, thank God for us and with us; thank him for all his goodness to us. And pray with us that we may know how to care for the child that he has given us. Join your prayers with ours that I may be a good mother, as you were, and that my husband may be a good father with a fatherhood patterned as closely as possible on the perfect fatherhood of God.

And, Mary, let me ask for one thing more. Since your boy was the best and most lovable of children, turn your motherly care to our child now so that it may grow up to be

as much as possible like Jesus, and like yourself, his mother. This is the grace that I desire most of all.

Tell me, virgin blest, what were your thoughts when you contemplated your God and Maker.

Who came from heaven to earth to dwell in you.

TO NURSE A CHILD

Holy Mary, you remember devoutly how as a young mother you pressed the divine Jesus tenderly to your breast. You were not then denied that precious privilege of motherhood, to nourish the life you had brought into this world.

Dear Mother of Mothers, I beg you to speak to God with me now to