

APRIL

April 17

BLESSED MARY ANN OF JESUS NAVARRO, VIRGIN

Memorial

Mary Ann was born on January 17, 1565, in Madrid, Spain. She led a virtuous life since her youth. At the age of 23 years she refused to get married and dedicated herself completely to God under the direction of the Mercedarian Fathers. She received the habit of the Third Order of Mercy and was professed in 1614. She dedicated herself to works of mercy, had a deep devotion to the Holy Eucharist, and was an inspiring example of prayer life, humility, and sacrifice. She was commanded, under obedience, to write a short autobiography. She died on April 17, 1624, in Madrid, where her body is preserved incorrupt.

From the common of Virgins, except for the following:

Invitatory

Ant. Come, let us worship Christ, joy, and crown of virgins, (alleluia).

Office of Readings

HYMN

Long live the Divine Love
That led Blessed Mary Ann
To the banquet of heaven above,
Where she reigns with the Blest.

The flame of the Holy Spirit
Was impressed upon her heart;
This indelible sign of God's love
Would from her never depart.

Untiring helper of the poor and needy,
We beg you to hear our plea;
So that when life's cares cease,
We shall be with you in peace.

Guide us to the holy mountain
Where we our God shall see,
And drinking at the living fountain,
Possess Him for all eternity.

Praise to God the Father, and the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit honor be;
May your praises, Three in One,
Continue for all eternity.

SECOND READING

From the Autobiography of Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus

(Ed. Madrid 1965, p. 254)

The Church offers us Christ in the Eucharist

One day, during the Octave of the Most Holy Sacrament, I went to a church in which this feast was celebrated with particular devotion and solemnity. On this occasion, I said to the Lord: "My Lord, could not this feast and its celebration last forever?" The Lord answered in the secret of my heart that it would have been impossible because men, on account of their weakness, could get tired and let this devotion diminish.

This happened because I was considering that the Octave was about to end. So I learned that man cannot continuously celebrate this feast on account of his weakness.

On another occasion, while I was about to receive Holy Communion, God let me see the emptiness, the unworthiness, and the nothingness of my soul before his greatness. Therefore, with great affection and love I said to him: "My Lord, this tabernacle in which you are enclosed is much cleaner and better adorned than my soul." But the Lord answered in my soul: "The tabernacle is not loving me!" From this I understood that the Lord likes to dwell in our souls and not among gold, silver, and precious stones; because all lifeless things are incapable of love.

Still on another occasion, after I had received Holy Communion, the Lord let me understand in a special way what a great friend God is, since he gives himself to our souls. I saw an immense eruption of waters rushing on our souls and turning back at the same time. From this vision I was able to realize the many times we don't permit our Lord to enter our souls because we don't have the right dispositions to receive him.

RESPONSORY

We contemplate your beauty, O virgin of Christ.

— You have received a shining crown from the Lord.

You will neither lose the honor of virginity nor be deprived of the love of the Son of God.

— You have received . . .

Prayer as in Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

HYMN

Glory and praise to your name, O God,
From all on earth below and heaven above;
May the Mystical Bride of your Son
Give you thanks with songs of love.

O Mary Ann, virgin chaste and wise,
For Jesus you gave up earthly goods,
Kept your torch burning bright
And became of Jesus a loving bride.

Renouncing all that was not him,
Your heart was full of love;

Now in ecstasy you sing the hymn
Of the eternal One in heaven above.

All praise to the Father, and the Son,
And equal glory to the eternal Love;
May all creation join in our song
As we proclaim the God of all.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. We bear always and everywhere the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus be also manifested in our body (Alleluia).

INTERCESSIONS

Let us praise Christ, spouse and reward of virgins, and say to Him:
Lord, we consecrate our lives to you.

Lord, watch over us as we begin our daily work,
— may we be united to the contemplative Mercedarian Sisters in worshiping you, their Bridegroom.

Lord, be mindful of the poor and destitute,
— may this day bring them relief and joy.

Grant that your faithful be born to a new life by the banquet of your Word and Eucharist;
— may this, food strengthen them to follow you joyfully like blessed Mary Ann.

To all those united to your Cross through suffering and sorrow,
— grant unwavering faith and inward peace.

Our Father . . .

Prayer

O God,
you taught your virgin Mary Ann,
model of penance
and faithful worshiper of the Eucharist,
to serve Christ in her brothers and sisters.
Help us, through her intercession,
to participate devoutly in the divine mysteries
and to heed with a generous disposition
the voice of the Spirit inviting us
to faithful service of you and of our neighbor.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Evening Prayer II

HYMN as in Morning Prayer.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. I have found him whom my heart loves, I have taken hold of him and will not let him go (alleluia).

INTERCESSIONS

United in spirit to the entire Mercedarian family, let us worship the Lord and say to him;
Lord, we thank you for the gift of your call.

Lord, may our consecrated life shine like a bright light before men,
— so that they may glorify the heavenly Father.

Lord, increase the number of your followers and sanctify them with your grace;
— may they always fulfill your Father's will.

Lord, help those who suffer for the faith,
— may their perseverance strengthen our weakness.

May your Virgin Mother intercede for the virgins consecrated to your service;
— may they live their charisma for the good of the Church.

May the Holy Eucharist strengthen us on our journey;
— and be the eternal joy for those who die in your love.

Our Father . .

Prayer

O God,
you taught your virgin Mary Ann,
model of penance
and faithful worshiper of the Eucharist,
to serve Christ in her brothers and sisters.
Help us, through her intercession,
to participate devoutly in the divine mysteries
and to heed with a generous disposition
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We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.