



## From the Deacon's Desk

In the book, "Mary, Mother of All," Pope Francis teaches us the meaning of the words of the Hail Mary.

### **Full of Grace**

The Angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace"; in her, the pope explains, "there is no room for sin because God has chosen her from all eternity." "The Word became flesh in her womb. We, too, are asked to listen to God, who speaks to us and to accept His will. The Lord always speaks to us."

### **The Lord is with you**

What happened in a unique way in the Virgin Mary, Francis says, "happens on a spiritual level in us as well when we welcome the Word of God with a good and sincere heart and put it into practice. It happens as if God were to become flesh in us; He comes to live in us because He makes His home in those who love Him and obey His Word.

### **Blessed are you among women**

How did Mary live her faith? "She lived it," the pope answers, "in the simplicity of the many daily occupations and worries of every mom, such as providing food and clothing and taking care of the house.

### **Blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.**

Mary is receptive, but not passive, Francis explains. "Just as she receives the power of the Holy Spirit at a physical level, but then gives flesh and blood to the Son of God who takes form in Her, so also on a spiritual level, she receives grace and responds to it with faith.

### **Holy Mary, Mother of God**

The Mother of the Redeemer, the pope continues, "precedes us and constantly confirms us in the faith, in our vocation, and in our mission. With her example of humility and readiness to obey God's will, she helps us to translate our faith into a joyful proclamation of the Gospel, without borders."

### **Pray for us sinners**

Francis relates an anecdote from the confessional to explain: a man explained that his mother had told him to go to the Blessed Virgin, and "she will tell you what to do." "Now, that [said the pope] is a woman who had the gift of counsel. She didn't know how to solve her son's problem, but she pointed out the right path: go to the Blessed Virgin, and she will tell you. This is the gift of counsel. You moms, who have this gift: ask that it be given to your children. The gift of counseling your children is a gift of God."

### **Now, and at the hour of our death**

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, Pope Francis says, "so that she, as the Mother of our first-born brother, Jesus, can teach us to have the same maternal spirit towards our brothers, with a sincere ability

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to accept, to forgive, to strengthen, and to infuse confidence and hope. Every 'yes' to God is a step toward Heaven, toward eternal life."

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