



The Marian

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A Newsletter Published
By St. Anthony's Guild

Dear Friends of Our Blessed Mother,

Soon we will begin the Novena for Mary, Untier of Knots. This special devotion to Mary has become more popular ever since Pope Francis encouraged the devotion in Argentina, and then spoke about it during his first year as pontiff. What are these "knots" you might ask? They are the problems and struggles we face where we don't see any solution. They are the knots we feel when we are ill or in danger; when our relationships are wounded or broken; when the affairs of our world seem inextricably caught in a knot. Throughout this nine-day Novena, The Franciscan Friars will be praying that the Blessed Virgin Mary will intercede for us all, that she will untie the knots that exist in all of our lives – so that we may be purified and ever closer to God.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. David Convertino, OFM

Executive Director, St. Anthony's Guild

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A Marian Fact

The color blue is associated with Mary because in ancient times, blue was associated with royalty. Beginning around 500 A.D, Byzantine art shows Mary wearing a dark blue mantle, a sign of her royal dignity as queen. This association of Mary wearing the color blue, spread to the west and has continued throughout the ages.



Through The Lens of a Friar

Fr. Bartholomew McMahon, OFM

Fr. Bart, as he is known, spent many years ministering to the people at our mission in Japan. He is now enjoying life at our retirement house, St. Anthony Friary in Butler, NJ. Here is his story.

"I was introduced to St. Francis of Assisi by a neighbor, Fr. Bernie Kessing, OFM, who took me to St. Joseph Seminary in Callicoon, NY for a summer vacation. The next thing I know, the Vocation Director for Holy Name Province, Fr. Sal Fink, OFM showed up at my door to sign me up!" "I was solemnly professed in 1956 and ordained to the priesthood in 1962. My first assignment after ordination was to go to our mission in Japan. Before going to Japan, I was asked to preach for the Franciscan Missionary Union and to work during the week at St. Francis of Assisi Church, in NYC. The years I spent in Japan included being guardian of the Friar community, ministering to those who were in a prison and as a spiritual director to the Japanese Sisters."

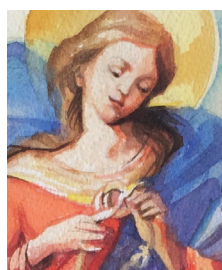
"My work in these two ministries was inspired by the

Japanese Provincial of the Franciscan Order and the local Bishop who asked me to avail myself to being their priest. Today they are doing wonderful work for the Lord and for the People of God. I enjoyed all of my ministries, but most of all I enjoyed my ministry work at the prison where I worked with those who had very troubled lives."



"My life's work and all of my ministries were made possible because I was able to give of my total self as a result of your generous support to St. Anthony's Guild, along with your encouragement and prayers. I, and every Friar of Holy Name Province, have been given the ability to do what we do because of your love. I thank you and I know all the Friars thank you."

The Story of the Painting of Our Lady Untier of Knots



The origin of Our Lady as the Untier of Knots dates back more than four hundred years.

Unlike many devotions that are rooted in Marian apparitions such as Lourdes and Fatima, this one comes from Mary's intercession in a troubled marriage. It happened in

September 1615, when a German nobleman, Wolfgang Langenmantel, and his wife Sophie, were experiencing marital problems. In a last attempt to avoid divorce, Wolfgang sought counsel from Fr. Jakob Rem, a Jesuit priest who was known for his devotion to Mary. Fr. Rem encouraged Wolfgang to bring his marital issues to Our Lady.

Story has it that the two men prayed together four times over a period of twenty-eight days, and at their last meeting, Wolfgang gave Fr. Rem his wedding ribbon. As was customary at the time, the bride and groom were tied together with a ribbon during the marriage ceremony, a symbol of their newfound unity as a couple. While they prayed, Fr. Rem held the ribbon up to a picture of Our Lady of the Snows, offering her "the ties of matrimony" and asking her "to untie all knots" in the Langenmantels' relationship.

Afterwards, as the priest smoothed the ribbon, it became snowy white. Wolfgang took heart and returned home with new hope for his marriage. While the exact story of their reconciliation is lost in history, it is known that he and Sophie did reconcile.



Artists rendition of Untier of Knots by Master artist, Gordon Daugherty

The story of their saved marriage was passed down and years later, Wolfgang’s grandson Hieronymus Ambrosius Langenmantel, a priest, decided to donate a family altar to the Church of St. Peter am Perlach in Augsburg Germany in commemoration of the turn of the century in the year 1700. Such donations were a common tradition at the time. The altar piece was dedicated to “the Blessed Virgin of Good Counsel” and Father Hieronymus wanted it to represent the history of the Langenmantel family.

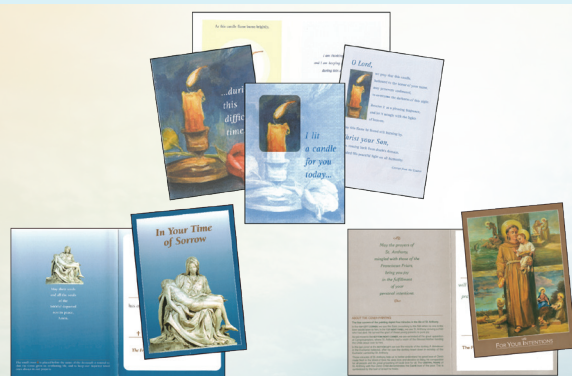
He commissioned an unknown painter, Johann Melchior Georg Schmittndner, to provide the painting for the family altar. Schmittndner decided to base his painting on the story of Wolfgang, Sophie and Father Rem. He depicted the Virgin Mary untying the knots of the ribbon of married life. The crushing of the serpent illustrates that Mary is the Immaculate Conception, since she is the one exempt by special grace from all stain of original sin and is the serpent’s eternal opponent. The dove is a reference to Mary as

the Bride of the Holy Spirit. Angels assist the Blessed Mother; one presents the knots of our lives to her, while another angel presents the ribbon, freed from knots, to us. Underneath Mary, the worried noble Wolfgang, accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, walks towards a monastery.

This story of the Langenmantel family eventually disappeared from history. However, throughout the centuries, the painting remained as an antique in the Church of St. Peter am Perlach in Augsburg. It was then moved and located in the Discalced Carmelite Convent in the same city of Augsburg. The painting, which has survived wars, revolutions and secular opposition, was finally moved back to the Church of St. Peter where it remains today.

Because of the spread of the devotion, thousands of followers of the Virgin Mary Untier of Knots now come to the St. Peter am Perlach Church to ask for her intercession regarding all their problems (knots). Besides marriage difficulties, these so-called knots include a range of other problems of unusual diversity. People come to Mary for assistance regarding health, work, disputes, family complications, personal problems, and conflicts both in the community and internationally. Many government officials, business people, religious groups and individual pilgrims have already placed themselves under the protection of the Virgin Mary Untier of Knots.

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A Daily Reflection From Coffee With Mary

Mary, there are days I don't want to look at the news, turn on the internet or read a newspaper. Sometimes it seems like it's too much to bear. I already know the world is in trouble. I don't want that trouble in my bedroom, in my living room, in my heart or in my head.

My Son wept over Jerusalem, saying how He wished to gather her under His wings like a mother hen gathers her chicks. Paying close attention to the news can bring sadness, but it can also bring glimmers of hope when refugees are welcomed and given shelter, when a fire fighter rescues a child from a burning building or when a town rebuilds itself after an earthquake. The good news and the bad form the story of the people of God. God wants no one to be lost, so pray and work for the conversion of unjust people and systems and remember that: “... the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the



revelation of the children of God; ...” **Matthew 23:37**
Romans 8:18-19, Context: Romans 8:14-30

If you would like to read more daily prayers with Mary, you may order our book for a suggested donation of \$5.00 at www.thefranciscanstore.org or order by phone at 1-(646)-564-3624.



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