



NOVENA TO MARY, UNTIER OF KNOTS

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Illustrated



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Introduction

“THE knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed with the obedience of Mary; that which the virgin Eve tied with her unbelief, the Virgin Mary untied with her faith.” This is a quote from the text of *Against Heresies* by St. Irenaeus. One could speak of this Father of the Church as the one who inspired the painting of *Maria Knotenlöserin*, or *Mary, Untier of Knots*. Today this painting is exhibited in the heart of the Bavarian city of Augsburg in the ancient church of St. Peter am Perlach, whose foundation dates back to the time of the Romans. The Virgin Mother is shown untying the knots that people cannot untie by themselves and that prove to be roadblocks in their lives.

This church in Augsburg has become the pilgrimage destination of an ever greater number of people from many different nations who pray to the Virgin Mary to intercede for them to the Lord. They ask her to help them resolve their difficult problems—the obstacles or knots in their lives that seem to be irresolvable—whether they exist in their own lives or in the lives of those whom they love. People recognize that they cannot overcome these problems by themselves. Oftentimes, they are facing very difficult situations at work, in their family life, or in their community. Other times, it is more a matter of them feeling that their whole life is tangled up in confusion, and they need the insight and strength from on high to be able to bring things back into line.

by the grace of her divine Son, is at the center of a spiritual battle. This is why Christians of every era have entrusted themselves in prayer and intercession to the Mother of God.

Pope Francis and the Spread of This Devotion

POPE Francis is greatly devoted to the image of Virgin Mother who unties knots (in Spanish, *Virgen Desatanudos*). He came across it during a trip to Germany and he popularized it in Argentina. He wrote a beautiful prayer in honor of this miraculous image, which is printed below. The rector of the cathedral of Buenos Aires, Fr. Alejandro Russo, describes how much Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio contributed to the spread of this devotion in Latin America:

The Holy Father spent time in Germany studying as a Jesuit priest. There he discovered the image of the Virgin who unties knots. He brought some copies of it to Buenos Aires, and he began to include one of those copies with whatever letter he wrote.

Eventually, an Argentinian artist offered to make a copy of the image that is found in that church in Germany and to place it in a chapel at the Universidad del Salvador. Many people began to pray to the Virgin Mary before that painting in the university chapel, but it was a small space.

DAY ONE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Say Act of Contrition and Prayer Asking for Conversion (page 11).

Meditation and Prayer for Intercession

O VIRGIN Mary, for centuries the Church has honored you as the new Eve, she who with her faith and obedience untied that which Eve, by her disobedience and her lack of faith, had caused to be tangled.

I recognize that often, in my own life, I have acted foolishly and faithlessly. I called out the words “Lord, Lord,” but I have not sought to discern the Will of God in my life and in my relationships. I built my house on sand and not on the rock foundation of the Word of God. This might even be why I am faced with problems that I cannot overcome, that I cannot face all by myself.

My beloved Mother, I pray for you to seek a new willing spirit for me so that I may be ready to listen to God and to trust completely in His plan. I pray that I might experience the same obedience that you showed when you said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

LORD, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, *pray for us.* *

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of virgins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of the Church,

Mother of Divine grace,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amiable,

Mother most admirable,

Mother of good counsel,

Mother of our Creator,

Mother of our Savior,

Virgin most prudent,

* *Pray for us is repeated after each invocation.*

Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,