2017

Litany of Loreto in Images

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Litany of Loreto in Images
The Litany of Loreto, so called because of its use in the sanctuary of Loreto (Italy) since at least as far back as 1531, was officially approved in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V. Its origin is believed to be a medieval rhymed litany influenced by Eastern Marian devotion, in particular by the famous Hymnos Akathistos. Contrasting with the older Litany of All Saints, the components of the Loreto Litany are purely ad- or invocational prayers. It is the only approved Marian litany. As can be observed, for example, in the so called Officia Mariana, many more Marian litanies were and are in use but designated for private devotion.

Engravings by Joseph Sebastian Klauber

The Marian Library has rare books of the eighteenth century with engravings by the renowned Augsburg artist, Joseph Sebastian Klauber (ca. 1700-1768). It is from these books (see case) that the engravings in this exhibit were taken. The highly symbolic and illustrative reproductions are typical of the Baroque period. Their message is of great spiritual richness. Mary’s profile is that of the exalted Mother, Virgin, and Queen, as suits the period. We have limited ourselves to the illustrations of the Marian titles. The reader needs to keep in mind that the titles introduced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, obviously, are not included in Klauber’s illustrations.

Modern Advocations

The 1587 version of the Litany of Loreto was subsequently enriched with new advocations.

- 1675 Queen of the most Holy Rosary
  (for the confraternities of the Holy Rosary)
- 1883 Queen Conceived without Original Sin
  (Leo XIII for the whole Church)
- 1903 Mother of Good Counsel (Leo XIII)
- 1917 Queen of Peace (Benedict XV)
- 1950 Queen Assumed into Heaven (Pius XII)
- 1980 Mother of the Church (John Paul II)
- 1995 Queen of Families (John Paul II)
The litany is structured using six categories.

1. **Mary's Holiness** – Three introductory advocations highlight Mary's sanctity as person, her role as mother of Jesus Christ, and her vocation as virgin.

2. **Mother of Christ** – Twelve advocations refer to Mary as Mother. The purpose of this series of advocations is to highlight the various facets of Mary's role as mother. Some of these advocations, especially at the beginning and at the end of the series, refer explicitly to her maternal activity.

3. **Mary's Virginity** – This series stresses not only the merit of her virginity, but also the “efficacy” of virginity.

4. **Mary's Titles and Virtues** – Next are thirteen symbolic advocations, mostly taken from the Old Testament and applied to Mary, which highlight her virtues and her eminent role in salvation history.

5. **Mary the Helper** – This group of four advocations extols Mary's role as advocate for spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

6. **Mary the Queen** – The last part of the Marian advocations is composed of a series of thirteen titles referring to Mary as Queen.

**The composition of each engraving consists of four parts.**

1. Title of the invocation in Latin (top of engraving), sometimes with a short explanation.

2. The title is followed by a medallion depicting Mary usually together with the Christchild. The medallion highlights the special virtue or mission of Mary.

3. The medallion is illustrated with a narrative or symbolic image which renders events of the Old Testament or of Mary's life. Frequently, symbols accompany and explain the narrative part.

4. The engraving ends with a scripture quote (bottom) giving the deeper meaning of the whole illustration and invocation.
Sancta Maria
Holy Mary

“Dic mihi, quo appellaris nomine?” (Genesis 32) “Tell me what name shall I give you?”

The answer is: “And the name is Virgin,” followed by the flower monogram “M” signifying Mary.

The two little angels proclaim, “Your name is like spreading perfume” (Canticles 1:3) and, “The Lord has named you a beautiful olive tree” (Jeremiah 11:16).

Two cantors sing, “ora pro nobis,” that is pray for us! while the devil cries out, “Terrifying is his (her) name” (Psalm 111).

“Praised be the Lord, who today has magnified your name so that it will never disappear from the mouth of the people” (Judith 15).

Sancta Dei Genitrix
Holy Mother of God
(Birth-Giver of God)

Mother and child in the medallion reflect and complement the Nativity event below. Both God the Father and Mary proffer the same truth,

“Ego hodie genui te.”
“Today I have given birth to you.”

**Sancta Virgo Virginum**  
**Holy Virgin of Virgins**

Mary’s half-figure crowns the stem with three lilies, while the risen Christ with the cross calls her: “My one alone is my dove, my perfect one!”

A host of saints surround the lily, wearing crowns and hailing Mary. We note the presence of such saints as Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara.

The inscription reminds us that the number of virgins is countless.

“The daughters saw her and called her most blessed” (Canticles 6:9).

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**Mother of Christ**

**Mater Christi**  
**Mother of Christ**

The two cameos show Mary nursing and caring for the child Jesus.

Two inscriptions framing the pictures highlight the Mother’s love. Jesus is the beloved who rests in Mary’s bosom (Canticles 1:3). She gave birth to him, the firstborn, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes (Luke 2:7).

“I carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought up, educated and supported you” (2 Maccabees 7:27).
**Mater Divinae Gratiae**  
**Mother of Divine Grace**

Mary whose half image is placed on top of a three-tiered fountain, is identified as the one who “contains all grace” (“In me gratia omnis,” Sirach 24). This is confirmed by the Annunciation angel, Gratia plena (full of grace), and by the three rays of light emanating from the triangular symbol of the Trinity. In turn, the rays are transformed into three well-springs flowing from Mary’s heart, symbol of Trinitarian grace and the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Thus, Mary is a fountain of life.

> “Let us proceed to and approach the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4).

**Mater Purissima**  
**Mother Most Pure**

Mother and child are represented in the circular shield of the full moon, inscribed, “Pulchra ut luna” (beautiful as the moon).

The two astronomers sitting atop the observatory are gazing heavenwards with their telescopes, only to reach the conclusion, “Tota pulchra es, macula non est in te” (You are most beautiful and there is neither fault nor stain in you).

Beauty is assimilated with the moon as stated in the Song of Songs: “... beautiful as the moon, resplendent as the sun” (6:10). Beauty is synonymous of purity. As the moon receives light from the sun, so the human person (Mary) receives beauty and purity from God. In this sense we understand the following lemma (header), “What God has made clean, you are not to call unclean (profane)” (Acts 10:15).
**Mater Castissima**  
Mother Most Chaste

To highlight Mary's chastity, her effigy is surrounded by two of the classical symbols of Our Lady's virginity, namely:

“Hortus conclusus” (enclosed garden)  
“Fons signatus” (sealed fountain).

Both symbols appear in the Song of Songs, “You are...my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a fountain sealed” (Canticles 4:12).

The typical half-image of Mother and child forms the crown of a tree which bears simultaneously flowers and fruit. They are symbols of Mary's simultaneous role as virgin (flower) and mother (fruit).

“What a beautiful and chaste creature (generation)” (Wisdom 4).

**Mater Inviolata**  
Mother Inviolate

This title is defined with regard to the Sun. There exists reciprocity between Mary and the Sun, “Sol in Virgine and Virgo in Sole.” The Sun, symbol for Jesus Christ, dwells in her virginal person, just as Mary has meaning only in and through the Sun, Jesus Christ. See the Jesus (IHS) monogram on Mary's chest.

Mary's position with regard to the Sun places her in the center of or beyond the changing seasons and times, symbolized by the signs of the Zodiac.

Mary, the inviolate mother, is the “mirror without stain” (Wisdom 7). The light and power of the Holy Spirit traverses her heart and is perfectly reflected; she is inviolately passing on the Spirit's grace so as
to bring light into the world (the burning candle) by the virginal birth ("virginea generatio").

“Because she has loved chastity, she will be blessed in eternity” (Judith 15:10).

**Mater Intemerata**
**Mother Undefiled**
The symbol chosen here is that of the mother whose Son uses the lance of his cross to combat wild beasts representing evil. She is holding the Christchild on her lap, but it is in fact He who had chosen her from the beginning ("Possedit me in initio" Proverbs 8:22).

“Thus, we know that all the powers of hell are no match for her.”

**Mater Amabilis**
**Mother Most Amiable**
Mary’s amiability is directed first of all to the Christchild as is shown in the “Eleousa” (tenderness) expression of the medallion. The hearts of Mother and Son are burning in reciprocal love.

Mary is the most amiable. To attest this superlative, Mary is compared to prominent Old Testament women figures, for example to Esther, who is of elegant aspect (Esther 2); Judith, who is also of elegant aspect (Judith 8); Rebecca, who is of exquisite beauty (Genesis 24); Rachel, who is well-formed and beautiful (Genesis 29). However, the verdict of the little angel is irrevocable, Mary is “amabilis super omnes.” She is more lovable than all four of them. “You exceed through your amiability the love of all other women” (2 Kings 1).
Mater Admirabilis
Mother Most Admirable

Mother and child in the medallion are reminiscent of the Salus Populi icon at Saint Mary Major. The medallion is flanked by two pyramid-shaped constructions from which ex-voto type objects are hanging. Both pyramids are crowned with a burning heart.

Between the two pyramids there is a representation of the burning bush, traditional symbol of Mary’s inviolate virginity (Exodus 3:2-5). Moses, kneeling in front of the burning bush, articulates the following: “Bring me to your holy mountain, to the place of your dwelling” (Psalm 42, 111:3).

Mother and Child are symbols of this divine dwelling place. The two pyramids are like ardent monuments of intercessory prayer addressed to Christ through Mary. The figures at the base of the two pyramids may be allegories of the elements, for example, wind, earth, water. . . .

“Her name will be called ‘admirable!’” (Isaiah 9).

Mater Creatoris
Mother of Our Creator

The customary and imposing half-figure representation of Mother and Child is resting on a bank of clouds, Mary holding a scepter, the Christ child the whole of the universe. The halo-shaped inscription over Christ’s head says, “He sustains everything through his mighty word” (Hebrews 2).
Jesus Christ is hailed by the two figures kneeling at his feet. Saint Paul on the left proclaims, “So whoever is in Christ is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). King David expresses the despair and longing of the Old Testament, “Ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi” (Psalms 72) (I am nobody, and did not even know it.) The sentiment of nothingness of the Old Testament is overcome by the reality of being a new creation in Christ.

What is Mary’s place in all of this? She exclaims with Ecclesiastes, “He who created me has deigned to dwell in my womb” (Sirach 24).

**Mater Salvatoris**  
**Mother of Our Savior**

The lower half of the engraving shows the Nativity scene. It is miniaturized to reflect that by now the birth of Christ is an event of the past. The message, though, remains unchanged, “Today a Savior is born to you.” Though depicted as a child, this Savior is present, with his mother, in a medallion marked by a crown of thorns and the many instruments of Christ’s passion (“Arma Christi”) from the purse with the thirty silver coins to the ladder serving for Christ’s deposition from the cross. In fact, the medallion with Mother and Child is hanging on the cross, the same cross Christ is pointing to with his right hand. The caption above Mary’s head highlights that she is not only the Mother of the Savior, but in a more intimate way “my mother,” which could refer to the Christchild as well as point to each one of us. Christ is destined or called to be the Savior of the world (Genesis 41).

Mary is the one of whom it is said, “She will bear a Son and name him Jesus, and he will save his people” (Matthew 1).
Virgo Prudentissima  
Virgin Most Prudent

Mary, an autonomous figure with arms outstretched in a noble gesture of openness and invitation, presents the double characteristics of virgin (Immaculate Conception highlighted by the twelve stars around her head), and mother (her womb bears the Christ monogram). Her figure is surrounded with a perfect circle symbolizing perfection of human knowledge and behavior. It is decorated with symbols of science (compass, square, globe, and telescope), and with cameos showing animal allegories of prudence: snake: be prudent like the snake; ant: go and learn wisdom from the ant (Proverbs 6); rooster: and from whom do you think the rooster received his intelligence? (Job 33).

There is a cameo between the representation of Mary and the illustration from the parable of the wise or prudent virgins who put oil in their lamps (Matthew 25). It bears the head of Janus (here a crowned head with a feminine and a masculine face), symbol of prudence, taking into account beginning and end, past and future of human life and endeavor.

“Mary is hailed as the woman who was most prudent” (cf. 1 Kings 25:3 re: Abigail).

Virgo Veneranda  
Virgin Most Venerable

The figure of Mary, holding a lily in her hand, is encapsulated in a medallion inscribed, “Venerable and Saint” (Numbers 28). Above and to her right, her risen Son is sitting on a throne, pointing with a gesture of
invitation to a second throne, next to his own, reserved for his mother.

The medallion rests on the replica of the House of Loreto, itself placed on a rock. At the foot of the rock a group of devotees is standing or kneeling in prayer. This group is seemingly contrasted with another group of people threatened by the snake (devil) hiding in a tree. The central figure, with his back to the onlooker, seems to petition Mary’s help in the combat against evil.

“All generations will call me blessed” (Luke, 1:48).

**Virgo Praedicanda**
**Virgin Most Renowned**

The cameo shows Mary in the posture of the *Orante*, hands crossed on her chest. Putti (little angels) playing the trombone are surrounding Our Lady’s picture. Their musical instruments are flagged and bear the name of Mary.

Underneath the cameo we notice two scenes, both destined to proclaim the praises of Mary. The scene in the foreground shows the interior of a Baroque church. The priest at the pulpit announces Mary’s all-holiness (“Beatissimam praedicaverunt” Proverbs 31). The second preacher, in an outdoor setting, praises the womb which bore Jesus.

“All your praise will not disappear from the people’s lips” (Judith 13).
**Virgo Potens**  
**Virgin Most Powerful**

This illustration bears evident martial features. Mary’s picture is set against a shield which is surrounded with a panoply of weapons, from bow and arrow to flags and cannons. Mary holds in her hand a commander’s staff; however, the motto around her head refers to Christ. It says, “I can do everything in Him.” Right and left of Mary’s image we read this inscription, “He made powerful things with his arm.”

On the lower half of this illustration we find the representations of two powerful typological feminine figures of Mary in the Old Testament. To the left we have Jael, who killed Sisera, the commander of the Canaanites, hammering and crushing his head with peg and mallet (Judges 5:26). The woman to the right is Judith decapitating Holofernes (Judith 11:17).

“In your hand are virtue and power” (1 Paral 29).

**Virgo Clemens**  
**Virgin Most Merciful**

Her hands folded and head inclined, Mary suggests meekness and compassion. The various inscriptions highlight this advocation, “The law of mercy is on her lips” (Proverbs 31). Illustrating the image of the heart at the bottom of the medallion, we read, “My heart is like melting wax” (Psalm 21). Right and left of Mary’s portrait we discover two allegorical animals emphasizing mercy: one is the Pelican feeding
her brood, with its own blood; the other is the mother-hen protecting her chicks. The bottom half of the illustration pictures the wedding feast of Cana, a further reference to Mary's attentiveness to human needs and her merciful intercession. The scene is flanked by two additional inscriptions and symbols. “Mercy is like the evening rain,” says one of them (Proverbs 16). The motto is visualized with an abundantly growing plant contrasting a broken column. The second scene, to the right, shows Rebekah with the jug offering a drink to people and animals, “I will draw water for your camels, too” (Genesis 24:20) says the inscription.

“I will be merciful to you for you have found favor with me” (Exodus 33).

**Virgo Fidelis**

**Virgin Most Faithful**

Mary, offering the Son resting on her lap to the world, is depicted inside a heart-shaped medallion which bears the inscription, “Her heart is faithful” (2 Esdras 9), and, “Faithful woman” (1 Corinthians 7). The real reason for Mary’s title is illustrated in the image below which features the crucifixion. Mary is indeed the “faithful woman.” She is standing at the foot of the cross, her heart pierced with a sword. The scenes right and left of the crucifixion seem to be of allegorical meaning. The scene to the left may well allude to Ariadne and Theseus, the woman's thread leading the man safely through the labyrinth of Knossos. Faithfulness warrants safety and right direction in life. On the other side, the figure lowered from the window on a rope reminds one of David. Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, let “David down through a window, and he made his escape in safety” (1 Samuel, 20:12). Michal is the loving and faithful wife standing by her husband, protecting him from her father's wrath. The following lemma is an invitation to unwavering fidelity:

“Be faithful unto death” (Revelation 2).
Mary’s Titles and Virtues

**Speculum Justitiae**

**Mirror of Justice**

The various symbolic meanings of the mirror highlight: (1) purity of the soul, (2) self-knowledge and moral integrity, as well as (3) the mirror’s ability to reflect reality. Mary's soul is holy and pure. She reflects the Sun of Justice, meaning God's perfection and holiness. She is the mirror without blemish of God's majesty (Wisdom 7:6). The Sun of Justice is reflected in the image of Mother and Child. The angel with balance and sword, usually a symbol of justice, signifies God's perfection.

There is a second and oval mirror whose surface is tainted and marred. In it, three shadowy silhouettes can be barely perceived, featuring Adam or sinful humanity between Good and Evil which is Satan, beckoning and tempting, and the Guardian Angel watching over his protégé. This mirror does not reflect light and perfection but darkness and sin, or at least the blurred human vision of God and eternity.

Thus Paul reminds us that “at present we see indistinctly as in a mirror, but then face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

**Sedes Sapientiae**

**Seat of Wisdom**

The title called “Seat of Wisdom” refers to the throne of Solomon. Mary is personified wisdom sitting on Solomon's throne made of ivory and gold (1 Kings 10:18-20). In fact, sitting on the throne of Solomon she comes to be the throne upon which her Son, “the Wisdom of the Father,” is seated.
The cameo of mother and child is surrounded by symbols of science and knowledge (globe, telescope, square). The lower half of the architectural façade shows a group of seven feminine figures standing around the throne, which bears the simple inscription “Verbum” (the Word). The throne of Solomon is no longer that of human but of divine wisdom, the Word of God made man. The caption around the medallion of Mother and Child states this with the following words: “In the mother’s womb is seated the wisdom of the Father.”

The lemma points out that “wisdom has built her house; she has set up her seven columns” (Proverbs 9:1). What are those columns personified by the seven feminine figures? It seems difficult to formulate a stringent answer. The artist may have intended to represent knowledge and wisdom. Thus the seven figures would be those of the liberal arts, of Trivium and Quadrivium. Another explanation seems to favor the seven virtues (theological and cardinal virtues) or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-2).

**Causa Nostrae Laetitiae**  
**Cause of Our Joy**

Our Lady is presented as autonomous figure, possibly pregnant as the Visitation scene in the lower half of this illustration seems to indicate. The medallion with Our Lady is flanked by Judith with the head of Holofernes and Esther dancing and playing the tambourine. The captions invite celebration and joy (Esther 10:10 and Nehemiah 12:43).
Separated by a bunch of musical instruments, the scene of the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth illustrates why Mary is cause of our joy. The moment Mary’s greeting sounded in Elizabeth’s ear, the baby leapt in her womb for joy (Luke 1:44). Mary’s role as announcer and cause of joy, the joy of redemption for all, is further visualized in two lateral scenes, one depicting the souls in purgatory, the other a group of Old Testament figures (among them Moses and David) awaiting the Messiah. “Our sadness will be changed into joy,” says the lemma, meaning that there is hope for all who believe in the Good News made flesh in Mary, the cause of our joy.

**Vas Spirituale**  
**Spiritual Vessel**

The noun “vessel” imperfectly expresses the intended meaning of this advocation. The Latin “vas” (vessel) is used to translate the Greek term “skeuos” which does not only mean vessel but also instrument or tool. Thus, the expression “spiritual vessel” should be rendered as “instrument of the Holy Spirit.” Mary is both dwelling place of the Spirit and his “agent” in the Incarnation. “With and through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God” (CCC 723).

The imagery of the advocation highlights this idea. The caption accompanying the symbol of the Spirit refers to the promise of the Annunciation. The Spirit will overshadow you. Mary answers the Trinity in the words of 4 Esdras 4:14, “If I have found grace with you, send your Spirit into me.” The picture of Mary expresses both humility (her answer to God) and grandeur (scepter in the form of a lily). The table covered with various vessels underscores the fact that Mary is the most exquisite of God’s vessels. She is a “vessel for a noble purpose” (Romans 9:21).
Vas Honorabile
Vessel of Honor

The preeminent symbol in this illustration is the monstrance containing Our Lady, and simultaneously Mary containing and pointing to the radiating host on her chest. The Immaculata (see twelve stars) is herself a monstrance, meaning transparent of and to God. It is her honor to make God visible through her sinlessness and as dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and her Son Jesus Christ. Mary is, according to 2 Timothy 21 (paraphrased here), “a vessel for lofty use (“vas in honorem”), dedicated, beneficial to the master of the house.” The master of the house here is Christ himself, present in the host held by the “vessel of honor,” his mother Mary. She is indeed, as Immaculata, the work of the Almighty One, and thus an “admirable vessel.” Monstrances with a Marian motif are typical of the Baroque period (see for example the famous Lepanto monstrance by J. Zeckel, 1708, Ingolstadt).

Vas Insigne Devotionis
Singular Vessel of Devotion

The word devotion exceeds the narrow meaning of devotional practice and refers to total dedication and fidelity in the service of God. Mary’s profession of faith, “I am the handmaid of the Lord,” most adequately expresses the meaning of this advocation. Her total dedication goes to her Son featured in the Mother-child image of the medallion. Total dedication has not only the meaning of service. It refers primarily to openness and receptivity of
God's will and grace. This attitude is illustrated in the lower half of this page with the story of the widow's oil. On Elisha's order the widow would pour oil in the vessels they handed her (2 Kings 4:5). God's grace cannot be exhausted. It takes a “singular vessel of devotion” to receive its plenty, one that has been perfectly purified (“Egredietur Vas purissimum”) (Proverbs 25:4).

**Rosa Mystica**

**Mystical Rose**

Mary is compared to the mysterious (mystical) rose. The rose was symbol of mystery (antiquity), and for early Christians a metaphor of both martyrdom (Cyprian) and paradise (catacombs of Saint Callistus). The half-image of Mary in this illustration emerges from a giant rose bush planted in a French garden. Two potted rose trees flank the central image. All three serve as visual support to the scriptural references of the rose symbolism applied to Mary.

The rose bush with open petals serving as throne of Our Lady bears the following caption: “Open up your petals like roses planted near running water” (Sirach 39:13). The lateral rose trees make reference to the “rosebush in Jericho” (Sirach 24:14) and to the “blossoms on the branches in springtime” (“quasi flos rosarum”) (Sirach 50:8). The immediate reference of these three rose metaphors are the children of God, Wisdom, and Simon, Son of Jochanan. They are also applied to Mary in order to highlight Mary's sinlessness and role in the Incarnation. Indeed, she is “rose without thorn” (since Sedulius Caelius, – 430) and the shoot (Mary) of the root (Jewish people) from which a “bud shall blossom” (Jesus) (see Isaiah 11:1 – since Tertullian, Ambrose). Mary's mystery is that of her virginal motherhood. The invitation of the lemma: “Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds” (Wisdom 2:8) is addressed to all. We are called to be sons and daughters of God.
**Turris Davidica**  
**Tower of David**

The main characteristic here is that of a sturdy tower surrounded by fortifications, hung with many shields and built on rocky foundations.

The medallion superimposed on the tower shows the half-image of Mary in the posture of the young and meek Orante. The medallion is decorated with the tools and symbols of war: sword, banner, helmet, shield, trumpet, even what looks like the head of Holofernes.

The symbol of the Tower of David is taken from the Song of Songs (Canticles 4:4). It was applied to Mary, and symbolizes Mary's womb giving life and protection to Jesus (Richard of St. Laurent). Mary also gives protection to all those who seek refuge against temptation and danger (Albertus Magnus). The tower is further a symbol of Mary's undefiled virginity (Salzer 12:21), later also of her Immaculate Conception. The fortifications of the tower are a symbol of Mary's virtues, the many shields (one thousand shields) are virtues or signs of heavenly protection against the devil.

Using Psalm 61, this illustration paraphrases the following verse and attributes it to Mary, “You are a tower of strength against the foe” (Psalm 61:4).

**Turris Eburnea**  
**Tower of Ivory**

There are three major elements in this illustration: the customary half-image of Maria Orans; King Solomon pointing with his scepter to the Marian medallion, and the “Tower of Ivory” which seems to be part of a castle.
Solomon seems to be uttering these words, “Your neck is like a tower of ivory” (Canticles 7:5). This sentence is part of the description of the Sulamite, the bride’s beauty. Attributed to Mary in the Middle Ages, this symbol highlights Mary’s eminent spiritual grandeur, beauty and fortitude (J. H. Newman).

The reference to Solomon includes ivory as the material from which he built his home, “The king also had a large ivory throne made, and overlaid it with fine gold” (1 Kings 10:18).

**Domus Aurea**

**House of Gold**

The sumptuously decorated medallion shows Mary holding a branch or scepter of lilies. The medallion rests on an impressive Baroque structure, symbolizing the “golden house.” Two inscriptions highlight the Marian connection. The glorious Christ utters these words, “This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I desire it” (Psalm 132:14). The second inscription reads, “The Lord’s glory filled the house of God” (2 Chronicles 5:14). Both of these quotes point to the Incarnation. Mary is the “House of Gold” harboring Jesus Christ; she is his “resting place.” Thus, she is filled with God’s glory.

The designation “House of Gold” goes back to the “Inner Sanctum” of the Tent of the Covenant and to Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6:20-22). Solomon’s Temple gave special distinction to the “Holy of Holiest.”
It was all in gold as befits the dwelling place of God Almighty. Mary is called “House of God” because she was the dwelling place of God Incarnate, and as such filled with grace and virtues, especially those of humility and purity.

She is in her own right (as says the lemma), “The house of the Temple all in gold” (1 Kings 7).

**Foederis Arca**

**Ark of the Covenant**

Mary’s portrait is partially contained in the representation of the Ark of the Covenant. It is surrounded by religious Jewish symbols. Mary’s image bears elegant features, the gestures of her hands seem to point to her womb, the true Ark of the Covenant. The inscription in the margin reads, “Arise Lord, come to your resting place, you and your majestic ark” (Psalm 132:8).

The Marian interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant is known since the Council of Ephesus (see: Proclus of Constantinople, 446). Several analogies can be established between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant: the Ark was the throne of God, Mary is the true “Christophora”; the Ark contained the tables of the law, Mary’s womb bore the one who is the law of the new covenant; the Ark was precious and beautiful, made in gold, Mary’s soul is adorned with the beauty of her virtues; the Ark was a warranty for victory, Mary has been victorious in the battles of God (Pius XII); the Ark found a place in the inner “sanctum” of the Temple, Mary was assumed into heaven.

“What God has made clean, you are not to call unclean (profane)” (Acts 10:15).
**Ianua Coeli**  
**Gate of Heaven**

The elaborately Baroque gate serves as Mary's throne. Her effigy is surrounded by stars and clouds. Her outstretched arms suggest openness, receptiveness. The open gate leads into an enclosed garden, symbol of her virginity. The angel with shield and flaming sword protects the open gate, which can be assimilated with the gates of paradise. The angel proclaims these words, “He has opened the gates of heaven” (Psalm 78:23). On the other side of the gate we discover the presence of the ladder of Jacob, with Jacob sleeping at its foot and angels moving up and down (Genesis 28).

The origin of the Marian allegory of the Gate of Heaven can be found in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus 431 (Homily for the Annunciation, 428, by Proclus of Constantinople or Cyzikus). The homily is based on Ezekiel 44:1-3, and thus alludes to the gate which shall remain closed, since the Lord has entered by it. The expression can be found in the *Ave Maris Stella* (“felix porta caeli”), eighth and ninth centuries, but also in the *Alma Redemptoris* and the *Ave Regina Caelorum*, twelfth century.

The lemma is taken from Psalm 24, “Lift up your heads, o gates.”

**Stella Matutina**  
**Morning Star**

This scene tells about the combat between light and darkness. Eventually, morning is breaking. The giant rooster announces the rising sun, while the roaring lion takes flight and the incubi of the night (frightening bats and dragons) sail away in a dark cloud. Taking advantage of the first light of day a ship leaves harbor. The lemma proclaims Jesus’ message to the churches: “I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star” (Revelation 22:16). He is the promised one seen by the prophet
Balaam. “A star shall advance from Jacob.” However, in this illustration the radiating star is covered with the bust of Mary which dominates the page.

“Stella matutina,” also known as “Stella marina” and “Lux matutina” (12C), and as “Stella maris,” used by Saint Bernard to explain the meaning of the name “Mary,” suggests and announces the rising sun of justice, Jesus Christ (Malachi. 4:3). The glory of her light is but light from eternal light, and praise of the never-ending light of God’s love for us.

Mary the Helper

*Salus Infirorum*
Health of the Sick

The representation of Our Lady is that of the *Orante* with hands folded in prayer of intercession. But the image also expresses Mary’s “compassion,” her suffering with those who suffer: “Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor” (attributed to Saint Paul). Mary is not the ultimate source of health and redemption (*salus*). It is God himself who heals all our infirmities, as indicated in Psalm 103:3 topping the whole page.

The image of Mary is surrounded by the symbols of the apothecary and medical professions. The lower half of the illustration contrasts sickness (a sick person on her sick bed) and healing (possibly an allusion to the pool of
Bethesda). “Health of the Sick,” Mary is a true physician. But her medical equipment is not the stethoscope. She acts as a healer by radiating holiness (virtue).

*Refugium Peccatorum*

Refuge of Sinners

This illustration of the second of four advocations extolling Mary’s role as advocate for spiritual and corporal works of mercy is of intricate composition. The cameo with mother and child is delimited by four anchors, symbols of hope, security, and stability. This central image is surrounded by five biblical scenes. Each one of them depicts in miniature size a situation of danger, temptation or fault with subsequent conversion and/or mercy:

1. In the lower half center, we see the rendering of Saint Peter’s vision of the large sheet filled with all animals of earth and sky (Acts 10:11-12). Peter had to change his opinion about what is clean and unclean in order to comply with God’s will.

2. The miniature to the left of Peter portrays a safe harbor (Psalm 108:30). Those who went off to sea experienced distress, but God brought them to the harbor they longed for.

3. To the right of Peter’s vision is a town-like agglomeration of houses, churches and castles. They are a symbol of refuge for the needy, possibly reflecting 1 Maccabees 10:13,14 and the stronghold of Beth-zur.

4. The upper left miniature tells of the rescue of Nabal, the evil rich man. His wife Abigail implores David to refrain from vengeance. David relents and praises her saying: “Blessed be your good judgment and yourself, who … have prevented me from shedding blood” (1 Samuel 25:33).

5. The fifth miniature, in the upper right corner, tells the story of
Adonijah, who in an attempt to become king turned against David, his father. Abandoned by his followers, he “went and seized the horns of the altar” in search of refuge against Solomon’s vengeance. Solomon acted mercifully, and said to Adonijah: “Go to your home” (1 Kings 2:49ff).

The lemma reminds us that God loves all people (Psalm 87:4f). It is Mary’s role to bring God’s love into the world, to be the intercessor for all, and to give hope and help to sinners.

**Consolatrix Afflictorum**
**Comforter of the Afflicted**

Mary is the solace, consolation and comforter of our life. This is the meaning of the caption borrowed from the book of Tobit (chapter 10). Her portrait is enclosed in the disk of the moon. The contrast between Mary’s constancy, fidelity and unwavering faith and the changing status of the waxing and waning moon heightens Mary’s reliability as consoler and comforter. In antiquity, the moon was guide and protector of charioteers. Similarly, Mary’s comfort forbids mere indulgence; she gives direction and points the way. She is leading the erring pilgrim (lower right) who sees in her the comforter of affliction (Psalm 119). In the storms of life (see ship lower left) Mary dispenses solace to those who remain faithful to the Holy One (Job 6:10).

The banquet scene in the lower half is an illustration of the lemma: “I beg you for my people” (Esther 7:3). Queen Esther in her fight against Haman begs the king, during the second banquet, to spare her life and that of her people. Esther is a well-known symbol or type of Mary. Both women are known for their attitude of prayer and intercessory power. Thus, Mary is comforter of the afflicted because she is both mother of and intercessor with Christ.
**Auxilium Christianorum**

**Help of Christians**

The meek and mild mannered representation of Mother and Child contrasts sharply with the amassed military paraphernalia surrounding them. Coat of arms (cross and half-moon) and armament are reminiscent of the opposition between Christians and Turks, and the naval battle featured evokes the October 7, 1571 victory of the Holy League under Don Juan of Austria against the Turks. The victory of Lepanto was given a special Marian meaning because of its connection with the month of October and the rosary. Commemorative coins bear the inscription: “The Lord’s right hand is raised, the Lord’s right hand strikes with power” (Psalm 118:16), and the date of the victory on October 7 was chosen by Gregory XIII as the annual feast of the rosary.

The lemma hails God's support and warns the enemies of the faith: “Woe to the nations that rise against my people! The Lord Almighty will requite them” (Judith 16:17). Pope Pius V officially added this invocation to the Litany of Loreto in 1571.

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**Regina Angelorum**

**Queen of Angels**

The central picture of Mother and Son is surrounded by a host of angels. The caption around the angels is paraphrasing Daniel 7:10: “Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him.” Some of the angels are easily recognizable, so Gabriel with his bunch of lilies addressing Mary standing at her prie-dieu and holding a book in her left hand. There is also Michael in knightly armor and Raphael with the pilgrim staff.
Other angels elude identification. The overall impression they convey is one of power and splendor, but however impressive their apparel, they humbly bow before mother and child, making true the message of the lemma: “Rule over us you (Gideon) and your Son ....” (Judges 8:22).

**Regina Patriarcharum**  
**Queen of Patriarchs**

The portrait of Mary, here depicted as queenly figure in typical Baroque style, is surrounded by two horns of plenty overflowing with crowns and scepters on one side, with ecclesiastical emblems and the crucifix from the other horn. These scattered symbols of power are contrasted with Mary’s scepter and crown which are unshaken and dominant.

There are two groups of Patriarchs at Mary’s feet. The one on the right represents patriarchs of the Old Testament: Moses and the Tables of the Law, Abraham and Isaac with the bundle of wood for the sacrifice, as well as Jacob and other Old Testament figures. The group on the left depicts some of the important founders of religious orders, notably Saint Ignatius (clothed with liturgical vestments marked by the Jesus monogram), Saint Francis (with Franciscan habit showing his stigmatized hands), possibly also two figures representing the Dominican and Augustinian traditions. Saint Benedict, patriarch of monastic life in the West, is sitting and holding a chalice, his most popular attribute.
**Regina Prophetarum**  
**Queen of Prophets**

The towering figure of this illustration is David, crown on his head and harp in his right hand. With his left hand he is about to set a crown on Mary's head while the eye of eternal foresight is looking on. David pronounces these words from Revelation: “Witness to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10). Mary in the picture of the humble handmaid seems to be pointing to the true reason for her being Queen of Prophets. From her mouth come the words of the Magnificat: “He has raised up Israel his servant” (Luke 1:54).

The lower half of the engraving features several prophetic figures, among them in the foreground Jerome with the lion, and what seems to be the figure of a sibyl, possibly the famous Sibylla Tiburtina (prophecy to Emperor Augustus). The background depicts the prophet Ezekiel standing in the valley of the dead and prophesying the resurrection of the flesh (chapter 37). The illustration is topped off with the praise of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:5: “One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues.”

**Regina Apostolorum**  
**Queen of Apostles**

Mary is hovering over the group of apostles gathered in the Upper Room. Her posture and countenance are those of the Immaculata. Her outstretched arms suggest intercession and mediation. Stars and rays of light, as well as the wheel of time marked by
the signs of the Zodiac surrounding her figure point to the woman clothed with the Sun (Revelation 12:1). The crown held by the little angel confirms her title as Queen of the Apostles. Meanwhile the tongues of fire, symbols of the Holy Spirit's (dove) light and zeal, are descending upon the apostles. The whole scene, which stresses the fullness of Mary's grace, is reminiscent of Acts 1:14, “They persevered in prayer, Mary, the mother of Jesus, being in their midst.”

**Regina Martyrum**

*Queen of Martyrs*

The central theme is that of the Pietà: Mary, Queen of Martyrs offers her Son, the very model and epitome of martyrdom, to the world. Behind her, the victorious cross stands tall. At the foot of the rock, which points out that Christ's passion and death are the foundation of the Church, a group of saintly martyrs are gathered in praise of Christ's sacrifice. We are able to make out Saint George, the dragon slayer, Saint Lawrence with the grill, and Saint Thomas Becket whose head is pierced by a sword. To the right of the rock we see the kneeling figure of Saint Jerome flanked by the lion. He lived like a lion in the desert (asceticism) and fought like a lion for Christ. Thus, he gave his heart to his Lord and Savior (plate with heart and Christ monogram) and stands for unbloody martyrdom.

Our Lady receives the crown of martyrdom from the hands of Saint Bernard. The hearts transfixed with a sword refer to his famous expression: “O beata mater, animarum gladius pertransivit. Aliquod nonnisi eam pertransiens, carnem filii tui penetraret” (In Dom. Oct. Ass., 14), here shortened as “Tuam ipsius animam.” Mary's soul receives the lance that could no longer touch her Son. The lemma highlights Mary's spiritual martyrdom paraphrasing Revelation 17:6, “Her clothes are purple from the blood of the holy ones and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.”
Regina Confessorum
Queen of Confessors

The queenly figure of Mary, adorned with scepter and crown, is sitting on a throne of clouds surrounded by sumptuous drapery held by two little angels.

At her feet are kneeling several bishops and a king, looking up in admiration or down with awe and reverence. Two figures attract special attention. One of them seems to be wearing the habit of the Dominicans, probably Saint Dominic; he offers a crown or wreath of roses. The other figure, in simple and monk-like attire, could be Saint Francis.

The representation is inspired by Revelation 4:10, “They fell down before the one on the throne and threw down their crowns.”

Regina Virginum
Queen of Virgins

Mary is adorned like a virgin. She holds a lily in her hands. A wreath of flowers crowns her head. Her hair is open and flowing freely to her shoulders—a typical sign of the young and unwed woman in Marian art.

A wreath of flowers and countless other virgins are surrounding Mary’s picture. The whole representation is dominated by the figure of the victorious lamb (banner with cross) who overcame death by giving his life. The Virgin Mary and all other virgins are
following the Lamb as Revelation reminds us,

“They are Virgins and these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (Revelation 14:4).

**Regina Sanctorum Omnium**  
*Queen of All Saints*

Mary is like the moon among lesser stars (“Velut inter stellas luna minores”), meaning she is the greatest of all saints. This idea is reinforced with still another inscription, “Super eminet omnes.” Mary exceeds all other saints in holiness.

The figure of Mary is dressed in queenly apparel. She is surrounded by saints offering their crowns to her in a gesture of reverence. We are able to make out the following: Noah, Peter, Laurence, Agnes, David and a sixth nondescript saint. Countless other saints are gathered around an angel offering Mary the imperial crown placed on a cushion.

Mary’s pre-eminent holiness is again highlighted in the lemma, “The mount of the Lord’s house shall be higher than the mountains” (Micah 4:1).

The Litany of Loreto illustrated by Klauber is available for loan from the Marian Library. The Klauber engravings were scanned and framed by Mary Popp of the Society for the Preservation of Roman Catholic Heritage (SPORCH) in Dayton, Ohio.