

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ON SATURDAY
BASILICA OF SAINT THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS
LISIEUX, FRANCE
OCTOBER 21, 2006

Eph 1: 15-23

Ps 8: 2-3 ab, 4-5, 6-7

Lk 12: 8-12

Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

1. Each Saturday, we express our devoted love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of our Savior Who, as He died on the cross, gave us to her as her dear children. Each Saturday, we are reminded of the great mystery of God's love for us, in which our Blessed Mother participates in a most special way. She first welcomed our Savior, God the Son, into the world at His conception under her Immaculate Heart. Her sinless heart was one with His Divine Heart from that moment forward. She was indeed His first and best disciple. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the model of the trust in the Holy Spirit, which our Lord Jesus teaches us in the Gospel. Seven most painful wounds of sorrow pierced her heart, but, through all her suffering, most especially the cruel Passion and Death of her most beloved Son, she trusted that God's Word to her would be fulfilled. Our Blessed Mother teaches us an ever deeper faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is steadfast in hope, in trust in God's promises, and ardent in love. The Virgin Mary, in her maternal love, leads us always to Christ, Head of His Body, the Church, in Whom alone is our life and salvation.

2. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus is a model of devoted love of the Mother of God, our Blessed Mother. The Martin Family expressed their deep Catholic faith, their faith in Christ alive for us in the Church, by entrusting their members to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yesterday, we recalled how, through the intercession of the Mother of God, Thérèse was cured of a grave illness at the age of ten, on May 13, 1883. While her sisters and she turned to our Blessed Mother for help in their great distress, the statue of the Virgin Mary, near her sickbed, smiled, and she was restored to health. A year later, in the afternoon after First Holy Communion, Thérèse, together with her

sisters, consecrated herself as a loving daughter to the Virgin Mary. She was asked to pronounce her consecration for the whole class of First Communicants. In her autobiography, she reflected upon the meaning of the consecration. She wrote:

In the afternoon, it was I who made the Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin. It was only right that I *speak* in the name of my companions to my Mother in heaven, I who had been deprived at such an early age of my earthly mother. I put all my heart into *speaking* to her, into consecrating myself to her as a child throwing itself into the arms of its mother, asking her to watch over her. It seems to me the Blessed Mother must have looked upon her little flower and *smiled* at her, for wasn't it she who cured her with a *visible smile*? Had she not placed in the heart of her little flower her Jesus, the Flower of the Fields and the Lily of the Valley (*Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, Father John Clarke, O.C.D. Third Ed. Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1996, p. 78).

Saint Thérèse had a deep sense of our Blessed Mother's intercession for all her children, that their hearts, with her Immaculate Heart, may rest always in the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. Thérèse had the privileged experience to see the loving smile of the Virgin Mary on the face of the miraculous statue, when she was ill, but she knew that the Mother of God never ceases to smile upon her children who call to her in their need. How often, we have called upon the help of our Blessed Mother and known her loving care for us!

3. When Thérèse made her Act of Oblation to Merciful Love, her consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, some eleven years later, she expressed the constant presence of our Blessed Mother within her, interceding for her and bringing her to our Lord. She declared: "It is to her I abandon my offering, begging her to present it to You," (*Story of a Soul*, p. 78).

With Thérèse, we may be confident that any prayer confided to the Blessed Virgin Mary reaches the Heart of Jesus, her Son.

4. With our Blessed Mother, we now approach the altar of Christ's sacrifice. We place ourselves, with her, before our Lord, begging His forgiveness and the outpouring of His grace into our souls. He will not fail to hear the prayers of His mother, our prayers. He will now reach down to draw us up to Himself, so that He may share with us the infinite riches of mercy and love which fill His heart. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may our Lord receive the offering of ourselves to Him. May He make of us, with Mary, an offering of love to all our brothers and sisters.

*Heart of Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
have mercy on us.*

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, pray for us.