



Everyday Devotions
For Moms

Christine Gibson



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First Edition

*For my own saintly mother,
who is always on call*

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*With gratitude to my husband for his patient help
in bringing this project to fruition*

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Introduction

For many years I lacked an understanding of the role of the saints in our Catholic faith tradition. Why should one pray to saints when one can pray to Jesus? I wondered. It seemed the implication was that we were too far away from Jesus for him to hear our prayers, and we would have better luck with someone “higher up” praying for us.

But some time ago, I encountered a very simple yet thought-provoking question: If we can ask our friends here on earth to pray for us, why would we hesitate to ask those who have gone before us? This gave me pause. I often asked friends to pray for me. In doing so, I never felt that I was saying that I couldn't pray to Jesus or that my friends were “higher up” than I. Would asking for the saints' prayers be any different? Could I expand my circle of friends to include the saints?

I considered that perhaps Scripture and our tradition had something to say in answer to my questions. There is some biblical basis for the idea of the angels and saints praying for us here on earth. The Book of Revelation not only mentions the “prayers of the holy ones,” but through the use of imagery describes the saints in heaven offering to God the prayers of the saints on earth (Revelation 5:8). We also read a little later, in 8:4, of an angel in heaven offering the prayers of the earthly saints: “The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel.”

While Scripture doesn't exactly speak of keeping the saints “on call,” interceding for our daily needs, this idea comes through in the tradition of our faith, particularly through the teachings of some of the early Church Fathers. They were clear that those who go to heaven continue to pray for their fellow Christians on earth. Saint Cyprian of Carthage (bishop and martyr) preached in the third century: “Let us on both

sides [of death] always pray for one another.” Encouraging Christians to pray for one another even after death, he said, “if one of us...shall go hence first, our love may continue in the presence of the Lord, and our prayers for our brethren and sisters not cease in the presence of the Father’s mercy.” We can rest assured that it is out of Christian love that the saints in heaven pray for us today.

If we accept that the saints in heaven can pray for us, we might next ask which saints we should call on. I never learned about the lives of many saints, so they never seemed like real people; they seemed like figures who were born as stained-glass beings. The stories of the saints are fascinating, and we can find that many faced situations, trials, and burdens very similar to those we encounter today. Others led lives entirely different from ours, but we can often find some aspect of their spirituality or their story that resonates with us. My chief desire in writing this book is to help readers discover that although they may have always had a special devotion to a particular saint, they can relate to many more saints than they may have imagined, in many more situations of daily life than they thought possible.

For moms, each day brings new needs, new concerns, and new prayer requests. I know this from experience, so I’ve designed this book with these things in mind. The table of contents is organized to help you quickly find the saint whose prayers you may need at any particular time. Once you find your saint to call, you can turn to her entry to learn more about this woman of faith, and learn from her life through a short reflection. Each reflection takes but a few minutes to read and is followed by a Scripture verse and prayer.

I hope this book provides you with the encouragement and comfort you are seeking.



Everyday Challenges

When you suffer in any way...

Saint Mary, sister of Lazarus

Saint Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha, was a good friend of Jesus. She is known to us as the one who sat at the feet of Jesus while her sister, Martha, busied herself with hostess duties and as the one who was upset that Jesus did not come to save Lazarus from death.

I yearned for a baby for years. All of our best efforts at conceiving failed. Month after month, we faced the same disappointment. Our adoption process proved difficult as well, as months of waiting turned into years.

What do we do, what do we think, when, contrary to Scripture, we ask and we do not receive, we knock and the door remains firmly closed?

Mourning the death of her brother, Lazarus, Mary says to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Isn't that what we want to say when that door refuses to budge? "Jesus, if you were here, if you cared, I would have a child/I would find a job/this depression would lift/my child would be cured."

Maybe Mary is showing us that it's OK to share with Jesus our hurt, our disappointment, and our frustration. Although we would like to be able to calmly say, "Thy will be done," in the face of sorrow, Jesus is there when we can't. In fact, the Bible tells us that when Jesus saw Lazarus in the tomb, he wept. He shared in Mary's sorrow, just as he can share in ours.

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

Saint Mary, please pray that I may find comfort in knowing that Jesus shares in my sorrow, and may I ever have hope that a miracle awaits me as it did you.

When you feel "sacrificed out" for your family...

Saint Gianna Molla

Saint Gianna lived in Italy from 1922–1962. She was a devout Catholic, a wife, mother, and physician. Gianna died after delivering her third child, whom her doctor recommended she abort in order to save her own life. She is the patron of mothers and physicians, and her feast day is April 28.

Every mother sacrifices for her children. One sacrifice that many of us struggle with is lost sleep. Perhaps we used to be eight-hour-a-night beauty-sleep believers, but motherhood makes us yearn for a good six-hour stretch. There are other sacrifices as well—extra cash, date nights with our husbands, lunches with girlfriends, tidy, quiet homes, leisurely mornings....

Once in a while (particularly after some serious sleep deprivation), we may feel a little "sacrificed out." "What about my needs?" we want to ask as we tend to everyone else's.

Saint Gianna Molla is someone to turn to when that “sacrificed out” feeling emerges. Gianna was two months pregnant with her third child when she was diagnosed with a uterine tumor. She was given three options for treatment, but only one would allow her to continue to carry her unborn baby. A physician herself, Gianna chose this option knowing that it was the most dangerous for her own health, as difficulties could arise at delivery. As her pregnancy continued, Gianna informed physicians and family that if a choice had to be made to save her or the baby, they must save the baby.

Unfortunately, such a decision had to be made. Gianna gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Gianna Emmanuella, but she herself died eight days later.

Gianna’s example of the ultimate sacrifice for her children can help us see the big and small sacrifices we make each day in a new light.

**Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion,
for God loves a cheerful giver.**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

*Saint Gianna, you made the ultimate sacrifice for your little one.
I ask you to please pray for me that I may rejoice in the sacrifices
that I can make for my dear children.*

When you are exhausted by mundane tasks...

Saint Veronica

Saint Veronica is known as the woman from Jerusalem who wiped Jesus’ face as he struggled toward Calvary. This act is depicted in the Sixth Station of the Cross. Tradition says that Christ’s face was imprinted on her cloth. She is the patron saint of photographers and laundry workers. Her feast day is July 12.

It has been said that you can sum up a mother's job with two words: She wipes. Whether it be countertops, baby bottoms, noses, faces, tables, or toys, mothers are constant wipers. This can feel so monotonous, insignificant, and tedious! And many of us wipers are women who were accustomed to (in a former life) or are accustomed to (during the 9-to-5 time frame) making important corporate decisions, managing major meetings of the minds, and other activities that may seem to matter more. How could God want us to spend our time wiping?

When you're weary after wiping that same sticky little toddler face for the tenth time, or at your wit's end from comforting a fussy baby all day, consider Saint Veronica.

In the midst of the passion, Saint Veronica stepped into the crowd to offer the only comfort she could: She wiped the face of the suffering Christ. This small, seemingly insignificant act is represented in the Sixth Station of the Cross, allowing the faithful throughout the ages to contemplate the compassion and tenderness that Veronica brought to the heart-wrenching scene.

Recall Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 25:40. "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Those monotonous, insignificant, tedious tasks that you perform for the little ones, you perform for him.

**For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and
you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you
clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.**

MATTHEW 25:35-36

Saint Veronica, please pray for me as I perform a million seemingly inconsequential tasks today. Please pray that I, like you, will provide comfort when I am needed and that I may catch a glimpse of the sacred in the mundane.