

## Mary, Undoer of Knots

*Use this complete prayer service with Chapter 3, Section 1 of Your Life in Christ. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.*

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- image of Mary, Undoer of Knots, pulled up on a projector or printed out (if desired) found here: <https://www.lordsart.com/maunofkninla.html>

### *Prayer Introduction*

Have you ever felt that a difficult situation is beyond your control to figure out? Perhaps it was an argument at home or with a friend, or a situation that you somehow found yourself in the middle of, but that was out of your power to resolve. When tensions and emotions are running high, it can be difficult to remember that God's grace is available in all situations. Actual grace, available to you through the gift of your Baptism, helps you to use your free will to cooperate with God's intervention in your life.

But sometimes it can be difficult to untangle the knots of your sin, the sin of others, and situations beyond your control. Even in such trying times, God wants to be there. One way to invite him in is to ask Mary to intercede for you. There is a special devotion to Mary, Undoer of Knots. Painted in the early eighteenth century by Johann Georg Melchior and on display in St. Peter Church in Bavaria, this devotion depicts Mary with a ribbon in which she is patiently and prayerfully untying the knots of sin to clear the way for Christ's grace. Today, invite Mary to take the ribbon of your life in her hands and help to undo the knotted situations of sin and difficulties that might be weighing you down. If you would like to take this prayer with you, it can be prayed as a novena, a special prayer said for nine days for a particular intention.

**Leader:** (Have students stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross.)

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## *Scripture Reading*

**Reader 1:** A reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. John (Jn 11: 1-44).

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death,\* but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

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So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father,\* I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice,\* "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

### *Reflection*

**Leader:** (Have students sit.) St. Irenaeus wrote that the "knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. For what the virgin Eve tied by her unbelief, this Mary untied by her belief." Today we hear of two women, Martha and Mary, who share in that belief of Mary. They too held to the belief that in Christ all things are possible. When Jesus witnessed their love for their dead brother, and heard their words of faith, he was moved deeply by their grief. And he acted at their intercession. Lazarus was raised from the dead, and untied from the knots of his burial clothes. Today let us bring before Mary and her Son Jesus all of those knots that are weighing down our hearts. Let us bring before Mary and Jesus our personal sin, the sin of others who have hurt us, the sins of past generations, and sins of whole countries. If you have a particular situation that you feel is a knot, bring it to prayer today.

### *Novena Prayer*

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**All:** Mother, Undoer of Knots, generous and compassionate, I come to you today to entrust this knot (mention your intention silently here) in my life to you and to Jesus to undo, under the light of the Holy Spirit, this snarl of problems.

Mary, Undoer of Knots, pray for me.

Virgin Mary, Mother of fair love, Mother who never refuses to come to the aid of a child in need, Mother whose hands never cease to serve your beloved children because they are moved by the divine love and immense mercy that exist in your heart, cast your compassionate eyes upon me and see the snarl of knots that exists in my life. You know very well how desperate I am, my pain, and how I am bound by these knots. Mary, Mother to whom God entrusted the undoing of the knots in the lives of his children, I entrust into your hands the ribbon of my life. No one, not even the evil one himself, can take it away from your precious care. In your hands there is no knot that cannot be undone. Powerful Mother, by your grace and intercessory power with Your Son and My Liberator, Jesus, take into your hands today this knot.

(Mention your intention here.)

I beg you to undo it for the glory of God, once for all. You are my hope.

O my Lady, you are the only consolation God gives me, the fortification of my strength, the enrichment of my destitution, and, with Christ, the freedom from my chains. Hear my plea.

Keep me, guide me, protect me, O safe refuge!

Mary, Undoer of Knots, pray for me! Amen.

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