



Reflection on the Scriptures of the Day
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Monday after Pentecost

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Have you been asked what is your favorite prayer to say? Of all the prayers that the Church has to offer there is one prayer that is my favorite and that is the Hail Mary. The first part of the prayer comes from Luke's Gospel when the Angel Gabriel greets Mary and says, "Hail, Full of Grace, The Lord is with you." The next part is from the greeting from Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, and mother of John the Baptist, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Then the last part of the prayer comes from the Church, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." The Venerable Fulton J. Sheen explains this origin in his book *The World's First Love*.

"Since it seizes upon the two decisive moments of life: "now" and "at the hour of our death," it suggests the spontaneous outcry of people in a great calamity. The Black Death, which ravaged all Europe and wiped out one-third of its population, prompted the faithful to cry out to the Mother of Our Lord to protect them at a time when the present moment and death were almost one."

Why then is this my favorite prayer? It gives me comfort in knowing that at my hour of death Mary, the Mother of God, will be with me. This is especially true today when our world is again in the midst of a world pandemic know as Covid-19. I am deeply troubled by the fact that those dying from this virus are left alone with no one, not even a loved one, to be at their side as they leave this life for eternity. Even our priests are not permitted to enter the hospital to anoint someone who is ill.

Today the Church celebrates Mary as the Mother of the Church. Mary, who we pray will be by our side at that hour of our passing to take us home. Mary, our mother who comforts us as her child, will protect us from harm. Let us as Church cry out to the Mother of God, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen.