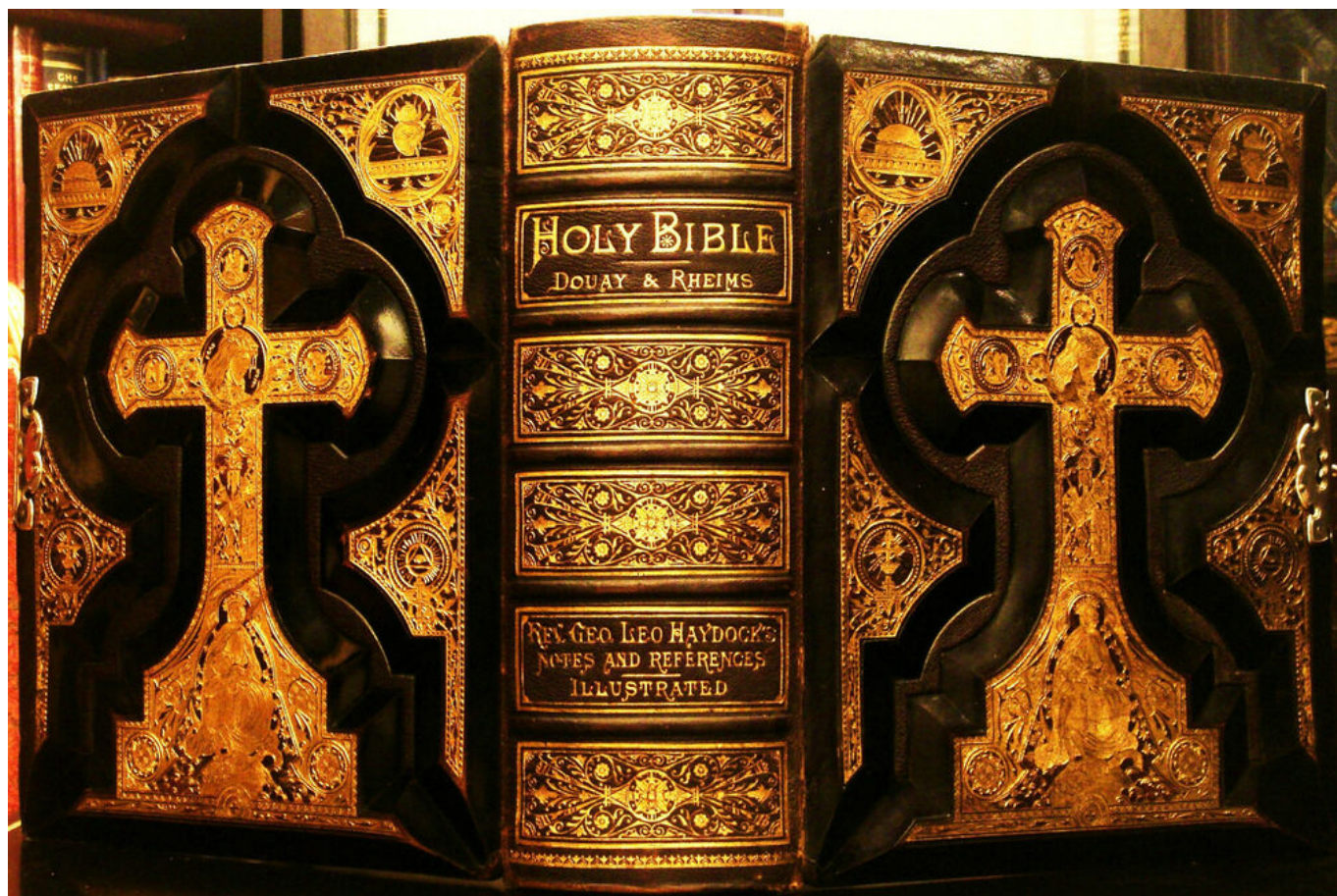


## Third Week of Lent: The New Eve

*“And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: Because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.” — [Luke: 1:26-38](#)*



## Commentary on Sacred Scripture

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." By saying 'YES' to the Will of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary declared Her 'FIAT' and countered the 'NO' of Eve, who ate of the forbidden fruit. 'Fiat' is a Latin word for 'Let it be done.' By Her Fiat, at the Annunciation, Our Lady thus earned the traditional title of the 'NEW EVE.'

The Angel greeted the Virgin Mary with the words: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." This exemplary salutation was no doubt in reference to the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary. In addition, it could have been in consideration of the fact that Our Lady was never tainted by the stain of Original Sin, which was passed on to all human persons from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Indeed, Our Lady was NOT a typical human person or an 'ordinary woman,' as some impiously speak, contrary to the words of the Archangel Gabriel.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was infallibly defined by the great Pope Pius IX in his dogmatic bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, of December 8, 1854:

“We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

From the treatise [Against Heresies \(Book V, Chapter 19\)](#) by St. Irenaeus (Bishop and Martyr, d. ca. 202 A.D.), we have:

“That the Lord then was manifestly coming to His own things, and was sustaining them by means of that creation which is supported by Himself, and was making a recapitulation of that disobedience which had occurred in connection with a tree, through the obedience which was [exhibited by Himself when He hung] upon a tree, [the effects] also of that deception being done away with, by which that virgin Eve, who was already espoused to a man, was unhappily misled — was happily announced, through means of the truth [spoken] by the angel to the Virgin Mary, who was [also espoused] to a man. For just as the former was led astray by the word of an angel, so that she fled from God when she had transgressed His word; so did the latter, by an angelic communication, receive the glad tidings that she should sustain (*portaret*) God, being obedient to His word. And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the patroness (*advocata*) of the virgin Eve.”

The Blessed Mother bore witness to the exalted character of Adam’s original human nature and [told](#) Ven. Maria of Agreda that:

“Adam in regard to the body was so like unto Christ that scarcely any difference existed. According to the soul, Adam was similar to Christ. From Adam God formed Eve so similar to the Blessed Virgin, that she was like unto her in personal appearance and in figure. God looked upon these two images of the great Originals with the highest pleasure and benevolence, and on account of the Originals He heaped many blessings upon them, as if He wanted to entertain Himself with them and their descendants until the time should arrive for forming Christ and Mary.”





## Scupoli's Spiritual Combat

In his classic book from 1589, [\*The Spiritual Combat\*](#), Dom Lorenzo Scupoli notes that God “permits persons to sin more or less grievously in proportion to their pride, and, if there were any as free from pride as the Blessed Virgin, I dare say, they would never fall” (chapter 2).

“When you see a statue of the Blessed Virgin, offer your heart to that Mother of Mercy. Rejoice that she always observed the will of God perfectly, that she brought forth the Savior of the world and nourished Him with her milk. Thank her also for the favors and helps that she never refuses us in our spiritual combats” (chapter 23).

“Meditating on the affection of the eternal Father for Our Lady, you must begin by raising your mind above all created beings; look forward to the vast expanses of eternity, enter into the Heart of God, and see with what delight He viewed the person destined one day to

become the Mother of His Son” (chapter 48).

“Contemplate, then, the virtues and heroic actions of the incomparable Virgin; make an offering of each or all of them to God, as they are of such efficacy to obtain for you divine assistance in your particular necessities” (chapter 48).

“After this, address yourself to Jesus, begging Him to be mindful of that loving Mother who for nine months carried Him in her womb, and from the moment of His birth paid him the most profound adoration. For this was her acknowledgment that this Child was at once God and man, her Creator and her Son” (chapter 48).

“Appeal to the Blessed Virgin herself, reminding her of her commission from all eternity, to be the Mother of Mercy and the refuge of sinners, and that after her Divine Son, you place your greatest confidence in her intercession. Present to her the fact, asserted by the learned and confirmed by miracles, that no one ever called upon her with a lively faith, and was left unaided” (chapter 48).

“No creature ever loved Jesus Christ more ardently, nor showed more perfect submission to His will, than Mary, His Mother” (chapter 49).

Scupoli teaches that Our Lady “is an inexhaustible source of blessings, bestowing her favors in proportion to the confidence placed in her” (chapter 49).



## The Message of Fatima

Reference is made to the 'Immaculate Heart of Mary' in both the [1916 apparitions of the Angel](#) and in the [1917 apparitions of Our Lady](#) to the three Fatima shepherds, Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia. The Blessed Virgin Mary's Heart was Immaculate because of Her Immaculate Conception and sinless life.

In Her June 13, 1917 appearance, Our Lady announced that Jesus "wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. To whoever embraces this devotion, I promise salvation; those souls will be cherished by God, as flowers placed by Me to adorn His throne." The Blessed Mother then asked Lucia: "Are you suffering a great deal? Do not lose heart. I will never forsake you! My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

Sister Lucia wrote:

"It was at the moment when She pronounced those last words that She opened

Her hands and communicated to us, for the second time, the reflection of that immense light. In it we saw ourselves as submerged in God. Jacinta and Francisco appeared to be in the part of that light which elevated itself to Heaven, and I in the part which spread itself on the earth.

In the palm of the right hand of Our Lady there was a Heart, surrounded by thorns which seemed to pierce it. We understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged by the sins of humanity, which demanded reparation."

In the May 13, 1917 appearance of Our Lady, She asked the three shepherd children: "Are you willing to offer yourselves to God to bear all the sufferings He wants to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and for the conversion of sinners?" Lucia responded: "Yes, we are willing." Our Lady replied: "You are then going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."

Likewise, in his second apparition in 1916 the Angel directed the children in a similar manner: "Make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. In this way, you will draw peace upon your country. I am its Guardian Angel, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the sufferings which the Lord will send you."

These words of Our Lady and the Angel apply to us as well, in the midst of the Spiritual Combat in our time. Like the New Eve and the Fatima children, we too must be willing to do the will of God even if it means that we will have much to suffer. Heed the words of Our Lady and the Angel well for strength, consolation, and victory in battle!



## Five First Saturdays

At the time when Lucia was a religious Sister of St. Dorothy in Pontevedra, Spain, the Divine Child Jesus and Our Lady of Fatima appeared to her. This was in fulfillment of a promise made at the Cova da Iria on July 13, 1917, that Our Lady would one day come to ask for “the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays.”

Lucia, referring to herself in the third person, [described the encounter](#) as follows in her memoirs:

“On December 10, 1925, the Most Holy Virgin Herself appeared, and beside Her, borne by a luminous cloud, the Child Jesus. The Most Holy Virgin put Her hand on her shoulder and showed her, at the same time, a Heart surrounded by thorns which She held in the other hand. At that same moment, the Child said to her:

‘Have compassion on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns



with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them.'

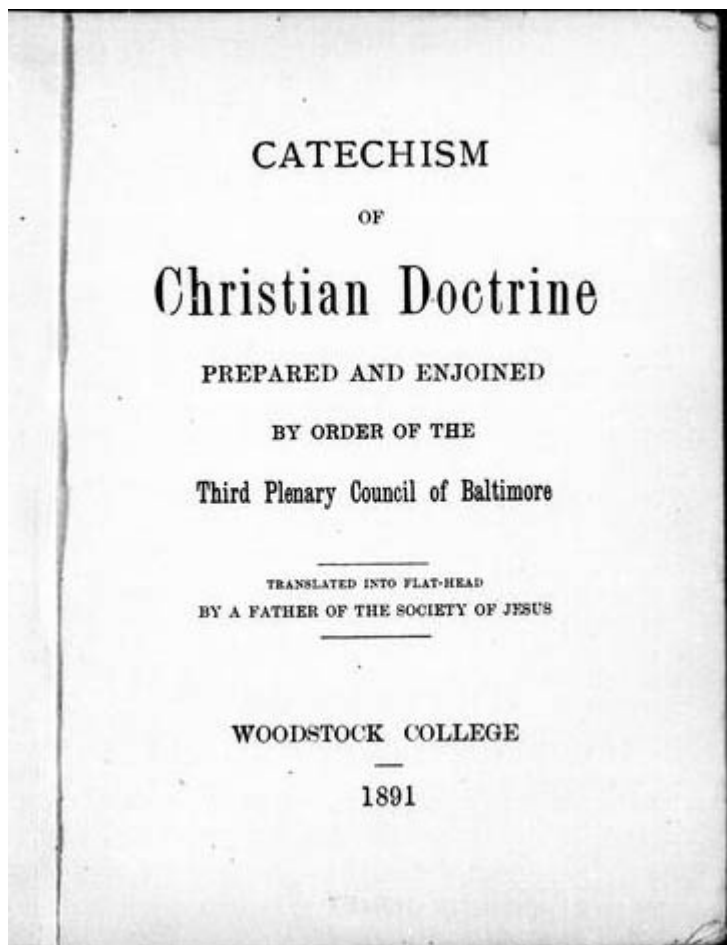
Then the Most Holy Virgin said:

'Look, My daughter, at My Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce Me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console Me and announce in My name that I promise to assist at the moment of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep Me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to Me.'"

Thus, in order to fully engage in the Spiritual Combat in our day, we must do the following for at least one set of five consecutive [First Saturdays](#) (and hopefully more):

1. Confession
2. Holy Communion
3. Rosary (5 decades)
4. Meditation (15 minutes on the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary)

All of the above must be done with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



## Baltimore Catechism

The traditional 1891 Baltimore Catechism (#3), "[Lesson 5 - On Our First Parents and the Fall](#)", teaches us about the Blessed Virgin Mary, Her Immaculate Conception, and Original Sin:

**Q. 268. Was any one ever preserved from original sin?**

*A. The Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved free from the guilt of original sin, and this privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.*

**Q. 269. Why was the Blessed Virgin preserved from original sin?**

*A. The Blessed Virgin was preserved from original sin because it would not be consistent with the dignity of the Son of God to have His Mother, even for an*

*instant, in the power of the devil and an enemy of God.*

**Q. 270. How could the Blessed Virgin be preserved from sin by her Divine Son, before her Son was born?**

*A. The Blessed Virgin could be preserved from sin by her Divine Son before He was born as man, for He always existed as God and foresaw His own future merits and the dignity of His Mother. He therefore by His future merits provided for her privilege of exemption from original sin.*

**Q. 271. What does the “Immaculate Conception” mean?**

*A. The Immaculate Conception means the Blessed Virgin’s own exclusive privilege of coming into existence, through the merits of Jesus Christ, without the stain of original sin. It does not mean, therefore, her sinless life, perpetual virginity or the miraculous conception of Our Divine Lord by the power of the Holy Ghost.*

**Q. 272. What has always been the belief of the Church concerning this truth?**

*A. The Church has always believed in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and to place this truth beyond doubt has declared it an Article of Faith.*

**Q. 273. To what should the thoughts of the Immaculate Conception lead us?**

*A. The thoughts of the Immaculate Conception should lead us to a great love of purity and to a desire of imitating the Blessed Virgin in the practice of that holy virtue.*

[“Lesson 7 – On the Incarnation and Redemption”](#) instructs us on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in the womb of the Blessed Mother:

**Q. 343. Is the Blessed Virgin Mary truly the Mother of God?**

*A. The Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, because the same Divine Person who is the Son of God is also the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

**Q. 360. Had Our Lord any brothers or sisters?**

*A. Our Lord had no brothers or sisters. When the Gospels speak of His brethren they mean only His near relations. His Blessed Mother Mary was always a Virgin as well before and at His birth as after it.*



**Fiat**

In the First Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation, Our Lady teaches us to promptly accept the sometimes unexpected Will of God. On one of my early pilgrimages that I led to Italy, my pilgrims and I learned that lesson the hard way.



We had just visited the Holy House of Loreto, the exact place where the Virgin Mary proclaimed her 'fiat.' Prior to that, we had visited Padre Pio's Friary and Saint Michael's Cave, both in the Gargano Mountain range.

As such, when we were passing through Genoa late at night to venerate the Shroud of Turin the next day, our bus began to experience transmission problems. I led the people in praying the 'Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel.' When it did not look good, we prayed the 'Angelus' calling to mind Our Lady's 'fiat': "Be it done to me according to thy word." Finally, I reminded them of Padre Pio's words, "Pray, hope, and don't worry," as the bus filled with smoke and we had to 'abandon ship' half-way up a steep hill in an unpopulated industrial area.

To the protests of some, I led the group on foot UP the hill, since there was nothing downhill, where we came from, that could be of use to us. As we approached the top of the hill, we saw bright lights. They were the lights of a FIAT automobile dealership - that were being turned off! I ran to the locked door and pounded on the glass until a worker opened it to allow my distressed pilgrims in to use the restrooms. Then I noticed, a stone's throw away, the lights of a diner called 'Mike's Place' which stayed open late to provide food and plenty of cappuccino for our group as we waited for our bus to be repaired.

Our Lady, St. Michael, and Padre Pio had answered our prayers. Our trust in the Will of God was rewarded with one of the most memorable pilgrimage experiences ever. Imitating Our Lady's 'fiat' and placing our confidence in Her and in God is the way to go into the Spiritual Combat.



## Five Reasons for the Five First Saturdays

Sister Lucia was asked why five first Saturdays and not some other number. Our Lord answered this question when He appeared to Sister Lucia on May 29, 1930 when she was a Sister of St. Dorothy at Tuy, Spain. He explained that there are [five principal blasphemies](#) and offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary which require reparation. These are:

1. Blasphemies against Her Immaculate Conception;
2. Blasphemies against Her Perpetual Virginity;
3. Blasphemies against Her Divine Maternity;
4. Blasphemies by those who openly encourage indifference or even contempt in the hearts of children towards His Immaculate Mother; and
5. The offenses of those who outrage Her directly in Her holy images.

For these blasphemies and offenses, in a special way, we can pray what is known by many as the 'Sacrifice Prayer' which Our Lady taught us to say especially when we make a sacrifice for sinners: "O Jesus, it is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in

reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”



## The Spiritual Combat in Our Time

The five reasons for the Five First Saturdays serve as an excellent outline for the Spiritual Combat in our day, related to defending the honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Mother, the New Eve; for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

**Blasphemies against Her Immaculate Conception:** Those who deny the dogma of the Immaculate Conception place themselves directly out of the Catholic Church. We are not free to reject infallibly defined doctrine. Those who say that the Blessed Mother was ‘like any other woman’ are implicitly blaspheming against Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception.

**Blasphemies against Her Perpetual Virginity:** Those who say that the Blessed Virgin Mary had other children are blasphemers against Her [Perpetual Virginity](#). The Church has traditionally taught that Our Lady was a virgin *before, during, and after* the birth of Christ. That is why properly 'written' icons have a star painted on each shoulder and on the top front of the Virgin Mary's veil. My brothers and sisters, the biblical translations rendered ['brothers' and 'sisters' of the Lord](#) does not exclude relatives, such as cousins, nephews, nieces or perhaps someone who is not biologically related, such as by friendship or by an ethnic or spiritual bond.

**Blasphemies against Her Divine Maternity:** Those who refuse to acknowledge the Blessed Virgin Mary as 'Mother of God' are blasphemers against Her Divine Maternity. In the first of the 'Twelve Anathemas of St. Cyril against Nestorius' at the [Council of Ephesus](#) in 431 A.D., it was declared: "If anyone will not confess that the Emmanuel is very God, and that therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God (Θεοτόκος /Theotokos), inasmuch as in the flesh she bore the Word of God made flesh [as it is written, *The Word was made flesh*] let him be anathema." In the Catholic Church, '[anathema](#)' signifies exclusion from the society of the faithful because of heresy.

**Blasphemies by those who openly encourage indifference or even contempt in the hearts of children towards His Immaculate Mother:** One example of this can be that 'back in the day' Rosaries were given out to children making their First Holy Communion, at which time they were also enrolled in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Sadly, that is generally not done in the Church today, although there is a remnant who continues this laudable holy practice. Many are the children who go to Catholic schools and 'CCD' programs who do not know how to pray the holy Rosary. Many are the children who do not even have a Rosary. Many more were never encouraged to wear the Brown Scapular.

**The offenses of those who outrage Her directly in Her holy images:** 'Exhibit A' can be the picture preceding this section of immigrants in Italy who [smashed a statue](#) of the Blessed Virgin Mary and urinated on it. To a lesser, but still serious, extent are the lamentable actions of those who removed statues and other images of the Blessed Mother from our Catholic Churches in the last five decades or so of 'wreck-ovation' to 'modernize' our 'worship spaces.'

ALL of these blasphemies and offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary can be traced to '[Modernism](#)' within the Church. In the Spiritual Combat always remember my **Three R's of Modernism**: Recognize it; Refute it; and Return to Tradition. By doing this, you will engage the infernal enemy and his minions in Spiritual Combat!

As distressing as the current times are, we will not surrender. We will never give up. We will



“fight the good fight.” We will “keep the Faith.” We will “finish the course.” We will “fight with the vigor of a man struggling for his very life.” We will remember that Our Lady “is an inexhaustible source of blessings, bestowing her favors in proportion to the confidence placed in her.”

With confidence in God and Our Lady, while distrusting ourselves, we will follow the advice of Padre Pio who said: “Pray, hope, and don’t worry.” We will turn to Saint Michael the Archangel to ‘defend us in battle,’ in our Spiritual Combat, using all of the spiritual weapons at our disposal.



*The Angelus* by Jean-François Millet

## This Week's Spiritual Weapon: The Angelus

Beginning this article with the Biblical account of the Annunciation, we now conclude with the related traditional prayer, the 'Angelus.' The Angelus is traditionally prayed at 6:00am, 12 noon, and 6:00pm, customarily accompanied by the pealing of the bells from a Catholic church.

*The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.  
And she conceived of the Holy Ghost. (Hail Mary...)*

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
Be it done unto me according to Thy word. (Hail Mary...)*

*[Genuflect] And the Word was made flesh.  
And dwelt among us. (Hail Mary...)*

*Pray for us, O most holy Mother of God.  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

*Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Click [here](#) for the Angelus in Latin.