



Holy Year of Mercy

December 8, 2015 - November 20, 2016

“Be bearers of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, **GENTLENESS**, self-control.” Galatians 5: 22



During the 2015 World Meeting of Families, one of the most visited sites in Philadelphia was the Knotted Grotto. The Grotto was dedicated to Mary, Undoer of the Knots, a favorite devotion of Pope Francis. “Undoer of the Knots” relates to a second century comparison of Mary’s faith to Eve’s made by Saint Irenaeus when he wrote: “Eve, by her disobedience, tied the knot of disgrace for the human race; whereas Mary, by her obedience, undid it”.

Pictured prominently within the Knotted Grotto was a 17th century image of Our Lady under this title. Mary is surrounded by angels and many symbols of her Immaculate Conception while the Holy Spirit hovers above her. In her hand she holds a long strip of white cloth which is knotted on one side. The knots represent the problems, struggles, challenges and sins of her beloved children who seek her intercession. As she intensely unties these knots, the look on her face is one of great mercy and **GENTLENESS**.

GENTLENESS is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

GENTLENESS is not weakness but a strength and power to be Christ to others.

GENTLENESS moves believers to forgive those who have done wrong or harm to them.

GENTLENESS enables Christians to treat people with kindness, consideration and thoughtfulness.

GENTLENESS allows believers to seek the grace and mercy of God, to correct one’s faults and to rid ourselves of the knots and sins of our lives.

May is the traditional time of the year when we honor our Blessed Mother. Let us reflect upon her **GENTLENESS** and desire to untie the knots of our lives. By doing so, our Lady will give us the strength to be Christians intent in bringing a **GENTLENESS** to the world as so beautifully modeled by her.

GENTLENESS IN ACTION

May 13 is a day dedicated to our Lady as it remembers the day when she first appeared to three young children in Fatima, Portugal. During a series of apparitions, Mary gave one constant message to the children: Pray the rosary for the conversion of the world. This month make an effort to pray the rosary. Ask our Blessed Mother to help you to be a bearer of Christ and His **GENTLENESS** to the world.

May 1 Sixth Sunday of Easter	John 14:23-29	<i>Jesus gives us a peace that the world cannot give. How does his peace help you to be gentle with people?</i>
May 8 Seventh Sunday of Easter	Acts 7: 55-60	<i>How does St. Stephen reflect the fruit of GENTLENESS as he was being stoned to death?</i>
May 15 Pentecost Sunday	Acts 5: 27-32, 40-41	<i>What fruits of the Holy Spirit can you identify in this passage?</i>
May 22 Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity	Psalms 100: 1, 2, 3, 5	<i>Describe your relationship with Jesus by using the images and words found in this Responsorial Psalm.</i>
May 29 The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Revelations 21: 1-5	<i>God promises to wipe every tear from your face when you meet him. How does this promise help you to commit more fully to the Christian life?</i>



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BACKGROUND FOR THE RESOURCE

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are based on the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. Though Paul identifies nine fruits, over time the Church added three more fruits of the Holy Spirit to the list (goodness, modesty, chastity.)

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

We often hear the expression, “Actions speak louder than words.” The fruits of the Holy Spirit are behaviors or attitudes which help us to respond to every day situations and witness to God’s grace working within us. They are signs to others that we are believers and depend on the Holy Spirit to live a faithful Christian life.

May’s resource highlights the fruit of the Holy Spirit of GENTLENESS as well as a month dedicated to our Blessed Mother.

The picture on the right hand side of the page is that of Our Lady, Undoer of the Knots. The picture on the left hand side of the page is the official icon for the Holy Year of Mercy.

For a (5 minute) multi-media presentation on the many titles of Mary from around the world, go to: <http://phillyocf.org/resources/> Scroll to the bottom of the page.

For bulletin board ideas on GENTLENESS, go to:

<http://www.ihmimmaculata.org/docLinks/ABCNotes.html>

For more information on the Year of Mercy, go to: <http://phillyocf.org/>