

# FLOWERS OF OUR LADY AND MARY GARDENS SLIDE LECTURE 50 SLIDES AND NARRATION TEXT

## SLIDES 11-20 AND TEXT

11.



The white lily, and particularly the Madonna Lily, with its striking clarity of form and immaculate, translucent whiteness, has long been regarded as the special symbol of the spotless purity of Our Lady.

In the 8th century St. Bede saw the translucent white petals to be a likeness of her pure body as she was assumed into heaven, and its golden anthers, of the glorious resplendence of her soul.

In Renaissance art it was adopted in paintings of the Annunciation, and accordingly came to be known as Annunciation Lily and Mary's Lily.

12.



Other flowers suggested to the faithful Mary's outward beauty, which so perfectly reflected the inner beauty of her holiness.

This is Our Lady's Tresses from the braid-like form of its spiraling flowers. Still known today by the derived common name of Ladies' Tresses

13.



Still other flowers suggested Our Lady's clothing and her adornment. The pendant blooms of Fuchsia were seen as Our Lady's Eardrops - fitting adornment for the ears which received the Angel's message of the Annunciation, as Mary "heard the word of God and kept it."

This XXth Century English holy card, depicting two doves adorning Mary's ears with her Eardrops, shows how religious art and devotion have continued to employ Our Lady's flower symbols even down to the present day.

14.



The violet, from the modest or humble manner in which its blooms peek out from under its leaves was adopted as the emblem of Our Lady's humility, and was also known as "Our Lady's Modesty".

St. Bernard spoke of Our Lady as "the violet of humility, the lily of chastity and the rose of charity."

A number of other flowers were associated with or named for the different virtues, and as such were especially associated with Our Lady, the model of all virtues.

15.



The "Lily of the Valleys", a title applied by the Church Fathers to Mary from the Cantic of Canticles, denoted both her purity and her humility. This name has been most fittingly applied to the low, white-flowered plant commonly known as Lily-of-the-Valley today, which so well symbolizes these virtues.

16.



From its petals resembling doves, the columbine has been adopted as an emblem of the Holy Spirit. The red columbine has been used especially for this purpose since its red spurs resemble also the tongues of flame with which the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost.

In paintings of the Madonna and in Mary Gardens the columbine recalls that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit, of whom she is also the dwelling place or temple, according to the words of the angel: "And the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee."

17.



Various fruits, such as the apple and the pear, have been used in art to denote the divine fruitfulness of Mary's womb. In Mary Gardens and in portrayals of Mary Gardens, the strawberry has been widely used for this purpose since its low form is suitably proportioned to other low-growing symbolical plants such as the violet and the lily-of-the-valley.

In flower and in fruit at the same time, the strawberry also represents Mary's perpetual virginity.

18.



Church bells were especially associated with Our Lady from their use to ring out the Angelus thrice daily, and were often given names and inscriptions honoring her role in the Incarnation. Consequently, several bell-shaped flowers, such as the Gland Bell Flower shown here were known as Mary's Bells or Our Lady's Bells.

The chimes of the Angelus Tower of St. Joseph's Church in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, beside which the Garden of Our Lady is planted, bear the inscriptions:

"I will teach you of life and of life eternal" and "Thanks be to God".

19.



Some fifteen different flowers, of which the best known is perhaps the Ladyslipper Orchid shown here were at one time called Our Lady's Slippers. Legends tell us that these flowers sprang up where Our Lady trod on the way to visit Elizabeth, showing, in the words of the Cantic of Canticles applied to her, that "all her steps were most beautiful".

Such legends, while not historical documentations, afford historical insight into the richness of the religious associations underlying the flower symbols of Our Lady.

20.



The beauty and purity of Our Lady's Thimble - Harebell, or Bluebells of Scotland - bespeak the sublime perfection and elevation of Mary's thoughts as she sewed for the infant Savior, to be born of her womb.

[\(Slides 21-30\)](#)

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# FLOWERS OF OUR LADY AND MARY GARDENS SLIDE LECTURE 50 SLIDES AND NARRATION TEXT

## SLIDES 21-30 AND TEXT

21.



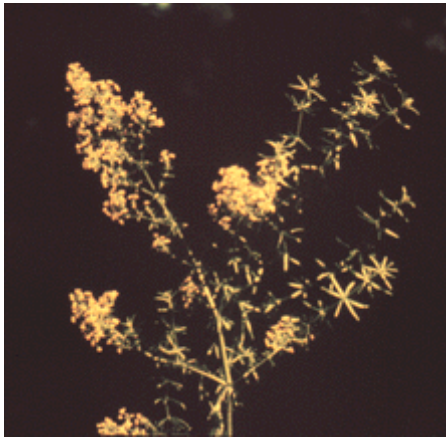
Our Lady's Pincushion, or sea pink, was one of many plants which brought to mind Our Lady's sewing work in preparation for the birth of the Divine Child.

22.



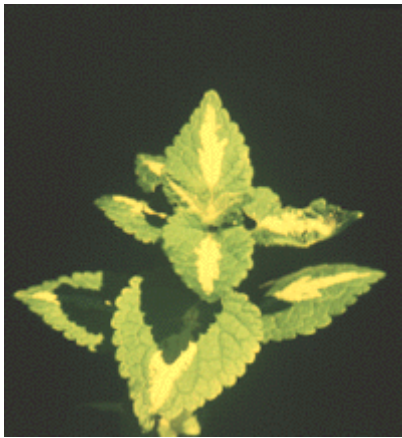
Here is another twentieth Century English holy card, this one based on Our Lady's Pincushion, just shown, which is commonly known as Thrift in England. Mary sewing for the Christ Child is the model for all mothers sewing for their families; for all religious and members of church altar societies sewing priestly vestments and altar linens, and for all who sew for Christ's poor.

23.



According to an old legend Our Lady's Bedstraw, a native Palestine plant, was the natural bedding on which Mary laid the Holy Child in the manger at Bethlehem, bursting into its golden flowers when the Divine Child was laid on it - a symbol of his divinity.

24.



From the white markings on its leaves Dead Nettle was named Madonna's Milk, according to a legend that these marks first appeared on this and other plants, such as Our Lady's Thistle or Milk Thistle, after drops of the Virgin Mother's immaculate milk fell on them while she nursed the Infant Jesus.

This symbolism turns our thoughts to the many statues and paintings of Mary as the 'Nursing Madonna', a representation adopted to show her motherly tenderness and also to show that while Jesus was true God, the Divine Word Incarnate, He was also true man, born of Mary's womb and suckled at her breast.

25.

Mary's Garden  
[www.mgardens.org](http://www.mgardens.org)



Star of Bethlehem

The Chrysanthemum is associated with the Epiphany, the manifestation of the Savior to the Gentiles, by a legend which tells us it was in bloom before the manger in Bethlehem. From the resemblance of the golden yellow star-like flowers of this plant to the star in the sky above, the Wise Men knew they had reached their journey's goal. Picking the flowers, they entered in and placed them in the outstretched hand of the Infant King enthroned on His mother's knees.

26.



The Snow Drop was known in England as Candlemas Bells or Purification Flower from its early bloom at the time of Candlemas or the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, February 2nd - now designated the Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

It is one of several flowers named from the liturgical seasons when they were in bloom, and thus available for church altar decoration at those times.

In our modern era of greenhouses and high- speed refrigerated transportation, we have become accustomed to seeing flowers such as roses, lilies, carnations, gladioli and chrysanthemums used over and over again as altar decorations at all seasons of the year. In a former day the only flowers available for a given feast were those naturally in bloom at the time - which thus came to bear the name of the feast.

27.



Blue Flag Iris, also called Sword Lily, from its sword-like foliage, was regarded as a symbol of Our Lady's Sorrows according to Simeon's words to Mary during the Presentation of Jesus in the temple: "And a sword shall pierce thy soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed".

Iris, the Royal Lily, was also used as an emblem of Our Lady's queenship.

28.





The spiked heads of Fuller's Teasel were used for centuries to raise the nap on wool. To the faithful they were known in some regions as Our Lady's Little Brushes, calling to mind Mary's motherly care for the Infant Savior.

It has been said that, after Simeon confirmed for Mary the Old Testament prophecies of the Suffering Redeemer, she sorrowed as she brushed the child Jesus' hair - knowing it would one day be matted with his Precious Blood.

29.



There are a number of legends associated with the rests taken by the Holy Family during the Flight Into Egypt. The blue mats of veronica ground cover, shown here, were known as Our Lady's Resting Place.

Several flowers such as Sweet Williams were named Our Lady's Tuft, Cushion or Resting Place because they formed a place for Our Lady to sit. Flowering Clematis or Wisteria vines were named Virgin's Bower because they spread over her head to shield her from the hot sun. Rosemary acquired its fragrance when Mary placed Jesus' garment on it to dry after a rain storm. And the Cherry Tree was said to have lowered its branches to assist St. Joseph in picking fruit for the refreshment of Mary and Jesus.

30.



Forget-me-nots were called Eyes of Mary. In a book of flower legends we read that the Boy Jesus, looking into Mary's eyes one day in front of their Nazareth home said: "Mother, your eyes are so beautiful, everyone looks at them in wonder. What a pity those who will be born in future generations will not be able to behold them. Because in your eyes one can see my paradise, and whoever looks into them cannot help but be drawn toward it."

Thereupon he touched her eyelids and passed his hands over the ground as though sowing seeds. Immediately there sprang up forget-me-nots: hundreds of tiny blue eyes with golden centers, as reminders of Our Lady's pure eyes for all peoples until the end of the world.

[\(Slides 31-40\)](#)

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## SLIDES 31-40 AND TEXT

31.



Authorities tell us the flowers growing in the fields and along the roadways where Jesus taught, and to which he referred in His Parables, were in all probability Poppy-Flowered Anemones.

From this historical association, these flowers are fittingly used in the Mary Garden to remind us of Jesus' teaching mission - first manifested to Mary and Joseph when they found him sitting with the teachers in the temple.

We are in awe when we consider that the Flowers of the Holy Land today have come from those on which Jesus and Mary gazed.

32.



In paintings of the Nativity daisies and similar flowers were shown in the straw of the manger or in the ground before it to denote the innocence of the Christ Child. Here, in this sixteenth Century Flemish portrayal of the Arrest of Christ, the same flowers are used with startling forcefulness to show Christ's purity and innocence in contrast to the evil of his apprehenders. Other plant symbols applied primarily to Jesus are Wheat and Grapes, emblems of the Last Supper and the Mass, and the Vine, depicting his teaching of the Mystical Body: "I am the vine and you are the branches".

Most of Our Lady's flowers would be equally appropriate as symbols of Christ, whose life she shared and whose virtues she reflected. It would seem, however, that flowers have been used more generally as symbols of Our Lady because of the Prophecy of Isaias, and because we have Our Lord himself always with us in the Holy Eucharist, in his priests and in our neighbor.

33.



The Passion Flower, a marvellous providential flower "signature" discovered by missionaries to the New World, embodies in its multiple symbolism the lash of Christ's Scourging, the Crown of Thorns, the Cross, the 3 Nails, Christ's 5 Wounds, Christ's Blood Drops and the World Christ came to save. In Germany it is known as Mother of God's Star. For our meditation a number of flowers symbolize aspects of Christ's passion individually.

The Passion Flower is unique among symbolical flowers in that the actual place and year of its discovery are known: Mexico, 1610. Over 400 species of this genus have subsequently been discovered.

34.

#### **Mary's Garden**



**Mary's Tears**

Our Lady's sorrows at the foot of the Cross were called to mind by a number of flowers known as Our Lady's Tears. Virginia Spiderwort, shown here, was called Our Lady's Tears because of the tear-like fluid emitted from the spent blooms hanging down beneath its blossom "eyes".

Our Lady's Tears recall the teaching of the Church that Our Lady was our Co-Redemptrix whose tears were joined with the Blood of Christ, our Redeemer, in the accomplishment of the work of our redemption.

Note: the original picture is missing, a substitute was placed here 11/27/2007. JSS3.

35.



While the Easter Lily has been adopted to proclaim the joys of Jesus' Resurrection, the White Day Lily has been called Assumption Lily from its bloom during the season of the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, August 15.

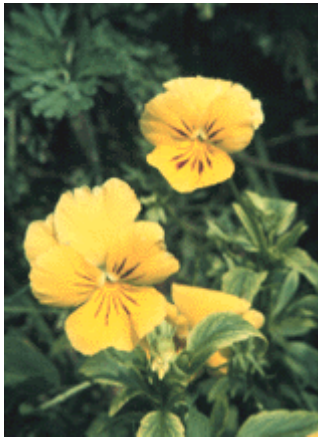
36.



The traditional Marigold or Marygold of England and northern Europe, shown here, is the flower known today in the United States as Scottish or pot marigold. Its golden-yellow petals spreading out from its center like rays of the sun evidently suggested the glorious splendor of Mary, the "Woman Clothed in the Sun", the "Queen in Gilded Clothing", after her Assumption and Coronation as Heaven's queens. It also suggests the interior splendor divinely wrought in Mary, the "House of Gold", on earth to prepare her as the Chosen Mother of the Onlybegotten.

In church architecture round stained glass windows with ray-like divisions were sometimes termed marigold windows to distinguish them from rose windows with rounded rose-petal-like divisions. The plants commonly known as marigolds in America today are of the genus, *Tagetes*, native to Mexico and Central America and adopted into the pre-existing European marigold tradition after their discovery by Spanish missionaries to the New World.

37.



The pansy, through its three colors in its wild form: yellow, blue and white, was adopted as a symbol of the Holy Trinity and was named Trinity Flower. It was also named our Lady's Delights suggesting Our Lady's beholding of it.

(In the developed strains, where one color is dominant - as yellow here - the other two colors are always found at the center.)

The double symbolism reminds us that the mystery of the Holy Trinity was first revealed to Mary, at the Annunciation, and that now she beholds and shares in the life of the three divine persons in the beatific vision of heaven.

38.



From its resemblance to the large candles kept lighted on Our Lady's altar in many English churches Giant Mullein was named Our Lady's Candle.

In Germany the following couplet describes its Symbolism:

"The Virgin Mary flies all over the land,  
With Heaven's Fire in her hand."

39.



While sharing in the life of the Trinity, Mary also serves as our divinely appointed heavenly mother and protector in the continuing work of the redemption - a role, symbolized in art by her mantle spread out by her over multitudes of the faithful, and in the Mary Garden by the mantle-like leaves of the plant still commonly known today as Lady's Mantle.

Several sweet-smelling plants such as lemon balm and bee balm, both called Sweet Mary, suggest Mary's motherly sweetness.

40.



Bleeding Heart, known in France as Mary's Heart, and in Germany as Our Lady's Heart, resembles the emblem of Mary's Sorrowful Heart, a heart pierced with a sword, used in art to recall Simeon's prophesy to Mary, "And a sword shall pierce thy soul".

Also it lifts our thoughts to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our heavenly mediatrix, who mercifully intercedes on our behalf with the Sacred Heart of Jesus - purifying and embellishing our prayers and reparations as she presents them to him.