



Our Lady, Undoer of Knots



The devotion of Our Lady Undoer of Knots is relatively new and is more well-known because of Pope Francis's own love and devotion to this image of Mary. The devotion that Pope Francis has comes from his experience of seeing the 18th century Baroque painting entitled "Wallfahrtsbild" painted by Johann Georg Melchior Schmidtner. The concept, however, of Mary untying knots goes all the way back to the work by St. Irenaeus of Lyons, "Against Heresies." In his book, St. Irenaeus presents a parallel between Eve and Mary, describing how, "thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith."

It was this quote that seemed to work in the mind of Fr. Jakob Rem, S.J., who counseled Wolfgang Langenmantel, a man who was near divorce from his wife. Fr. Jakob prayed to Our Lady with the words, "In this religious act, I raise the bonds of matrimony, to untie all knots and smoothen them." Almost immediately things turned around for the couple. Out of gratitude, their grandson commissioned and donated the painting to the priest.

Pope Francis, then Jorge Bergoglio, saw the painting in person while studying in Germany during a very trying and dark time in his life. He brought the devotion back with him and introduced it to the Church in Argentina. He expressed how this particular image of Mary is able to help people bring the difficulties of our everyday lives to Our Mother, who looks to unbind the struggles so that we are free to see the presence of her Son working in our lives. Our Lady Undoer of Knots is the patroness of personal challenges, family struggles, anxiety and addiction.

Let Us Pray

We come to you Mary, Undoer of Knots, lifting our troubles and challenges. You walked this earth, challenged by the complexities of life. You experienced the problems and troubles that life can bring, from inconveniences to tragedies. We turn to you now, lifting up the knots of our lives. May you take our prayers to your Son, Jesus, and guide us ever closer in our relationship with him.

Reflection Questions:

- What are the “knots” in your life that need undoing? What are the “little” things that are getting in the way of knowing Jesus’s presence in your life?
- Have you ever experienced being in a situation you had no idea how to resolve? Have you ever had that issue get sorted out by itself in a way that surprised you? How was God at work in that?
- What things do you feel are too “small” that you don’t feel like sharing with God? Have you ever considered bringing these things in prayer to Mary? Is there someone in whom you would trust to confide regarding these issues?
- What are the knots and bonds keeping you from sharing your faith with others?

Holy Mary, full of the presence of God, during your life you accepted with great humility the holy will of the father and the legacy of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and evil never dared to entangle you with its confusion. Since then you have interceded for all of our difficulties as you did at the wedding feast of Cana. With all simplicity and with patience, you have given us an example of how to untangle the knots in our complicated lives. By being our mother forever you arrange and make clear the path that unites us to Our Lord.

Holy Mary, Mother of God and ours, with your maternal heart, untie the knots that upset our lives. We ask you to receive into your hands (here mention your prayer request) and deliver us from the chains and confusion that restrain us. Blessed Virgin Mary, through your grace, your intercession and by your example, deliver us from evil, and untie the knots that keep us from being united to God. So that free of all confusion and error, we may find him in all things, keep him in our hearts, and serve him always in our brothers and sisters. Mother of Good Counsel pray for us.

Amen.