

Day 39

# PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

MATRIMONY



## SONG OF SONGS

(SONG OF SOLOMAN - 4:12, 5:1)

A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride,  
a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed!  
I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride;  
I gather my myrrh with my spices,  
Eat, friends; drink!  
Drink deeply, oh beloved ones!



## THE SANCTUARY OF HORTUS CONCLUSUS IN BETHLEHEM

The sanctuary of the Hortus Conclusus: one of the lesser-known shrines of the Holy Land. Built on the hill in front of the village of Artas, in the territory of Bethlehem, the verdant land of the sanctuary and its architecture contrast with the dryness of the area.

The shrine was the desire of Mons. Mariano Soler, the Archbishop of Montevideo, Uruguay, and rises above the small valley and it leans against the mountain.

Because of its fertile land, the location has always been identified as the “closed garden” (hortus, in Latin), which can be read about in the Song of Songs: “A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed!”

In 1885, the Archbishop, on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, decided to commit himself to building a place intended for the incessant praise of Mary on the basis of that verse of the Song of Songs.

Built over four years, the shrine was entrusted to the Daughters of Mary Most Holy of the Garden as a material sign of the love of Mons. Soler for the Virgin of the Garden

and to the Daughters, at whose convent in Uruguay he always used to find refuge and comfort himself through prayer. In 1904, it was then united to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Garden of Chiavari and, a year later, to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. For this reason, it enjoys the privileges and indulgences granted to the Basilica.

Given its natural beauty, the Hortus has been used for several years as a retreat house for groups, movements and fraternities.

The current superior, Sr. Rose, explained that the sister in the sanctuary are there to, "protect this part of the Holy Land that keeps the image of the Madonna prefigured in the Song of Songs alive. I believe this is a super prophetic presence because everyone here feels at home: Franciscans, the Latin Patriarchate, Muslims, Jews, Armenians, Syriacs, Greek Orthodox. Here everyone feels like children united by Our Lady." We do not ask for donations but Providence comes through because people love the Virgin Mary.



## **RENEWAL OF WEDDING VOWS (priestly prayer)**

**V /** Lord God and Creator, we bless and praise your name.

In the beginning you made man and woman, so that they might enter a communion of life and love. You likewise blessed the union of these married couples, so that they might reflect the union of Christ with his Church.

Look with kindness on them today. Amid the joys and struggles of their life you have preserved the union between them.

Renew their marriage covenant. Increase your love in them and strengthen their bond of peace, so that surrounded by their children they may always rejoice in the gift of your blessing.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**R /** Amen.



## RENEWAL OF WEDDING VOWS (priestly prayer)

**V/** Husbands and wives, please bow your heads for the blessing. May God the eternal Father keep you of one heart in love for one another that the peace of Christ may dwell in you and abide always in your home.

**R/** Amen.

**V/** May you be blessed in your children, have solace in your friends and enjoy true peace with everyone.

**R/**Amen.

**V/** May you be witnesses in the world to God's charity, so that the afflicted and needy who have known your kindness may one day receive you thankfully into the eternal dwelling of God.

**R/** Amen.

**V/** And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**R/** Amen.

Vows of renewal and blessing adapted from the Roman Missal, Third Edition. Prayers modified from the Prayer of Blessing of a Married Couple, Book of Blessings (1989).

