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## **DEVOTION TO THE HOLY BABY MARY**

AT THE DIOCESAN SHRINE OF

OUR LADY OF JOYFUL HOPE – OUR LADY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Fr. Stanley Smolenski spma

In 1998, during a pilgrimage to venerate the Holy Shroud in Turin, Italy, our group also went to Milan. Among the sites we visited there was the Sanctuary of Maria Santissima Bambina – the miraculous Holy Baby Mary – about which I knew nothing. I celebrated Mass right below the scene of her in a crib surrounded by choirs of Angels, contemplating her. Her little smiling holy face looking at me reached my heart immediately. I was smitten by her and, yes, I fell in love with Maria Bambina. Eventually I came across a smaller version of her and acquired it for our Kingstree Shrine. Whenever I look at her, it is as though for the first time. In this way, the entire life of Mary is honored at her Kingstree Shrine from her Immaculate Conception to her Coronation as Queen of Creation.

After hearing of some extremely difficult situations that pro-life witnesses face at abortion sites, the idea of entrusting the pro-life activities to the Immaculate Heart of the Holy Baby Mary came to mind. Its formula is given below.

This is the full explanation by Cathy Bell, the pilgrimage director at the Shrine. She was very disturbed by the Oct 27<sup>th</sup> emails she received from Valarie Baronkin about how the pro-abortion protestors were behaving toward the 40 Days for Life prayer warriors at the abortion facility in Greenville and across the country. But, she felt her simple response giving everyone assurance of continual prayer coverage at our Blessed Mother's Shrine for those in this ministry in our diocese was not enough. As she continued her prayers at the Shrine that morning for the diocesan pro-life activities she kept looking at our little shrine to Maria Bambina [Baby Mary] who she felt needed to be part of something bigger and more spiritual that our Blessed Mother's Shrine could offer. So, she told me about this when we gathered for Mass that day and it resulted in my developing the attached "Act of Entrustment of the Pro-Life Activities in the Diocese of Charleston to the Holy Baby Mary" which I hope appeals to you.

**AN ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF THE PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES  
IN THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON  
TO THE HOLY BABY MARY**

O Mary, you are the Immaculate Conception, signifying the sacredness of human life at its very beginning. Being sinless from conception, you were full of grace. When contemplating your Nativity, the Church invokes you as “the hope and the daybreak of salvation of the world”. [Mass of the Nativity of Mary – September 8<sup>th</sup>]

With this in mind, we entrust the Pro-Life Activities of the Diocese of Charleston to your Immaculate Heart in the mystery of your holy infancy, venerated in a special way at the diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Joyful Hope – Our Lady of South Carolina.

Your life was formed and directed from infancy by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Enlighten and guide us with the wisdom to value life at all its stages, Counsel us to direct all human life on its natural and supernatural levels according to the beneficial laws of God. Arm us with the fortitude to resist and combat the errors which are contrary to divine truth. Enliven our hearts with the awe and piety that flow from the knowledge that, through your divine Son, Jesus Christ, we are to be children of God throughout eternity.

Have mercy on those who resist God’s truth about human life. Bring them to the realization of their own unique destiny of magnifying God the Father in the new creation restored by your union with your Son, the Savior of the world.

We thank you for accepting this entrustment which gives us confidence to continue our pro-life activities and assures us of ultimate victory with that of your Immaculate Heart. Amen.

Approved by the Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone  
Bishop of Charleston - 9 December 2019

## **Significance of the Images of Mary Patroness of the Pro-Life Movement**

International Patroness: Our Lady of Czestochowa – The scars on her face signify the multiple wounds to motherhood through decades of worldwide abortions.

National Patroness: Our Lady of Guadalupe – Her pregnancy signifies the sacredness of her Divine Child. Abortion attacks the child created in the image of God.

Diocesan Patroness: Holy Baby Mary – Venerated in the diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Joyful Hope – Our Lady of South Carolina. Her holy infancy signifies the supernatural life and destiny of each child to a blissful eternity with the Most Holy Trinity and the saints. Abortion denies the possibility for the rightful preparation and development of this relationship with God.

### **The Immaculate Mysteries of the Rosary**

With the addition of these mysteries, the Rosary then commemorates the entire life of Mary, from Conception to Coronation. Around 1980, my Marian articles in the *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, *Our Sunday Visitor* and the *Catholic Digest* included these mysteries. They were approved for private recitation by Archbishop John F. Whealon of Hartford CT in the 1980's. Permission for public recitation at the Shrine, Pro-Life activities and other appropriate occasions was granted by Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone of Charleston SC.

1. The Immaculate Conception of Mary – celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>
2. The Holy Nativity of Mary – celebrated on September 8<sup>th</sup>
3. The Presentation of Mary – celebrated on November 21<sup>st</sup>
4. The Holy Virginitly of Mary – celebrated throughout the liturgy
5. The Holy Espousals of Mary and Joseph – celebrated with permission on January 23<sup>rd</sup>

**PRO-LIFE = PRO-LOVE**