



THINKSTOCK



## Reflection Questions

- What is the one “knot” in your life that causes you the most worry and heartache?
- Are you willing to allow Mary to help you find solutions to the knots in your life?
- Does knowing that Mary is waiting to help undo the knots in your life give you greater confidence in prayer?



*May Mary help us to become increasingly men and women of conscience, free in our conscience, because it is in the conscience that dialogue with God takes place; men and women, who can hear God's voice and follow it with determination, who can listen to God's voice, and follow it with decision. (Angelus address, June 30, 2013)*

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## Pope Francis' Prayer to Our Lady Undoer of Knots

Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio is attributed with composing his own prayer in devotion to Our Lady Undoer of Knots, which serves as a central part of the novena to Our Lady. Say this prayer to call on Mary to help untie the knots in your life:

*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.*

— Excerpt from Mario H. Ibertis Rivera,  
For the full novena to the Virgin Mary Untier of Knots, go to [www.desatadora.com.ar](http://www.desatadora.com.ar)  
International Fraternity of the Virgin Mary Untier of Knots, Inc.



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A FAVORITE DEVOTION OF POPE FRANCIS

# OUR LADY UNDOER OF KNOTS



*“Mary ... is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul...”*

— Pope Francis

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## The Knots in Our Lives

Our lives have knots that can seem impossible to untie: Marriage troubles, money problems, unemployment, illness, loneliness, fears, and worries of all kinds. When we find ourselves facing challenges and seem to have no solutions, there is a devotion we can turn to that unties the knots for us so that we might, in the words of Pope Francis, “better unite with God and serve him always.”

The devotion to Mary as “Undoer of Knots” is recent; it’s only been around for about thirty years. Pope Francis is credited with bringing it to Argentina. From there, the devotion spread to Brazil and is now rippling throughout the entire Catholic world.

Of course, devotions aren’t magic. Just saying words doesn’t do anything. But the trust we have in Mary’s ability to intercede for us and the faith in God to answer prayer can lead to changes in our lives that we never dreamed possible.



SHUTTERSTOCK

## History of the Devotion

Devotions to Mary have entered the Church in many different ways: apparitions (Fátima and Lourdes), sacramentals (the rosary), doctrines (the Immaculate Conception), and miraculous statues and icons (Our Lady of Guadalupe). Sometimes, a devotion arises simply because it touches hearts and minds at a time of particular need. In the case of Mary Undoer of Knots, Pope Francis was instrumental in pulling the devotion out of obscurity, and its popularity has spread most likely because all of our lives are filled with “knots” that need Mary’s intercession to untangle.

While this devotion is new, the image of Mary Undoer of Knots and its story are not. It began in 1612 with a miserably unhappy marriage. A German nobleman, Wolfgang Langenmante, and his wife, Sophie, were on the brink of divorce. Desperate, Wolfgang sought advice from Father Jakob Rem, a Jesuit priest. The story goes that at their last visit, Wolfgang handed his wedding ribbon to Father Jakob, who lifted it up to an image of “Our Lady of the Snows” and, while untying its knots, prayed: “I raise up the bond of marriage, that all knots be loosed and resolved.” (At the time, a bride and groom were “tied” together in the wedding ceremony with a ribbon, symbolizing their unbreakable union.) The unkotted ribbon became bright white — a sign of Mary’s intercession — and the Langenmantes’ marriage survived.



NEWSCOM

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## Pope Francis and the Undoer of Knots

Pope Francis’ introduction to the devotion came while he was in Germany in 1986 studying for his doctorate. While visiting the Church of St. Peter am Perlach in Augsburg, then-Father Jorge saw a painting of Our Lady untying the knots in a white ribbon. He was captivated by the painting and the story behind it. He bought a postcard of the image. As cardinal, he had the image engraved into a chalice and presented it to Pope Benedict XVI.

In the image, one angel hands Mary a white ribbon while another smooths the opposite end. The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, appears over Mary’s head and is surrounded by twelve stars and eight angels. Mary unties knots in the ribbon while she stands above a crescent moon, crushing a twisted serpent under her heel. The scene recalls the words of Revelation 12:1: “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.”

One of the first things Pope Francis did after being elected was to visit the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and dedicate his tenure as pope to Mary’s care. This action didn’t come as a surprise to those who knew him as cardinal. In his previous roles, he’d introduced this powerful, but little-known, devotion to Mary to his native Argentina — Our Lady Undoer of Knots.



## “The Faith of Mary” Marian Vigil

Saturday, October 12, 2013

On the eve of consecrating the world to Mary, the Mother of God, Pope Francis offered these words:



*Mary’s faith unties the knot of sin (cf. Lumen Gentium, 56). What does that mean? The “knot” of disobedience, the “knot” of unbelief.*

*When children disobey their parents, we can say that a little “knot” is created. This happens if the child acts with an awareness of what he or she is doing, especially if there is a lie involved. At that moment, they break trust with their parents. How often does this happen! Then the relationship with their parents needs to be purified of this fault; the child has to ask forgiveness so that harmony and trust can be restored.*

*Something of the same sort happens in our relationship with God. When we do not listen to him, when we do not follow his will, we do concrete things that demonstrate our lack of trust in him — for that is what sin is — and a kind of knot is created deep within us. These knots take away our peace and serenity. They are dangerous, since many knots can form a tangle which gets more and more painful and difficult to undo.*

*But nothing is impossible for God’s mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by his grace. And Mary, whose “yes” opened the door for God to undo the knot of the ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul by his fatherly mercy.*

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