

Understanding
MARY
Undoer of **KNOTS**



How an obscure German painting became the world's fastest growing Marian devotion, and is changing lives today.

History • Prayers • Novena

What you see here is the original “Mary, Undoer of Knots,” a once obscure, 300 year-old painting that has inspired the fastest growing Marian devotion in the world today. Known in her German homeland as “Maria Knotenlöserin,” this beautiful sacred image by Catholic master painter Johann Schmittndner was inspired by a real German family’s story of marital disunity, struggle, intercession, and powerful reconciliation. Discovered and then expanded into a Marian devotion in the 1980’s by then-Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio, “Mary, Undoer of Knots” is a favorite devotion of Pope Francis himself, and continues to spread throughout the world due to his influence. Our image of the original “Mary, Undoer of Knots” has undergone professional restoration to remove the effects of 300 years of aging and candle smoke.

We invite you to read this booklet, learn the story of the devotion, and pray along with us as we seek Our Lady’s intercession for a lost and hurting world.

Mark Nelson
Mark Nelson

Founder, Steubenville Press
and Nelson Fine Art & Gifts



Understanding Mary, Undoer of Knots:

How an obscure German painting became the world's fastest growing Marian devotion and is changing lives today.

NIHIL OBSTAT:

Alan Schreck, Ph.D.

Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR:

+Most Reverend Jeffrey M. Monforton

Bishop of Steubenville

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**CATHOLIC
TO THE MAX**





St. Peter am Perlach Photo by: Felix König

became dazzlingly white. Fr. Rem interpreted this as a confirmation that Mary had heard his prayer for the couple. There was no longer any threat of divorce, and Wolfgang and Sophia remained happily married!

85 years later, to commemorate the turn of the century, Wolfgang's grandson, Fr. Heironymus Ambrosius Langenmantel, decided to donate a family altar to the church of St.

Peter am Perlach. Fr. Langenmantel commissioned Johann Melchior Georg Schmittndner to provide a painting for this altar which was to be dedicated to "Our Lady of Good Counsel" and was to represent the history of the Langenmantel family. Being inspired by the story of Fr. Langenmantel's grandparents, Schmittndner based his painting on the image of Mary untying knots.

Having survived wars, revolutions and secular opposition, the original painting still hangs over the Langenmantel family altar to this very day in the church of St. Peter am Perlach in Augsburg, Germany.

Novena of Service To Mary, Undoer of Knots

Notes from the author:

While the idea of the Blessed Mother “untying” spiritual knots has several points of origin, a novena to her under this title is a fairly recent development. We have, in part, the efforts of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., better known today as Pope Francis, to thank for this, as well as the many devoted faithful who have put their faith in Mary’s intercession under this title. There is, at the time of this composition, no “official” church-designated novena to Mary, Undoer of Knots, nor has one ever been given by divine revelation. What exists in published form, then, are several novenas authored in countries like Brazil and Argentina, composed by laypeople and intended for use by the whole Church in its ministry of healing. This is just such a novena.

While the “Knots” novenas currently in circulation tend to focus on the healing and intentions of the individual praying, this particular novena is intended to redirect our focus away from ourselves. As Pope Francis continues to exhort all Catholics to stop looking to their own needs, but instead to go out into

the streets and serve the poor, witness to those who disdain the faith, and in general repent of pride and self-centeredness, the need for a deep conversion of one's mindset and perspective becomes evermore gravely apparent.

Service sanctifies us. Just as the water flowing through a river is made pure by its outward flow and movement, so too are we human beings made holier when we reach out to others. This is particularly true of people or groups for whom we as individuals struggle to love or forgive—the harder it is for us to be as Christ to someone, the more our efforts to be so will sanctify us. It is only fitting, then, that a novena seeking Mary's intercession to untie the knots in our own lives should be effective by bringing us to help untie the knots of others.

May God open your heart to humility, compassion, and, thus prepared for it, healing.

Your brother in Christ,
--Kevin Nelles

Novena of Service to Mary, Undoer of Knots

Formula:

- 1) Sign of the Cross
- 2) Act of Contrition
- 3) Preparation Prayer
- 4) Daily Scripture Reading
- 5) Daily Intention Prayer
- 6) Our Father
- 7) Hail Mary
- 8) Glory Be
- 9) Concluding Prayer

Daily Intentions

- | | |
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| First Day: | Praying for struggling marriages |
| Second Day: | Praying for those with addictions |
| Third Day: | Praying for your pastor |
| Fourth Day: | Praying for your local bishop |
| Fifth Day: | Praying for the poor |
| Sixth Day: | Praying for the unbelieving |
| Seventh Day: | Praying for Christians outside the
Catholic Church |
| Eighth Day: | Praying for the Holy Father |
| Ninth Day: | Praying for your own needs |

First Day

Praying for Struggling Marriages

Mark 10:6-9

“But in the beginning, at the time of creation, ‘God made them male and female,’ as the scripture says. ‘And for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.’ So they are no longer two, but one. No human being must separate, then, what God has joined together.” (GNT)

Daily Intention

Most Blessed Virgin, who in your marriage to St. Joseph became our perfect example of spousal fidelity, chastity, and love, take into your hands the knotted wedding ribbon of struggling marriages. Together with Saint Rita, loose the knots that bind married couples from loving each other as professed in their wedding vows. Protect troubled marriages from divorce and temptation, free spouses from knotted hearts and attitudes, and renew the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in marriages all across the world.

Lastly, Mother, help me to pray for Marriage, as it is holy, loved by you, and loved by God.

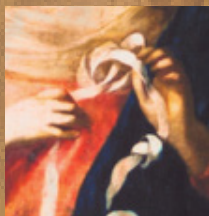
Mary, Undoer of Knots, pray for us.

“The knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary.”

-St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, c. 180

In 1700, German painter Johann Schmittndner captured this beautiful task visually as “Maria Knotenlöserin,” or “Mary, the Undoer of Knots.” Almost 300 years later, an Argentinean priest named Jorge Mario Bergoglio was deeply moved by the image, and on his way to becoming the future Pope Francis, Father Bergoglio brought back to his native country what has since become a worldwide movement.

Learn the story behind this burgeoning devotion, see the original painting that inspired it, and pray the prayers and novena that have come from it. Inspired by the service and humility of Pope Francis, this new novena to the Undoer of Knots could very well change your life by first changing your heart.



“I find this novena to Our Lady Undoer of Knots, a devotion which has been promoted by Pope Francis, to be rich and inspiring.”

-Dr. Alan Schreck, Franciscan University of Steubenville

