



## Mother of Good Counsel Protect the Vulnerable

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*Lord, you know that our thoughts on earth are full of fear and uncertainty; through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from whom your Son took flesh and blood, send us the Spirit of counsel to teach us how to know your will, and to guide us in all we do.*

Each January 1st the Church celebrates the beginning of the New Year by commemorating the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. Most especially for the VIRTUS® family, there is no better way to begin the year than by honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary whose selfless life was devoted to her Son, Jesus.

For the past 13 years the VIRTUS® coordinators from around the country gather for a conference that draws us together in prayer. This conference is educational, spiritual, recreational and prayerful. We have learned that sharing each other's burdens certainly lightens them, and in the same way coordinators learn from one another and carry this knowledge and experience back to their home arch/dioceses.

Prayer is certainly a major part of our gatherings and each year we remember victims, survivors, thrivers and all who are involved in the work of Protecting God's Children. We pray to our Mother of Good Counsel asking her to protect all children and vulnerable persons. We know from sharing the good news stories that through her intercession God responds in mighty ways. Consider the thousands and thousands of Catholic faithful who are represented by the coordinators who attend. Consider the thousands who fall under the care of our dear Blessed Mother every second of the day. We rely on her to guide and counsel us.

Many of the arch/diocesan coordinators are mothers and fathers who have their own children to watch and guide. They give tirelessly of themselves so others might have the opportunity to learn and live in safe environments. We remember them especially this New Year and ask God's blessings on their families.

As we start the New Year, we remember that Mary's life was devoted to the good care and protection of her Son and to lead all to God the father. In this spirit we pray for her intercession to guide us throughout the year by propelling us to:

- Listen more to what our children have to say
- Be more mother and father and less friend to them
- Teach them gratitude by example
- Continue to learn
- Profess our values
- Spend more time with our children
- Impart good self-esteem to them
- Model honesty for them
- Laugh, sing and enjoy life with them
- Be their greatest cheerleader
- Teach them about competition and fairness
- Be the chief witness to our children's lives
- Show care and concern about everything in their lives



- Celebrate moments
- Pray with them

May all of us join in union of prayer to bless all of the children and vulnerable people of the world. May we all have a blessed and Happy New Year!

*Prayer for the Vulnerable*

Gentle Mother of all Good Counsel,

hear our prayers for those who are

vulnerable and need your protection.

Guide their steps to persons and places that hold safe the love you have for your Son, Jesus.

We ask for your guidance and counsel to make good decisions

as we seek to protect all of God's Children.

Never let us forget the important mission we have begun to protect all those whose voices are silent and unheard. Dearest Mother, you know that

Our voices are small, but God's power working through us and with your intercession is all we need.

Amen.

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