

**Devotion to Mary the Untier of Knots**  
**Circular 2015-21**

**To: All the Parish Priests in the Diocese of Novaliches**

Allow me to introduce the devotion to Mary Untier of Knots with the hope that our Youth will venerate her at Kristong Hari Shrine for the Youth.

Mary Untier of Knots is Pope Francis' most favorite Marian devotion. Fr. Bergoglio first fell in love with the devotion when he was in Germany for further studies. "In 1986, the then Padre Bergoglio finished as rector in the seminary, and was sent to Germany for six months. At the time, to borrow modern parlance, Fr. Bergoglio was not in a good place – the Dirty War had exacted a heavy toll on his nerves and he worried that the Jesuit community would never recover from the many mutinies that had taken place in their ranks."

He would regularly visit the Church of St. Peter in Perlack in Augusburg and venerate the painting of Mary Untier of Knots.

After his stint in Germany, Fr. Bergoglio brought the said devotion to Argentina. The devotion has since become popular in a number of countries particularly Brazil and Canada. As Fr. Bergoglio is now Pope Francis, the devotion to Mary Untier of Knots has become even more widespread and popular.

Its basic theological inspiration is the Meditation of Saint Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyon and Martyred in 202) based on the parallel made by Saint Paul between Adam and Christ. Saint Irenaeus, in turn, made a comparison between Eve and Mary, saying: "Eve, by her disobedience, tied the knot of disgrace for the human race; whereas Mary, by her obedience, undid it."

What are those knots? "There are problems and struggles we face for which we do not see any solution... knots of discord in your family, lack of understanding between parents and children, disrespect, violence, the knots of deep hurts between husband and wife, the absence of peace and joy at home. There are also knots of anguish and despair of separated couples, the dissolution of the family, the knots of a drug addict son or daughter, sick or separated from home or God, knots of alcoholism, the practice of abortion, depression, unemployment, fear, solitude... Ah, the knots of our life! How they suffocate the soul, beat us down and betray the heart's joy and separate us from God."

As we are positioning Kristong Hari as the future Shrine of the Youth, we try to address and reflect on the question: How do we bring the youth closer to Christ?

We think of bringing them to Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We ask again: What particular devotion of Mary that may be attractive to today's youth?

We think of Mary Untier of Knots, for the following reasons:

1. It is new to the Filipino youth hence they can make this devotion personal to them.
2. While devotion to Mother of Perpetual Help is popular in the Philippines, many young people find it's devotion for the "oldies" only.
3. If ever the youths have a "devotion" to the Blessed Mother, it is something that is shared with them and/or handed over to them or they had imbibed from their parents or grandparents, and therefore not personal.
4. It is close to Pope Francis whose popularity among the youth is strong.
5. It encourages creative expression of devotion like tying of "life's ribbons" around the "Rope of Mary" as they beg Mama Mary to untie or undo or straighten their life's knots (struggles, issues, confusions, pains, hurts, etc.)

What are our hopes? Position Kristong Hari as a Pilgrim Site of the youth with the devotion to Mary Untier of Knots as an attraction.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, 6 October 2015.

**Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD**  
Bishop

Attested by:

**Rev. Fr. Reynaldo Percival S. Flores**  
Chancellor