

The Lamp

September/October 2019



“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

Ps.119: 105

On September 8, we celebrate the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Feast is particularly important to the Mother of Light Center: our center carries her name, has numerous images of her many titles within, and has been enthroned to Jesus and Mary, as well.

While the circumstances of the Virgin Mary's infancy and early life are not directly recorded in the Bible, other documents and traditions describing the circumstances of her birth are cited by some of the earliest Christian writers from the first centuries of the Church. These accounts outline some of the Church's traditional beliefs about the birth of Mary.

Some early Church writers held that Mary's father Joachim was a wealthy member of one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Joachim and his wife Anne were deeply grieved by their childlessness. Joachim and Anne devoted themselves extensively to prayer and fasting to obtain the blessing of a child.

They were blessed abundantly and an angel prophesied to Anne that all generations would honor their future child: “The Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive, and shall bring forth, and your seed shall be spoken of in all the world.”

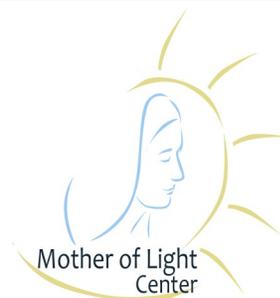
Saint Augustine described the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an event of cosmic and historic significance, and an appropriate prelude to the birth of Jesus Christ. He wrote, “She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley.”

To reflect on the beauty of this precious flower, we encourage you to celebrate the birth of Our Lady!

One way to begin is to meditate upon and recite the Mary, Mother of Light Prayer, written by Father Matthew Zuberbueler, MOLC Spiritual Director.

Mary, Mother of Light, with calm confidence we call upon you, asking you to share with us your mission of bringing the Light and Love of Jesus to this world, which is so often veiled in darkness. Teach us to protect the flame of faith given to us in Baptism. With your prayer and guidance allow us to illuminate with Christ's love the lives of the suffering and the poor who feel forgotten and lost, who live lives burdened by many afflictions. For love of you and Jesus, may we walk with them and see their struggles transformed into a life-giving participation in the fruitful Sacrifice of His Holy Cross. Amen.

Mary, Mother of Light, pray for us.



The Lamp is the name of the Mother of Light Center (MOLC) newsletter. The name, linked to the word of God, brings light on our paths. It represents life, hospitality, and guidance for the mission, and our hope for our guests and ourselves (volunteers, benefactors, friends) as we embrace “no us and them — only us”.

Fall and Winter Activities

October

Cold Gear Drive In preparation for the upcoming winter, Mother of Light Center is accepting donations for the poor and homeless men and women in our area. We are seeking individual donations, and would be grateful for volunteers that could arrange drives in their own parishes. The items we need most are shoes and boots (for children, men, and women), winter coats (for children and men), sleeping bags, backpacks, winter socks (for men), and underwear (for men - in larger sizes, especially).

We plan to distribute items to the area's needy families on **October 19**, and to homeless persons on an ongoing basis in November and December.



Father Gee and Friends Saturday, **October 26th** (time TBD), Join Father Gee, his musical friends, and the Mother of Light Center in the school courtyard at St. Rita's Catholic Church for an evening of live music. Enjoy music and fellowship during this fun evening while you support the Mother of Light Center. Donations will be happily accepted, and there will be raffle items, food and beverages available, too. St. Rita is located at 3815 Russell Road in Alexandria. Many thanks go to Fr. Gee and St. Rita parish for their continued support! Watch for additional information on Facebook, or email us for further details.

November

Fall Volunteer Get Together All MOLC volunteers - new or longtime, and those considering joining us - are encouraged to attend this event on **November 16** from 9am - 12pm at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in the Trinity Room. We'll discuss ongoing projects and programs, and provide details on our fall and winter special programs listed on this page. The need for more volunteers is great, especially considering the upcoming holidays. Blessed Sacrament is located at 1427 West Braddock Road in Alexandria. RSVPs are not required, but are requested. Please email us at motheroflightcenter@gmail.com for more information or to r.s.v.p.

Thanksgiving Food Distribution MOLC is currently serving over 70 families in need in the Northern Virginia area, primarily Alexandria. Many of these families don't have adequate kitchens to prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal. For our first Thanksgiving since opening, we will provide the families with full Thanksgiving meals, ready to serve. We have a great need for volunteers to cook turkeys, pies or other dishes; people to assemble packages of non-perishable food on Saturday, **November 23**; and drivers to deliver the food on Wednesday, **November 27**. Many hands make light work, so we hope you'll consider volunteering for this ambitious and much needed project.

December

Christmas Gift Project To address the need that is so sorely felt during Christmas, we will distribute gifts to all the children of the families that we serve. Families will be able to choose wrapped gifts for their children. All gifts will be broken down by sex and ages. The gifts will be distributed at the Mother of Light Center. This would be an ideal project for a parish, and as always, individual donations are much appreciated. Our timeframe for the distribution is **mid-December**. Please check out Facebook, our website at www.motheroflightcenter.com, or email us for more details or to volunteer at motheroflightcenter@gmail.com.



Ongoing Activities

For Homeless Men and Women & Day Laborers

Bailey's Community Shelter: On the **first Saturday of every month** from 10am - 1pm. Prepare and serve food. Distribute clothing, comfort bags, and snacks.

Shirlington Pavilion (labor workers, men): On the **second Friday of every month** from 10:30am - 12:30pm. Meet at MOLC to prepare lunch brought in by volunteers. Take snacks, drinks, and comfort bags. Serve, pray, and talk.

Meade Memorial Episcopal Church: On the **third Tuesday of every month** from 10am - 12:30pm. Distribute clothing, snacks and comfort bags. Meet at MOLC and drive to the church.

Mat Making in Partnership with American Heritage Girls: **4th Saturday** from 2-4pm. Families, youths, and individuals receive training on how to create a sleeping mat for homeless men and women.

Walking Outreach to Labor workers and homeless persons: Flexible schedule. During the week usually on **Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday** from 7:30 to 9:00am. Locations vary. Serve sandwiches, drinks, pastries, and comfort bags.

For the Poor and Needy in the Area

Food Provisions Delivery: **All week days, including Saturdays**. Prepare the bags of food and deliver them to families in their homes.

Food Bank: **Every Monday** from 7-10am. Pick-up food at Capital Area Food Bank in Lorton. And stock food in pantry from 10am - 12pm.

St Anne's Women Group (poor and single mothers and children): On the **first Saturday of every month** from 4 - 6pm at St Rita's Church. Prayer, talk, activities, sharing, and serving dinner.

We have many ways to volunteer. Please join us!

Holy Mass is celebrated at Mother of Light Center every first Friday of the month starting with Adoration and the holy rosary at 5 PM followed by Holy Mass at 6:30 PM. If you are interested in attending, please let us know by calling (703) 508-5289 or e-mail at motheroflightcenter@gmail.com

Adopt-A-Family

In an effort to encourage the development of relationships between families of the Mother of Light Center supporters and those families on our roster that need assistance, we are starting the Adopt-a-Family program.

The program will provide support in identifying short- and long-term needs of adopted families through building friendships with adopting families, with support from MOLC resources. It will give an opportunity to move adopted families to greater self-sufficiency. Initial program goals will be food distribution and Christmas items for the adopted families. Gift distribution is not a part of the program, rather, the first part will be the establishment of the relationships during the Christmas 2019 season.

We hope that through these personal relationships, specific goals of each adopted family will be identified and addressed by various resources. Perhaps that will be language lessons, tutoring, or employment assistance. Each family will have different needs to reach self-sufficiency. Considerations in matching families will include languages, location, and family sizes.

Starting in September, we'll identify the families that could most benefit from this project. From there, we will enlist volunteer adopting families. We hope to have enough volunteer families to complete the matching by the middle of October.

MOLC will provide the majority (if not all) of food for distribution, and will support, whenever and however possible, other needs to make the "adoption" a success. If your family would like to explore this idea further, please contact us at motheroflightcenter@gmail.com.

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends:

“The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.” Proverbs 16:9

We are blessed as the Lord continues to direct our steps. The Mother of Light Center is strengthening to grow in the scope and impact of its activities. About 30 volunteers are actively involved, donors are engaged, and ever greater numbers of poor and homeless people in need are being served. We have a network of more than 70 low-income families we have helped with groceries in their homes, spiritual support, clothing and furniture. Monthly, we have contact with about 40 homeless men and women at Meade Memorial, and we provide them with clothing, snacks, and comfort bags.

We work to strengthen sound priorities: to meet our mission by serving the poor and people experiencing homelessness and to run a spiritual business overflowing with compassion. To that end, at our annual board meeting on September 13, new board officers will be elected. These officers will be a valuable asset. The new board will support MOLC in becoming stronger, more resilient, and more effective. In addition, a Center Director and Assistant Director will manage the day-to-day activities of the Center and work in partnership with the board to serve our pro-

grams, guests, networks, donors, partners, and volunteers.

“Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

The Mother of Light Center is grounded in the life of Christ, a life **of service, of giving, of sharing**. We try to focus on the quality of the work we do—the “muchness” of it is more important than the sheer quantity. It is the power and grace of Christ that make our efforts fruitful. Thank you for being involved with passion and love in doing the work of the Mother of Light Center: step by step, one person at a time transforming lives, churches, and community.

Please remember to keep the Mother of Light Center in your prayers in this significant moment as we continue to lift up all our friends and supporters in ours. Mary Most Holy, Mother of Light pray for us!

God bless and keep you always,
Matilde Alvarado
Mother of Light Center Chair

MOLC Board Members

Rev. Fr. Matthew Zuberbueler
Deacon Gerard Marie Anthony
Matilde Alvarado
Elizabeth Carrier
Lawrence Holmes, Jr.
Robin T. Huddleston
Leslie Murphy
Marcella Hadeed
Dan Cotter

CORE MISSION

With a coordinated approach, the assistance of volunteers and others in the community, Mother of Light Center is dedicated to love and serve men and women who are poor, needy, and homeless. We provide spiritual support, encouragement and information they need by establishing relationships. We help them identify their talents and potentials, redirect their lives, find jobs and permanent housing, and most importantly, discover how much God loves them.

Mother of Light Center, P.O. Box 1482, Falls Church, VA 22041

Contact us at: motheroflightcenter@gmail.com

For more information visit: www.motheroflightcenter.com

MOLC is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt, not-for-profit, charitable organization, registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A financial statement is available upon written request from the VA Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs.