



In the vast richness of Catholic tradition, there are sacramentals that have accompanied the spiritual life of the faithful for centuries, reminding us of God's closeness and the intercession of the Virgin Mary. One of these is **the Measure of Our Lady of the Pillar**, a lesser-known but profoundly meaningful sacramental, filled with history, devotion, and maternal protection. What exactly is it? What is its origin? How can it help us today? Join us on this journey through its history, symbolism, and relevance in the Christian life today.

What Is the Measure of Our Lady of the Pillar?

The Measure of Our Lady of the Pillar is a **sacramental**, a blessed ribbon that reproduces the exact measurement of the column (or pillar) on which, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to the Apostle James in Zaragoza, Spain, in 40 A.D. The ribbon is a tangible reminder of the Virgin's maternal protection and her intercession before God.

For generations, the faithful have used this sacramental as a sign of trust in Our Lady of the Pillar, especially in times of illness, danger, or tribulation. Many devotees carry it with them, place it in their homes, or use it as a symbol of protection, similar to the scapular.

History and Origin: A Pillar of Faith in Christianity

Devotion to Our Lady of the Pillar dates back to the early years of Christianity. According to tradition, the Apostle James, discouraged by the slow conversion of pagans in Hispania, received a visit from the Virgin Mary while she was still living in Jerusalem. She appeared to him on a pillar of jasper in Zaragoza and asked him to build a temple there in honor of her Son.

Over time, this column became a sign of the Virgin's maternal presence and the center of great Marian devotion. By the 17th century, the custom of measuring the pillar and reproducing its exact size on a ribbon began to spread among the faithful. These ribbons were blessed and given as a sign of Our Lady's protection and shelter.

The Characteristics of the Measure of the Pillar

1. The Exact Measurement of the Pillar

The ribbon represents the height of the pillar on which the Virgin appeared to James. Although sources vary, the generally accepted measurement is **36 centimeters** (approximately 14 inches), corresponding to the height of the jasper column still venerated



today in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza.

2. Colors and Their Meaning

The ribbons come in different colors, each with a special meaning:

- **White:** Represents the purity of the Virgin Mary.
- **Blue:** Symbolizes her motherhood and heavenly queenship.
- **Red:** Signifies the love and blood shed by Christ and the martyrs of the faith.
- **Yellow or gold:** Represents divine glory and power.

Many devotees choose a color based on their personal devotion or the intention with which they wish to carry the Measure of Our Lady.



3. Use and Blessing

For this sacramental to have its full significance, it must be **blessed by a priest**. The faithful may then carry it in their wallet, place it under their pillow or in a baby's crib, sew it into their clothing, or display it in their home as a sign of the protective presence of Our Lady of the Pillar.



The Measure of the Pillar in the Christian Life Today

In a world where faith is constantly tested and life's difficulties can make us feel alone, the Measure of Our Lady of the Pillar remains a physical reminder that we are not abandoned.

Many testimonies tell how this ribbon has accompanied people in difficult situations:

- **Mothers placing it in their child's crib** to ask for the Virgin's protection.
- **The sick carrying it with them** for comfort and healing.
- **Devotees keeping it in their homes** as a sign of blessing and shelter.

This sacramental invites us to remember Mary's closeness in our lives, just as she was with James in his moment of difficulty.

A Biblical Sign of Protection

The use of blessed objects as signs of protection and faith has biblical support. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read:

"So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them." (Acts 19:12)

This reminds us that, although sacramentals are not magical objects, they are **signs of God's grace** and the intercession of the saints.

The Measure of the Pillar and the Challenge of Faith Today

In times of relativism and secularization, sacramentals like the Measure of the Pillar may seem outdated to some. However, their true value lies in what they represent: **the living faith of Christians who seek God's protection and closeness through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.**

This sacramental is not a talisman but a help in our spiritual journey. It reminds us that just



as Our Lady of the Pillar was a support for James, she continues to be a pillar of faith for us today.

Conclusion: A Pillar in Our Spiritual Life

The Measure of Our Lady of the Pillar is much more than a simple ribbon; it is a reminder of the Virgin's loving presence in our lives, a tool of protection, and a sign of faith that accompanies us in our joys and trials.

In times of hardship, in moments of illness, or simply as an act of love for the Virgin Mary, carrying the Measure of the Pillar is an embrace of trust in the spiritual motherhood of the one who has been given to us as our Mother.

May Our Lady of the Pillar help us remain firm in faith and remind us that, no matter what happens, we are never alone.