

## *Belonging to Jesus through Mary*



*"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God."* (Lk 1:30)

**Mary is unique and her place in God's heart is unique.**

She welcomes the angel, Gabriel. She says, "Yes." Yes to everything! She totally trusted her God. *"And the Word was made flesh."* (Jn 1:14)

From this faith in God, then in Jesus his Son, stem all the graces that she wishes to spread over mankind and in everyone's hearts. Mary introduces us to this total trust in her Son. St Bernard tells us that Mary is "the aqueduct through which we received the source of life, Christ." She welcomed the Son of God in her womb and made herself the spokesperson of her Son's wishes. She is the source of graces and plenitude.

*"Do whatever he tells you."* (Jn 2:5)

Mary is at the Wedding Feast at Cana in Galilee as Jesus' mother. **Through her faith in Jesus, she contributes to "the beginning of the signs," that reveal her Son's messianic power.** St John Paul II marveled, "What deep understanding existed between Jesus and his mother!" He invites us to contemplate Mary's intercession with Jesus. Mary is Christ's mother and she is also close to us. She is our mother, our Mummy. She acts a mediator: a presence between man and God. She knows all we need; she anticipates our requests, desires, with tenderness, delicacy, if we look at her, if we listen to her... if, just like the servants at Cana, we place our trust in her.

**With Mary, we approach the Mystery.** The Oriental church gives Mary the name of "*Hodegetria*", she who shows the way. Advocate, Assistant, Helper, and maternal Mediator. Mary intercedes for man. She pleads our cause with God, protects us, comes to our aid, and defends us. She leads us towards Jesus and presents all our requests to him, from the smallest to the largest one. Each individual is important in her eyes. Mary's concern for man, for each one of us, is infinite.

**Aude and Olivier de la Motte**

## **SPIRITUAL LETTER**

**Mary, the mediator of all graces.**

God is God and no other but him. God is God and the source of all that exists in the universe. Freely, and with no other reason but his infinite love, he created man in his image and resemblance, man and woman, he created them so that humanity could receive all his love, his life. God created man in his image, but he was unable to receive this life from God! Therefore, God sent his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, to save us. This Son, totally God and totally man, is the sole mediator between God and men because of "his relationship to both," according to St Irenaeus' expression.

If God is made man, it is thanks to the Virgin Mary's free consent. Thus the Son of God became flesh in a woman, a daughter of Israel, a daughter of our humanity, one of us. Through her motherhood, "through her, salvation entered the world." (Liturgy) Through her motherhood...

Because of this unique grace that God gave her, she is associated with the whole mystery of her Son, of the gift he made of himself. Thus she is obviously present in the Saviour's childhood, but also at Cana and right up to being present at the foot of the cross. She is present, as one who believes, as one who offers up all of herself in the Lord's wake.

"Mary, mediator of all grace." This title was given to her because of her motherhood. Bossuet summed it up magnificently, "Since she brought into the world the author of grace, she is associated with all graces." Let us remember that "Holy Mary, Mother of God," is the beginning of the second part of the "Hail Mary," that introduces Christians' requests to pray for them, "sinners, now and at the hour of our death." We ask Mary to intercede for us.

Intercede... This reality highlights accurately Mary's meditation. She intercedes for her human brothers because, in her, the Son of God came to save them. It is necessary to add that, associated through the Holy Spirit that rests on her, associated through her faith with the Lord's whole life, the Virgin also became, at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:25-27), the Mother of all men saved by the Lord. Mary intercedes because she is the Mother of God and the Mother of mankind, our own mother to each of us. Her intercession is maternal. Christians have attached themselves to her because of the maternal love they feel. Whether they are saints or sinners, everyone turns to her. The reason for this impetus is a son's attachment to their mother. More precisely, in their faith, Christians believe in this unique presence of their mother with the Saviour, with the source of all graces. "They believe..." Very often, this faith is not conscious, but nevertheless the reality is there and we affirm, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us..."

Intercede... This reality also highlights our place with the Lord. "May its power (that of the mystery of our salvation) burn our hearts with the same love that the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, so that we might participate with her in the work of redemption." (Offertory Prayer, "Holy Mary, Mother of the Church" mass, written by Blessed Pope Paul VI, 21 November 1964, Closure of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Second Vatican Council) We take part with her... We intercede with her... We are associated with her! With her... we participate in the unique intercession of the Son of God, Saviour of all mankind. The teaching of the Rosary allows us to contemplate the Lord's plan of love and to intercede for the world with the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Mother of mankind.

**Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, op  
Spiritual Counsellor to the Intercessors**

"There is but one Mediator as we know from the words of the apostle, "for there is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all." (1 Tm 2:5) The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it."

**Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, paragraph 60**

## MARY'S SPIRITUAL MEDIATION AT CANA

**"Everything through Mary: such is the authentic interpretation of the presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church."**

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1987, Pope John Paul II promulgated the encyclical letter, *Redemptoris mater*, mother of the Redeemer. That same year, he solemnly opened a Marian Year and underscored the link between Mary and the Holy Spirit by starting this year at Pentecost. The encyclical letter develops Marian spirituality in line with the Second Vatican Council and meditates on Mary's maternal mediation.

"Mary is present at Cana in Galilee as the Mother of Jesus, and in a significant way she contributes to that "beginning of the signs" which reveal the messianic power of her Son. (...) Even though Jesus' reply to his mother sounds like a refusal (especially if we consider the blunt statement "My hour has not yet come" rather than the question), Mary nevertheless turns to the servants and says to them: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn. 2:5).

Then Jesus orders the servants to fill the stone jars with water, and the water becomes wine, better than the wine, which has previously been served to the wedding guests. What deep understanding existed between Jesus and his mother? How can we probe the mystery of their intimate spiritual union? (...)

In John's text on the other hand, the description of the Cana event outlines what is actually manifested as a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say Mary's solicitude for human beings, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs. At Cana in Galilee there is shown only one concrete aspect of human need, apparently a small one of little importance ("They have no wine"). But it has a symbolic value: this coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission and salvific power. Thus there is a mediation: Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. She puts herself "in the middle," that is to say she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she "has the right" to do so. **Her mediation is thus in the nature of intercession: Mary "intercedes" for mankind.**

**St John Paul II**  
**Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris mater*, paragraphs 21, 22**

**"There I found the answers to my questions"**

"A work destined to become a classic of Marian spirituality was published 160 years ago. St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort wrote the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* at the beginning of the 1700s, but the manuscript remained practically unknown for more than a century. When, almost by chance, it was at last discovered in 1842 and published in 1843, the work was an instant success, proving extraordinarily effective in spreading the "true devotion" to the Most Holy Virgin. I myself, in the years of my youth, found reading this book a great help. "There I found the answers to my questions", for at one point I had feared that if my devotion to Mary "became too great, it might end up compromising the supremacy of the worship owed to Christ" (*Dono e Mistero*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996; English edition: *Gift and Mystery*, Paulines Publications Africa, p. 42). Under the wise guidance of St Louis Marie, I realized that if one lives the mystery of

Mary in Christ this risk does not exist. In fact, this Saint's Mariological thought "is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity and in the truth of the Incarnation of the Word of God" (*ibid.*).

Since she came into being, and especially in her most difficult moments, the Church has contemplated with special intensity an event of the Passion of Jesus Christ that St John mentions: "Standing by the Cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!". And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (Jn 19: 25-27).

Throughout its history, the People of God has experienced this gift of the crucified Jesus: the gift of his Mother. Mary Most Holy is truly our Mother who accompanies us on our pilgrimage of faith, hope and charity towards an ever more intense union with Christ, the one Saviour and Mediator of salvation.

As is well known, my episcopal coat of arms symbolically illustrates the Gospel text quoted above; the motto *Totus tuus* is inspired by the teaching of St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort. These two words express total belonging to Jesus through Mary: "*Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*", St Louis Marie wrote, and he translates his words: "**I am all yours, and all that I have is yours, O most loving Jesus, through Mary, your most holy Mother.**"

**Pope John Paul II's Letter to the Montfort Religious Family  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

## **MARY, A MEDIATOR WITH GOD AND WITH MANKIND**

**The Virgin Mary's mediation is twofold: she is a mediator for God with mankind and a mediator for mankind with God.**

The first mediation relates completely to God, just as St Bernard correctly explained it: Mary did not create the grace, but she is the channel that leads to it. (Paragraph 142) The second mediation is operated by Mary, the new Eve: "It is as if a poor peasant, wishing to win the friendship and favour of the king, were to go the queen and give her an apple - his only possession - for her to offer it to the king. The queen, accepting the peasant's humble gift, puts it on a beautiful golden dish and presents it to the king on behalf of the peasant. The apple in itself would not be a gift worthy of a king, but presented by the queen in person on a dish of gold, it becomes fit for any king." (Paragraph 147) (...)

"But have we no need at all of a mediator with the Mediator himself? Are we pure enough to be united directly to Christ without any help? Is Jesus not God, equal in every way to the Father? Therefore is he not the Holy of Holies, having a right to the same respect as his Father? If in his infinite love he became our security and our Mediator with his Father, whom he wished to appease in order to redeem us from our debts, should we on that account show him less respect and have less regard for the majesty and holiness of his person?"

Let us not be afraid to say with St. Bernard that we need a mediator with the Mediator himself and the divinely-honoured Mary is the one most able to fulfill this office of love. Through her, Jesus came to us; through her we should go to him. If we are afraid of going directly to Jesus, who is God, because

of his infinite greatness, or our lowliness, or our sins, let us implore without fear the help and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is kind, she is tender, and there is nothing harsh or forbidding about her, nothing too sublime or too brilliant. When we see her, we see our own human nature at its purest. She is not the sun, dazzling our weak sight by the brightness of its rays. Rather, she is fair and gentle as the moon, which receives its light from the sun and softens it and adapts it to our limited perception.

She is so full of love that no one who asks for her intercession is rejected, no matter how sinful he may be. The saints say that it has never been known since the world began that anyone had recourse to our Blessed Lady, with trust and perseverance, and was rejected. Her power is so great that her prayers are never refused. She has but to appear in prayer before her Son and he at once welcomes her and grants her requests. He is always lovingly conquered by the prayers of the dear Mother who bore him and nourished him." (Paragraph 85)

**St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort**

***Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, 1863 for English translation***

## **PRAYER OF PERSONAL CONSECRATION TO MARY**

"... In the presence of all the heavenly court,  
I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress.  
I deliver and consecrate to thee as Thy slave,  
My body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior,  
And even the value of all my good actions, past present and future;  
Leaving to you the entire and full right of disposing of me,  
And of all that belongs to me, without exception,  
According to Thy good pleasure  
To the greatest glory of God, in time and in eternity.  
(...)  
Amen"

**St Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort**

## **TAKE MARY AS YOUR WIFE**

*"Behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife." (Mt 1:20-24)*

*(...) As for Mary, her terribly young maternal tenderness projects a new light on these Scriptural texts that she makes her own, "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you... You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice." (Is 66:13-14) "Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion*

*for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." (Is 49,15) Thus, she is not mistaken in thinking that God is also a "mother."*

**Henri Caffarel, *Parole & Silence*, 2006  
"Take Mary as your Wife," p 137**

## GENERAL INTENTION

Lord, You have given us Mary as Mother and model for our families. Help us to make our family a place where love, peace and joy reign. May everyone be benevolent, gentle, considerate and patient. May everyone see only the good in the other person. May spouses be filled with tenderness for each other. May we be united in the joys as well as in the hardships thanks to prayer. May prayer be at the heart of our family. May we be deeply contemplative, intensely Eucharistic, and vibrant with joy.

Pope Francis' universal intention: "**Families in Difficulty.** *That families in need may receive the necessary support and that children may grow up in healthy and peaceful environments.*"



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