

FAITH AND REASON

Mary Our Mother: In the sad incidences of departure from true doctrine, that have occurred throughout the long history of the Church, it is helpful to recall the Blessed Mother ever remains on the side of orthodoxy..... From the earliest serious division of Arianism - which denied the divinity of Christ, the Council of Ephesus A.D.431 vindicated the divinity of Christ, defined Mary as the Mother of God. Ever since, those who sincerely sought the truth of Christ have, like the wise men "found the child with Mary his Mother (Mt 2:11)". And in the same vein, one should bear in mind the words Chesterton; "Those who forget the mother will soon forget the child in her arms". History has proven again and again the accuracy of those words.

In Nagasaki, when persecution widowed the Church of its pastors for two centuries, it survived underground handing on the faith from generation to generation. When, at last, a priest came to Nagasaki, the people asked him three searching questions: "Are you subject to the Pope"? "Do you say Mass"? "Do you believe that Mary is the Mother of God"? These questions have profound implications. Are you subject to the successor of Peter whom Jesus placed over His Church? Do you offer Mass in which the Risen, Glorified Lord makes present again his one, eternal sacrifice of Calvary. Do you believe in the Divinity of Christ? It is interesting to note how persecution forces people to emphasize the essentials.

The Late Cardinal Wright of Philadelphia said the following: "Ours is the age of Mary because the worries of our generation are such as to invite her sweet mercies and such as a call for the healing influence of the truths which the Holy Catholic Church preaches concerning the "Mother of Christ". It is always dangerous to speak of the evils of the hour as if they were something entirely new and hitherto unheard of. They are not! The things which discourage us, the things which sicken us, are all of them as old as sin, as old as treason, as old as death, as old as defeat, as old as sickness, as old as war. They are of course the things that worry us. These are the evils of the hour; they are the oldest worries in the world. They are the evils which from time immemorial, the spirits of truth and virtue have associated with the three-fold source of all sin and all grief. The worries of our age are as old as the world; they are as old as the flesh; they are as old as the devil. We pay the evils of the world too great tribute when we pretend they are new and strong and fresh. They are not! They are merely new manifestations neat the most new forms of these old unholy three: the world, the flesh, the devil. They take new emphasis, sometimes novel firms, but it is to these three-the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the modern guises of their old temptations, that the doctrine of Holy Mother Church concerning the Blessed Mother of Christ brings timely and powerful counteraction.

The Church from its earliest days has never lost sight of the central position of Mary in the plan of salvation and, consequently, in the life of the Church through the ages. Mary was the first and greatest disciple of Christ conceived Jesus in her womb because she conceived him first of all in her soul. (St Augustine and the two conceptions of Mary). If we wish to understand what the Church teaches about Mary, if we wish to be a true follow of Jesus, we must prayerfully consider the example of Mary.

The drama of Mary begins with the message of the Angel: "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you". At that moment, Mary was confronted with something that demanded a faith in God that reached into a darkness far beyond human understanding. Mary's response was one of unconditional faith... "Be it done to me as you say". From that moment Mary's life was shaped by that of her child. It was not until much later, when the child remains in the temple, that the divine love which is at the center of her life is revealed; "How is it that you sought me, did you not know that I must be about my Father's business"? Mary did not understand this..... She pondered it in her heart, as she did many other things in the years that lay ahead. Everything that affected the child affected the mother, yet no intimate understanding existed between them. Mary had given Jesus her life and her love, yet she had to watch as he moved beyond her reach, into a world where she could not go. How could she, a mere mortal, fathom the mystery of God?. Who was this "Holy One" that she had borne? Who is this child that steadily outgrows her love? Mary could not understand, but she believed... all the way to the Cross.

Romano Guardini, one of the great minds of the 20th Century, a renowned spiritual writer, explores the point in his usual style. "Every step the Lord took toward the fulfillment of his godly destiny, Mary followed in bare faith. Comprehension came only at Pentecost. What is demanded of us as of her is a constant wrestling in faith with the mystery of God, and with the evil resistance of the world. Our obligation is not delightful poetry but granite faith - more than ever in this age of absolutes in which the mitigating spell is falling from all things and naked absolutes clash everywhere. The purer we see and understand the figure of the Mother of God as she is recorded in the New Testament, the greater the gain for our Christian lives.

Mary lived in a world dominated by Rome, a materialistic and pagan power. We live in a world today in a world that in many ways is much worse than such a world. What is demanded of us as of Mary is a constant wrestling in faith with the mystery of God and the evil resistance of the world, "with granite faith". Those who do not take this to heart have not and will not survive in their faith! **Fr. William C. Mooney**

Epiphany Solemn Blessing: God has called you out of darkness, into his wonderful light. May you experience his kindness and blessings, and be strong in faith, in hope, and in love. because you are followers of Christ, who appeared on this day as a light shining in darkness, may he make you a light to all your sisters and brothers. The wise men followed the star and found Christ who is light from light. May you too find the Lord when your pilgrimage is ended...- **Author Unknown**

Without God we are nothing: Give yourself to me, my God! Restore yourself to me. Behold I love you, and if my love should be too little, let me love you even more strongly. I am unable to measure my love in order to know how much is still lacking in me before my life can run into your embrace and not be turned away until my life is hidden in the secret place of your presence. This only I know: Woe is me if I am not in you not only in my outward life, but also deep within myself. And all the abundance I have that is not my God is only poverty. Before I was, Lord, you were. Nor was I anything at all that you should grant me the gift of existence. And yet, see how I exist now simply because of your goodness, which has provision for all you have made me to be and all that you have made me from. For you had no need of me, nor could I be of any use to you my Lord and my God. It is not as if I am of such assistance to you with my service that I could keep you from tiring in your work. Nor could your power be any less without my help. Instead, you made me so that I can worship and serve you, so that good will come to me from you. For you are the one who has made me capable of receiving what is good..... **St Augustine of Hippo**

I'll Be Always Loving You: I am here with you by your side, Sheltering your heart from the night. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I'll be always loving you. I will be your God your comforter. I will hold you close in my heart. Let me love the world through your heart, Let me heal your wounds with my touch. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I'll be always loving you. I will be your God your comforter. I will hold you close in my heart. Let me see the world through your eyes, Let forgiveness shine through your smile. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I'll be always loving you. I will be your God your comforter. I will hold you close in my heart. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I'll be always loving you.

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	You cannot love a thing without wanting to fight for it.
Monday	The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man.
Tuesday	A new philosophy generally means in practice the praise of some old vice.
Wednesday	Great truths can only be forgotten and can never be falsified.
Thursday	The issue is now clear. It is between light and darkness and every one must choose his side.
Friday	Fallacies do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions.
Saturday	A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it.

He lies in a manger, but He holds the world in His hand; he is nourished at the breast, but He feeds the angels; He is wrapped in swaddling clothes, but He clothes us with immortality; He is suckled but is adored; He does not find room in the inn but He makes a temple for Himself in the hearts of believers. For Strength took on weakness that weakness might become strong. Therefore, let us marvel at rather than despise His human birth; from it let us learn the lowliness which such loftiness assumed for our sake. Then let us enkindle our love so that we may come to His eternal day...**St. Augustine**

Jesus' strong rebuke is addressed to a people who "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Mk 7:6). The Lord asks us to be faithful to the Law of God in truth and sincerity of conscience; however, at the same time he shows us where we can find the true and inalienable source of the authentic observance of the law: "in the heart of each person". The roots of moral evil, of nonfulfillment, or rejection of the law can nestle in the hearts for "wicked designs come from the deep recesses of the heart" (Mk 7:21) likewise from the heart are born good proposals, desires for good, the decisive commitment of the upright conscience. It is necessary, however, to work with good heart that is, in sincerity and truth.

In the good heart is the foundation of our relationship with God. "Humbly welcome the Word that has taken root in you" (James 1:21). The Lord insists on asking us for true conversion, accepting his Word with a pure conscience. To accept, in fact, means to make the Word our own, to act in such a way that it enters into the dynamics of our liberty, following a conscience open to the light that comes from that Word. **St. John Paul II**

My Wish For You: I wish you God's rich blessings, upon life's happy Way; success and happiness be yours on each succeeding day. One little prayer I hope you will say, in hail or rain or sun: we learned this prayer from Christ's own lips, "Father Thy will be done". And if perchance we do not meet till years have passed away, perhaps this little verse will bring fond memories of today.

In His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

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