

The Divine Motherhood of Mary Our Mother

Some Love-filled Thoughts about Her Conception, Birth, and Qualities

Our Dear God the Father, who is in Heaven, is the Divine Parent of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; and Mary is the human parent of this same Divine Person who became man, the Incarnate Word, whom we know as Jesus. Jesus calls God his Father, and He calls Mary his Mother; and both the heavenly Father as well as Mary call Jesus their Son. Jesus' Divine Sonship as the Word of the Father and his human sonship derived from Mary are the fruits of the same eternal fecundity (fruitfulness) of God the Father—a fecundity that this so benevolent Father has shared with Mary our Mother so that her created Maternity would be a reflection of His uncreated Paternity.

Before the beginning of time, Mary was conceived in the mind of the Father to be the true Mother of the Incarnate Word, for it was decreed in the mysterious plan of Divine Love that the Second Person of the Trinity would become man by Mary and by Her become the Brother of all human beings, even if sin had not entered this world. So just as surely as it was decreed that the Word would assume human nature so was it decreed that Mary would be brought into existence to be the most holy and worthy Mother of God—first of all as the Mother of Jesus our Brother and, due to the sin of Adam, as the Mother of Jesus our Savior!

Like all creatures of God, Mary was created out of nothing. But She was to be His most magnificent creature, and God called the Angels and all creation to witness the love and grace with which this most elect creature would be brought into existence.

Yet, even before Mary came into actual existence, in view of Jesus' foreseen merits as Redeemer of mankind, the inscrutable Providence of Eternity ordained that Jesus as Son of God would first conceive within Himself all of Mary's thoughts, words, and deeds, and incarnate within His own Divine Love, her love which embraced everyone.

It can be said, therefore, that Mary was not only conceived in the womb of the holy St. Anne, St. Joachim's aging spouse, but at that same instant She was conceived in the Eternal Son of God who poured out His fullness of Grace into her most blessed soul, making Her the all holy and all beautiful one! She was filled

with grace and gifts beyond the highest Seraphim of Heaven and there was not a single instant of her existence in which She lacked in the least the light and friendship of her Creator. What God is by nature, Mary became by Grace even from the very moment of her Immaculate Conception. The Divine Fiat produced in Mary the richest gifts and the treasures of His Grace forming in Her a new creation exceedingly more beautiful and wonderful than the entire Universe.

And God saw fit to give Mary not only infused knowledge [of the most intimate secrets of the Supreme Being] and all the gifts and prerogatives which He had given Adam but sowed within her soul the seed of Divine Maternity giving her a maternal love for all creatures, then at least, the inexpressible tenderness of this both divine and human Mother would destroy the seeming distance between God and man, sweetly softening men's fear and awe of the Supreme Majesty. Later, at the time of the Annunciation, She would come to understand this love of maternity. She would give her unconditional *Fiat*; and the Word would become flesh, acquiring on earth a Mother without a father, as in the Heavenly Trinity He has a Father without a mother. As She gave her *Fiat*, God, with his own *Fiat*, gave her Motherhood the most wonderful power to generate Jesus in every creature; and as true Mother of both her Creator and his creatures, She was able to rear, nourish, clothe, guide, and love them both with the same love.

Not only did God send the Archangel Gabriel to Mary to announce His wish that She be the Mother of the Redeemer, but He had already sent this Archangel to Mary's parents, before She was conceived, to let St. Joachim and St. Anne know that God was pleased with their prayers, and that even in their old age He would give them a most special daughter whose name, before time began, had been chosen by God Himself—the powerful and magnificent name of Mary.

St. Anne passed her days of pregnancy all spiritualized by the sweet and divine operations of the Holy Spirit; and the newly conceived Mary began the never-interrupted love of God in her most precious and holy soul. Nine months from her Immaculate Conception She was born pure and stainless, beautiful and full of grace; and She was ravished in a most high ecstasy during the process of her birthing. Mary was inferior only to God and superior to all other creatures.

At this most holy moment the Creator again sent the Archangel Gabriel on a mission. This time he went to the Limbo of the holy souls, who were awaiting the

Redeemer, to announce the joyful news that the dawn of their eternal felicity had begun since the one who was to be the Mother of the Messiah had now been born.

Conceived and born with the use of reason and persevering from the day of her birth, in spite of whatever cares and labors, the Divine Mary made it a holy and wholesome practice to begin each day by prostrating Herself in the presence of the Most High, praying thus:

[I] gave Him thanks and praise for his immutable Being, his infinite perfections, and for having created me out of nothing; acknowledging myself as his creature and the work of his hands, I blessed Him and adored Him, giving Him honor, magnificence and divinity, as the supreme Lord and Creator of myself and all that exists. I raised up my spirit to place it into his hands, offering myself with profound humility and resignation to Him and asking Him to dispose of me according to his will during that day and during all the days of my life, to teach me to fulfill whatever would be his greater pleasure. This I repeated many times during the external works of the day, and in the internal ones I first consulted his Majesty, asking his advice, permission and benediction for all my actions. (words of Our Lady to Ven. Mary of Agreda, p.95 "City of God" - popular abridgment, 1949, Corcoran Publishing Company, Albuquerque, NM)

Now from the most wonderful and enlightening book by St. Alphonsus Liguori, which he very appropriately titled, "The Glories of Mary" we discover many more most beautiful things which he and other saints and holy persons have been blessed to understand about Mary our mother. So let us pass in review a few of these precious jewels of most refulgent light which this great Saint made known about our Mother and Queen.

Mary's soul was the most beautiful soul that God ever created other than the very soul of Jesus. Mary was not only a very great saint from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, but She surpassed in holiness not only each particular saint but all the angels and saints put together; and then She was born an even greater saint than She was at her conception, due to her correspondence and fidelity to this plenitude of grace during her nine months in St. Anne's womb.

St. Claude de la Columbiere, says that it is the opinion of all that this holy child, when She received sanctifying grace in the womb of St. Anne, received also the perfect use of her reason, and was also divinely enlightened in a degree corresponding to the grace with which She was enriched. So that we may well believe, that from the first moment that her beautiful soul was united to her most pure body, She, by the light She had received from the wisdom of God, knew well the eternal truths, the beauty of virtue, and above all, the infinite goodness of God. She knew how much He deserved to be loved by all, and particularly by Herself, on account of the singular gifts with which He had adorned and distinguished Her above all creatures, by preserving Her from the stain of original sin, and by bestowing on Her so immense grace, and distinguishing Her to be the Mother of the Eternal Word (although She would only later understand this), and Queen of the universe.

Hence from that first moment Mary, grateful to God, began to do all that She could do, by immediately and faithfully making full use of that immense grace which had been bestowed upon Her; and applying Herself entirely to please and love the divine goodness, from that moment She loved Him with all her strength, and continued thus to love Him always, during the whole of the nine months preceding her birth, during which She never ceased for a moment to unite Herself more and more closely with God in fervent acts of love. She was already free from original sin, and hence was exempt from every earthly affection, from every irregular movement, from every distraction, from every opposition on the part of the senses, which would in any way have hindered Her from always advancing more and more in Divine Love: her senses also concurred with her blessed spirit in tending towards God. Thus her beautiful soul, free from every impediment, never lingered but always flew towards God, always loved Him, and always increased in love towards Him.

Many learned theologians say that a soul that possesses a habit of virtue, as long as it corresponds to the actual grace which it receives from God, always produces and act equal in intensity to the habit it possesses; so much so that it acquires each time a new and double merit, equal in sum of all merits previously acquired.

Mary, then, during the whole of that time in the womb of St. Anne, in each moment, doubled that sublime grace which She possessed from the first instant; for corresponding to her whole strength, and in the most perfect manner in her every act, She subsequently doubled her merits in every instance. So that supposing that a

thousand degrees of grace in the first instance, in the second She had two thousand, in the third four thousand, in the fourth eight thousand, in the fifth sixteen thousand, in the sixth thirty two thousand. And we are as yet only at the sixth instance; but multiplied for nine months, consider what treasures of grace, merit, and sanctity Mary had already acquired at the moment of her birth!

Let us, then, rejoice with our beloved infant Mary, who was born so holy, so dear to God, and so full of grace. And let us rejoice, not only on her account but also on our own account; for She came into the world full of grace, not only for her own glory but also for our good.

Mary was created 'full of grace' and with a sanctity so perfect for She had been chosen for the sublime dignity of becoming the Mother of the Divine Word. This dignity, says Denis the Carthusian, is associated with the order of the hypostatic union of Christ Himself, and therefore God elected Mary to an order superior to that of all other creatures.

Mary is beautiful but beautiful as the sun, for as St. Peter Damian said, "As the light of the sun so greatly surpasses that of the stars, that in it they no longer appear visible; it so overwhelms them, that they are as if they were not;" "so does the great Virgin Mother surpass in sanctity the whole court of heaven."

St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, asserts that the reason the Archangel Gabriel called Her full of grace, *Hail, full of grace!* was because only limited grace was given to others, but it was given to Mary in all its plenitude: "Truly was She full; for grace is given to other saints partially, but the whole plenitude of grace poured itself into Mary." St. Basil of Seleucia declares that She received this plenitude that She might thus be a worthy mediatrix between men and God: "Hail full of grace, mediatrix between God and men, and by whom heaven and earth are brought together and united." "Otherwise," says St. Laurence Justinian, "had not the Blessed Virgin been full of Divine Grace, how could She have become the ladder to heaven, the advocate of the world, and the most true mediatrix between men and God."

Mary Queen and Mother

"No sooner had Mary," says St. Bernadine of Siena, "consented to be Mother of the Eternal Word, than She merited by this consent to be made Queen of the world and all creatures." As Jesus is the King of the universe, Mary is also its Queen. Yes

Mary is Queen; but, for our common consolation, it must be known that She is a Queen so sweet, so clement, and so ready to help us that the holy Church wills that we should salute Her under the title of Queen of Mercy. Although She is a Queen, She is not a queen of justice, intent on punishment of the wicked, but a queen of mercy, intent only on commiserating and pardoning sinners. The Lord has ordained that all mercies should pass through the hands of Mary and be disposed of by Her at will. St. Bernard asks why the Church calls Mary "the Queen of Mercy"? And he replies, that "it is because we believe that She opens the abyss of the mercy of God to whomsoever She wills, when She wills, and as She wills; so that there is no sinner, however great, who is lost if Mary protects him."

—Example—

We read in the life of Sister Catharine of St. Augustine, that in the place where she resided, there was a woman of the name of Mary, who in her youth was a sinner, and in her old age continued so obstinate in wickedness, that she was driven out of the city and reduced to live in secluded cave; there she died, half consumed by disease, without the Sacraments, and was consequently interred in a field like a beast.

Sister Catharine, who always recommended the souls of those who departed from this world, with great fervor to God, on hearing the unfortunate end of this poor, poor old woman, never thought of praying for her; and she looked upon her (as did everyone else) as irrevocably lost.

One day, four years afterwards, a suffering soul appeared to her and exclaimed: "How unfortunate is my lot, Sister Catharine! Thou recommendest the souls of all those that die to God: on my soul alone thou hast not compassion." "And who art thou?" asked the servant of God. "I am," she replied, "that poor Mary who died in the cave." "And art thou saved?" said Catharine. "Yes," she answered, "by the mercy of the Blessed Virgin Mary." "And how?" "When I saw myself at the point of death, loaded with sins and abandoned by all, I had recourse to the Mother of God, saying, 'Lady, thou art the refuge of abandoned creatures; behold me, at this moment, abandoned by all; thou art my only hope; thou alone canst help me: have pity on me.' The Blessed Virgin obtained for me the grace to make an act of contrition. I died and am saved; and besides this, She my Queen obtained for me another favor, that my purgatory should be shortened, by enduring in intensity that which otherwise would have lasted for many years: I now want only a few Masses to be entirely delivered; I

beg thee to have them said; and on my part, I promise always to pray for thee to God and to Mary."

Sister Catharine immediately had Masses said; and after a few days that soul again appeared to her, shining like the sun, and said: "I thank thee, Catharine: behold I go to paradise to sing the mercies of my God and to pray for thee."

Mary's Love of God and Love of Us

The Saints, because they loved God so much, did much for their neighbor; but who ever loved God as much as Mary? She loved Him more in the first moment of her existence than all the Saints and Angels ever loved Him, or will love Him. Our Blessed Lady Herself revealed to Sister Mary Crucified that the fire of love with which She was inflamed towards God was such, that if the heavens and earth were placed in it, they would be instantly consumed. St Alphonsus speaks of a certain Father Nieremberg who says that the love that all mothers have ever had for their children is but a shadow in comparison with the love that Mary bears to each one of us and that She loves us more than do all the Angels and Saints put together.

Truly, no sinner converts, no holiness blossoms, no grace descends upon the earth, and no love leaves the throne of God without first being placed in her Motherly Heart. She nurtures every gift that God gives; She nourishes it with her love, She enriches it with her grace—. Thus, in receiving grace, the soul experiences both the Fatherhood of God and the Motherhood of the Queen of Heaven.

Our Mother was always and in everything united to the Will of God. St. Bonaventure says that when Mary saw the love of the Eternal Father towards men to be so great that, in order to save them, He willed the death of his Son; and, on the other hand, seeing the love of the Son in wishing to die for us; in order to conform Herself to this excessive love of both the Father and the Son towards the human race, She also, with her whole will, offered and consented to the death of her Son so that we might be saved.

The Holy Gospel in speaking of the Eternal Father's love for us says, "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." "So also," says St. Bonaventure, "We can say of Mary, that She has so loved us as to give her only-begotten Son for us."

She gave Him, says Fr. Nieremberg, when She gave Him permission to deliver Himself up to death. She gave Him to us a thousand and a thousand times during

the three hours preceding his death and which She spent at the foot of the cross; for during the whole of that time She unceasingly offered, with extreme sorrow and extreme love, the life of her Son in our behalf, and this with such constancy, that St. Anselm and St. Antoninus say, that if executioners had been lacking, She Herself would have crucified Him in order to obey the Eternal Father who willed his death for our salvation. Can we even begin to comprehend this Love which Mary has for us?!

Just as Jesus came for sinners, so does Mary work constantly for them. She once said to St. Bridget: "However much a man sins, I am immediately ready to receive him when he repents; nor do I pay attention to the number of his sins but only to the intention with which he comes: I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy." Therefore, to have recourse to Mary is the same thing as to find grace with God.

Let us end this section giving gratitude to St Alphonse and others for sharing with us their illuminated love of our Most Holy Mother and Queen.

The New Pentecost and Mary as "Co-Sanctifitrix"

There have been many signs during the 20th Century of a new Pentecost is soon to come about, both from the official ranks of the Church and from various other persons in Christ's Mystical Body in whom God has clearly manifested his Will for a new era of a "new and divine holiness."

On January 26, 1916, Jesus said to the Servant of God Conception Cabrera of Mexico:

On sending to the world a new Pentecost, I want it inflamed, purified, illumined— inflamed and purified by the light and fire of the Holy Spirit. The last stage of the world must be marked by the effusion of the Holy Spirit. He must reign in hearts and in the entire world...(28)

On September 27, 1918, Jesus told her about the Holy Spirit:

He will come, I will send Him again clearly manifest in His effects, which will astonish the world and impel the Church to holiness.(29)

Pope John the XXXIII called for a new Pentecost. Pope John Paul II spoke of a “new and divine” holiness for the Third Christian Millennium.

Since the Holy Spirit's mission is to sanctify souls, it follows quite appropriately that his Spouse, Mary, is intimately involved in His mission of sanctification; and therefore, She has the much deserved role of “Co-Sanctifitrix.” As already pointed out above, Mary is the dispensatrix of all graces that come from God. For the Glory of God the first consideration of grace is our salvation; but our God wants even more for us; He wants our sanctification, which is to be and act as much like Him as possible. Nothing delights Our Lady and Mother more than to make us grow rapidly in the likeness of God.

Let us look for a moment at some very beautiful insights about Our Lady from the writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe:

At no time did her [Mary's] will ever deviate from God's will. With all its strength, her will was always one with his. (*“Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit—The Marian Teachings of Father Kolbe.”*p. 128)

[T]he Holy Spirit and Mary are two persons who live in such intimate union that they have but one sole life. (*“Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit—The Marian Teachings of Father Kolbe.”*p. 44)

In Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single Person who is God [i.e. the hypostatic union]; here on the contrary we have two natures and two persons, the Holy Spirit and the Immaculata, but united in a union that defies all human expression. (*“Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit—The Marian Teachings of Father Kolbe.”*p. 128)

From Kolbe's insight we can understand that when God created Mary's humanity He united his Divinity to it in a mysterious but real manner!

In the Immaculata there never was sin of any type; and even more importantly, Mary's human will never reigned in Her even for a moment; therefore, She never offered any resistance whatever to the flow of the Divine Life in her entire humanity, which was the most highly deified of all humanities after that of the God-man, Our Lord Himself.

St. Kolbe says that Mary's action is the very action of the Holy Spirit.

("Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit—The Marian Teachings of Father Kolbe.")

From this explanation and insight of St. Kolbe, we can understand that (since the action of the Holy Spirit is produced, animated, and directed by the Divine Will) the action of Mary is also produced, animated, and directed by the Divine Will. Therefore, it is seen that the Divine Will operated in Mary as it does in God, producing in Her the highest degree of likeness to God.

This is very significant for the children consecrated to Mary, because it is certain that her motherly instincts impel Her to obtain for her children, as far as it is possible, the riches and prerogatives that She Herself possesses, so that each of her children, possessing her qualities, can truly cooperate with Her in bringing about a new era of Divine Holiness, a New Pentecost, the fulfillment of her Divine Son's prayer that the Father's Will will at last be done on earth as in Heaven.

This is none other than the essence of the Great Triumph of her Immaculate Heart!—a Heart which continuously bursts forth brilliant suns whose rays irradiate all the Heavenly Court and the entire universe with voices speaking of love towards, God, the Saints, the Angels, and all the creatures of earth.

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