

Mary, Our Queen-Mother

Intercessor of Miracles and Co-Redemptrix

There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers. "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washing, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from—although the servers who had drawn the water knew--, the head waiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. (John 2:1-11)

The Church has just concluded its liturgical Christmas season with the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan and that beautiful "theophany" of the Most Holy Trinity and the anointing of Jesus for his redemptive mission, His personal Pentecost in His Sacred Humanity. The eastern churches in earlier times connected the Nativity of Jesus, the Epiphany, Jesus' Baptism and the miracle at Cana because they all serve as magnificent manifestations of Jesus' divinity, His Sonship as the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, and His fulfillment of the ancient promise of a Messiah Who was to come in the fullness of time to save God's people. While Jesus' Baptism inaugurated that mission, it was confirmed with the first public miracle at Cana that revealed Jesus' glory so His disciples might begin to believe in Him. It was clearly a manifestation of God's hospitality and compassion for His children, a miracle obtained through the intercession of Jesus' Mother.

While the miracle at Cana has many aspects to ponder, we will focus on Mary's role in Jesus' redemptive mission. It is quite clear from the passage that Jesus knew exactly Who He was, and so did Mary. Jesus calls Mary "Woman" in recognition of her role as Mother of the Savior, the Woman of Promise in Genesis, the one who will crush the head of the ugly serpent and smash it with her heel, freeing all men from its deadly sting. Jesus calls her "Woman" because she is the blessed one privileged to bear God

in her virginal womb and to suckle Him at her breasts, and more blessed for hearing the Word of God and believing it. Jesus called her "Woman" because she is the Woman of Revelation, clothed with the Sun like she who declares that "all the glory of the King's daughter comes from within." She is the woman who gives birth to a Son, escapes the dragon and is born away on eagle's wings to safety in the desert. From the beginning of God's Word spoken in time, Mary became the echo of that Word, resounding in the ears of all her children born of her Divine Spouse who makes her fruitful. She is the Mother of the Sacred Humanity, co-redeemer with the Messiah who is the Amen of God's Love, blessed and broken for us.

Jesus' question to Mary at the wedding feast of Cana where she was so solicitous for the bridal couple, likely her relatives, wanting to save them embarrassment on their wedding day which should be a day of great joy, indicates that it was not yet time for Him to manifest Himself publicly with signs and wonders. But Mary, impelled by Divine Wisdom, knew her place in Jesus' Heart and in the Father's will. She knew the Father had fashioned her to be an essential part of Jesus' life and mission, so she gave the word for that mission to begin. Heaven smiled at her boldness and delighted in it, for her favor in heaven is unprecedented. Is not the will of God open to our intercession and prayer so we can change the course of history? Mary is the epitome of the "queen mother" understood in the Hebrew Scriptures as the one who sat at the right hand of the king, whose intercession for the people was so revered that her every request was honored with the greatest respect from a son for his mother. The miracle Jesus works at Cana at Mary's request is proof of that favor and crowns her the true Queen-Mother above all other queens and all other mothers, but Mary is for us *always more mother than queen*.

Mary walked most closely with Jesus through His mission, along the *via dolorosa* of His Passion, that steep, bloody route to the hill of Calvary, dying a "thousand deaths" with Him with every step of the way, at the sound of every whip and lash upon His Sacred Body -- which her memory still held so gently as the Baby she bore in Bethlehem -- and with the sound of the nails being hammered into His Sacred Flesh. No one save God Himself could be closer to that Sacred Humanity than she. Ah, such grace and such question, such agony and such ecstasy, such pondering and such surrender must have been hers through the years that God's Beloved Son lived on earth so intimately with her. As the Church declares, with Mary's death and Assumption into heaven, she shared immediately in Jesus' resurrection and sits at His right hand in His glory as King of heaven and earth, where she continues her maternal intercession with her Divine Son for the redemption of her children.

Jesus poured out His life as is the essence of His divine self-emptying nature, giving every drop of His Blood to ransom us from sin and to ensure our adoption into His Father's house, to share His Sonship with us. He also gave us His most precious

earthly gift beyond His own life, His beloved Mother, in the person of John, His beloved disciple, so we might have easy access to the secrets of His Heart and might have the key to open that Heart like floodgates lifted to pour out His grace and His Spirit upon us in baptisms of water, fire and divine love. How that Spirit loves to flame His fire within us! That Divine Son, like a bridegroom, weds heaven to earth in His Sacred Humanity, weds us to Himself in our Baptism as that Holy Trinity of Divine Persons makes its dwelling within us, making us living tabernacles in the flesh and God's paradise on earth. How that Sacred Humanity delights to dwell with the children of men in the Eucharist, prefigured in the miracle at Cana, where Jesus now changes bread into His Body and wine into His Blood to sustain us with His very life as our spiritual food and drink. What a wedding feast Our Lord has prepared for us in those moments after Holy Communion! Do we realize what is taking place within us in those moments? We eat of Him and we become one with Him more truly than any wife becomes one flesh with her husband. This miracle at Cana, as at the Eucharist, speaks to the nuptials that Jesus offers to every person when he or she is baptized into Him and when he or she feasts on His Body. Those nuptials were prefigured in the covenant God made with His chosen people when He spoke of them as His wife, His espoused, His beloved. We see it again when Scripture refers to the unending feast of heaven's communion with God as the wedding feast of the Lamb and of the Lamb's Wife, His Bride, the Church. We as individuals, and we as Church, His living Body, are espoused to Him through baptism. We celebrate our union in Eucharist, and we live that union in the everyday of our lives in that powerful but gentle grace of the Divine Indwelling Presence that is our sanctification. Jesus becomes the bridegroom of every soul that accepts His offer of communion with Him. "Unless you eat my Body and drink my Blood you shall not have life within you."

Mary is the expert to teach us the power of this gift of divine espousal and union with the Indwelling God, for she lived it first and best. As the Litany of Loreto says, Mary is the "cause of our joy." Why is that? Because Jesus Himself chose to pass all the merit and grace He won for us in His death through her motherly and compassionate hands. Our Lady spoke to Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, visionary for the "Our Lady of America®" devotion, on August 22, 1957, feast of the Immaculate Heart, about her role as Mediatrix of grace for our sanctification and salvation.

My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.

O my sweet child, time passes and with it wasted graces and constant refusals on the part of man to co-operate with me in the accomplishment of the Divine Will for his own sanctification and salvation. (Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, Diary, "Our Lady of America ©," Fostoria, OH, pg. 18.)

Earlier, on August 5 of that year, the feast of Our Lady of Snows, Our Lady spoke to Sister about the Divine Indwelling, source of all holiness which comes from within.

It was her life and she lived it perfectly, always conscious of His presence, never forgetting that all her greatness came from within, from Him Who dwelt there, working, loving, and doing good through her. This is what Our Lady means when she speaks of reformation, renewal. It is this about which she is so concerned, namely, sanctification from within.

As Our Lady spoke this, she seemed at the time to be deeply occupied. Though the serenity of her countenance never left her, she spoke with a gravity that made her words all the more solemn. She seemed anxious to impress me with some idea of the greatness of this gift of God to us, namely, His Divine Presence within our souls through sanctifying grace. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, Diary, pg. 18.)

It is the wish of my Son that fathers and mothers strive to imitate me and my chaste spouse in our holy life at Nazareth. We practiced the simple virtues of family life, Jesus our Son being the center of all our love and activity. The Holy Trinity dwelt with us in a manner far surpassing anything that can ever be imagined. For ours was the earthly paradise where once again God walked among men.

As in our little home no sin was to be found, so it is the wish of the Heart of my Son and my Immaculate Heart that sin should, as far as possible, be unheard of in the homes of our children.

The Divine Trinity will dwell in your midst only if you are faithful in practicing the virtues of our life at Nazareth. Then, you also, my children, you also will become another paradise. God will then walk among you and you will have peace. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, Diary, pg. 8.)

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Sister Mildred in November of 1955, prior to Mary's first appearance, he counseled Sister to go to Mary to learn purity of heart.

I have come to tell you that Our Lord is pleased with your effort to do good. He asks that you go to His Mother and learn great purity of heart. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, Diary, pg. 9.)

When Our Lady made her first appearance on the eve of the North American martyrs as Our Lady of Lourdes where she had identified herself as "I Am the Immaculate Conception," the title by which we honor her as our Patroness, Mary proclaimed the power of her Immaculate Heart to secure miracles today as surely as it did at Cana, though today she prefers "miracles of the soul," miracles of grace to

miracles of nature, for today our souls are being starved and robbed of the grace won at the cost of so much suffering on the part of Her Son and herself, in union with Him.

I am pleased, my child, with the love and honor my children in America give to me, especially through my glorious and unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception. I promise to reward their love by working through the power of my Son's Heart and my Immaculate Heart miracles of grace among them. I do not promise miracles of the body, but of the soul....For it is mainly through these miracles of grace that the Holy Trinity is glorified among men and nations. Let America continue and grow in its love for me, and I in return, in union with the Heart of my Son, promise to work wonders in her. My child, I desire that this be known. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, Diary, pg. 10.)

On the afternoon of the feast itself, Our Lady continued:

My child, I entrust you with this message that you must make known to my children in America. I wish it to be the country dedicated to my purity. The wonders I will work will be the wonders of the soul. They must have faith and believe firmly in my love for them. I desire that they be the children of my Pure Heart. I desire, through my children of America, to futher the cause of faith and purity among peoples and nations. Let them come to me with confidence and simplicity, and I, their Mother, will teach them to become pure like to my Heart that their own hearts may be more pleasing to the Heart of my Son.

Our Blessed Mother called herself Our Lady of America in response to the love and desire that reached out for this special title in the hearts of her children in America. This title was the sign of her pleasure at the confidence our land places in her and as a reward for its staunch and childlike devotion to her. Her children longed for this personal visit of Our Lady, whether consciously or otherwise, and in her kindness and mercy she responded far beyond all expectation. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, Diary, pg. 11.)

How clearly Mary mirrors for us that compassion and hospitality she showed her cousins at the wedding feast of Cana as she anticipated and solicited their every need before they could even ask her. How clearly she mirrors her role in Jesus' redemptive mission, for her turning to the servants and telling them to "do whatever He tells you" was a sign of her confidence in heaven's will to honor her every request as Mother of the Savior King and to deliver a miracle even before it was destined. God's will is often at the mercy of our Faith and our love. At Cana we see that the sure way to Jesus' Heart is through Mary's Heart. How necessary devotion to her becomes in order to please Jesus.

I desire to make the whole of America my shrine by making every heart accessible to the love of my Son. If souls would place themselves into my keeping, I would teach them the way of true love. ...O child of my Pure Heart, tell my children to come to me and learn this true love of my Son, which is so necessary for their peace of soul. ...But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this Pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its heaven upon earth. Come to me, my children, come to me and learn. There is much I would teach you. It is for your own happiness and eternal salvation. Do not disregard the voice of your Mother. It is the voice of love trying to save you from eternal ruin.

O my sweet child, when will my desires be realized? My Immaculate Heart desires with great desire to see the kingdom of Jesus my Son established in all hearts. How I have pleaded with my children to open their hearts to Him, but most are cold and indifferent. Has ever a mother shown more love and interest in her children's welfare than I have done? (Diary, pgs. 12, 16-17.)

On February 11, 1958 Our Lady addresses the victory of her Immaculate Heart, but states clearly that we share that victory in the measure in which we share in Christ's redeeming Passion, suffering with Him as co-redeemers even as she did. Nothing of worth is accomplished without pain.

My Immaculate Heart will win in the end, and the Spirit of Christ will dwell in the hearts of men. Those in whom this Spirit is not found will be condemned to eternal hell fire.

My child, nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much. You see the sword in the Heart of your Mother. Suffering completed the work of divine grace in my soul. He who refuses to suffer will never abide in the Spirit of Christ, will never be formed into His image.

My sweet child, the Father will never recognize a soul as His own unless he sees in it the likeness of His beloved Son. Souls must attain to the perfection of the Father through the Spirit of the Son. ... There is only one true way to the Father, my child, only one way to eternal union. It is the way of the divine humanity. It is through my Son, the Only-begotten of the Father, that souls attain perfect union with the Divinity, as perfect as human nature is capable of, aided by grace. (Diary, pg. 23.)

I am the Mother of the sacred humanity, and it is my special work as co-redemptrix of the human race to help souls reach the sanctity of the Father in eternal union by showing them how to put on Christ, to imbibe His Spirit, and thus become one with Him. (Diary, pg. 24.)

Mary shared the redemptive mission of Jesus as no other creature, from beginning to end on earth, and from beginning to end in heaven. She is Jesus' first disciple and His most faithful one, and therefore, the supreme model for imitating He Who is our divine Spouse and our Savior, He Whose Spirit changes us as surely as He changed the water into wine at Cana and changes bread into His Body and wine into His Blood at every Eucharist. Mary is the echo of God's Word, the wine of our joy, the one to whom we can go with our every need and know that it will be answered with a miracle, if not of the body, then of the soul.

St. Louis de Montfort has this to say about the necessity of devotion to Our Lady and her part in the Incarnation, which is equally her part in Redemption.

With the whole church I acknowledge that Mary, being a mere creature fashioned by the hands of God is, compared to his infinite majesty, less than an atom, or rather is simply nothing, since he alone can say, "I am he who is." Consequently, this great Lord, who is ever independent and self-sufficient, never had and does not now have any absolute need of the Blessed Virgin for the accomplishment of his will and the manifestation of his glory. To do all things he has only to will them.

However, I declare that, considering things as they are, because God has decided to begin and accomplish his greatest works through the Blessed Virgin ever since he created her, we can safely believe that he will not change his plan in the time to come, for he is God and therefore does not change in his thoughts or his way of acting.

God the Father gave his only Son to the world through Mary. ... "The world being unworthy," said Saint Augustine, "to receive the Son of God directly from the hands of the Father, he gave his Son to Mary for the world to receive him from her.

The Son of God became man for our salvation but only in Mary and through Mary. God the Holy Spirit formed Jesus Christ in Mary but only after having asked her consent through one of the chief ministers of his court.

God the Father imparted to Mary his fruitfulness as far as a mere creature was capable of receiving it, to enable her to bring forth his Son and all the members of his mystical body. God the Son came into her virginal womb as a new Adam into his earthly paradise, to take his delight there and produce hidden wonders of grace.

God-made-man found freedom in imprisoning himself in her

womb. He displayed power in allowing himself to be borne by this young maiden. He found his glory and that of his Father in hiding his splendours from all creatures here below and revealing them only to Mary. He glorified his independence and his majesty in depending upon this loveable virgin in his conception, his birth, his presentation in the temple, and in the thirty years of his hidden life. Even at his death she had to be present so that he might be united with her in one sacrifice and be immolated with her consent to the eternal Father, just as formerly Isaac was offered in sacrifice by Abraham when he accepted the will of God. It was Mary who nursed him, fed him, cared for him, reared him, and sacrificed him for us.

The Holy Spirit could not leave such wonderful and inconceivable dependence of God unmentioned in the Gospel, though he concealed almost all the wonderful things that Wisdom Incarnate did during his hidden life in order to bring home to us its infinite value and glory. Jesus gave more glory to God his Father by submitting to his Mother for thirty years than he would have given him had he converted the whole world by working the greatest miracles. How highly then do we glorify God when to please him we submit ourselves to Mary, taking Jesus as our sole model.

If we examine closely the remainder of the life of Jesus Christ, we see that he chose to begin his miracles through Mary. It was by her word that he sanctified Saint John the Baptist in the womb of his mother, Saint Elizabeth; no sooner had Mary spoken than John was sanctified. This was his first and greatest miracle of grace. At the wedding in Cana he changed water into wine at her humble prayer, and this was his first miracle in the order of nature. He began and continued his miracles through Mary and he will continue them through her until the end of time. (St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, "Necessity of Devotion to Our Lady," #'s 14-19.)

And so we place our entire confidence in you, O Mary, our Queen, our Mother, the Immaculate Conception - our Patroness, Co-Redemptrix and Intercessor for all our needs. We live in holy expectation of miracles every day, especially miracles of the soul.

Our Lady promised that greater miracles than those granted at Lourdes and Fatima would be granted here in America, the United States in particular, if we would do as she desire.

(Diary, pg. 9.)

Will we do as she desires?

**Copyright © Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity,
Fostoria, Ohio, 2010**