

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Theotokos!

...The Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man. Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason, the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 AD that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #466.)

Our Catholic doctrine is most clearly defined when it is threatened by heresy. Such was the case when St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, accused Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, of heresy to Pope St. Celestine. Nestorius did not accept the unity of two natures in the one person of Jesus, Son of God. He taught that Mary only gave birth to Jesus' human nature and should only be called the Mother of Christ. This would mean Jesus was two separate persons, one human and one divine, and only the human Jesus was in Mary's womb. In this view, Jesus would not be God incarnate in the womb of Mary and Mary would not be Mother of God, of the divine Person of Jesus. Hence, the Council of Ephesus was convened and clearly defined the Hypostatic Union which is the union of Christ's humanity and divinity, two natures, in one hypostasis or individual existence, one person, thus making Mary Mother of the person of Jesus, not merely of his human nature. Mary is, therefore, truly Mother of God, for Jesus is the Son of God come down from heaven who took flesh within her. Nestorius is considered to be one of the principal heretics in Christology. Cyril, on the other hand, an early Church Father, was a great champion of orthodoxy, known as a Pillar of Faith and Seal of all the Fathers. Later, in 1882, he would be declared a doctor of the church.



While theologians can debate for years on matters of doctrine and Faith, the simple, humble souls chosen by God to reveal the great mysteries of our Faith can do so in a moment, under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. During this post-Christmas season, we are reminded of two such humble souls: Mary, who recognized the miracle God had wrought in her at the Annunciation; and Elizabeth who, filled with the Holy Spirit, was first to proclaim the divinity of Christ in the womb of Mary.

Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. How does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would



be fulfilled. [Perhaps we need to confess the Baptist's recognition of his Lord as well, from the womb of his mother, when he leaped for joy in the presence of the Messiah in Mary's womb, dancing before the Ark of the New Covenant, even as David danced before the Ark of the Covenant of old!] (Luke 1:42-43.)

God gave us the best of Himself when He gave us His dearly beloved Son Who took a body from Mary so He might walk among us and lead us on our journey home to our Father's house. God gave us His next best, when His Son, in turn, gave us His most holy Mother, His Queen and Mediatrix of His grace, the most perfect image of Himself, from the cross. **"Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your Mother."** (John 19:26-27.)

"My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men." (Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, Ohio, Page 18.)

In the message of Our Lady of America, Mary calls herself the Mother of the Sacred Humanity, not in any way to negate her divine maternity, but to emphasize Jesus' identity with us as His brothers and sisters and children of His Father. She also calls herself co-redemptrix with Christ in the work of the sanctification of souls.

"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." (The Diary, Page 24.)

There is much debate these days concerning Mary's reference to herself as co-redemptrix and Joseph to himself as co-redemptor with Jesus and Mary. The study done on the message of Our Lady of America and endorsed by six bishops suggests that these terms have **never been expressed as Catholic doctrine and must be seen as an error.**" On December 21, 2020, Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins, S.T.D., himself an internationally recognized Mariologist and Josephologist, wrote a fifteen-page rebuttal to the study and sent it to the six bishops. He states unequivocally: **"On this matter, however, I submit that their collective Excellencies and their experts have made a statement in crass ignorance."** He cites numerous passages that contradict their conclusions. He also speaks to the supernatural nature of Sister Mildred's visions and the vagueness of their criteria. He states: **"I regret to submit my conclusion that the Bishops' statement of 7 May 2020 is a profoundly flawed document and ought to be withdrawn."**

We will leave the ensuing debate to the theologians and will turn our attention to the more humble beliefs of ordinary people who understand neither Mary nor Joseph is the Redeemer, Who has to be a God-man, but who know just as well that Mary and Joseph co-operated in our redemption as no others, and that we, too, are called to be co-redeemers with Christ in the work of the salvation of souls. So does St. Paul instruct us in his understanding of our being baptized into Christ's Paschal mystery.

The great devotee of Our Lady, St. Louis de Montfort, speaks of the necessity of devotion to Our Lady, acknowledging that her part in the Incarnation is equally a part in our Redemption. God, in His infinite majesty, never needs anyone to accomplish His will. He need only to will it and it happens. But St. Louis shows us the will of God in this matter was far more astounding and magnificent than acting alone. After all, God is trinity, an interdependence of persons. St. Louis' words provide a profound reflection.

... 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 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. ...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.

...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.)

The Council of Ephesus also confirmed that Mary is essential to the Incarnation, not that God couldn't have sent Jesus into the world another way, but God chose to send Him born of a woman, in a family, with a father and a mother, in order to re-create the whole order of nature with a new and greater order of grace, from conception to death. Joseph, as legal and putative father to Jesus on earth, is essential to this whole mystery of the Incarnation, too. Jesus, Mary and Joseph form the hypostatic order of grace that made the Hypostatic Union of the God-Man possible. The earthly trinity, the Holy Family, is an essential part of the heavenly Trinity's plan for our salvation.

"The imitation of the Holy Family, my child, of the virtues we practiced in our little home at Nazareth is the way for all souls to that peace which comes from God alone and

which none other can give.” (The Diary, Page 29, March 19, 1958, St. Joseph to Sister Mildred.)



On March 30, 1958, St. Joseph again appeared to Sister Mildred and asked to be honored on the First Wednesday of the month, calling for reparation and imitation similar to that asked by Our Lady for the First Saturday devotion and the Sacred Heart of Jesus for First Friday devotion. He stated:

“The Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph have been chosen by the Most Holy Trinity to bring peace to the world; hence, their request for special love and honor, also in particular, reparation and imitation.” (The Diary, Page 31.)

How fitting that, in less than ten years after St. Joseph spoke these words to Sister Mildred, Pope Paul VI established the first World Day of Peace to be observed on January 1, 1968, and each year thereafter, the same day we honor Mary as Mother of God, she who brought the Prince of Peace into our world in the flesh in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Through imitation of this family, the peace of Christ comes again to reign in our hearts, our homes, and our world. This is the true peace come down from Heaven which only God can give, which alone lasts forever!

O Mary, my Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to thee, and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me, as thy property and possession.

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