

Woman, Behold Your Son! Son, Behold Your Mother!

The chasm between Mary and ourselves created by her singular purity and our defilement finds her alone on one side and all humankind—without exception—on the other. Even the greatest of our saints, save only Mary, at one time or another have been averted from God: be this said unto our consolation. Indeed, as the eagle-preacher [John] reminds us, Christ entrusted the highest offices within His gift to sinners. The supreme charge over His flock He gave to Peter who denied Him. The first of His evangelists was the Publican, Matthew. The favored watcher at His Cross, the first recipient of His Easter blessing, was the Magdalen. The foremost of His preachers was Paul, who persecuted the Church of God and who acknowledges on his every page his guilt before God and men. So has it been in the history of His Church ever since. Not the just and innocent but converted sinners are typically chosen to serve Him. All those closest to Him—save only Mary, His Mother—were from among them. She alone was conceived holy in the sight of God, cleansed from the first primeval moment when God Himself first thought of her.

Again, why? Christ chose penitent sinners, even for high places in His apostolate. There are literally none among all mankind, not even saints, who are not penitents. He did not call into being a special breed of men to be His priests and prophets and co-workers because in one subtle sense, a sense of which the Holy Saturday Liturgy so beautifully reminds us, it was *better*, so to say, that those who would be His apostles be themselves sinners. He chose them *for others*; ... He chose Mary *for Himself*. ... But for Himself the God in Christ could fashion only an extraordinary being of privileged purity. Those who would be the human channels of the life of our souls He would providentially choose from among the defiled but she who would be the channel of *His own* humanity must have a purity somehow in conformity with the purity of Himself. Two loves were destined to be blended in the heart of Mary: She was to give her Son the love due to God, and her God the love due to a son. The love for her Son would be an impulse of nature; the love of her God an impulse of grace. And just as her Son was one with her God, so nature and grace, the two loves in Mary, unlike, alas, those which war in us, were intimately blended, and grace was present from the first moment that nature existed in her: Both were united in the single love of her Most Pure Heart.

(Cardinal John Joseph Wright, MARY OUR HOPE, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, CA, Pgs. 31-33.)

A few weeks ago we celebrated the mystery of our redemption with Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection and stood with Mary, in the depths of our hearts, at the foot of the Cross, longing to bring some small solace to a Mother's sorrows. Now we ponder on Calvary in terms of Mary's Divine Motherhood of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, our Savior, and in terms of her Spiritual Motherhood of His Mystical Body, the Church, born out of His pierced side as He gave up His Spirit and poured it out upon us who are made one body with Him in His Blood. On Calvary He entrusted us in the person of John to His Mother so that she might be our Mother as dearly as she was His. There, anticipating Pentecost itself, the Mother of the Redeemer became the Mother of the redeemed, of the Church.

Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw His Mother and the disciple He loved standing there; so he said to His Mother, "Behold your son." And then He said to the disciple, "Behold your Mother." (Jn 19:25-27)

Mary was God's idea from all eternity. She was singularly fashioned as the perfect image of the Beloved, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, destined to give the Son a body to sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, destined to be **Theotokos**, Mother of Him who as God, a divine person, would unite our human nature to His divine nature, becoming fully human while remaining fully divine, in order that He might satisfy divine justice for the sin of our first parents, the sin of the finite against the Infinite, the creature against the Creator, mankind against almighty God. That restitution could only be accomplished by one fully human to represent humanity, and one fully divine, to satisfy divine justice. The Sacred Humanity of Jesus was God's Love unveiled and made manifest to us, a revelation beyond our comprehension because of all that it would mean. God would allow Himself to be crucified by His own creatures. The Heart of His Beloved would be broken, crushed like grapes in a winepress, to become the cup of blessing for us, the wine of our joy in heaven's unending wedding feast of the Lamb slain for our sins and His Bride, His people, in the banquet of consummated glory. Mary's glory is totally dependent upon her intimate relationship with Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord and our God, as His Mother. From all eternity, the Theotokos and the Incarnate Word are inseparable, two mysteries of God's splendor wed together. "Theotokos" is our defense against all heresy that attacks either the full humanity or the full divinity of Jesus, the hypostatic union of His two natures in His one divine person, the Word-made-flesh for our atonement.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, erroneously taught that Jesus is two distinct persons, one human and one divine, and that Mary is Mother only of the human person and should be titled "Christotokos." The Council of Ephesus refuted that error and in 431 defined our Catholic teaching: Jesus is one divine person with two distinct and inseparable natures: divine and human.

The problem with Nestorianism is that it threatens the very reality of atonement. If Jesus is two persons, then which one died on the cross? If the human person, how could He satisfy divine justice? If the divine person, how could He fully represent mankind who needed the atonement? The Council of Ephesus confirmed Mary's title and role as Theotokos, God-bearer. Mary is the Mother of Jesus Who is God; therefore she is Mother of God, the Son of God, but daughter of the Father and Spouse of the Spirit. Mary is mother of the person of Jesus, not merely His nature. When Jesus assumed our nature, He became one of us, our brother, and His Mother became our Mother in the grace of the Incarnation and that identification with us. When He died for our sins, He purchased us from our slavery to the Prince of Darkness and paid the price of our ransom, restoring us to our pre-ordained place in the Kingdom of Light, of freedom, as the children of God. Christ's Mother shared in that work of redemption as no other, immolating herself with the immolation of her Son on the altar of sacrifice on Calvary. There on Golgotha where some believe the skulls of the first Adam and the first Eve are buried, they who brought sin to all their posterity through their pride and disobedience, the new Adam and the new Eve, by their humility and obedience, restore grace and supernatural life to all, making all things new.

By her maternal charity, she [Mary] cares for the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ, the one Mediator. (Vatican II, *Constitution on the Church*, no. 62.)

Mary can never take us away from Jesus; she is the surest and fastest way to enter into His Heart. **Her mission is to bring Him to us and to take us to Him.** She proclaims this in the message given to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil when she appeared and identified herself as Our Lady of America®. We need to study her words!

“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. ... 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 mind. ... 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. ...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?

My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men....What I ask, have asked, and will continue to ask is reformation of life. There must be sanctification from within. I will work my miracles of grace only in those who ask for them and empty their souls of the love and attachment to sin and all that is displeasing to my Son. Souls who cling to sin cannot have their hands free to receive the treasures of grace that I hold out to them. ...

My humble one, my small flower, we must have more souls who love, love unselfishly and without reserve. Who does anything who does not love? I wish to gather about me, my tender child, soldier and valiant bearer of the torch, an army of brave lovers, who as my torchbearers will enkindle the fire of Divine Love in the souls of men. Only those who are strong in love can become my soldiers to bear aloft, not the sword of destruction, but the sword of fire, the flaming torch of Divine Charity.

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 divine grace."

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 24, 16-19, 23.)

St. Louis De Montfort spoke eloquently in his work, **TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY**, of the necessity of devotion to Mary as the most perfect means of finding Jesus and becoming holy as He is holy. Gabriel Denis, a Montfort father, states:

God has entrusted Mary with the keeping, the administration and distribution of all His graces, so that all His graces and gifts pass through her hands. ... **As in the order of nature, a child must have a father and a mother, so likewise in the order of grace, a true child of the Church must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother; and if anyone should glory in having God for his Father and yet has not the love of a true child for Mary, he is a deceiver and the only father he has is the devil.**

Since Mary has formed Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect, it is also her office to form the members of that Head, that is to say, all true Christians; for a mother does not form the head without the members, nor the members without the head. Whoever, therefore, wishes to be a member of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, must be formed in Mary by means of the grace of Jesus Christ, which she possesses in its fullness, in order to communicate it fully to her children, the true members of Jesus Christ. ...

St. Augustine even says that during their present life all the elect are hidden in Mary's womb and that they are not truly born until the Blessed Mother brings them forth to life eternal. ... St. Augustine calls Mary the living mold of God, and that indeed she is; for it was in her alone that God was made a true man without losing any feature of the Godhead, and it is also in her alone that man can be truly formed into God, in so far as that is possible for human nature, by the grace of Jesus Christ.

(Gabriel Denis, S.M.M., THE REIGN OF JESUS THROUGH MARY, The Montfort Fathers, Bay Shore, NY, Pgs. 10-15.)

A sculptor has two ways to make a lifelike statue: he can carve it out of some hard material with chisel and hammer, over a long period of time; or he can cast it in a mold, much easier, less expensive, easy to reproduce with exact replication and with no danger that a slip of the hammer or chisel might ruin the piece. Of course, the mold must be perfect and the material used must offer no resistance to the hand of the artist.

Mary is the great mold of God, made by the Holy Ghost, to form a true God-Man by the Hypostatic Union, and to form also a man-God by grace. In that mold none of the features of the Godhead is wanting. Whoever is cast in it and allows himself to be molded, receives all the features of Jesus Christ, true God. The work is done gently, in a manner proportioned to human weakness, without much pain or labor; in a sure manner, free from all illusion, for where Mary is the devil has never had, and never will have, access; finally, it is done in a holy and spotless manner, without a shadow of the least stain of sin. ... There does not exist and never will exist a creature in whom God, either within or without Himself, is so highly exalted as He is in the most Blessed Virgin Mary. (Denis, Pgs. 14-15.)

An understanding of the role of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, our Mother, model of chastity, purity and perfection, is more important than

ever in **our present age, an age Cardinal John J. Wright calls the Cult of the Flesh, a culture**

...filled with emphasis on the flesh and especially on the satisfaction, sometimes not only licentious but also violent, of the demands of the flesh. In its commercial advertising, its entertainment, its everyday living, our culture tends to exploit, to exaggerate, and to satiate the instincts of the flesh. ... Hence the need for a Christian *theology concerning the flesh*, so that our culture may be refined by it, our civilization may be cured of excess and purified of decadence, our lives made sane and *holy* by it. The flesh must also be made sacred; human nature must never become mere flesh, least of all despiritualized, animal flesh. (Cardinal Wright, Pg. 117.)

Surely in this light, we can see how important is the message of Our Lady of America® and the divine mandate heaven has given to America to lead the world in a return to Faith and Purity so we might know the peace of Christ which this world cannot give. On September 25, 1956, Our Lady appeared to Sister Mildred under this new image and identified herself with these words:

“I am Our Lady of America®. I desire that my children honor me, especially by the purity of their lives. ... 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 in America, to further 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.”

[On September 27, 1956, Our Lady appeared, holding the world in her hands as her tears fell upon it.] “Behold, O my children, the tears of your Mother! Shall I weep in vain? Assuage the sorrow of my Heart over the ingratitude of sinful men by the love and chasteness of your lives. Will you do this for me, beloved children, or will you allow your Mother to weep in vain? I come to you, O children of America, as a last resort. I plead with you to listen to my voice. Cleanse your souls in the Precious Blood of My Son. Live in His Heart, and take me in that I may teach you to live in great purity of heart which is so pleasing to God. Be my army of chaste soldiers, ready to fight to the death to preserve the purity of your souls. I am the Immaculate One, Patroness of your land. Be my faithful children as I have been your faithful Mother. ... These are my words, O my daughter. Make them known to my children. I desire to make the whole of America my shrine by making every heart accessible to the love of my Son. ...

My daughter, will my children in America listen to my pleadings and console my Immaculate Heart?" ... [On the feast of the Holy Rosary, Oct. 7, 1957] "My beloved daughter, what I am about to tell you concerns in a particular way my children in America. Unless they do penance by mortification and self-denial and thus reform their lives, God will visit them with punishments hitherto unknown to them.

My child, there will be peace, as has been promised, but not until my children are purified and cleansed from defilement, and clothed thus with the white garment of grace, are made ready to receive this peace, so long promised and so long held back because of the sins of men. My dear children, either you will do as I desire and reform your lives, or God Himself will need to cleanse you in the fires of untold punishment. You must be prepared to receive His great gift of peace. If you will not prepare yourselves, God will Himself be forced to do so in His justice and mercy. ... Write these words upon your hearts, my dear children, because of the compassion I have for you in my Immaculate Heart. Oh, if you knew the punishment I am holding back from you by my pleading and intercession on your behalf." (Diary, Pgs. 10-12, 15, 21.)

On November 22, 1980 Our Lady spoke most clearly of this mandate to America to lead the world in a reform of life and to lead the world to the peace of Christ.

"Beloved daughter, the United States is a small one among nations, yet has it not been said that 'a little child shall lead them'? It is the United States that is to lead the world to peace, the peace of Christ, the peace that he brought with Him from heaven in His birth as man in the little town of Bethlehem. The Savior did not come to enter this world in a big city but a small town, again, a little one among many. Dear child, unless the United States accepts and carries out faithfully the mandate given to it by heaven to lead the world to peace, there will come upon it and all nations a great havoc of war and incredible suffering. If, however, the United States is faithful to this mandate from heaven and yet fails in the pursuit of peace because the rest of the world will not accept or co-operate then the United States will not be burdened with the punishment about to fall." [Sister stated on February 11, 1981:] It is evident that the Forces of Evil are enveloping the world. Their hatred, however, is now particularly focused on the United States because of the Divine Mandate given to it to lead the world to peace.

I was afraid that the burden of leadership would be too great for the United States without some special help from heaven. Our Lady assured me that Michael and the whole army of Blessed Spirits will give their assistance at all times. As the Queen of Angels she has loving command over them and they accomplish whatever she wishes. This made me feel better and the fears that I had left me. [In 1982-1983, Our Lady spoke:] "O my children, you still aren't listening. I see the destruction coming but you do not believe me. You can stem this tide of suffering if you at last do as I've been asking of you for so long. Renew your hearts, your spirits, by seeking

and following the light of the Holy Spirit within yourselves and in the teachings of Holy Church. ... Will you do as I wish at last, my children?"
(Diary, Pgs, 38, 39, 44.)

Let us pray! Pray for America, that at last, we will listen to the voice of our Mother!

Prayer to the Immaculate Conception

O Immaculate Mother, Queen of our Country, open our hearts, our homes, and our Land to the coming of Jesus, your Divine Son. With Him, reign over us, O heavenly Lady, so pure and so bright with the radiance of God's light shining in and about you. Be our Leader against the powers of evil set upon wresting the world of souls, redeemed at such a great cost by the sufferings of your Son and of yourself, in union with Him, from that same Savior, Who loves us with infinite charity.

We gather about you, O chaste and holy Mother, Virgin Immaculate, Patroness of our beloved Land, determined to fight under your banner of holy purity against the wickedness that would make all the world an abyss of evil, without God and without your loving maternal care.

We consecrate our hearts, our homes, our Land to your Most Pure Heart, O great Queen, that the kingdom of your Son, our Redeemer and our God, may be firmly established in us.

We ask no special sign of you, sweet Mother, for we believe in your great love for us, and we place in you our entire confidence. We promise to honor you by faith, love, and the purity of our lives according to your desire.

Reign over us, then, O Virgin Immaculate, with your Son Jesus Christ. May His Divine Heart and your most chaste Heart be ever enthroned and glorified among us. Use us, your children of America, as your instruments in bringing peace among men and nations. Work your miracles of grace in us, so that we may be a glory to the Blessed Trinity, Who created, redeemed, and sanctifies us.

May your valiant Spouse, St. Joseph, with the holy Angels and Saints, assist you and us in "renewing the face of the earth." Then when our work is over, come, Holy Immaculate Mother, and as our Victorious Queen, lead us to the eternal kingdom, where your Son reigns forever as King. Amen (200 days)

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Fostoria, Ohio, Mother's Day, 2011.
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