



*MARY: MOTHER, MEDIATRIX: Icon of the Heart of Christ*

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*by Sister Maria Marguerite*

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**Dear Friends of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,**

May is the month traditionally dedicated to Mary in our Church and, likewise, today's sharing on Sacred Heart spirituality features Our Blessed Mother. There is so much for our consideration when we ponder the beauty and attributes of Our Lady. However, for these few minutes, I would like to touch upon the heart of Mary as a reflection of the Sacred Heart in her roles as Mother and Mediatrix through the thoughts of Venerable John Paul II and 20th century spiritual writer, Caryll Houselander.

All who enter our monastery chapel are welcomed by the beautiful rose window depicting the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary – for which our monastery is dedicated. This image serves as a reminder for each of us of the deep communion that exists between the Hearts of Son and Mother and Mother and Son. Venerable John Paul II, in a 1984 message, expresses this union in these words: "Between the heart of the Mother and the Heart of the Child, there was from the beginning a bond: a splendid union of hearts" ... "At the moment of the Annunciation the colloquy of the Mother's heart with the Heart of her Son began." In reality, the hearts of Jesus and Mary are one Heart beating in a unison of mutually infused love. Our Lady was created with a perfected human nature in order to truly understand and reflect the Heart of Christ, her Divine Son.

Through Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the human Heart of Jesus is derived and is made manifest to us. Humanity and Divinity embrace in Mary, forging an eternal bond. "From that moment", says the Holy Father as quoted by Monsignor Arthur Calkins in his article *Why the Heart*, "God began to love with a human heart, a true heart capable of beating in an intense, tender and impassioned way. The Heart of Jesus has truly experienced feelings of joy before the splendor of nature, the candor of children, the glance of a pure young man; feelings of friendship toward the Apostles, Lazarus, the disciples; feelings of compassion for the sick, the poor, the many persons tried by struggle, by loneliness, by sin, feelings of anguish before the prospect of suffering and the mystery of death. There is no authentically human feeling that the Heart of Jesus did not experience.

. . .Of the infinite power that is proper to God, the Heart of Christ kept only the defenseless power of the love that forgives. And in the radical loneliness of the cross, he accepted being pierced by the centurion's lance so that from the open wound there might pour out upon the world's ugly deeds the inexhaustible torrent of a mercy that washes, purifies and renews. In the Heart of Christ, therefore, there meet divine richness and human poverty, the power of grace and the frailty of nature, an appeal from God and a response from man. In the Heart of Christ the history of mankind has its place of arrival, because 'the Father has assigned all judgment to the Son' (John. 5:22). " ...

God be Praised!



Willing or not, every human heart must refer to the Heart of Christ... The Heart of Jesus Christ is a great and unceasing call from God, addressed to humanity, to each human heart!”

It is Mary, meek and humble of heart like Jesus, who models and teaches us how to respond to the awesome reality that in God we each have an Annunciation and that He waits for our fiat – for our love – as He waited for hers. Near Our Mother’s heart, we can learn to say as she “Behold the Handmaid of the Lord”.

The former Holy Father further observes of the relationship of Jesus and Mary (Homily, 1981): “Mothers always live in their children. Mary lived in Christ: as a man He was her Son and, as such, bore within Himself the inheritance of His Mother. He resembled her. The bond which had been created between Son and Mother when Mary carried Him in her womb, continued in both of them. In a later writing, John Paul II continues on this subject: “Since the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are joined forever in love, we know that to be loved by the Son is also to be loved by His Mother.” We understand that Mary, in addition to being Mother of God and our Mother, is also Mediatrix because through her, we are drawn in “intimate mystery of union with her Son” into the Sacred Heart and, through Him, into the life of the Trinity. As Mother, she is our advocate and our intercessor. When we call upon Mary, she responds with the affection with which she responded to St. Juan Diego under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, crying “Am I not your mother?” In Mary, our hearts are formed in the image of her Son if we are willing to accept her motherly care and allow her to mold us into who God calls us to be.

The late Caryll Houselander, a prolific spiritual writer and mystic of the mid 20th century expressed in her book, *The Mother of Christ*, the role of Mary as Mother and Mediatrix in this way:

Our Lady gave God a human heart.  
She made it possible for him, for Christ, to love me.  
She gave her life to be his life....  
She was made for Christ and then literally her life became his life.  
She gave birth not only to Christ in history, but to the Christ in all of us.  
She gave her good simple life to be the sustenance of life in all of us.  
Her love for him always radiated, always went out to the whole world, always touched sinners.  
When she held him to her heart, she took all broken, sinful men to her heart.  
Giving him (Jesus) her life, she gave us our life....”

These words take flesh in the unfolding of the Annunciation into the mystery of the Visitation where the heart of Our Blessed Mother is poignantly revealed. Mary is with child. Every child is a miracle from God, but even more so this Child Who is God’s Only Begotten Son. What joy and wonder must have been hers as she carried Love Incarnate beneath her heart! That same love, joy,



and wonder impels her to the aid of another as she runs in haste to the hill country of Judea to her cousin Elizabeth. St. Francis de Sales tells us that charity is never idle, rather, it burns in the heart where it dwells and reigns. There is no charity without humility, and no humility without charity. They have one object – God – and in God they pass on to neighbor. Until they do so, they are not perfected. In Mary, we see these tandem virtues deeply rooted in her being – a reflection of the self-emptying love that the One hidden in her womb will manifest in His Most Sacred Heart. Mary is the mirror in which we gaze to find Jesus. She is a portrait of God's love and a vessel of His mercy as she radiates the features of the Heart of Jesus. As the icon writer releases the inner light beneath a darkened medium to form a sacred image, so Mary reveals the Light of the World in her Immaculate Heart. In her humility, His glory is made visible.

Let us close this sharing with this text written by Carol Houselander capturing the essence of Our Mother and Mediatrix in the context of the Visitation and, then, with a few lines from our beloved John Paul II:

“Telling her lovely secret to Elizabeth in the words of the Magnificat, (Mary) already accepted the children of the world whom Christ put into her arms when his own were spread on the cross; more than that, her love swept out to them across the centuries, giving him, giving her only child to them. Just as she gave him his body to suffer cold and hunger and thirst and death, and to rise from death, she gave him to the children of men, to suffer over and over again, and over and over again to rise from death. She knew the cost to herself, but rejoiced: ‘His mercy is from generation to generation, to them that fear him.’”

And the late Holy Father: “Mary directs all things to her Son, who answers our prayers and forgives our sins. Thus by dedicating ourselves to the heart of Mary we discover a sure way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of the merciful love of our Savior.