

## ***Lecture 9: Mary, Mother of God, and Her Role in Salvation***

1. We need the Holy Spirit
  - a. The Holy Spirit is the goal of our desire
  - b. But how does the Holy Spirit come to us; how does He act upon us?
  - c. What is God's design for me to follow the Holy Spirit?
2. The divine economy: God creates and saves by means of a family
  - a. The Trinity is a Family
    - i. God is not an isolated individual
    - ii. Rather, in the Trinity there are three divine persons who live in an eternal exchange of gifts and love
  - b. Mankind was created in the Image of a Family
    - i. Mankind was created to image God in His eternal exchange of love (*Gaudium et Spes*, #32)
  - c. Thus, no person is self-sufficient
    - i. The little child needs the care of its parents for its physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual development
    - ii. Even once we reach adulthood we find that inequalities and differences remain – these are tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual and moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth.
      1. These inequalities and differences belong to God's plan: He “wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular talents share the benefits with those who need them.” (GS 29, CCC 1937)
      2. These inequalities necessitate that the human person live in interdependence with others
        - a. This interdependence is a call from God to charity
        - b. It is a call to share the spiritual and material gifts or talents each has received with those in need, and to receive from others all he lacks in order that every person may reach his goal
      3. This is the principle of Solidarity
  - d. Further, there exist certain Social Structures designed to help the development of the human person
    - i. On the Natural Level
      1. The Family
      2. The Political community is another social structure designed for the well-being of the persons within it
      3. The need for these communities flows from the inner nature of the human person, created to reflect the life of the Trinity by living in interdependence, in a mutual exchange of love with others
    - ii. On the Supernatural Level
      1. There is an analogy between the order of nature and the order of grace

2. “As God did not create man for isolation, but for the formation of social unity, so also it has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals, without bond or link between them, but by making them into a single people” (Gaudium et Spes, #32)
  3. God has chosen to save all of mankind by means of a covenant family
    - a. Through the covenants God established with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and finally through His Son, Jesus Christ, we see that this has been God’s design from the beginning
    - b. Through the Church
3. What is Mary’s Role in Our Salvation?
- a. The answer lies in the fact that:
    - i. We are not saved in isolation, but as part of the covenant family, which is the Church
      1. This is the principle of community, which God uses in his plan of salvation
    - ii. God has given this family a Mother, in the order of grace
  - b. JP II, *Redemptoris Mater*
    - i. A child is dependant on its mother
    - ii. We too in the family of the Church are dependent upon the maternal love and care of Mary, which is made fruitful by the Holy Spirit
    - iii. “Motherhood always establishes a *unique and unrepeatable relationship* between two people: *between mother and child and between child and mother.*” (#45)
      1. The beauty of motherhood is that even when there are many children in one family, each child has a personal relationship with his mother. In this relationship, each child is surrounded in the same way by that maternal love on which are based the child’s development and coming to maturity as a human being.
      2. Motherhood in the order of grace preserves the analogy of motherhood in the order of nature
        - a. Just as a natural mother has a personal relationship with each of her children and the child’s development and coming to maturity are based in a significant way on this maternal relationship
        - b. So too God desires that Mary develop a personal relationship with each of her children who share in the divine life of Jesus, her Son
  - c. We see Mary in Her Role as Mother all throughout the Life of Our Lord
    - i. The Incarnation itself
      1. During the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit came down in Person on Mary to conceive Christ in her womb

2. She cooperated with the Holy Spirit in the birth and development of Jesus
  - ii. At the Cross (Jn 19:25-27)
    1. Jesus entrusts humanity to Mary
    2. It is *not* that Jesus entrusted Mary to John
      - a. She had other living relatives (Mary, wife of Clopas, was at Calvary)
      - b. He entrusted John to Mary-*to her maternal care*
  - iii. So the role she had for Christ – that of Mother – continues in us
  - iv. Rev. 21:17: Even though she has been taken up to heaven, Mary continues to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to bring Christ to our soul and then to educate and form each Christian in the likeness of Christ
4. So what should be my response to Mary's Motherly role?
  - a. We should entrust everything to her
    - i. This is an imitation of Christ: Jesus entrusted Himself to Mary, to belong entirely to her and to depend totally to her
  - b. The reason is that Mary is the one whom the Holy Spirit uses to bring us to Jesus – this is the task that God has given her
    - i. Luke 1:35 Annunciation: Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings humanity into communion with Jesus
    - ii. Luke 1:39-41: Visitation: Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings Joseph into communion with Jesus
    - iii. Mt. 1:20-21: Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings Joseph into communion with Jesus
    - iv. Lk 2:8,9, 15-16: Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings the Shepherds into communion with Jesus
    - v. Mt 2:11 Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings the Magi into communion with Jesus
    - vi. Jn 2:1-11: At Cana the Holy Spirit brings the bride and groom into communion with Jesus
  - c. Why do I really need Mary when I can go directly to Jesus?
    - i. Jesus comes to us and we go to Him through the Holy Spirit
      1. And the Holy Spirit works through Mary
      2. Example of and Icon: Mary is extending Christ to us; She is leading us to the Child in her hands, Who is Christ.
5. Mary and the Holy Spirit
  - a. Mary does not carry out this role in the Church by her own power
  - b. Her maternal role in the Church is made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, just as her role in the Incarnation was made fruitful by the power of the Holy Spirit
    - i. Lk 1:35: it is the Holy Spirit who comes down upon Mary to impregnate her with Christ
    - ii. Acts 1:14: At Pentecost we once again have the two key protagonists, the Holy Spirit and Mary cooperating to bring about the birth of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

- c. Mary is totally in the hands of the Holy Spirit
  - i. She is under His guiding influence to bring humanity into union with the Spirit, who forms Christ in our soul
  - ii. So, in effect, for me to place myself into her hands becomes the most effective way to be totally in the hands of the Holy Spirit
    - 1. She is the one most under His influence and at His service for the growth of Christ in my soul
    - 2. It is the Holy Spirit who needs to influence me and bring me into a deeper communion with Jesus
  - iii. Mary is the Icon of the Holy Spirit: she is His visible sign
    - 1. Mary shows the way. She is the Hodigitria, she is the “sign” of the way
  - d. It is the will of God that Mary have this role with the Holy Spirit: and the more I become aware that this is the way God works – that this is the divine economy – the more I am able to freely cooperate with God and more fully open up to His influence
- 6. So how do we put ourselves entirely in Mary’s hands?
  - a. Consecration to Mary
    - i. What does this mean?
      - 1. It means formally giving ourselves to Our Lady, so that she can do with us whatever will give God most glory and bring us most directly to Jesus
      - 2. Living moment-to-moment with the awareness of being her little child
      - 3. Offer up to her all the sufferings, joys, successes, failures, prayers, etc...
      - 4. Give her the reins in your life
    - b. Probably the best program for doing this is the one given by St. Louis Marie DeMontfort, as set forth in his book, *True Devotion to Mary*
      - i. Gives us thirty-three days of meditation, and a complete gift of ourselves to Our Lady
      - ii. The first twelve days are centered on emptying oneself of the spirit of the world, which is opposed to the Spirit of Jesus
      - iii. The next twenty-one days are spent imbuing oneself with the Spirit of Jesus through the maternal help of Mary
      - iv. At the end of thirty-three days one should go to confession and receive Holy Communion with the intention of giving oneself to Jesus through Mary as His slave of love.
      - v. Then one recites the consecration de Montfort gives, which follows, in his work, *Love of Eternal Wisdom*
  - c. It is with entrustment our life of living as Mary’s child begins

Recommended Reading:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, ## 484-511; 721-726; 963-975

Theology for Beginners, Frank Sheed

The World’s First Love, Fulton Sheen