

Christian spirituality is distinguished by the disciple's commitment to become conformed ever more fully to his Master. (Romans 8:29)

The Church points to a profound analogy between the way Christ came into the world and the way Christ comes into the souls of the faithful (Lumen Gentium 59; Ad Gentes 4)

There is a profound analogy between the Annunciation and Pentecost

- Luke 1:35, at the Annunciation Mary cooperated with the Holy Spirit to form Christ in her womb.
- Acts 1:14, before the day of Pentecost, Mary cooperated with the Holy Spirit by her intercession to bring Christ to the souls of the faithful.
  - There is a parallel between the birth of Christ and the Church
  - The two key protagonists in these events are the Holy Spirit and Mary

John Paul II in *Theotokos Woman, Mother, Disciple*, p. 198-99

“Mary’s prayer has particular significance in the Christian community. It fosters the coming of the Spirit, imploring his action in the hearts of the disciples and in the world. Just as in the Incarnation the Spirit had formed the physical body of Christ in her virginal womb, in the upper room the same Spirit came down to give life to the Mystical Body. Thus Pentecost is also the fruit of the Blessed Virgin’s incessant prayer, which is accepted by the Paraclete with special favor because it is an expression of her motherly love for the Lord’s disciples.”

### **Annunciation: Luke 1:35**

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:

by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary,

and became man.

- Mary became the Mother of Christ by the power the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **What was Mary's role in the Incarnation? She was the Mother**

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*.
3. Mary cooperated with the Holy Spirit to *educate and form* Jesus as He grew to maturity.

### **What was the role of the Son?**

1. Jesus entrusted Himself to Mary to be her little child
2. to belong entirely to her
3. to depend totally on her

According to John Paul,

"Before anyone else it was God himself, the Eternal Father, who entrusted himself to the Virgin of Nazareth, giving her his own Son in the mystery of the Incarnation."<sup>1</sup>

Mary responded to this marvelous gift with faith (total gift of self to God)

- She entrusted herself to Him without reserve,
- Devoting herself totally as the handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son.

Through the Incarnation we see that God's life comes to humanity through

1. The Work of the Holy Spirit
2. The maternal presence and cooperation of Mary.

At the time of the visitation Elizabeth cried out, "Blessed is she who believed." Mary is blessed because it was through her faith, her total gift of self, that the world received the Incarnation of Christ.

Yet, John Paul says, "this blessing reaches its full meaning when Mary stands beneath the Cross of her Son." (RM 18)

At the Cross Mary is united "through faith -- the same faith with which she had received the angel's revelation at the Annunciation" to the redemptive love of Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> RM 39

The source of the world's salvation is the self-emptying love of Christ upon the Cross,

- but not the love of Christ alone.
- God wished to have a generous associate in His work of redemption.
- Mary is the Co-Redemptrix (the woman with the Redeemer)

Therefore, just as in the Incarnation, Mary cooperated with the Holy Spirit and with Jesus at the Cross, uniting her total gift of self to that of His.

This union of Jesus and Mary gained the life of grace for the world.

- Christ's total gift of self,
- united to the maternal compassion of Mary at the Cross,
- resulted in the conception of all those who would receive His life in the Church.

### **John 19: 26**

Jesus bears witness to this when He extends the maternal role of Mary to John proclaiming the continuation of her motherhood in the Church.

The Church then, that is conceived at the Cross as the fruit of the redemptive love of Jesus and the maternal love of Mary, is given birth at Pentecost. And there we see Mary with her infant Church.

The Pope states:

After the events of the Resurrection and Ascension, Mary entered the Upper Room together with the Apostles to await Pentecost, and was present there as the Mother of the glorified Lord. She was not only the one who "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith" and loyally persevered in her union with her Son "unto the Cross" but she was also the "handmaid of the Lord," left by her Son as Mother in the midst of the infant Church: "Behold your mother." Thus there began to develop a special bond between this Mother and the Church. For the infant Church was the fruit of the Cross and Resurrection of her Son.<sup>2</sup>

John Paul says, at Pentecost, "we see Mary prayerfully imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> RM 40

<sup>3</sup> RM 24

At Pentecost Mary cooperates with the Holy Spirit through her intercession to bring about the birth of the Church.

Thus, in God's saving design there is a unique correspondence between

1. the conception and birth of Jesus
2. and the conception and birth of the Church.

John Paul speaks of the significance of the correspondence between these two events:

In the redemptive economy of grace, brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit, there is a unique correspondence between the moment of the Incarnation of the Word and the moment of the birth of the Church. The person who links these two moments is Mary: Mary at Nazareth and Mary in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. In both cases her discreet yet essential presence indicates the "path of birth from the Holy Spirit." Thus she who is present in the mystery of Christ as Mother becomes by the will of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit -- present in the mystery of the Church. In the Church too she continues to be a maternal presence, as is shown by the words spoken from the Cross: "Woman, behold your son!"; "Behold, your mother."<sup>4</sup>

Through the events of the Incarnation, Nativity, Cross and Pentecost, we see that God has given Jesus to the world through the Holy Spirit and the maternal presence and cooperation of Mary.

In each event Mary is the mother present as the "path of birth from the Holy Spirit."<sup>5</sup>

- With Mary the Holy Spirit formed Jesus in the womb
- With Mary the Holy Spirit forms Jesus in my soul and your soul.

### **Why do I need Mary when I can go directly to Jesus?**

- Jesus does not come directly to us,
- nor do we go directly to Him
- We go to Jesus by the Holy Spirit
- John 14:26; 15: 13-14
- The Holy Spirit is the bond of love between Christians and Christ

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<sup>4</sup> RM 24

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**Romans 8:9-14** Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** No one can say, “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit

- Jesus comes to us through the Holy Spirit.
- We go to Jesus through the Holy Spirit

CCC 725

Through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God’s merciful love, into communion with Christ, and the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

- It is the Holy Spirit Who brings Christ to us and us to Christ
- Mary is His instrument

**Luke 1:35** Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings humanity into communion with Jesus.

**Luke 1:39-41** Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist into communion with Jesus

**Luke 2:15-19** Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings the Shepherds into communion with Jesus

**Matthew 2:11** Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings the Magi into communion with Jesus: “*And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.*”

**Luke 2:22-38** Through Mary the Holy Spirit brings Simeon and Anna into communion with Jesus

**John 2:1-11**

1. At Cana the Holy Spirit brings the bride and groom into communion with Jesus;
2. the first public miracle of Christ takes place
3. the disciples begin to believe in Him

It is the Holy Spirit who inspires me and brings me into a deeper communion with Jesus.

- How does He do this?
- Through Mary.

**Fr. Laurentin**      What the Holy Spirit does as God, Mary does with Him: she participates with Him as the visible sign. Mary is the sensible visible presence of the Holy Spirit. July 2003

Mary is the sensible visible sign and instrument of the Holy Spirit.

- What the Holy Spirit does as God
- Mary participates with Him as His visible sign
- Mary is the icon of the Holy Spirit

Mary is the *place*, the *sign* and the *Icon* of the work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the source of the divine life in our soul

- Mary cooperates with the Holy Spirit to form each one of us in the likeness of Christ.

The maternal role of Mary is to:

1. Inspire us
2. Dispose us to receive the life of Jesus

The more I become aware of this

- the more I am able to freely cooperate with God and open up to His influence.

**We are called to live in perfect imitation of Christ.**

Then what do we need to do?

Imitate Christ – from the very beginning of His earthly life.

Then Entrust or consecrate oneself entirely into her hands

- into her maternal care,
- in imitation of Christ

**Vat II decree on the Apostolate of lay people**, “Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her and *entrust his life* to her motherly care.” 4

2677 Entrust everything to Mary

Why? Her role is to help us to **know** and **do** His will.

- John 2 The Wedding at Cana - Do whatever he tells you

### **Consecration to Jesus through Mary**

Articles 227–233, Montfort outlines a *thirty-three day preparation* to give oneself entirely to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary.

The Montfort Spiritual Exercises consist of three weeks, preceded, when the Consecration is first made, by:

Twelve preliminary days: centered on emptying oneself of the spirit of the world, which is opposed to the Spirit of Jesus.

**Week 1** - In order to be more fully united to Jesus Christ we must first know ourselves, our own weaknesses, and the need for God.

**Week 2** - Consists of immersing oneself in Mary the Mold of God

**Week 3** - We pray for a deeper knowledge - a true experience – of Jesus, in whom and through whom in the power of the Holy Spirit we are one with God alone.

**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.

**Recite the consecration** Montfort gives, which follows, in his work, *Love of Eternal Wisdom*

### **How do I live the Consecration?**

Be conscious of her loving presence at all times and by giving ourselves to her, confiding in her.

Live in imitation of Jesus' relationship with Mary as He was a little child growing to maturity under her care and protection.

Her role is to help us to know and do His will

Live in filial dependence upon Mary - a lived relationship with Mary

Daily Renewal: I am all yours and all I have is yours, O dear Jesus, through Mary, your holy Mother. (TD 233)

### *Presence of Mary*

Fathers spoke of Mary's presence like being in the womb of Mary for all of one's life – death is birth to eternal life and the face of the Father.

Mary's presence is not the presence God

- God alone created us and holds us in being at every instant
- God is the one who divinizes us as well, from within, and immediately, that is to say, without any mediation playing any part in this gift.
  
- Nevertheless, Mary is in God and with God in her capacity as a loving Mother.

Mary is present to us as a Mother

- We must become aware of this
- We must cultivate this

In this capacity as our Mother, Mary watches over the beginnings, transitions, and crosses or spiritual dark nights of the soul.

1. Let us then offer to Mary all our beginnings or commencements, the launching of our day or of our various projects and work. Let us confide these things to her, just as God confided himself to her in order to be able to receive his human life.
2. Let us also offer to Mary the transitions of our lives, the new and uncertain experiences, the crises, and even the great dramas and agitation of the life of the world that goes on around us in which we are involved and indeed tried in our hearts.
3. Let us offer to Mary especially crises and transitions that turn out to be painful, for she is the Mother standing at the foot of

the Cross, united to the suffering of her Son with compassion. Sometimes she can lighten our cross for us, and sometimes she can even help us avoid it at least to some extent, although she generally does not just remove our crosses for us. She could not remove the cross of her Son! What she does provide, as the cross presses down on us, though, is love, confidence, and peace; she provides an undefinable sweetness of hope that stays with us to the hour of our death.

## **Rosary**

- 1) How does a little boy become like his father?
  - By watching him.
  - The Rosary is tremendous tool of prayer to watch Christ and meditate on His life and teachings in order to become like Him.
- 2) Maternal influence of Mary: Mary cooperates with the Holy Spirit to educate and form us in the image of Jesus through the Rosary.

### **John Paul II**

With the Rosary, the Christian people *sits at the School of Mary* and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer. *Rosarium 1*

### **Goal of the Christian life is to become like Christ – an interior reflection of him**

- See page 21 of Rosarium

### **How to pray the Rosary – Meditation on Christ**

Announce each mystery to open up a scenario on which to focus our attention

The Rosary is therefore no substitute for meditation on the Word of God; on the contrary, it presupposes it.

Read a passage from the Bible, CCC, a book of meditation, the life of a saint, C.S. Lewis' *The Last Battle*

Silence

After the announcement of the mystery and the reading, pause and focus the attention on the mystery

In this way we set out on a path of assimilation meant to help us enter more deeply into the life of Christ.

If prayed in this way the Rosary becomes a spiritual itinerary in which Mary acts as Mother, teacher and guide sustaining the faithful by her powerful intercession.

Family Rosary (see Rosarium 41)

- Its bed time you may go to bed or pray the Rosary
- Gems and a treasure box for little kids
- Family Catechesis and instruction in meditation