

One

The Holy Spirit and Mary

We have been reflecting on Consecration to Mary and how we should belong to her, depend on her, and be led by her. But St. Paul tells us we should be led by the Holy Spirit. So why do we put all this emphasis on Mary rather than the Holy Spirit? Why do we even need Mary when we have the Holy Spirit? Because it's really hard to love a mother when we don't know what She looks like.

The Holy Spirit acts as a mother toward us. We could say the Holy Spirit is our Divine Mother. But it's hard to have a relationship with fire or wind or water or a dove, all images of the Spirit. So, God fashioned Mary to be the perfect human expression of the Holy Spirit.

When we look at Mary we see the face of the Holy Spirit. And when we turn to Mary, belong to Mary, depend on her and are led by her, we are being led by the Holy Spirit. In Mary, we experience the maternal love and care of the Holy Spirit.

Two

On what basis can we say the Holy Spirit acts as a Mother toward us? Let's begin with the Trinity.

The Father is the origin of the whole divinity. He is the giver. He has only one gift to give, that of his divine being. The Father generates the Son, giving divine being to Him.

The Son is begotten by the Father, receiving divinity from the Father and giving divinity to the Holy Spirit. The Son receives and gives divinity.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, receiving divinity from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is a pure capacity to receive divine being.

Receptivity is a feminine and maternal perfection. Receptivity is the capacity to hold or contain things, like a warehouse, a library, or a computer. A higher or greater perfection of receptivity would be the capacity to receive and hold biological life. In this sense a woman and mother is the greatest created perfection of receptivity, the capacity to receive and hold human life.

Now, the created world is in some way a reflection of the Trinity (cf. Balthasar Theo Drama III, 493, 495). And the greatest expression of the feminine and maternal perfection of receptivity is the Person of the Holy Spirit who receives and holds divine life from the Father and the Son. So, the feminine perfections of Motherhood are, above all, associated with God the Holy Spirit. If anything, femininity reflects the personal attributes of the Holy Spirit.

Three

By observing the action of the Son and the Spirit in the world we may better understand them.

The Son and the Spirit have a joint mission in the World. St. Irenaeus reminds us that God does everything in the world with his own hands, that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Mission of the Son is to give his life to us. The Son came to give his life as a ransom for many. Mk 10:45

Jesus wants to give himself to us that we may share in His divine life. But we have a hard time receiving. We resist, we suffer from pride and self-reliance.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, to overcome our resistance. The Mission of the Spirit is to help us receive the Son. As the Spirit receives the Son in the Trinity, in a similar way, the Spirit dwells in Mary at her Immaculate Conception so she can receive the Son at the Annunciation.

Likewise, the Spirit dwells in the souls of believers so they can receive the Son at Pentecost and in Baptism. The Holy Spirit helps us receive the Son.

Four

The Holy Spirit Acts as a Mother to us

When Jesus met with Nicodemus at night, He told him he, “must be born of water and the Spirit.” John 3:5-16

Nicodemus was understandably confused. Nicodemus could only imagine one kind of birth, a natural one. And he could imagine only one kind of mother, a human mother. But Jesus told him that this birth would be a different kind of birth. It would be a birth from above by means of water. And the Person one would be born of would be a different kind of Person. It would be the Holy Spirit

Jesus was telling Nicodemus about the sacrament of Baptism in which we are reborn as children of God. And just as in birth according to human nature, we are born of our natural parents. So too in Baptism, we are born of God.

Now obviously the Person you are born of is your parent and Jesus says that Christians are born of the Holy Spirit. So, does that mean the Holy Spirit becomes our Divine Father through Baptism? No, we already have

a Divine Father through Baptism, - the First Person of the Trinity. He becomes our adoptive Father in Christ.

Since the Holy Spirit is not God the Father, the Spirit must take the role of the feminine parent, the role of our Mother.

God the Father is our Divine Father. God the Spirit acts as our Divine Mother. The Holy Spirit relates to us as our Mother. And how do we relate to the Holy Spirit? As a child with its mother.

Five

The Holy Spirit is not a woman.

Nor is God the Father a man.

They are both the infinite God, surpassing all limitations of created humanity, including that of sex or gender. But the masculine perfections of Fatherhood are, above all, associated with God the Father. And the feminine perfections of Motherhood are, above all, associated with God the Holy Spirit. And we are born of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.

So, we may say the Holy Spirit is infinitely more of a mother to us than any human mother could be.

The great Catholic theologian on the Holy Spirit, Yves Congar writes, "The part played in our upbringing by the Holy Spirit is that of mother – a mother who enables us to know our Father, God, and our brother, Jesus. The Spirit also enables us to invoke God as our Father and he reveals to us Jesus our Lord, introducing us gradually to his inheritance of grace and truth. Finally, the Spirit teaches us how to practice the virtues and how to use the gifts of a son of God by grace. All this is part of a mother's functions... The Spirit does this by an intimate educative

activity and a kind of impregnation and, so that the seal may be set on this work, the Spirit's maternal and feminine part is combined with the function of the Father and that of the Son.”

There are two mothers who work as one: the Holy Spirit and Mary. The Holy Spirit on the divine level, Mary on the human.

The Holy Spirit descends on Mary at the Annunciation so that she can become the Mother of Christ. The Holy Spirit descends on Mary at Pentecost so that she can become the Mother of the Church. The Holy Spirit gives Mary her motherhood at every stage. But, of course, you can only give what you yourself possess. It is the Holy Spirit who possesses all the richness of motherhood, which is then bestowed upon the supreme human mother – Mary, the Mother of God.