

DAY 27: Marian Entrustment (Part One)

Now that we've completed our three-day, mini-retreat with Mary, we should have a clearer sense of Mary's maternal mediation. This motherly mediation is the key that unlocks the whole theology of Marian consecration. And now that we have this key, we're ready to learn exactly what John Paul means by Marian consecration, or as he usually refers to it, "Marian entrustment." To begin, we need to go back to the foot of the Cross.

"Woman, behold, your son." With these words, Jesus is entrusting all of humanity to Mary's motherly care. He's making her the spiritual mother of all. And as we learned yesterday, Mary fully accepted this gift "with burning love."

Next, Jesus speaks to John, the beloved disciple, who represents all of us: "Behold, your mother." Jesus is now giving us a gift, the great gift of his mother as our spiritual mother. Do we accept this gift? Yes. At least we're trying to (otherwise, we wouldn't be making this retreat). But how do we accept it? This is the crucial question.

According to Pope John Paul, the following Gospel text tells us how we are to accept Mary as our spiritual mother, "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (Jn 19:27). The Pope describes this action with one word: "entrusting." We see an example of this in the person of John, who entrusted himself to Mary, who was herself entrusted to John by Christ, "Behold, your mother." John's entrusting of himself to Mary is *his response to Christ's command from the Cross*, but it's not only that. It's also *a response to Mary's "burning love" for us*: "entrusting is *the response* to a person's love, and in particular *to the love of a mother*." John Paul goes on to describe the nature of this entrusting of oneself to Mary:

Entrusting himself to Mary in a filial manner, the Christian, like the Apostle John, "welcomes" the Mother of Christ "into his own home" and brings her into everything that makes up his inner life, that is to say into his human and Christian "I": he "*took her to his own home*." Thus the Christian seeks to be taken into that "maternal charity" with which the Redeemer's Mother "cares for the brethren of her Son," "in whose birth and development she cooperates" in the measure of the gift proper to each one through the power of Christ's Spirit. Thus also is exercised that motherhood in the Spirit which became Mary's role at the foot of the Cross and in the Upper Room.

This entrusting of oneself to Mary, which the Pope beautifully describes as taking her "into one's own home," should be understood as our following of Christ's own example — he first entrusted himself to Mary at the Annunciation and then throughout the Hidden Life — and as his will for his disciples. After all, he himself initiates such entrustment, "Behold, your mother." But why does Christ do this? Is it that he wants to distance himself from us? No. He's bringing us closer to himself by giving us to the one who is closest to him, the same one who directs everything to him, "Do whatever he tells you."

Mary wants to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as children. "And it is well known," says the Pope, "that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the 'unsearchable riches of Christ.'" Again, this is so both because of the unique closeness of Mary to Christ and because of her special role of bringing others into the intimacy she shares with him.

Tomorrow, we'll see how this closeness of Mary to Christ, particularly in his consecration of himself for our sake, helps us make our own consecration to Christ. This is the whole purpose behind why we entrust ourselves to Mary: It's so she can bring us even closer to Christ through her powerful prayers and motherly love.

Today's Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.

Prepare me to entrust myself completely to Mary so she can bring me closer to Christ.