

## DAY 28: Marian Entrustment (Part Two)

Let's return to Fatima, where we started this week — but this time let's go with St. John Paul II.

Exactly one year after being shot in St. Peter's Square, John Paul went to Fatima "in order to give thanks that the mercy of God and the protection of the Mother of Christ" had saved his life. On that occasion, he delivered a heartfelt homily that's a rich source of the theology of Marian consecration and entrustment. The entire homily and Act of Entrustment are too long to cite here. So, I'm going to summarize. Specifically, I'm going to draw out from them the connection the Pope makes between consecration to Mary, Divine Mercy, and the redeeming consecration of Christ. Let's start with the connection between Mary and Divine Mercy.

Before we begin, a few things about Divine Mercy: (1) According to John Paul, Divine Mercy is the limit imposed by God on evil, the love of God in the face of evil; (2) Divine Mercy is symbolized by the pierced side of Christ and the blood and water that gushed forth from his side; (3) a central part of the modern Divine Mercy devotion is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which offers atonement and implores mercy for our sins and those of the whole world. In what follows, notice how these three aspects of Divine Mercy are central to the Pope's most important homily on Marian consecration.

The homily's context is the widespread, "almost apocalyptic" evil of our time, an evil that "menaces," that is "spreading," and that gathers "like a dark cloud over mankind." The Pope confesses that this evil causes "trepidation" in his heart. Despite this, he finds hope in "a Love more powerful than evil" which no "sin of the world can ever overcome." This Love he identifies as "merciful Love."

And what about this *merciful Love*? What does it have to do with Marian consecration? Everything. It has everything to do with consecration because Mary is the one who brings us to the source of merciful Love. Mary is the one who brings us to the love that is more powerful than evil. Indeed, as John Paul says in his homily, consecration to the Immaculate Heart means "drawing near, through the Mother's intercession, to the very Fountain of Life that sprang from Golgotha." What is this fountain of life? The Pope identifies it as "the Fountain of Mercy." It's the pierced side of Christ from which blood and water flowed as a source of grace and mercy. And it's through this wound in Christ's Heart that "reparation is made continually for the sins of the world." Moreover, through this Fountain of Mercy, we find "a ceaseless source of new life and holiness."

The Pope goes on to explain that consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means "returning to the Cross of the Son." It means bringing the world and all its problems and sufferings to "the pierced Heart of the Savior" and thus "back to the very source of its Redemption." It means bringing the world, through Mary, to Divine Mercy! The power of

the Redemption, the power of merciful Love, "is always greater than man's sin and the 'sin of the world'" and is "infinitely superior to the whole range of evil in man and the world."

Now, Mary knows the power of the Redemption, the power of merciful Love, better than anyone. In fact, John Paul says she knows it "more than any other heart in the whole universe, visible and invisible." Therefore, she calls us not only to conversion but "to accept her motherly help to return to the source of Redemption." For again, Mary's task is to bring us to the Fountain of Mercy, to the pierced side of Christ, to his Merciful Heart.

Essentially, then, consecrating ourselves to Mary "means accepting her help to offer ourselves and the whole of mankind" to the infinitely Holy God. It means entrusting ourselves to she who was most united to Christ's own consecration: "Hail to you who are wholly united to the redeeming consecration of your Son!" It means entrusting ourselves to Mary's prayers, that she may "help us to live with the whole truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family of the modern world." In other words, consecrating ourselves to Mary means relying on her motherly intercession to help us offer ourselves more fully to Christ in his own consecration for our redemption.

After putting himself and the world into Mary's hands and Heart, after giving himself to she who is most wholly united to Jesus' consecration, the Pope prays the heart of his act of entrustment. Let's conclude by pondering it deeply in our own hearts:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

It was precisely by reason of this love that the Son of God consecrated himself for all mankind: "And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth" (Jn 17:19).

By reason of that consecration the disciples of all ages are called to spend themselves for the salvation of the world, and to supplement Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the Church (see 2 Cor 12:15; Col 1:24).

Before you, Mother of Christ, before your Immaculate Heart, I today, together with the whole Church, unite myself with our Redeemer in this his consecration for the world and for people, which only in his divine Heart has the power to obtain pardon and to secure reparation.

Today's Prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.*

*Draw me in, with, and through Mary to the Fountain of Love and Mercy.*