

Shepherds of Christ

2007 ISSUE NO. 5 A SPIRITUALITY NEWSLETTER FOR PRIESTS BY REV. JOHN J. PASQUINI

CHIEF SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

Jn. 10: 1-15

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep”
(New Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday).



MOLD ME, MARY

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

O beautiful mold of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed, pray for me.
Mary, you molded your Son, Jesus, God and man.
May I be broken down and melted so that I may be poured into your mold.
May you mold me in such a way that I might appear as your Son.
Mold me to be fully human so that I may participate in the divinity of your Son.
O beautiful mold of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed, pray for me. (Imitation of Two Hearts [China: S of C Publications]).

“The Mother of the Word of God gave
her son all his flesh.”

— Pope St. Pius X

MARY

By Fr. Karl Rahner

“Holy Virgin, truly mother of the eternal Word who has come into our flesh and our life, Lady who conceived in faith and in your blessed womb the salvation of us all, and so are the mother of all the redeemed, you who live ever in God’s life, near to us still, because those united to God are nearest to us.
With the thankfulness of the redeemed, we praise the eternal mercy of God that redeemed you. When your existence began, sanctifying grace already was yours, and the irrevocable grace was with you always. You walked the way of all the children of this earth, the narrow paths which seem to wander so aimlessly through this life of time, commonplace, sorrowful roads, until death. But they were God’s ways, the path of faith and unconditional consent: ‘Be it done unto me according to thy word.’ And in a moment that never passes, but remains valid for all eternity, your voice became the voice of all mankind, and your Yes was the Amen of all creation to God’s irrevocable decree. You conceived in faith and in your womb Him who is at once God and man, creator and creature, changeless unalterable blessedness, and an earthly life marked out for bitter death, Jesus Christ our Lord. For our salvation you said Yes, for us you spoke your Fiat; as a

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FR. EDWARD CARTER
Founder, Shepherds of Christ

This newsletter is for priests
and those who are interested
in the spiritual life.

PRIESTHOOD

By Charles De Foucauld

To a Friend Preparing for Ordination

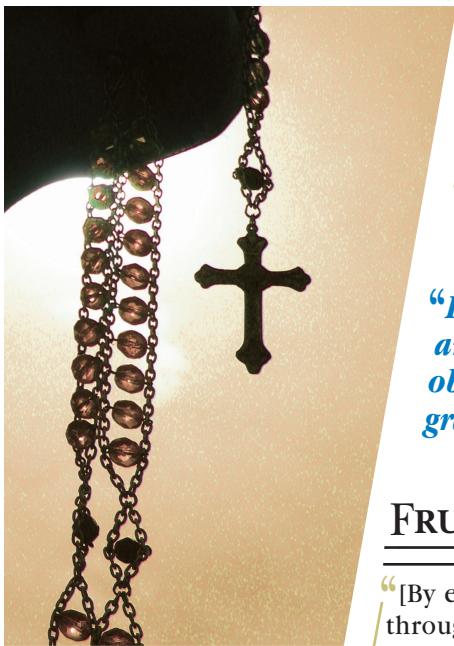
“The priest... is something transcendent; through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them our Lord’s Body as He Himself did at the Last Supper, and at their death He helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them their final forgiveness and the supreme strength... Every single day of his life, a priest does what Jesus did during his three years of ministry—He teaches men to know, love and serve their good Master. What a vocation!”



woman of our race you accepted and bore in your womb and in your love him in whose Name alone there is salvation...on earth. Your Yes of consent ever remained, was never revoked, even when the course of the life and death of your Son fully revealed who it was that you had conceived: the Lamb of God, taking on himself the sins of the world; the Son of Man, nailed to the Cross by our sinful race's hatred of God, and thrown, Him the Light of the world, into the darkness of death, the lot that was ours. In you, holy Virgin, who stood under the Cross of the Redeemer...as the second Eve and mother of all the living, it was redeemed humanity, the Church, that stood under the Cross and received the fruit of redemption and eternal salvation....

We consecrate ourselves to you, holy virgin and mother, because we are consecrated to you. ...[Our] life and salvation is ever dependent on your consent, on your faith and the fruit of your womb. So when we say that we wish to be consecrated to you, we are only proclaiming our willingness to be, and to accept in mind and heart and action both interior and external, what we really are....

We come to you, then because in you our salvation came to be, was conceived by you. Since we are consecrated to you thereby, and are consecrating ourselves to you, show to us who have been made sharers in your grace, Jesus the blessed fruit of thy womb. Show to us Jesus our Lord and Savior, the light of truth and the advent of God into this world of time. Show to us Jesus Who has truly



suffered and truly risen, Who is the Son of the Father and the son of earth... Show to us Him in Whom we are truly set free from all principalities and powers that are still under heaven, even though the man of earth is still subject to them. Show us Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and for ever.... Amen."

(*Prayers for a Lifetime*, trans. Albert Raffelt [New York: Crossroad, 1986], 140-142).

"As breathing is not only a sign but even a cause of life, so the name of Mary, which is constantly found on the lips of God's servants, both proves that they are truly alive, and at the same time causes and preserves their life, and gives them every succor."

— St. Germanus of Constantinople

LADY OF GRACE

By Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa

"Mary...principally proclaims to the Church that all is grace. ...Mary is the real living manifestation of that grace that comes first in the relation between God and his children. Grace is the meeting point between creatures and their Creator....

Mary is the figure and mirror of the Church. What does the fact that Mary's story begins with the word 'grace' signify for the Church and for each one of us? It signifies that for us, too, at the beginning, there is grace, the freely given election of God, his inexplicable favor, his coming down to us in Christ and giving himself to us for the sake for pure love. It signifies that grace is the first principle of Christianity." (*Mary: Mirror of the Church*, trans. Frances Villa [Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992], 17-24).

"He Who said, Honor your father and your mother, that He might observe His own decree gave all grace and honor to His Mother."

— St. Methodius

FRUITFUL SPIRITUALITY

By St. Louis de Montfort

"[By entrusting ourselves to Mary we do all] through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary, so as to enable us to do them with greater perfection through Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus and for Jesus.... We must abandon ourselves to Mary's spirit to be prompted and guided according to her will. We must try to place ourselves, and then remain, in her virginal hands like a tool in the hands of a worker or a lute in the hands of a good



flutist. We must lose ourselves completely in her like a stone thrown into the sea. It's possible to do this quite simply and in an instant with a quick inward glance or slight motion of the will or with a few brief words." (*Devotion to Mary*, 161f).

"The Mother of God is my Mother. How firm, then, should be our confidence, since our salvation depends on the judgment of a good Brother and a tender Mother."

— St. Anselm

TREE OF LIFE

By St. Bonaventure

"The Holy Spirit came upon her like a divine fire, inflaming her soul and sanctifying her flesh in perfect purity. But the power of the Most High overshadowed her so that she could endure such fire. By the action of that power, instantly Christ's Body was formed, his soul created and, at once both were united to the divinity in the person of the Son, so that the same person was God and man, with the properties of each nature maintained. Oh, if you could feel in some way the quality and intensity of that fire sent from heaven, the refreshing coolness that accompanied it, the consolation it imparted; if you could realize the great exaltation of the Virgin Mother, the ennobling of the human race, the condescension of the divine majesty; if you could hear the Virgin singing with joy; if you could go with your lady into the mountainous region; if you could see the sweet embrace of the Virgin and the woman who had been sterile and hear the greeting in which the tiny servant recognized his Lord, the herald his judge and the voice his Word, then I am sure you would sing in sweet tones with the Blessed Virgin that sacred hymn: 'My soul magnifies the Lord...' and with the tiny prophet you would exalt, rejoice and adore the marvelous



PREGNANT HEARTS

By St. Augustine

“[Mary] carried [Jesus] in her womb, may we carry him in our hearts; the Virgin became pregnant with the Incarnation of Christ, may our hearts become pregnant with faith in Christ; she brought forth the Savior, may our souls bring forth salvation and praise. May our souls be not sterile, but fertile for God.”

(Sermons, 189, 3 [PL 38, 1006]).

“You will do well in having special recourse to the glorious Virgin Mary, for she is the one among all pure creatures who most signaled herself in the virtue of humility.”

— St. Aloysius Gonzaga

virginal conception.” (The Tree of Life, 1, 3, trans. E. Cousins [127f]).

“Eve caused us to be condemned by the fruit of the tree; Mary wrought our pardon by the gift of the Tree, because Christ also hung upon the Tree as fruit. As therefore we died through a tree, so by a Tree are we brought to life. All that was done by Adam is washed out by Mary.”

— St. Ambrose

SPOUSE OF THE SPIRIT

By Rita Ring

“The Holy Spirit, the spouse of Mary, worked within the womb of Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation. What a holy place, this womb of Mary. Let us contemplate the place that the Almighty God came and lived in this world, in her most holy womb....

We too must go to the spiritual womb, the Heart of Mary. It is there that the Holy Spirit works...to sanctify us, to make us holy, to make us more and more into the image of Jesus. It is there that He gives to us great lights, that He gives to us grace that helps us know God more and more.... It is in going to the heart of Mary, her spiritual womb, that we will receive lights whereby we know God and love Him more.” (Apostles Manual [China: S of C Publications, 1997], 144-146).

“The Divine Spirit, the love itself of the Father and the Son, came into Mary, and enriching her with graces above all creatures, reposed in her and made her His Spouse, the Queen of Heaven and Earth.”

— St. Anselm

MARY, SYMBOL OF CHURCH

By St. Edith Stein

“Mary is the most perfect symbol of the Church because she is its prefigurement and origin. She is also a unique organ of the church, that organ from which the entire Mystical Body, even the Head itself, was formed. She might be called, and happily so, the heart of the Church in order to indicate her central and vital position in it. The terms body, head, and heart are of course simply metaphors. But their meaning, nevertheless, is somehow absolutely real. There is a distinctive coherence between head and heart, and they certainly play an essential role in the human body; all other organs and limbs are dependent on them for their existence and function. Just as certainly, through her unique relation with Christ, Mary must have a real—that means here a mystic—relationship with the other members of the Church. This relationship extends far above that of the other members in intensity, nature, and importance; it is analogous to the relationship which a mother has with her children, a relationship surpassing that which the children have amongst themselves. The title Mary as our mother is not merely symbolic. Mary is our mother in the most real and lofty sense, a sense which surpasses that of earthly maternity. She begot our life of grace for us because she offered up her entire being, body and soul, as the Mother of God.

That is why an intimate bond exists between Mary and ourselves. She loves us, she knows us, she exerts

MARY—ICON OF THE CHURCH

By Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar

“Where the church is ‘holy and blameless,’ according to its original election (Eph. 1:4), where it is the ‘bride in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,’ ‘holy and without blemish’ (Eph. 5:27), there it professes itself, in full accord with the Son’s law of incarnation, as ‘handmaid of the Lord’ (Lk. 1:38).

[Mary therefore is the perfect model, the perfect exemplar of the Church!]. This mother’s body, which was already (in the overshadowing of the Spirit) a bride’s body, is proleptically the church body from which and for which everything will be formed unto Christ, which will later be called the church....

[Mary] is ‘blessed’ because her existence is filled with ‘hearing the word of God and keeping it’ (Lk. 11:28; 2:19-51).... [Mary] as the ‘lowly handmaid’ is struck by the glance of ‘his mercy,’ of the God who ‘exalts those of lowly degree, fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty’ (Lk. 1:48-53). [Mary’s life exemplifies] that God’s saving action singles out and redeems especially...the powerless and those deprived of rights...

[Mary truly is the exemplar of the Church.]” (Kehl and Löser, eds., The Von Balthasar Reader [New York: Crossroad, 1997], 219-220).

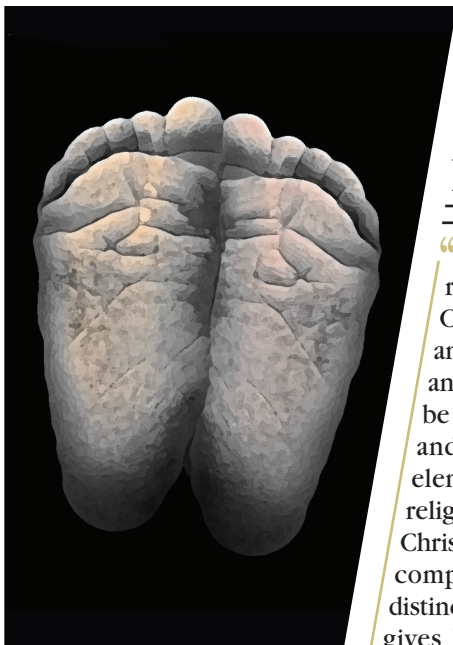
“Mary is the glory of virgins, the joy of mothers, the support of the faithful, the diadem of the Church, the express model of the true Faith, the seat of piety, the robe of virtue, the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity.”

— St. Proclus



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herself to bring each one of us into the closest possible relationship with the Lord—that which we are above all supposed to be. Of course, this is true for all humanity, but most particularly for women. There maternity and bridehood of the *Virgo-Mater* is continued, so to speak, in their maternity, natural and supernatural, and in their life as brides of Christ. And just as the heart sustains the other organs of a woman's body and makes it possible for them to function, so we may genuinely believe there is just such a collaboration of Mary with every woman wherever that woman is fulfilling her vocation as woman; just so, there is a collaboration of Mary with us in all works of the Church. But just as grace cannot achieve its work in souls unless they open themselves to it in free decision, so also Mary cannot function fully as a mother if people do not entrust themselves to her. Those women who wish to fulfill their feminine vocations in one of several ways will most surely succeed in their goals if they not only keep the ideal of the *Virgo-Mater* before their eyes and strive to form themselves according to her image but if they also entrust themselves to her guidance and place themselves completely under her care. She herself can form in her own image those who belong to her. The stages which lead to a divinely-ordered incorporation of woman into the church are thus indicated: child of God, organ of the Church in her natural and supernatural maternity, symbol of the Church, and child of Mary on all levels."



(*Essays on Woman*, trans. Freda Oben [Washington: ICS Publications, 1996], 240-241).

"The Mother of the Head, in bearing Him corporally became spiritually the Mother of all the members of this Divine Head."

— St. Augustine

PATTERN OF OUR LIFE

By John Cardinal Henry Newman

"Mary is the pattern of Faith, both in the reception and in the study of Divine Truth. She does not think it enough to accept, she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, she develops it; not enough to submit the Reason, she reasons upon it; not indeed reasoning first, and believing afterwards... [First] believing without reasoning, next from love and reverence, reasoning after believing: "Mary kept all things, and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19)." (*The Heart of Newman* [London: Burns and Oates, 1963], 130).

"Mary was such that her life alone was a model for all. Let the virginity and life of Mary be to you as a faithful image, in which the form of virtue is resplendent. Thence learn how to live, what to correct, what to avoid, what to retain."

— St. Ambrose

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

By Pope Benedict XVI

"People have realized that the complete removal of the feminine element from the Christian message is a shortcoming from an anthropological viewpoint. It is theologically and anthropologically important for woman to be at the center of Christianity. Through Mary, and the other holy women, the feminine element stands at the heart of the Christian religion. And this is not in competition with Christ. To think of Christ and Mary as being in competition means ignoring the essential distinction between these two figures. Christ gives John, and through John all of us, the Mother. That is not competition, but a most profound kind of intimacy. The Mother and Virgin forms an essential part of the Christian picture of man." (*God and the World*, Trans. Henry Taylor [San Francisco: Ignatius, 2002], 302).



"Evil came by a woman, so good has come by the Woman: for by Eve we fell, by Mary we stand; by Eve we were reduced to slavery, but by Mary we were made free. Eve took from us length of days, Mary restored to us immortality."

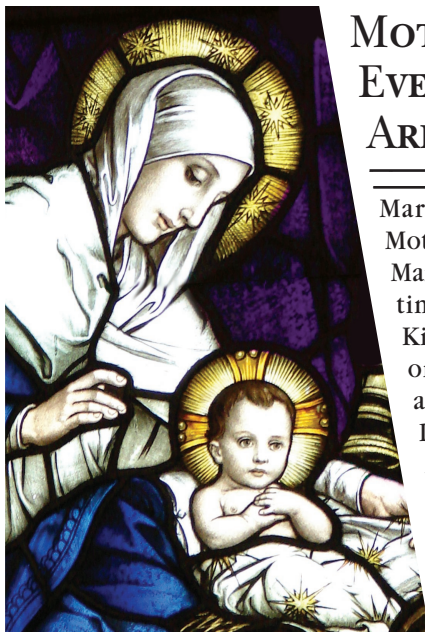
— St. Ambrose

PRO-LIFE MOTHER OF MOTHERS

By Pope John Paul II

"O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life: Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy. Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time. Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life." (*Evangelium Vitae*, #102).

"O man, whoever you are, understand that in this world you are tossed about on a stormy and tempestuous sea...; remember that if you would avoid being drowned, you must never turn your eyes



MOTHER, SPOUSE, EVER-VIRGIN, TEMPLE, ARK, MODEL

Fr. John J. Pasquini

Mary is the mother of Jesus. Mary is the Mother of God. The Old Testament prefigures Mary as being the Mother of God. During the time of King Solomon until the end of the Kings of Judah, the Queen Mother always sat on the right hand of her son as a confidant and advisor. Jesus, the New Testament Davidic King, has a New Testament Queen Mother, Mary.

Mary is referred to as the “Mother of my Lord” in Luke’s Gospel (Lk. 1:43). This is significant for in the Jewish world the title “Lord” was a title reserved for God, Yahweh. And in the Greek New Testament the title “Lord,” or “Kyrios” refers to **only** God. It is no coincidence that just two verses later (v. 45), the divine title “Lord” is being used in such a way that one could not confuse it for anything other than the title for “God.” Mary is the Mother of Lord, the Mother of Yahweh, the Mother of God.

Mary is unique for she is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. When we examine the phrase “to overshadow” as used in the annunciation scene in Luke 1:35 we cannot but be made aware of the spousal relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit. Jewish rabbis knew that the phrase “to overshadow” when used in the context of conception was a euphemism for a spousal relationship (*Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 39:7; *Midrash Ruth Rabbah* 3:9). The Holy Spirit “overshadowed” Mary (cf. Lk. 1:35). Thus, Mary entered a spousal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

One must study at the “school of Mary,” as Pope John Paul the Great explained, if one is to truly understand the mystery which is Christ.

Mary was redeemed by Jesus from the very moment of her conception. She was preserved from original sin and personal sin by Jesus, her Redeemer and Savior. Mary is *kecharitomene*; that is, she is “full of grace.” Jesus was without sin, and because of Jesus, Mary was without sin. Mary is the New Eve as Jesus is the New Adam. In the Garden of Eden the devil, a fallen angel, brought the words that would lead to death. At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel would bring the words that would lead to life, to Mary. Eve disobeyed God and brought upon the fall of the human race. Mary obeyed God and helped to bring about the redemption of the human race. Where Eve was a poor disciple and poor mother, Mary, the New Eve, was the perfect disciple and perfect mother.

The Old Testament Eve was the mother of the

human race in the order of nature. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the New Eve, the new mother of the human race in the order of grace. The Old Eve was the natural mother of the human race; the New Eve, Mary, is the *supernatural* mother of the human race.

Mary is the pure Temple, the pure Ark in which the Savior came to dwell in. The Ark of the Covenant is the most holy object in all the Old Testament! The Ark was to be made “perfect in every detail” to allow that which is perfect to “fill it,” God (Ex. 25; 40:5). Not only did the Ark have to be perfect, it had to be kept free from all impurity and profanation. Mary was the pure Ark, the pure Temple, that held the divine presence, the Son of God, Jesus (cf. Lk. 1:35). When comparing the Greek and Hebrew imagery used for the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:20; 40:35; Num. 9:18, 22) and the scene of the annunciation (1 Chr. 28:18; Lk. 1:35f), one cannot but see—when read in their original languages—the powerful and unquestionable parallel. Mary was created “full of grace,” “without sin” so that Emmanuel, the “God who is with us,” Jesus, could dwell within Mary.

In Genesis 1:2 and following we are reminded that from the *immaculately* created cosmos God created Adam (Evil and chaos entering the world only after the fall, Gen. 3.). In Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 we are reminded that Jesus is the second Adam. If the first Adam was created from pristine organic materials, what would the second Adam be created



from...[Mary]. Call on Mary. In dangers, in straights, in doubt, remember Mary, invoke Mary.”

— St. Bernard of Clairvaux

PURE CRYSTAL

By St. Maria Faustina Kowalska

“O Mary, Immaculate Virgin, pure crystal for my heart, you are my strength, O secure anchor, you are a shield and protection for a weak heart. O Mary, you are pure and unparalleled, Virgin and Mother at one and the same time; you are beautiful as the sun, by nothing defiled. Nothing is worthy of comparison to the image of Your soul. Your beauty enthralled the Thrice-Holy One, that He came down from heaven, forsaking the eternal See’s throne, and assumed from Your Heart Body and Blood, hiding for nine months in the Virgin’s Heart. O Mother, Virgin, this will no one comprehend, that the infinite God is becoming a man; It’s only love’s and His inscrutable mercy’s purpose. Through You, Mother—it’s given us to live with Him for ever. O Mary, Virgin Mother and Heaven’s Gate, through You salvation came to us; Every grace to us streams forth through Your hands, and faithful imitation of You only will sanctify me. O Mother, Virgin—most beautiful Lily. Your Heart was for Jesus the first tabernacle on earth, and that, because Your humility was the deepest, wherefore You were raised above Angel choirs and Saints. O Mary, my sweet Mother, to You I turn over my soul, my body and my poor heart. Be the safeguard of my life, especially at death’s hour, in the final fight.”

(*Diary* [Stockbridge: Marian Press, 2004], 89-90).

“Devotion to Mary is one of the safest means to obtain the grace of a holy death.”

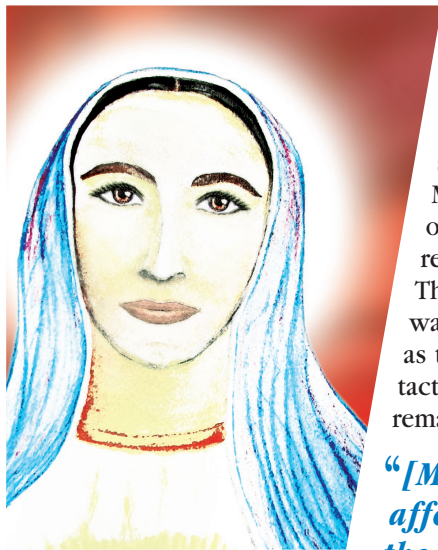
— St. John Bosco

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from? Obviously an immaculate, pristine Mother! Mary is the perpetual virgin, the “ever-virgin”! Jesus had no blood brothers or sisters. Brothers and sisters in Semitic usage can refer to nephews, nieces, cousins, half-brothers, half-sisters, allies, friends, members of the same culture or nationality, etc. (cf. Gen. 13:8; 14:14-16; 29:15, Lev. 10:4, etc.). James and Joseph are called the “brothers of Jesus,” yet they are the sons of Mary the wife of Clopas (Jn. 19:25) (Mt. 13:55; 28:1; cf. Mt. 27:56).

Jesus is Mary’s “firstborn” and only child. The term “firstborn” was a legal term indicating rights and privileges (i.e., Gn. 27; Ex. 13:2; Nm. 3:12-13; 18: 15-16; Dt. 21:15-17). For example, the term “firstborn” often referred to a child that was responsible for opening the womb of a woman, without any further implication (Ex. 13:2; Nb. 3:12). Sometimes it referred to someone as being special, as being sanctified (Ex. 34:20). According to the Law of Moses, all Jewish first-born children were to be presented in the Temple and offered to God in thanksgiving (cf. Lk. 2:22f). The firstborn son had to be redeemed within forty days (Ex. 34:20). No further implications could be made.

Mary had one and only one child, Jesus. Mary is the perpetual virgin, the “ever-virgin.” As Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 295) stated: *“If Mary had had other children, the Savior would not have ignored them and entrusted his Mother to someone else; nor would she have become someone else’s mother. She would not have abandoned her own to live with others, knowing well that it ill becomes a woman to abandon her*



“[Mary] is a bride, so gentle and affectionate, and the mother of the only true bridegroom. In her abundant goodness she channeled the spring of reason’s garden, the well of living and life-giving waters that pour forth in a rushing stream from divine Lebanon and flow down from Mount Zion until they

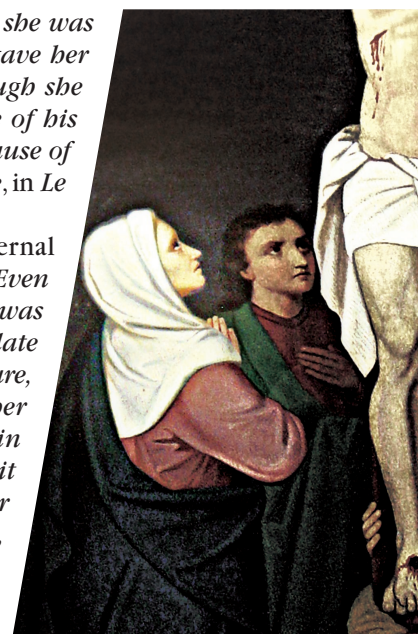
husband and her children. But since she was a virgin, and was his Mother, Jesus gave her as a mother to his disciple, even though she was not really John’s mother, because of his great purity of understanding and because of her untouched virginity” (De virginitate, in Le Museon 42: 243-44).

Mary is the model of life and of our eternal destiny. As St. John Damascene wrote: *“Even though your most holy and blessed soul was separated from your happy and immaculate body, according to the usual course of nature, and even though it was carried to a proper burial place, nevertheless it did not remain under the dominion of death, nor was it destroyed by corruption. Indeed, just as her virginity remained intact when she gave birth, so her body, even after death, was preserved from decay and transferred to a better and more divine dwelling place. There it is no longer subject to death but abides for all ages” (Homily 1 on Dormition 10: PG 96, 716 A-B).*

Jesus ascended body and soul into heaven (Lk. 24:50-53). Mary, being the perfect disciple, the perfect imitator of her son, the perfect model of the Church, the one who knew her son more than any other creation of God, would be granted the gift of imitating her Savior, her son, by being “full of grace” and without sin. And at the end of her earthly journey, she would imitate her Savior, her son, by being assumed by Him into heaven body and soul. If Enoch and Elijah were taken up to heaven (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kgs. 2:1, 11), how much more would Mary who is “full of grace.”

Original Sin and personal sin are what prevent a person from entering into heaven. But because of the merits of Jesus, Mary was “full of grace” and therefore without Original Sin or personal sin. Heaven was open to her and because of her special place in the life of Jesus, she was assumed into heaven.

Mary knew no decay, for she was free from original sin and concupiscence. As Psalm 16:10 reminds us: “[the beloved will not] know decay.” The beloved, blessed Mary knew no decay. She was assumed body and soul into heaven. Just as the Ark of the Covenant was to remain intact, the New Ark of the Covenant, Mary, was to remain intact, Body and Soul!



surround the shores of every far-flung nation.”

— St. Amadeus of Lausanne

FALLING ASLEEP

By Bl. Pope John XXIII

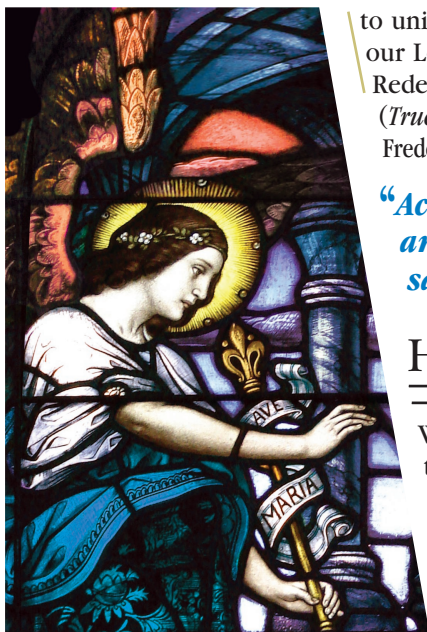
“The queenly figure of Mary is illuminated and glorified in the highest dignity which a creature may attain. What grace, sweetness and solemnity in the scene of Mary’s ‘falling asleep,’ as the Christians in the East imagine it! She is lying in the serene sleep of death; Jesus stands beside her, and clasps her soul as if it were a tiny child, to his heart, to indicate the miracle of her immediate resurrection and glorification.

The Christians of the West, raising their eyes and hearts to heaven, choose to portray Mary borne body and soul to the eternal kingdom.... Oh let us go with her, borne aloft by her escort of angels!

This is the source of consolation in days of grief or pain, for those privileged souls—such as we all can become, if we respond to grace—whom God is silently preparing for the most beautiful victory of all, the attainment of holiness.

The great mission which began with the angel’s announcement to Mary has passed like a stream of fire and light through the mysteries in turn: God’s eternal plan for our salvation has been presented to us in one scene after another, accompanying us along our way, and now it brings us back to God in the splendor of heaven.

The glory of Mary, Mother of Jesus and our mother too, is irradiated in the inaccessible light of the august Trinity and reflected in the dazzling splendor in Holy Church, triumphant in heaven, suffering patiently in purgatory in the confident expectation of heaven, and militant on earth.” (*Virgin Wholly Marvelous*, ed. Supple [Cambridge: Ravengate Press, 1981], 95-96.)



to unite Himself to us, and us to Him; and to our Lord as to our Last End, to Whom as our Redeemer and our God, we owe all we are.” (*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. Frederick Faber [New York: Montfort Fathers]).

“Accept me, O Mary, as your own, and as yours, take charge of my salvation.”

— St. Alphonsus Liguori

HAIL MARY

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

When I pray, “Hail Mary, full of grace,” may I seek to live a life filled with grace.

When I pray, “The Lord is with you,” may the Lord be with me and protect my soul.

When I pray, “Blessed are you among women,” may I recognize that all those who are with your Son are blessed beyond imagination.

When I pray, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,” may I realize that within me is the presence of your Son’s image and likeness, that within me is the temple of God.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, now, and at the hour of my death. (*Imitation of Two Hearts* [China: S of C Publications]).

“How much should we love Mary? Love her as much as Jesus!”

— Bl. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

CONSECRATION TO MARY

By St. Louis de Montfort

“A perfect and entire consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin consists... in giving ourselves entirely to our Lady, in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. We must give her (1) our body, with all its senses and its members; (2) our soul, with all its powers; (3) our exterior goods of fortune, whether present or to come; (4) our interior and spiritual goods, which are our merits and our virtues, and our good works, past, present and future. In a word, we must give her all we have in order of nature and in the order of grace, and all that may become ours in the future, in the orders of nature, grace, and glory....

We give [the Blessed Mother] all our merits, graces, and virtues—not to communicate them to others, for our merits, graces and virtues are, properly speaking, incommunicable, and it is only Jesus Christ Who, in making Himself our surety with His Father, is able to communicate His merits—but we give her them to keep them, augment them and embellish them for us.... By this devotion, we give to Jesus Christ in the most perfect manner, inasmuch as it is by Mary’s hands, all we can give Him.... A person who is thus voluntarily consecrated and sacrificed to Jesus Christ through Mary can no longer dispose of the value of any of his good actions. All he suffers, all he thinks, all the good he says or does, belongs to Mary, in order that she may dispose of it according to the will of her Son and His greatest glory.

We consecrate ourselves one and the same time to the most holy Virgin and to Jesus Christ: to the most holy Virgin as to the perfect means which Jesus Christ has chosen whereby

“Through Mary’s intercession, many souls are in paradise who would not be there had she not interceded for them, for God has entrusted her with the keys and treasures of the heavenly Kingdom.”

— St. Thomas Aquinas

HOW TO BECOME A SHEPHERD OF CHRIST ASSOCIATE

The Shepherds of Christ has prayer chapters all over the world praying for the priests, the Church and the world. These prayers that Father Carter compiled in the summer of 1994 began this worldwide network of prayer. Currently the prayers are in six languages with the Church’s *Imprimatur*. Fr. Carter had the approval of his Jesuit provincial for this movement, writing the Newsletter every 2 months for 6 1/2 years. After his death, and with his direction, we in the Shepherds of Christ circulated the *Priestly Newsletter Book II* to 95,000 priests with other writings. We have prayed daily for the priests, the Church, and the world since 1994. Associates are called to join prayer Chapters and help us circulate this newsletter centered on spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart and helping to renew the Church through greater holiness. Fr. John J. Pasquini is a tremendous gift on this 13th anniversary year of the newsletter. Form a Prayer Chapter & order a Prayer Manual.

Also we have people who spend 2 hours weekly before the tabernacle praying for these intentions: 1.) For the spread of the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary culminating in the reign of the Sacred Heart and the triumph of the Immaculate Heart. 2.) For the Pope. 3.) For all bishops of the world. 4.) For all priests. 5.) For all sisters and brothers in the religious life. 6.) For all members of the Shepherds of Christ Movement, and for the spread of this movement to the world. 7.) For all members of the Catholic Church. 8.) For all members of the human family. 9.) For all souls in purgatory. This movement, *Apostles of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*, was begun by Fr. Carter. Please inquire. Shepherds of Christ Ministries P.O. Box 627, China, Indiana 47250 USA Telephone: (toll free USA) 1-888-211-3041 or (812) 273-8405 Fax: (812) 273-3182 Email: info@sofc.org

Titles to the sections of the newsletter have been given by Fr. John Pasquini.

EDITOR’S CORNER

Fr. John J. Pasquini is a columnist, author of more than a dozen books, guest speaker, lecturer on topics of systematic, moral and spiritual theology, a retreat leader, and a parish priest in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida. He feels blessed to serve the Shepherds of Christ as the editor of their newsletter. The newsletter is dedicated to renewal, fraternity, and the building of the Kingdom of God. It is a spirituality newsletter particularly dedicated to priests, religious, and all interested in the spiritual life. Comments and insights are always welcome.

“I give my heart to Jesus and Mary with you in love.”

— Shepherds of Christ

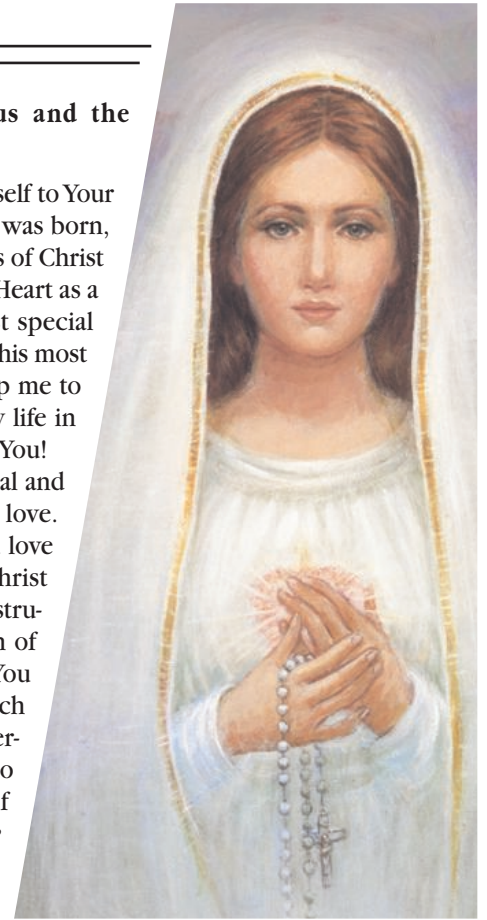


ACT OF CONSECRATION



Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“Lord Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock, I consecrate myself to Your most Sacred Heart. From Your pierced Heart the Church was born, the Church You have called me, as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, to serve in a most special way. You reveal Your Heart as a symbol of Your love in all its aspects, including Your most special love for me, whom You have chosen as Your companion in this most important work. Help me to always love You in return. Help me to give myself entirely to You. Help me always to pour out my life in love of God and neighbor! Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in You! Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, I consecrate myself to your maternal and Immaculate Heart, this heart which is symbol of your life of love. You are the Mother of my Savior. You are also my Mother. You love me with a most special love as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, a movement created by your Son as a powerful instrument for the renewal of the Church and the world. In a return of love, I give myself entirely to your motherly love and protection. You followed Jesus perfectly. You are His first and perfect disciple. Teach me to imitate you in the putting on of Christ. Be my motherly intercessor so that, through your Immaculate Heart, I may be guided to an ever closer union with the pierced Heart of Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock” (Rita Ring, *Mass Book: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus*, El Paso, Texas: [Shepherds of Christ Publications, Second Printing, May 2000], pp. 265).



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