

May 20, 2024

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

John 19:27

Today, Monday May 20 we celebrate the gift of Mary given to the Church as our Mother. From the Cross Jesus looks at St. John and says: "behold your Mother." From one of the "last 7 last words" of Jesus "from the Cross," the Church thanks Jesus for a loving Mother to be an example for us on how to be obedient and always say yes to her Son, Jesus.

I am first going to comment on this quote from Saint Paul VI from the 2nd Vatican Council.

"...Mary is very near to us. Like us, she is a child of Adam and so too our sister on account of our common human nature; she was preserved from the stain of original sin by reason of the future merits of Christ, but she added to these gifts received from on high the example of her own perfect faith and so merited the proclamation in the Gospel: "Blessed are you who have believed."

What is unique about Mary is that she received a special Grace from the "future merits" (Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension) of her Son, so as to show the Church our future, as an example of one who believed in her Son Jesus, and obediently followed His Spirit, thus, enjoying the fruits of the Spirit, and ultimately then being raised to Heaven.

With that said: I will share this simple story of why I believe if you really want a deeper relationship with Jesus, go through His Mother Mary. As a seminarian I traveled home to visit family and my Mother, who at the time was bed-ridden in an assisted-living care facility. While in the hallway getting ready to enter the room I heard my mother go on and on about a young man very important to her. As I listened, I realized I needed to take this young man to dinner to thank him for being such a gift to my mother. Then I heard my mother say: "and another thing about my son Vic..." I was brought to tears when I heard those words. She was talking about me the whole time. I had never known myself as described through her eyes, a mother's eyes. And the things I learned were intimate and beautiful. Thank you mother! As I walked into the room, even bed-ridden, my mother was holding court, in her room filled with staff and friends. She was filled with joy because of her love for Jesus, her son, and the gifts of the Spirit. My mother was experiencing the image of Mary, our Mother, who can be our future, as we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

From this experience I love how Mary will show us her Son through the eyes of a loving Mother. Thus, we can experience Jesus in a more intimate and beautiful way through the eyes of His loving Mother. Just as I saw myself in a most unique way through my mother's eyes.

As a Priest with a loving devotion to Mary, I believe the greatest gift she can give her Son, is a Priest striving to have a heart like Mary. How can this not be most pleasing to Jesus, and certainly a gift to Him. With that said: I believe the same is true for any of you reading my words today. By asking Mary to be our Mother, and then asking her to make us a special gift for her Son, then, not only will we come to know Jesus in a most intimate way, and then experience the fruits of the Spirit, but we will, through her intercession, become a special fragrance and gift "pleasing" to her Son Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death." Amen.
Vivat Jesus,
Father Vic Gournas