

# Reflections

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## Mary at the Foot of the Cross

There is when Mary will be truly important. Then a word dedicated to her most intimate Mother-heart – which will mysteriously extend – will descend upon Her.

If Christ has chosen the vocation of suffering and dying for the salvation of the world, it is clear that as many – throughout the centuries – who are united to Him through love, will have to accept – each one according to their state of life and function – that same vocation of dying and suffering for that salvation. And, if a member of Christ flees that function, something is lacking, not only to that member, but as St. Paul would explain, to the same Passion of Christ. Because His Passion yearns to be prolonged in the co-redeeming compassion of all the members of Christ. This is the mysterious meaning of the phrase of St. Paul to the Colossians: “*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church.*” (COL 1:24)

That small group at the foot of the Cross, that rising Church, was there for something more than simple sentimental reasons. They were united to Jesus, not only to His sufferings, but also to His mission.

And, in this Church, Mary has a unique position. Until then this position and that mission had remained like on the penumbra (semi-darkness). Now on the Cross they will be clear for eternity. This is the hour, this is the moment in which Mary occupies her role – rightfully – in the redeeming Work of Jesus. And She enters into the mission of her Son with the same office she would have in his origin: that of Mother.

It is evident that, on the cross, Jesus did much more than concern Himself for the material future of his Mother, leaving her care in the hands of John. The importance of the moment, the play on words of the phrases will be enough to reveal to us that we are facing a deeper reality.

If it were only about a material commission, the “behold your son” would be logical.

Mary was being left without a son, she was getting a new one. But, why the “behold your Mother?” John not only had a mother, she was there present. Why give him a new mother?

It is clear that it was about a different maternity. And also that John is not there only as the son of Zebedee, but something more. Already from antiquity, the Christians have seen John in the entire humanity represented, and more concretely, in the rising Church. It is to this Church and this humanity to whom a spiritual mother is given. It is this Virgin, aged by the years and sufferings, who suddenly senses anew her bosom filled with fruitfulness.

That is the great legacy which Christ grants to humanity from the Cross. That is the great task which at the hour of the great truth is entrusted to Mary. It is like a second Annunciation. Thirty years earlier – She remembers it well – an angel invited her to be the Mother of God. Now, and not an angel but her own Son, announces to Her a more sublime task, if you will: to receive as the children of her heart those who are the assassins of her first-born son.

And she accepts. She accepted, thirty years earlier, when She said that “fiat” which was a total surrender into the hands of the Will of God. From there may the odor of the blood of Calvary begin to strangely have an odor of the newborn. From there may it be difficult to know if now it is more what dies or what is born. From there may we not know if we are attending an agony or a birth. The odor of Mother and begetting on this dramatic afternoon is so great.....!

### Questions for reflection

1. Do I feel Mary as a mother?
2. How do I imagine Mary at the foot of the cross?
3. What does the phrase “behold your son” say to me?

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