

Reflections

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The Holy Spirit and Mary

I would like to meditate with you on some of the moments in the life of Mary.

The Incarnation. There is no doubt that the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from its beginning, was under the strong influence of the Spirit of God. The Virgin is “All Holy” because from the first moment of her existence, She was the “Temple of the Holy Spirit,” but her great encounter with the Spirit was the Annunciation which culminated with the Incarnation. There, Mary had her first Pentecost: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (LK 1, 35). From that moment on, She is called temple, tabernacle, shrine of the Spirit. This event indicates the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in Mary in a singular and superior way to all other Christians. As in all human beings, the Spirit of sanctity wants to act in and through the Virgin, but there is something more here, something new and unique: the Holy Spirit wants to act together with the Virgin. Why? The Holy Spirit wants to unite with and become attached to Mary so that from Her, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can be born. The Holy Spirit wants the Blessed Virgin to say “Yes,” totally free and voluntary, in order that She surrender to the Spirit of God so that She can become the Mother of God.

Her growth in the order of the Spirit. We should not think that the Virgin understood everything from the first moment. Evidently, She understood much more than we because She had, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, the prophetic light which gave her greater knowledge of the things of God.

Nevertheless, as a human being, She grew in wisdom and developed her understanding throughout her life. For that reason, Father Kantenich, the Founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, says that Mary grew in the order of the Spirit. What does that mean? Mary had to understand, step by step, what Jesus wanted and what She had to do at His side. She had to progress into the world of her Divine Son, and in which only the Holy Spirit could lead Her. In dialog with the Spirit of God, She had to travel her own way of faith. Let us think about when Jesus was lost at the age of twelve. How difficult it was for Her when her Son abandoned them and later told them:

“Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?” (LK 2, 49). As the text adds, Mary did not understand what Jesus had just told them, but surely, She came to understand that her Son carried within Himself another world, the world of the Father into which She also had to enter in a more perfect way.

Another difficult moment arose at the wedding feast in Cana. “Woman, how does your concern affect me, my hour has not yet come” (JN 2, 4). Mary’s thinking is still very human; she wants to help the bride and groom in their need. Jesus sees beyond, He thinks of his great Hour, the hour of the Cross, and, nevertheless, He fulfills the wish of his Mother.

When His great Hour came on Calvary, her desires and natural needs were silenced. Everything is subject to the will of the Father. She wants nothing else other than to fulfill perfectly her role in the plan of salvation.

The pinnacle of that insertion into the order of the Spirit was the waiting for Pentecost. There Mary became the perfect instrument of the Holy Spirit. She led the apostles and disciples to the Cenacle. She transmitted to them her profound longing for the Divine Spirit, and She implored with them, the power of the Most High on the entire Church gathered there. At Pentecost, her longing for the Spirit of God was sated. There, She was completely penetrated and transformed by Him. Her life now had a spiritualized body, that is, transformed by the Spirit in a way in which it could not be destroyed. In this way she was left prepared for her last and final step: her assumption of body and soul into heaven.

I also think that in our own life there should be a gradual insertion into the order of the Spirit.

Questions for reflection

1. How do I cultivate my relationship to the Holy Spirit?
2. Do we feel how the Holy Spirit attracts us and introduces us into God’s world?
3. Is the Virgin my companion when I pray?

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