

Reflections

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Mary Leads Us To Acknowledge Our Smallness

Baptism is the fundamental sacrament. On that day in which we were baptized, we began a love story with Christ. But this story – throughout our long life – is filled with repeated infidelities. Each time we sin, we are stealing from God some of the love He asks of us and we surrender it to one of his rivals.....to an idol which can be money, sensuality or pride.

The people from Israel were already suffering from the weight of its infidelities – just like us. And then God promises them that some day He will give power to his own and will convert them into a faithful people.

Christ brought that power and He gives it to the Church through the sacrament of reconciliation. Through this sacrament, the Lord comes close to us and gives us the spirit of mercy, of forgiveness and of reconciliation. It is the power which makes possible our conversion and a renewed fidelity.

Before God, we have all been unfaithful: prodigal sons who have fled the house of our father seeking to be happier in our own ways. But Christ has not come to condemn us but to save us. He does not look for those who are good and who are saints but for sinners and those who are sick. Because these are the ones who need a doctor who can cure them, a hand to lift them up.

God gives in to our lack of love by giving us more love: He triumphs over our infidelities with mercy. That is what the woman adulteress felt when Jesus forgave her with so much kindness. Or the prodigal son who instead of an angry face finds – waiting for him – a father with open arms who is ready to celebrate his return with a feast.

It is not difficult for us to understand that God loves the humble, the poor and the weak. But it is hard for us to believe that HE also loves the smallness or the culpable weakness of sinners. Therefore, when we feel the weight of our guilt on our conscience, we frequently tend to flee from God and hide.

And we ask ourselves: Why does God allow/permit sin? Then St. Paul gives us the answer: “*God permitted sin in abundance in the world in order to make his mercy superabundant.*” Because love reaches its peak in mercy, nothing obligates our future fidelity more than an undeserving forgiveness. Therefore, God permits us to sin: to be able to forgive us and to thus convince us of the infinite greatness of his love.

Like no one else, the Blessed Virgin knew how to rejoice before the capacity of mercy and forgiveness which God had demonstrated before Her. Because She knew that if She was without sin, it was not by her own merit, but because God, through pure mercy, God had forgiven her beforehand.

Mary felt “picked up/embraced” even before tripping, “raised” before falling, “immunized” even before whatever possibility of being contaminated. Therefore, She was considered the creature most fully forgiven and redeemed.

Like no one else, the Virgin experienced the joy of receiving forgiveness, and the infinite joy which God himself feels upon giving it. Therefore, no one better than She – the humble servant of the Lord – to teach us the joy of acknowledging our smallness and frailty. Nobody better than She – our Mother – to make us understand the meaning of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Mary is capable of freeing us from all fear we could feel when approaching the confessional. She helps us to discover that the priest who awaits us is not a representative of a God-judge, but the Good Shepherd, the Father who awaits the prodigal son with open arms.

The sacrament of confession is a sacrament of liberation and of reconciliation, the sacrament of re-encounter and of joy. Mary invites us to acknowledge our smallness and to open ourselves to the forgiveness of God.

And She wants us to give testimony to that divine mercy which we have received, that we also know how to forgive those who have offended us. She asks us to conquer the bad with the good, to overcome hate, resentment or the desire for revenge... with forgiveness and reconciliation.

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