

faith is empowered by the spirit, conformed to the Son, and with the Son leading us back to the Father.

Mary exemplifies this pattern and direction of Christian faith. Through the power of the Spirit she makes her “fiat”, her yes to God. She conceives of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit who spoke through the prophets, also spoke through Mary as she utters her Magnificat in the tradition of the prophets. She is one with her son, the Word Incarnate, through his life, death and resurrection.

#### **Statement-8**

Mary can be invoked under many titles. Three titles that are under discussion today are, advocate, mediatrix, and co-redemptrix. These must be understood in the correct manner.

1. Advocate: in the Hail Holy Queen, we call upon Mary as “our most gracious advocate.” An advocate is one who pleads our cause. The Catholic tradition believes in the intercession of the saints. Mary, Queen of All Saints fulfills this role of advocate.

2. Mediatrix: a mediator is one who brings parties together that were at a distance. Mary is the mediatrix of all graces, meaning that she is instrumental in assuring that the grace of God comes to us.

3. Co-redemptrix: In his speeches Pope John Paul II speaks of Mary’s role in the work of redemption-but never substituting for Jesus. She cannot stand on the same level with Jesus, but she can share in the unique mediation of Jesus, only with care and caution.

#### **Statement-9**

Faith must be compassionate and merciful, with the strong and tender love of a mother for her children.

Mary manifests compassion and reverence for life from her Annunciation, to the Visitation and to her prayerful support for the apostles. At Cana, she has the concern for the host when the wine runs short.

At Calvary she manifests the boundless love of a mother for her child while standing the closest to the cross, reflecting the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God’s mercy. Even in the midst of such grief, she accepts the beloved disciple as her own son, and so becomes the mother of all Christians. The depth of Mary’s compassionate faith in the pieta, the 13th station of the cross, when she received the limp body of her Son into her arms.

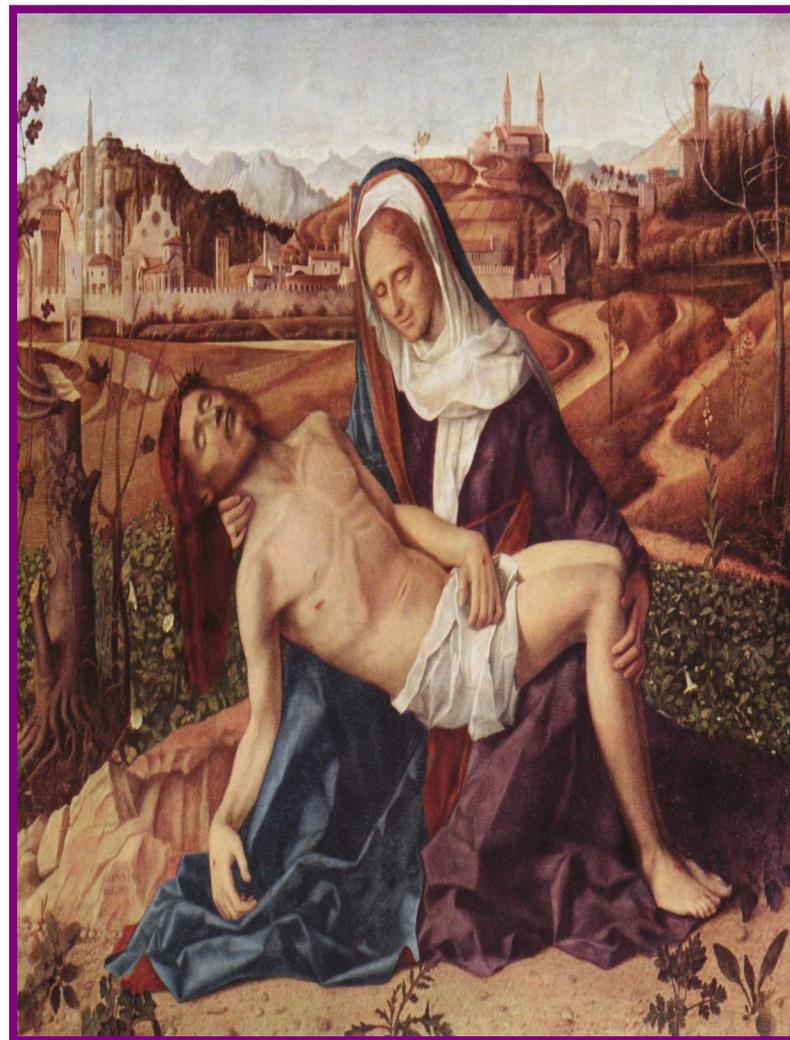
In pamphlet-1 (statements 1-3), we have reflected on the biblical basis for the greatness of Mary. In pamphlet-2 (statements 4-9), we explored the various dimensions of her faith and their significance for Christian faith today. In pamphlet-3 (statements 10-12) point specifically to the Catholic nature of devotion to Mary.

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## **Mary, Model of Faith**

*and*

## **Perfect Disciple**



**Part II of III**

## Reflections on the Study of the Life of Mary-II

By: Peter Schineller, S.J.

In statements 4-9, we shift somewhat from the biblical foundations and dogmatic teaching of the Church to the qualities of faith that Mary exemplifies, qualities we should imitate in our Christian lives today. These qualities are necessary in our devotion to Mary if in our lives we wish to imitate her faith and the qualities of her faith.

### Statement-4

Christian faith today in imitation of Mary should lead the Christian to solidarity with, identification with the poor in service and in lifestyle.

The first quality of Mary's faith and faith life is her clear association with the poor, the "anawim" to use the Biblical word. The gospel of Luke makes this eminently clear. Jesus Christ is born in a stable because there is no room in the inn. He is laid in a manger, and Mary, Joseph and Jesus share the lot of the poor. The first visitors to Jesus are shepherds, a lowly and humble way of life. The sign given to the shepherds is the sign of the manger, the sign of poverty. At the presentation, Luke continues the story with Mary and Joseph offering the gifts of the poor, two young pigeons. They are welcomed by Simeon and Anna, representing the humble who wait for the Lord. In the gospel of Matthew we see that the Holy Family shared the fate of many of the poor-fleeing as refugees, in exile to a foreign land, the land of Egypt.

In addition to the events of her life, we see the simplicity and poverty of Mary in her great prayer, the Magnificat. So strong is this prayer-a prayer of revolution-that in one nation in Latin America, the wealthy military government officials forbade Catholics to recite this prayer in public.

### Statement-5

Faith must be fruitful, that is, leading to good works of charity and justice.

St. Paul writes that "the only thing that counts is faith in love"(Gal.5-6). The letter of St. James is equally strong. "Faith that does nothing in practice...is thoroughly lifeless" (Jas. 2:17). Mary exemplifies a fruitful and active faith from the moment she gives her consent in the story of the Annunciation. "Thereupon Mary set out, proceeding in haste..."(Lk. 1:39). We can also mention the day to day faith life of Mary in nurturing, rearing and educating her child Jesus in the ways of Jewish life.

At Cana, Mary is active, saving embarrassment for the host by bringing Jesus' attention to the lack of wine. She remains with Jesus even to Calvary, where most of the

apostles had deserted their Lord and Master. Then when the Church is about to be born, Mary is there, supporting and strengthening the first apostles in prayer as they wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost. In her Magnificat, Mary gives the basis for this active, fruitful life. She explains that God acts for justice. God shows might with his arm, God upholds Israel, his servant. The God who actively does great things for Mary calls for that active, loving response in her.

### Statement-6

Faith must be tested and deep, that is, paschal/Passover faith that passes through the cross and death to new life.

Jesus Christ expects a faith in his followers that can stand persecution and overcome difficulties. In fact he promised the sign of persecution to his followers (Jn. 15:20). This we can see continually in Mary's pilgrimage of faith. The difficulties of no room in the inn, the hardships of exile in Egypt did not deter Mary from her vocation. She proceeded in faith and trust even when she did not understand, i.e., Simeon's words at the Presentation that a sword shall pierce her heart, or, at the age of twelve, in the temple, when Jesus responded that he must be about his Father's business. At Cana, Jesus calls her to a deeper faith in the mystery of his life, calling her simply "woman" rather than mother, and saying "My hour has not yet come" (Jn. 2:4).

Above all, at Calvary Mary shows the depth of her faith. When others, including Peter and most of the apostles abandoned Jesus, Mary remains. It seems that her Son's life is a failure. All that he stood for seems rejected. She remains with her Son to the end in faithful love. The end is a new beginning and Easter Sunday follows Good Friday.

### Statement-7

Faith today must be Christ-centered, and thus Trinitarian. Christian faith is in and with Jesus, led by the power of the Spirit, leading to God the Father.

Trinitarian faith describes both how God reveals God's self to humankind, and how the human person returns to God. In regard to revelation, the Father reveals his love through the sending of his Son, the Word made flesh, born of Mary. This always occurs in the power of the Spirit who is poured out and given to humankind. Our Christian response of