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Marian Mariology

Chapter 3



The veneration of Mary, when properly understood, permeates the entire life of the Church; it is a dimension of dogma and of piety, of Christology and of ecclesiology. This dimension needs to be made explicit today in connection with the problems of humanity. Mariology expresses something fundamental to the Christian life itself, to the Christian experience of the world.

Sound Mariology has always been understood in Christological terms. If the Gospel revealed nothing more than the fact that Jesus Christ, God and man, was born of Mary, this alone would be sufficient for the Church to love her and to draw theological conclusions from pondering this relationship of Mother and Son. We need no other revelations. Mary is a self-evident and essential *datum* and dimension of the Gospel.

Chapter one centers on Catechesis flowing from Byzantine Marian spirituality with commentary by Brother John M. Samaha, S.M. Chapter two discusses Mariology today with commentary by Rev. Professor Michael Lapierre, S.J. The remaining chapters are commentaries on various Marian topics by noted theologian Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (1914– 2000).

Chapter 3

Our Lady and the Resurrection

by Fr. John Hardon, S.J.

Our Lady, the First Witness

It is not only a pious opinion that the Risen Savior first appeared to His Mother Mary on Easter Sunday. No less than six Doctors of the Church, including SS. Ambrose, Anselm and Albert the Great held that Our Lady was the first witness of the Resurrection. Pope Benedict XIV declared that this fact is "based on the tradition proclaimed by ancient architectural and liturgical monuments, starting from Jerusalem itself." Therefore it is not surprising that St. Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises simply assumes that Jesus "appeared in body and soul to His Blessed Mother" immediately after rising from the dead. In fact, Ignatius makes this Marian mystery the first of fourteen meditations on the risen life of Christ. It is also the key meditation which introduces the capstone of the Spiritual Exercises, the "Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love." We are to learn from Mary that "love ought to be found in deeds rather than words," and that "love consists in mutual interchange on either side."

The Resurrection Fulfills the Annunciation

Over the centuries, the Church's masters of the spiritual life have explained why Christ opened His forty days on earth after the Resurrection by appearing to His Mother. It is because the Resurrection was the fulfillment of the Annunciation.

- At the Annunciation, Mary submitted her will by faith to the word of God. At the Resurrection, her faith was rewarded by actually seeing and speaking with her glorified Son.
- At the Annunciation, Mary represented the human race still needing to be redeemed. At the Resurrection, She represented the human race already redeemed.

Mary's Motherhood

- At the Annunciation, Mary became Mother of the Redeemer by giving Him the human nature with which He offered Himself on the cross. At the Resurrection, She received Him in her arms, after having received from Him on Calvary the Motherhood of the Church.
- At the Annunciation, Mary accepted her vocation to suffer with her Son in His mission of redeeming the world from sin. On Easter Sunday, She shared with Him in the joy of His glorious Resurrection.

Mediatrice

- At the Annunciation, Mary became the link between Christ's humanity and our own. She provided Him with the body He needed to sacrifice to His Father for our salvation.
- At the Resurrection, Mary completed this link by cooperating with Him as the mediatrix of the graces He began to dispense to a human family restored to merciful friendship with God. Thus in Jerusalem Mary's role in the Resurrection of Christ was the completion of her mission at the Annunciation in Nazareth. The Mother of Sorrows became the Cause of Our Joy twice over:
- Once because the joy She experienced on being reunited with her Risen Son is the promise of the joy we should experience on earth in knowing that we have done the will of God.
- Once again because the joy she experienced on Easter Sunday is the prelude to the perfect joy we shall experience on seeing Christ, in soul when He calls us into eternity, and in body and soul after the final resurrection on the last day.

But all of this depends on our faith. We will be blessed, provided like Mary we too have believed that the things promised us by the Lord will be fulfilled.

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