

Why Should We Dedicate Ourselves to Mary?

by Paul Landolfi, SM

This is a fair question. After all, our entire religion is centered in Jesus. Why do we have to do anything else, except to listen to his Word and follow it. Is Mary just a distraction from our goal? God certainly didn't think so. Here are some reasons why we should dedicate ourselves to Mary.

1. Our loving and gracious God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—chose Mary for the fulfillment of the Divine Plan. The Divine Plan was the salvation of all humanity. It was God who desired that Mary be part of this Plan. God's love for us is beyond our wildest dreams. God decided to become one of us. To save humanity God sent the Son to be one of us, live our life, and show us the way to return home after humanity decided to stray from God and go its own way. To become one of us, God needed a mother. He chose Mary. Jesus, the Son of God, would become the Son of Mary in order to save humanity. God never forces, only invites. God asked Mary to become the Mother of Jesus who would then help humanity to come home. God created us without us but does not save us without us. The whole world waited on the answer of this woman. Mary said Yes. She is not a distraction and definitely was involved in the Divine Plan.

2. Mary's Yes was a total Yes. Mary had told the Angel Messenger: "Behold, the Handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to Your Word." At that moment, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus, the Only Begotten Son of God, would be born of Mary. Mary had fully cooperated with the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Divine Plan. Mary was totally faithful to the Holy Spirit and so was fully involved in the salvation of humanity. But there is more to Mary's story. At the same time the Holy Spirit formed Jesus in her chaste womb, the Holy Spirit also formed her heart to the likeness of Jesus. Mary lived the Life of Jesus fully. She was associated with him in all the mysteries of his life. She became a living icon of Jesus through the Holy Spirit's power. In other words, Mary did not only say Yes, she lived it out and became the first and perfect disciple of the Lord. She becomes a sure model for those who wish to follow Jesus.

3. Jesus is the Head, St. Paul tells us, and we are the Members. When Mary said Yes and gave birth to Jesus, the Head, she also gave birth to the Mystical Body of Jesus, which also was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She is truly our Mother in the spiritual order. This is not just a pious way of saying things. Her Yes at the Annunciation gave us life. Her presence at Calvary reaffirmed this. Jesus proclaimed this as he told the Beloved Disciple: "Behold your Mother!" Mary collaborated with her son throughout her daily life, while on Calvary, and even now in glory. Always she fulfills her vocation as Spiritual Mother, collaborating with the Holy Spirit by her maternal love in giving life and in educating the whole Christ. Ultimately it is her faith working through love that the Holy Spirit uses as the instrument to form us in the Christ life.

4. We are called to live the life of Jesus fully. Blessed Father Chaminade invites us to dedicate ourselves to Mary in order to become more like Jesus. Mary's virtues are really the virtues of Jesus. He would tell us: How great to have for our mother the very mother of Jesus. We dedicate ourselves to Mary so we too may cooperate with the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the Divine Plan. Do we remember? Through Baptism and faith we were conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We became other Christs, sons and daughters of Mary. By our dedication to Mary we choose to be born of Mary, allow ourselves to be raised by her as Jesus was, and want to do all we can to help her fulfill her mission. She wants everyone to become like Jesus. She wants us to be part of her family, i.e., other Christs continuing his ministry on earth. His ministry is to fulfill the Divine Plan—the redemption of humanity. Jesus invites us to collaborate in this . . . just as Mary, his mother, has done.

4. Mary's educative mission is to lead all humanity to Jesus. This is why we should dedicate ourselves to Mary and take her as our model. She lived the life and virtues of Jesus perfectly. Her one desire is for our conformity with Christ. As Mediatrix of all the grace won for us by Jesus, she now helps believers to live the life of Jesus. She definitely has a collaborative role with the Holy Spirit in the formation of Christ within us. Mary is also our intercessor with Jesus. But we must choose her specifically to be our mother. This is what is dedication or entrustment. We must choose Mary just as Jesus did. We must live our life with Mary just as Jesus did. We must cooperate with Mary in her educative mission to the world.

Act of Entrustment to the Blessed Virgin Mary

(for persons newly dedicating or renewing)

O Mary, Mother of God, accept my entire consecration to you. Standing before you I offer your Immaculate Heart all my feelings, thoughts, and actions, all my sufferings and merits, and my very death. I offer all that I can do, all that I have, all that I am. I wish to love and honor you, to defend your titles, especially that of your Immaculate Conception, and strive to imitate your virtues.

Grant that I may act in everything only through love for the heart of Jesus and for you. Remember the Marianist Family; it is in union with them that I consecrate myself to you.

Powerless as I am to love you as I would wish, let me offer you the honor and love you received from the Heart of Jesus on earth and the honor you receive from the Holy Trinity eternally in heaven. Amen.

May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

+ Amen

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