

# Mary Our Guide and Model

*Under your protection I take refuge, O Mary;  
be the guide and model of my interior life.*

## MEDITATION

1. Month of May, Month of Mary! The heart of every Christian turns spontaneously toward his heavenly Mother, with a desire to live in closer intimacy with her and to strengthen the sweet ties which bind him to her. It is a great comfort on our spiritual way, which is often fatiguing and bristling with difficulties, to meet the gentle presence of a mother. One is so at ease near one's mother. With her, everything becomes easier; the weary, discouraged heart, disturbed by storms, finds new hope and strength, and continues the journey with fresh courage.

"If the winds of temptation arise," sings St Bernard, "if you run into the reefs of trials, look to the star, call upon Mary. In danger, sorrow or perplexity, think of Mary, call upon Mary." There are times when the hard road of the "nothing" frightens us, miserable as we are; and then, more than ever, we need her help, the help of our Mother. The Blessed Virgin Mary has, before us, trodden the straight and narrow path which leads to sanctity; before us she has carried the cross, before us she has known the ascents of the spirit through suffering. Sometimes, perhaps, we do not dare to look at Jesus the God-Man, who because of His divinity seems too far above us; but near Him is Mary, His Mother and our Mother, a privileged creature surely, yet a creature like ourselves, and therefore a model more accessible for our weakness.

Mary comes to meet us during this month, to take us by the hand, to initiate us into the secret of her interior life, which must become the model and norm of our own.

2. St Therese of the Child Jesus, referring to certain discourses on the Blessed Virgin, said, "She is spoken of as unapproachable, whereas she should be represented as imitable" (*Novissima Verba*). Mary is inaccessible, it is true, in the sublime privileges which flow from her divine maternity, and it is right to consider these prerogatives in order to admire and contemplate them, to praise our Mother's greatness and hence always to love her more and

more; but, at the same time, we must consider Mary in the concrete picture of her earthly life. It is a simple, humble picture, which never leaves the framework of the ordinary life common to all mothers; under this aspect, Mary is truly imitable. Our programme for the month of May, then, will be to contemplate the grandeurs of Mary, that we may be stimulated to imitate her virtues.

We shall consider Mary especially as the ideal and the model of our interior life. No one has understood, as she did, the depth of meaning in the words of Jesus: "*But one thing is necessary*" (Luke 10,42), and no one has lived by these words better than she. From the very first moment of her life, Mary was entirely God's and lived only for Him. Consider the years spent in the Temple in silence and prayer, the months passed at Nazareth in recollection, and in adoration of the eternal Word incarnate within her, the thirty years lived in sweet intimacy with Jesus, her Son and her God; then the sharing of His apostolic life, the union with Him in His Passion, and finally, her last years with St John, during which, by her prayers, she was the support of the infant Church. Although the scenes in which she moved changed in appearance, although the external circumstances varied, her life remained unchanged in its substance, in her interior search for the "one thing necessary", and in her adherence to God alone.

The succession of events and her exterior activity did not hinder her from persevering in that attitude of continual prayer in which St Luke presents her to us: "*Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart*" (2,19).

If, in imitation of Mary, our heart is firmly anchored in God, nothing can distract us from our interior occupation: to seek and love the Lord and live in intimacy with Him.

## Mary Our Mediatrix

*O Mary, since Jesus willed to come to us through you,  
grant that I may go to Him through you.*

### MEDITATION

1. The Church teaches us to invoke Mary as Mediatrix of all graces. This title summarizes what the Blessed Virgin is for us, in our relations with her beloved Son: the Mediatrix of grace, of mercy, the treasurer of all the graces which Jesus merited for us.

"By the communion of sorrows and of will between Christ and Mary," says St. Pius X, "she merited to become the dispenser of all the benefits which Jesus acquired for us by shedding His Blood" (Encyclical: *Ad Diem Illum*). Mary, who was associated in the closest and most intimate way with the life, the work, and the Passion of her Son, cooperated with Him in our redemption to such an extent that the grace, which Jesus alone could merit for us condignly, was merited also by Mary, although in a secondary way and by congruity only.

Thus Mary obtained real power over all the supernatural treasures acquired by her Son; and since she obtained them together with Him, she also distributes them to us with Him. Leo XIII says, "It may be affirmed that, according to God's will, nothing comes to us without going through Mary's hands. Just as no one can approach the Almighty Father except through the Son, so no one can approach Christ except through His Mother" (Encyclical: *Octobri Mense*). After Jesus, who is the only Mediator, Mary is the Mediatrix: as Jesus continually intercedes with the Father in heaven on our behalf, so Mary intercedes with Jesus for us; she obtains and dispenses to us all the graces we need. The Introit of the Mass for the Feast of Mary Mediatrix of All Graces [May 8 in some places] very fittingly applies to Mary the words spoken by St. Paul about Jesus: "*Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, to obtain mercy and pardon.*" Next to Jesus, Mary is really the "throne of grace," and she can obtain everything for us from her Son. She is the *omnipotentia supplex*, the all-powerful intercessor: all-powerful in her prayer as Mother.

2. Mary is the Mediatrix between her Son and us for a twofold reason: she gives Jesus to us and she brings us to Him. The Gospel tells us this several times, showing us the typically maternal attitude of Mary as she brought Jesus to mankind. Our Lady offered the Infant Jesus to the adoration of the shepherds and the Wise Men; she took Him to the Temple and presented Him to Simeon; by her intercession at Cana, she obtained the first miracle from her Son. On Calvary, Mary received into her arms the martyred, lifeless Body of her beloved Son, whom she offered to mankind as the price of its redemption. In the Cenacle, she begged the plenitude of the Holy Spirit for the Apostles and, from that day to the day of her Assumption, she sustained the infant

Church by her prayers and maternal encouragement. To find Mary is to find Jesus. This is the whole reason for her existence and her mission: to give Jesus to the world and to souls, and with Jesus, to give His grace and blessings. As St. Bernard says, Mary is truly the channel which carries the living water of grace to mankind; furthermore, she brings Jesus, the very source of grace.

As Mediatrix, Mary also leads men to Jesus by teaching them the way to her Son and showing them how to please Him. We are always poor little children incapable of making presentable gifts to God, but Mary our Mother, with maternal delicacy, arranges and embellishes our gifts, our acts, our prayers and sacrifices, and offers them with her own hands to her divine Son. She, like a true mother, gives particular attention to our hearts, which she desires to make pleasing to Jesus: Mary wants to form in each one of us a heart which is pure, full of love and goodness, a heart which can beat in unison with the heart of her Son. Let us then, place our hearts in Mary's hands, that she may fill them "with grace and truth, life and virtue."

**From *Divine Intimacy* by Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.**

### MARY AND JOSEPH

What great profit Saint Joseph must have drawn from the many years of conversation he had almost constantly with the Blessed Virgin!... I have no doubt at all that even the silence of Mary was extremely edifying and that it was enough just to look at her to feel drawn to love God and despise everything else. But what kind of speech must have been that of a soul in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, in which God had poured the fullness of grace and who had more love than all the Seraphim combined! What fire must have issued from that mouth when she opened it to express the feelings of her heart! What coldness, what ice must it not have melted! But what an effect it must have had on Joseph, who was already so greatly disposed to be inflamed! ... This great fire, capable of setting the whole world alight, had only Joseph's heart to warm and burn for so many years... If she considered Saint Joseph's heart to be a part of her own, what care she must have taken to inflame it with God's love!

**- St. Claude de la Columbière**