

Mary's Role in the Redemption of the World

In a homily given by Fr Livinus Igbodekwe on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Monday, 8 September, he stated, “Natural minds talk of history while spiritual minds ponder on divine providence.” His quote hit home as I was taking time to “ponder” the Nativity of our Blessed Lady.

I started to think of God reconciling the world to himself. From Genesis to Revelation, we witness over and over again, the continual cycle of sin and restoration. Man sins and God, out of his mercy and grace, continues to restore. We should be most thankful that we have a God who works through covenants and not contracts.

There are times when I often think to myself, “Adam and Eve had it all, and they blew it!” They walked with God, “... in the coolness of the day.” (Genesis 3) Everything they could possibly want was theirs, and yet that still was not enough. They wanted more. They needed to be the determiner of their own destiny. God had to offer them was not good enough. Their disobedience led to the angel of lies, and in so doing, it led them to sin, alienation and death.

But God was not going to leave us to our own devices. God intervened when he said to the serpent, “...Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’” (Genesis 3:14-15)

In the New Testament, we see the dawning of the new creation, “... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14) However, this would not be possible if it were not for a simple, fiat, a simple, “Yes” from a young virgin, Mary most holy. God in his infinite wisdom permitted a human being to play an integral role in the

redemption of the world. God chose a woman to participate in his act of redemption and restoration.

St. John Paul II, during his pontificate, wrote and taught continuously on the spirituality of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. There were some theologians which had difficulty with the teaching of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. While the Universal Church has never formally defined Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix as a dogma requiring assent of the faithful, individual Christians are still free to believe and use this language or not, according to whether they find it helpful.

What I have taught in the parishes to which I have been fortunate enough to have served over these past 38 years, is that there is a deep sense by which we, the faithful baptized, are also called to be co-redeemers with Christ. Through baptism, we are all called to participate in Christ's work of redemption, in a way that Mary models and exemplifies for us.

It was our Blessed Lady who worked in conjunction with the will of God and with her Son. While Christ our Lord is the mediator of our salvation, it was Mary, in her "Yes" to God who thereby participated in the most profound manner in the redemption of the world. It is with the cooperation and the obedience of Mary that her Son, Jesus Christ, was able to fully accomplish His mission to restore us from the sin of Adam. Thereby, she most certainly participated as, Co-Redemptrix.

Pax Christi

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