**How is Mary the “Spiritual Mother of Humanity”?**

By Dr. Mark Miravalle • June 4, 2012 • Articles • Comments Off on How is Mary the “Spiritual Mother of Humanity”?

From the cross, the dying Christ gave his mother to John, his “beloved disciple and, ultimately, to all humanity: When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said this mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother” (Jn. 19:26-27).

Blessed John Paul II explains how the gift of Mary as the world’s Spiritual Mother is a gift which Jesus makes personally to each individual and to all humanity:

The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very center of this mystery – a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity – is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The man at the foot of the cross is John, “the disciple whom he loved. But it is not he alone. Following Tradition, the Council does not hesitate to call Mary the “Mother of Christ and the Mother of mankind” …Indeed, she is Mother of the members of Christ …since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful… (Redemptoris Mater, M 23)

…Mary’s motherhood which became man’s inheritance is a gift: a gift which Christ himself makes personally to each individual” (Redemptoris Mater, 45).

 In his prayer consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25, 1984, Bl. John Paul calls Mary the “Mother of individuals and peoples” who knows our sufferings and embraces our human world:

O Mother of individuals and peoples, you who know all their sufferings and their hopes, you who have a mother’s awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we, moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Heart. Embrace, with the love of the Mother and the Handmaid of the Lord, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of concern for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples…(March 25, 2004, L’O R, p.8).

 The Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council refers to the Mother of Jesus as a “mother to us in the order of grace,” (Lumen Gentium, 61) meaning that Mary is not a mother to humanity in any physical sense, but rather a mother in the spiritual and mystical order, precisely as a result of her unique role with Jesus (and completely dependent upon Jesus) in fulfilling the mission of human redemption:

She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son’s sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus in a wholly singular way, shed cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace (LG, 61).…Taken up into heaven, she did not lay aside this saving office, but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal life (LG 62).

 In essence, Mary is our spiritual mother because she participated with Jesus in obtaining the graces of redemption, and as a result, was given the privileged role of distributing the graces of redemption to her earthly children. Thus the Mother of Jesus participates in the mothering actions of interceding, of birthing, of nourishing, and of protecting humanity in the supernatural order through sanctifying grace.

How specifically does Mary act as a spiritual mother to us? She does so in the spiritual order in the same three basic ways that a good earthly mother does so in the natural order.

First, a good mother suffers for her child. This oftentimes happens shortly after conception, but certainly continues through gestation, at the labor of birth, and throughout the lifelong sacrificial vocation of motherhood for her child.

Secondly, a good mother nourishes her child. It is not enough to bring her child into existence through conception and birth, but she must also feed her child and nurture her child in love and formation.

Thirdly, a good mother intercedes for her child. A good mother pleads for the best for her child, whether it be in the areas of education, moral direction, social activity, recreation, in most all aspects of the child’s life. A mother’s intercession is especially powerful whenever her child is in risk of any danger or difficulty.

These are precisely the three foundational ways, that of 1)suffering; 2) nourishing; and 3) interceding, by which the Mother of Jesus exercises her spiritual and maternal functions on behalf of the entire human family.

Mary uniquely suffered with Jesus throughout her earthly life, but climatically at Calvary, in order to obtain of the graces of redemption for us all, like a New Eve alongside of the New Adam (cf. St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. II, 2nd Century). For this first role of spiritual motherhood, she has been referred to in the Church since the 14th century as the “Co-redemptrix.” Bl. John Paul II had specifically called Mary the “Co-redemptrix on at least six separate occasions for her role of historic suffering with Jesus.

Mary then distributes the graces of Jesus to humanity which were obtained by the Divine Redeemer and the immaculate human Co-redemptrix at Calvary. For this role of motherly “nourishing” in the spiritual order, she is referred to by the popes of the last two centuries as the “Mediatrix of all graces.”

Mary also intercedes for all humanity in the spiritual order, especially at historic times of great danger and difficulty, bringing the needs of humanity to the throne of Christ he Son. She also intercedes for and announces the coming of the Holy Spirit, which she did so effectively in the Upper Room gathered with the first disciples before the First Pentecost (cf. Acts 1:14). For this role of maternal intercession, Mary has been referred to as the “Advocate” for the human family since the second century of the Church.

Ultimately then, how is Mary the world’s Spiritual Mother? She is Spiritual Mother of humanity precisely through the exercise of her three principal spiritual roles of service to the human family as the Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate. Her general role as Spiritual Mother of humanity is realized through these specific motherly functions as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate. Mary’s overall role as Spiritual Mother is inseparable and put into practice only through these three specific maternal roles and actions in the order of grace.

Mary perpetually shared in the ongoing sufferings of Jesus throughout his life mission of salvation, and at Calvary she was “spiritually crucified with her crucified Son, as Bl. John Paul II taught (Jan. 31, 1985 Address, Quayaquil, Ecuador). In all his teachings, Bl. John Paul II made clear, once again, that as Spiritual Mother of all Humanity and as Mediatrix, Mary may dispense the graces of Redemption, only because as Co-redemptrix with Christ she cooperated in the obtaining of the graces of Redemption. The titles Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix presuppose each other and are absolutely inseparable.

Only these three titles and roles of Mary as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate combined accurately express her entire mission as Spiritual Mother of humanity: to suffer and redeem with Christ, to dispense all graces of salvation from Christ, to intercede for us and to invoke the coming of the Holy Spirit of Christ, on behalf of all humanity.

Note here that we speak not of “three mothers”, but of one mother with three aspects of maternal service for her children. We therefore are not speaking of three separate truths about Mary, but one central truth, her spiritual motherhood, which is manifested in three profound and inseparable expressions of her spiritual maternity as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate.

In the messages of the Lady of All Nations, the Church approved messages from Amsterdam (local Church approval, May 31, 2002), the Mother of Jesus calls for the proclamation of the Dogma of Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate as the heavenly pre-condition for Our Lady to intercede for a new descent of the Holy Spirit, and thus to usher in a time of global peace, true peace, for the world:

The Lady of All Nations desires unity in the Spirit of Truth. The world is encompassed by a false spirit—Satan. When the dogma, the last dogma in Marian history, has been proclaimed, the Lady of All Nations will give peace, true peace to the world” (May 31, 1954 Message).

 On Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 2012, a new worldwide online petition to Pope Benedict XVI for a “New Coming of the Holy Spirit” through the papal declaration of Mary as “Spiritual Mother of humanity” was initiated and has immediately “caught on fire”, with petitions coming in from over 70 countries in just the first week of this global online petition. This petition to His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, is spearheaded by an extraordinary list of international Catholic celebrities, including Mr. and Mrs. Steve and Susie McEveety, Hollywood Producer of “The Passion of the Christ”, “Braveheart”, “Bella”; Mother Angelica, Foundress of EWTN Worldwide Television Network; Immaculee Llibagiza, world renowned Rwandan speaker and author of “Left Behind”; the most honorable, Mercedes Tuason, Vatican Ambassador from the Philippines, and several others.

To examine this extraordinary phenomena of worldwide petitions from all parts of the world, or to add your own name to these international Catholic celebrities in favor of a “New Pentecost” initiated by the papal proclamation of Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood by Pope Benedict XVI, go to www.peacethroughawoman.com.

The world right now could use some help from heaven, like a new, historic, dynamic outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the Spiritual Mother of All Peoples. Join the petition and forward it on to the friends and family members whom you know will understand. The time is now for a New Pentecost through Mary, the world’s Spiritual Mother.

Dr. Mark Miravalle

Professor of Theology and Mariology

Franciscan University of Steubenville

May 31, 2012 Feast of the Visitation of Mary