

9 Day Consecration Maximilian Kolbe

DAY ONE

*Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit,
Nurtures Christ and the Church*

St. Augustine's Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit that my thoughts may all be holy;
Act in me O Holy Spirit that my works, too, may be holy;
Draw my heart O Holy Spirit that I love but what is holy;
Strengthen me O Holy Spirit to defend all that is holy;
Guard me then O Holy Spirit that I always may be holy.

Reading: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing is impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Commentary

The Incarnation takes place in Mary's womb; the greatest event of history occurs at the Annunciation. The angel greets Mary with superlatives and indicates her primary role as Mother of the Messiah! At this moment the Holy Spirit verifies Mary as His "spouse" and that no human father will be the agent of conception. Mary's generous response sets the tone of her whole life with Jesus. She is the first and best Christian, our example of giving an unqualified "yes" without knowing the future.

Reflection

St. Maximilian, a Conventual Franciscan, was influenced by his Order's having been the defender of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception for six centuries before the definition of the dogma in 1854, and before the words of Mary at Lourdes, "I am the Immaculate Conception." This Conception took place, after the normal human encounter of her parents, in the womb of Mary's mother. God, of course, creates each human soul individually; He gifted Mary with utter freedom from sin because of her future motherhood.

In the relationships within the Trinity the only begotten Son is generated by the Father. As we use our human experience to understand what "Son" means, so He leads us to understand the Spirit as the "Uncreated Immaculate Conception." Thus the Holy Spirit, as it were, gives His own name to Mary: the Immaculate Conception, and chooses her for His bride.

By Christ's direct command from the Cross, "Behold your Mother," we are to be formed by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, not physically, of course, but by the process of spiritual formation. Our total consecration acknowledges this process. Whereas such a consecration is not necessary to salvation, it is an immense help. Our awareness of a commitment makes us conscious of our responsibility to evangelize the world and imitate Mary. As Scripture has it, Jesus remains the Mediator with God, but we go to Jesus and then to God with Mary, and with the whole Church. Thus Mary continues her

nurturing motherhood in every member of the Church and gives birth to the likeness of Jesus in all of us by the power of her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, the Uncreated Immaculate Conception.

The Words of St. Maximilian

(Journal reflection: "Our Purpose," August 1940)

The aim of creation, the end of man himself, is the love of God, Creator and Father, an ever greater love, the divinization of man, his return to God from whom he came, union with God, a fruitful love. So that love for the Father might become even more perfect, infinitely more perfect, the love of the Son Jesus, made itself manifest. But so that love for the Son might burn more intensely and thus enkindle a still more ardent love for the Father, there has come to help us the united love of the Holy Spirit and of the Immaculata, the mother full of mercy, the Mediatrix of all graces, an earthly creature like ourselves, who strongly attracts hearts to herself and to her motherly heart.

The love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit flames eternally; the love of the Father, Jesus and the Immaculata knows no imperfection. Only man (not always and not in all things) responds imperfectly to this love with his own love. To arouse that love for the Immaculata, therefore, by enkindling it in one's own heart, to communicate this fire to those who live close to us, to set on fire with this love all souls and each one in particular—those who live now and those who will live in the future, to make this flame burst forth ever more intensely and without restrictions in ourselves and all over the earth: such is our purpose. Everything else is just a means.

An effect resembles the cause that produced it. Consequently every creature shows in itself some resemblance to God, the more perfect the creature is the more evident is this resemblance.

Even if we could establish thousands and thousands of degrees, each more perfect, each more spiritually pure than the last, there would still remain an infinite distance between even the most elevated of these degrees and the Source of Love itself. God bends down to his own creature and joins himself to it with a love that annihilates that whole infinite space; he counts his creature as part of his family, makes it one of his own offspring.

The soul is regenerated in the sacred waters of Baptism and thus becomes God's child. Water, which purifies everything over which it runs, is a symbol of her who purifies every soul that draws near to her. It is a symbol of the Immaculata, of her who is without stain. Upon one who is washed in this water the grace of the Holy Spirit descends. The Holy Spirit, the divine Spouse of the Immaculata, acts only in her and through her; he communicates supernatural life, the life of grace, the divine life, the sharing in divine love, in divinity. The child of God, as a member of the divine family, has God the Father for father and the Mother of God for mother. Then one has the Son of God for brother and becomes God's heir and is joined to the Persons of this divine family through love. Nor is that all. The Son of God selects spouses from among souls; he unites himself with them in a conjugal love, and through him they become the mothers of many, many other souls.

Sub Tuum Praesidium Prayer

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

Miraculous Medal Prayer

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you, and for all who do not have recourse to you, especially the enemies of the Church and all those recommended to you.