



At length, the culmination of prophecy arrives. The shadow of things to come gives place to the reality, and the angel of God appears in a humble cottage of Galilee to an unknown maiden. He comes not to command but to propose, for God will not take away the freedom of His children. His proposal is this - that She, Mary of Nazareth, shall consent to become the very Mother of the Eternal God Himself. **"Behold, thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name 'JESUS.' He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High."** There is a pause; then a question; then another pause. At length, She bows Her lovely head as She utters those momentous consenting words: **"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word."** At that moment, the Word is made Flesh and dwells amongst us.

God thought so much of Mary that He willed to make the Redemption of men dependent upon Her free consent. If She had not consented then; if, for example, She had said instead, **"Lord, I am not worthy"** the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity would not have taken flesh in Her. How or when we would have been redeemed, we do not know, nor is it of any importance that we should know, for our fate was safe in Mary's keeping. To that consent of Hers, we owe Jesus, His Church, His Grace and any hope we have of attaining eternal life. The Redeemer

came through Her to the rest of our poor fallen race, and He brought everything that the Faith contains. Almost immediately, the significance of this Truth becomes evident when Mary visits Her cousin, Elizabeth. On the approach of Jesus now living within Mary, the unborn precursor leaps in his mother's womb. Elizabeth says expressly that this happens at the sound of Mary's greeting reached her ears. John the Baptist is cleansed from original sin, only because the Savior comes to him through His Mother. Mary exercises, for the first time, Her unique prerogative as the administrator of the Treasury of Heaven: the Dispenser of all Graces.

At Bethlehem, both Shepherds and Magi find - not Jesus alone but **"Mary with the Child"** or **"the Child with His Mother."** Later, in the Temple, Jesus and Mary are united in sorrow. He will be **"a sign which men will refuse to acknowledge"**; Her soul will **"have a sword to pierce it."**

At Nazareth, the Hidden Life is spent with Mary and ends on the note of Mary: **"His Mother kept in Her heart the memory of all this."** The Public Life of Jesus begins, is even advanced, through Mary: **"There was a wedding-feast at Cana in Galilee; and Jesus' Mother was there."** Likewise, the Public Life ends on the note of Mary. **"His Mother ... had taken Her stand beside the Cross of Jesus."** For the Sacrifice of Redemption, Mary provided Victim and Priest, Blood and Altar. Moreover, in the words of Pope Benedict XV:

"With Christ suffering and dying, She too suffered almost unto death. For man's salvation, She abdicated Her rights as mother over Son. In order to appease Divine Justice, She immolated Him as far as it lay within Her power, so that we may justly say that She has, with Christ, redeemed the world."

The work of Redemption, begun and consummated dependently on Mary, continues as long as grace is applied to the souls of men. Mary gave us the very source of grace; She continues now to obtain every grace for us. **“Mary,”** said Pope Benedict XIV, **“is, as it were, a celestial stream, by which all heavenly gifts and graces are borne to men.”** **“Nothing whatever of that magnificent treasure of grace which Christ has won for us,”** continues Leo XIII, **“nothing is imparted except through Mary.”** And, concludes Benedict XV: **“The graces of every kind which we have received from the treasures of Redemption are administered by Her hands. Graces of every kind.”**

Therefore, Sanctifying Grace, the life of the soul is given to us through Mary. Hence, supernatural life comes to the soul from God through Mary, just as natural life comes to the body from God through natural mothers. Mary is in truth and reality the Mother of the souls of men. We are related to Her in the supernatural order just as actually as we are related to our earthly mothers in the natural order. If it is true that we can do no good work of ourselves towards our salvation without God's Grace, and that no Grace is given except through Mary, it must certainly be true that we can do no good work of ourselves towards our salvation apart from Mary.

Pondering these sublime truths of theology, Mary's Child understands that they will benefit him little unless he tries to reduce them to practice in his own spiritual and apostolic life. He knows that his desire to bring Mary to the world as the infallible means of winning

the world to Jesus is utterly impossible unless he has Mary in his heart. Without Her, he can neither lift himself to God nor do God's work; with Her, he becomes capable of attaining a marvelous degree of sanctity and of possessing unbelievable power over the souls of others.

At the moment of the Annunciation, God viewed the human race through Mary; She was our representative and, as such, God became Incarnate within Her. The spiritual life of a Christian is simply the growth within him of the life and spirit of Christ. Because it is a work of grace, this new **“INCARNATION”** does not take place without Mary. She is really the Mother of Christ; She is really the Mother of the Christian. For the daily growth of the Christ-life in the individual soul, Her consent and motherly care are just as necessary as they were when He took flesh at Nazareth. Realizing this, the Child of Mary deliberately and wholeheartedly acknowledges Mary's position as his representative at Nazareth and on Calvary.



It was through Mary that all his actions became the actions of a Christian; Acknowledgement of Her position implies that every action of his should bear some impress of gratitude towards Her. An act of consecration once repeated would never be sufficient ratification of the things Mary did on his behalf.

Our actions are only rendered supernaturally meritorious because of the grace bestowed through Mary; therefore, every action should contain some expression of the soul's dependence on Her.