



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Assumption-August 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

***Readings: Apocalypse 11: 19, 12: 1-6, 12, Psalm 44, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-27, Luke 1: 39-56***

For some Christians the great stumbling block to becoming Catholic, to becoming part of the Universal Church, is Our Lady. Most of the reasons evinced by the hesitant are nothing to do with the reality and everything to do with a set of carefully crafted canards and manufactured myths.

Today is a good day to tackle them.

‘Catholics worship Mary’. As Sheridan put it: ‘The lie direct’. Catholics are forbidden to worship Mary. Worship is for God alone.

‘Catholics put a disproportionate emphasis on Mary’.

Disproportionate for what? If you take the line that Mary was an incidental in salvation history, a young girl swept up in the story whose part was purely as a biological convenience, fair enough. But Scripture will not allow you to do that. Mary is chosen by God, singled out for the unique task of bearing the Saviour of the world into the world He came to save. Her vocation is not incidental or accidental but providential. Her closeness to Christ cannot be equalled, her faithfulness, to the One who chose her, unrivalled.

She alone is present for the entire earthly life of Jesus, conception to tomb....and beyond.

‘Jesus Himself is dismissive of His Mother’. True, Jesus calls her ‘Woman’ – but this is not a 21<sup>st</sup> century term of dismissal. She is WOMAN. The new Eve. The personification of God’s intention for the *human race*. The first Eve – whose name means, ‘mother of the living’, by man’s disobedience and fall, becomes the ‘mother of the dying’. Mary, by obedience and commitment to God’s will, becomes the Mother of all who will live through the New Adam, the recreation of Mankind, Jesus Christ.

‘Mary is just another saint...’ But Jesus speaks to her and to us from the Cross. ‘Behold your mother’, he says to the beloved disciple. Is this really just a bit of deathbed housekeeping? ‘Look after me Mum please’. It is a command to the beloved disciple, John, you, me, all who stand at the foot of the Cross. Jesus gives His Mother to us – a gift of love but also a sign. We started out as creatures of God. We are hereby promoted to little brothers and sisters in Christ, part of the universal, timeless and divine family.

This moment, the Cross of sacrifice is the supreme moment of the history of salvation, the culmination of the Incarnation, the defeat of death. It is where both humanity and creation receive the ultimate re-boot. We become the children of the Mother of the Living.

‘Catholics pray to Mary’. Guilty as charged, your honour. But please understand what we mean by this. We do not pray to the Blessed Virgin as a sort of ‘fourth person of the Trinity’. We pray as I might, in 16<sup>th</sup> C language, say to you: ‘I prithee pray for me’ – I pray you, I beseech you, pray for me. We, as original Christians, know that Our Lady was the first intercessor at the Wedding at Cana – the miracle that contains the sacramental mystery of our salvation. We know that, in Christ, death does not divide us – the family, universal, timeless, in Heaven and on Earth are united at the altar of sacrifice and can pray for one another. Death is a radical discontinuity – not a division of the Body of Christ.

‘Why do so many of your churches begin Our Lady of....etc?’

BECAUSE.....Our Lady is our Mother. The Church is Our Mother. Both find their vocation in the openness to the Holy Spirit of God (at Annunciation and at Pentecost) that gives Christ’s entry into the world and presents Him to the people and ponders His life and follows Him everywhere He goes. Our Lady is the ikon of the Church.

A modern objection:

‘Mary is a symbol of old fashioned collaboration with the Patriarchy.’

Correct. But, in this case, the Patriarchy is the supreme reality of the redeeming love of the Father. Mary does not fit the required sub-Marxist pattern of feminism. She does not collude with the biological and theological nonsense of the motherhood- rejecting sloganizing of the culture of death. No-one could have been a more viable candidate for abortion in modern terms than Mary- young, vulnerable, pregnant by (to the world) unknown, in mortal danger of capital punishment for adultery etc etc. Mary reveals, in her courageous and loving and faithful humanity, the highest hope of Man. She collaborates with the Father in our Redemption. That’s why some like to call her ‘Co-Redemptrix’. Not equal to God but a sign of the highest and most intimate co-operation in the work of salvation.

And today we celebrate her homecoming. At the end of her life, Her beloved Son comes to receive her, body and soul, into the heights of Heaven. The God-bearer, for that is who she is, knows no corruption as we will. But she is still the great sign of hope for us, her children, that we may, at the end of our lives, purged of all sin in the fire of divine love, be lifted heavenwards and join her, highest of the saints, at the throne of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, pray for us.

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