

PART 2

**Consecration to the Immaculata:
In the Heart of the Trinity, with Our Gaze Fixed on Christ**

Readings from the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe

The gift of the Mother, entrusting and consecrating ourselves to Mary, our belonging to Her, are in themselves a gift of the Most Holy Trinity.

The Father reveals all His love for us in the Son's sacrifice on the Cross. The Spirit makes the gift of the Crucified Christ alive and present. The love that the Father manifested in Christ is offered to us by the Holy Spirit, Who remains forever in the Church.

Also the motherhood of Mary, therefore, is offered to us by the Holy Spirit. As her physical motherhood is a work of the Spirit ("What has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit"), so her spiritual motherhood is from the Holy Spirit.

Then it is a gift of the Trinity, but it also refers to the Trinity. Consecration to Mary has the Trinity as its goal and as its ultimate reference, because the whole Christian life is related to the Trinity. Mary herself is entirely related to the Trinity:

"She is the Mother of the Son of God, beloved daughter of the Father, the Temple of the Holy Spirit" (LG 53).

St. Maximilian cared very much about the Trinitarian dimension of consecration to Mary, because everything that happened to Mary is a work of the Holy Trinity. Mary lived a unique experience of the action of the Most Holy Trinity in her life at the moment of the Annunciation:

"The One and Triune God looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden and 'He who is mighty' works in her 'great things'. God the Father entrusts to her, as a son, His own Son, God the Son enters into her womb, while the Holy Spirit molds the Body of Christ in the womb of the most pure Virgin. 'And the Word was made flesh' (Jn 1:14). The Immaculata becomes Mother of God. Christ, God-Man, is the fruit of the love of the One and Triune God and of Mary Immaculate" (KW 1295).

It is important to understand that, in the light of Father Kolbe's considerations, the profound relationship between Mary and the Trinity is the reason why our consecration to her implies to begin an itinerary that leads us to the encounter with the Most Holy Trinity.

Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and in her life she was always docile to the action of the Spirit.

Consecration/entrustment to Mary, therefore, becomes trusting in the divine Presence. In the Holy Spirit Mary takes care of me, of us, the world. My life and that of the world are in good hands. In the hands of the Spirit, first of all, and of this Mother, who exercises her motherhood by the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who associates Mary to Himself in the work of sanctification of men. The "*motherhood in the order of grace*" (LG 61) that Mary exercises in the Church is in the Holy Spirit. Even today, like that day at the foot of the Cross, we receive the gift of this motherhood thanks to the Holy Spirit, as we have already pointed out.

Mary, for her part, from the moment of the Annunciation, was always docile to the action of the Spirit. St. Luke emphasizes a usual attitude of Mary who "treasured all these things in her heart..." (Lk 2:19, 51). Mary accomplished it in the Holy Spirit, in Whom the Word is alive. The first attitude in living out our consecration to Mary is precisely to listen to the Word in total availability, trust, surrender to the Spirit.

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"Let yourself be led... by the Holy Spirit. Let yourself be led by the Holy Spirit through the Immaculata" (KW 987 C), as St. Maximilian reminded himself, in a text that speaks of consecration to Mary as surrender into the hands of Mary and docility to the work that the Spirit accomplishes in us through her.

Mary is the beloved daughter of the Father, as it was written in the text of the Second Vatican Council. We see in her the fully realized plan of God for His creatures: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself,*" as Paul writes in the epistle to the Ephesians (1:3-5). In this sense, Mary is the beloved daughter of the Father, because He accomplished first of all in her the dream that He had for all of us, making her holy and immaculate in love. Contemplating this mystery St. Maximilian wrote that: "*The Immaculata is ... the ultimate limit between God and creation. She is a faithful image of God's perfection, of His sanctity*" (KW 1232). Mary's life is under the sign of the gratuitous love of the Father from the beginning of her existence. Mary feels all its intensity when with grateful astonishment and singing to her God she exclaims: "*He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant*" (Lk 1:48). This ocean of love that inundates her from the first instant of her conception, becomes a river of love that grows in the following of her own Son, and which will reach its climax under the Cross. There, at the foot of the Cross and conformed to her Son in love (Phil 2:5), she received every man for whom He offered Himself and whom He was asking her to embrace as a child.

From this attitude of love and acceptance of Mary's motherhood, arises another fundamental attitude in living our consecration to the Immaculata: love. It is love that conforms us, as it did her, to her Son.

With Our Gaze Fixed on Christ

Mary is especially **the Mother of God**, and then in this entrustment/consecration to her the relationship with Christ is essential. We already saw it in the previous reflection, but now we come back to it, because it is very important.

The goal of consecration to Mary is the growth in the faith in Christ the Lord.

Mary is entirely relative to Christ. The words that Mary said to the servants at Cana, are the words that she repeats to each of us: "*Do whatever he tells you*" (Jn 2:1-12).

Mary did first what Jesus said. In her life we find the accomplished model of the disciple of the Lord: "*My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice*" (Lk 8:21). Jesus points to the life of Mary as a life fully conformed to His Word. Mary, for this intimate union with the entire life of the Son, in obedience to the will of the Father, invites us to turn our gaze to Him. She reminds us that He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6). That "Do whatever He tells you" is her own sharing of a life experience that takes place in the service of love for Christ; of a life that finds its sense in conformity to Him and that experiences existentially the union of branch to the vine (Jn 15:1 ff.).

Mary expresses her motherhood toward us by showing us the Son, wishing our conformity to Him. St. Maximilian reminds us that Mary aims at making us reach the stature of Christ. She wants us to shine with His beauty.

Consecration to Mary therefore is not just a devotion, an idea, but a path of conformity to Christ. It means to walk with Mary toward Christ, centering more and more our life in Him. From that arises a life commitment: the communion with Christ and the conformity to Him up to the gift of ourselves, as St. Maximilian did. In him the most challenging words of the Gospel became reality: love for enemies and, above all, the greatest love: "*to lay down one's life for one's friends*" (Jn 15:13), which is exactly what Jesus did for us on the Cross.

Consecration to Mary as taught by St. Maximilian Kolbe is a Christ-centered experience.

It is not centered on Mary, but on Christ, as Paul VI emphasized in the homily for Fr. Kolbe's

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beatification, on October 17, 1971:

“Maximilian Kolbe was an apostle of the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, seen in her first, original privileged splendor, as she defined herself at Lourdes: the Immaculate Conception. It is impossible to separate the name, the activity and the mission of Blessed Kolbe from that of Mary Immaculate. It was he who instituted the Militia of the Immaculata here in Rome, even before he was ordained a priest, on October 16, 1917. We can commemorate its anniversary today.

“It is well known how the humble and meek Franciscan with incredible audacity and extraordinary organizational genius developed the initiative and spread devotion to the Mother of Christ, contemplated as ‘clothed with the sun’ (cf. Rev. 12:1). This devotion was the focal point of his spirituality, his apostolate and his theology.

“Let no hesitation restrain our admiration and commitment to all that our new Blessed had left us as a heritage and an example, as if we too were distrustful of such an exaltation of Mary in view of two other theological movements, the Christological and ecclesiological, which seem to compete today with the Mariological. On the contrary, there is no competition, for in Father Kolbe's Mariology, Christ holds not only the first place but the only necessary and sufficient place in the economy of salvation. His love of the Church and its salvific mission was never forgotten either in his doctrinal outlook or in his apostolic aim. On the contrary, it is precisely from our Lady's complementary, subordinate role in regard to Christ's universal, saving design for man that she derives all of her prerogatives and greatness.

“How well we know it! And Kolbe, in accord with the whole of Catholic doctrine, the whole liturgy and the entire theology of the interior life, sees Mary included in God's plan of salvation as the ‘term fixed by eternal counsel,’ as the woman filled with grace, as the Seat of Wisdom, as the woman destined from eternity to be the Mother of Christ, as the Queen of the Messianic Kingdom, and at the same time as the Handmaid of the Lord, chosen to participate in the Redemptive Act as Mother of the God Man, our Savior. ‘Mary is the one through whose intercession men reach Jesus and the one through whom Jesus reaches men’ (L. Bouver: *Le trone de la Sagesse*, p. 69).

“Therefore our Blessed is not to be reproved, nor the Church with him, because of their enthusiasm for the formal religious veneration of the Mother of God. This veneration with its rites and practices will never fully achieve the level it merits, nor the benefits it can bring precisely because of the mystery that unites her to Christ, and which finds fascinating documentation in the New Testament. The result will never be a ‘Mariolatry,’ just as the sun will never be darkened by the moon; nor will the mission of salvation specifically entrusted to the ministry of the Church ever be distorted if the latter honors in Mary an exceptional Daughter and a Spiritual Mother. The characteristic aspect, if you like, and the original quality of Blessed Kolbe's devotion, of his ‘hyperdulia’ to Mary, is the importance he attributes to it with regard to the present needs of the Church, the efficacy of her prophecy about the glory of the Lord and the vindication of the humble, the power of her intercession, the splendor of her exemplariness, the presence of her maternal charity. The Council confirmed us in these certainties, and now from heaven Father Kolbe is teaching us and helping us to meditate upon them and live them. This Marian profile of our new Blessed places him among the great saints and seers who have understood, venerated and sung the mystery of Mary.”