

Holy Father's Encyclical: Feast Of Mary's Queenship

Following is an English translation of the Encyclical Letter **AD CAELI REGINAM**, of His Holiness Pope Pius XII, in which he instituted the Feast of Mary, Queen. An English text of the Encyclical was not made available at the time of its issuance. This translation, from the original Latin, was made in this country with the assistance of leading scholars:

The Encyclical Letter Of Our Most Holy Lord

Pius XII
By Divine Providence Pope

ON THE ROYAL DIGNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND ON THE INSTITUTION OF HER FEAST

To The Venerable Brethren
Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops,
And the other Local Ordinaries,
Having Peace And Communion With The Apostolic See
POPE PIUS XII
Venerable Brethren
Greetings And Apostolic Blessing

ALREADY FROM the earliest centuries of the Catholic Church, the Christian people have addressed suppliant prayers and hymns of praise and veneration to the Queen of Heaven, both when they had reason to rejoice and particularly when they were beset by serious troubles. The hope placed in the Mother of the Divine King, Jesus Christ, has never failed. There has never been a weakening of that faith by which we are taught that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, reigns with her maternal heart over the entire world, just as she is crowned with the diadem of royal glory in heavenly blessedness.

After the frightful calamities which, under our very eyes, have covered flourishing cities, towns, and villages with ruins. We, sorrowing, see so many and such great spiritual evils springing themselves abroad with fearful violence, and we behold justice giving way and the attractions of evil triumphing. We are filled with great sorrow in this threatening and fearful danger and thus with confidence we fly to Mary, Our Queen, manifesting not only our own sense of filial reverence, but also that of all those who glory in the Christian name.

It is pleasing and helpful to remember that we ourselves, on the first day of November of the Holy Year 1950, before a huge multitude of Cardinals, Bishops, priests, and of the faithful who had come there from every part of the world, defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. (1) While, present in soul and body, she reigns together with her only begotten Son, amid the heavenly choirs of the angels and the Saints. And moreover, since a century was being completed from the time our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, proclaimed and defined the great Mother of God had been conceived without any stain of original sin. We, instituted this current Marian Year. (2) Now, with great consolation, to our fatherly heart. We see not only here in Rome, and especially in the Liberian Basilica, where great multitudes have manifested in a striking way their faith and their most ardent desire to be united to the heavenly Mother, but also in all parts of the world, that filial reverence toward the Virgin Mother of God has increased more and more, and that the principal shrines of Mary have been visited and are still being visited by many throngs of Catholic pilgrims gathered in prayer.

Everyone knows that we, as often as the opportunity presented itself, that is when we were speaking to our children in Christ who were gathered in our presence, or when, by radio, we spoke to people afar off, we have exhorted all whom we could to love our most kind and powerful Mother as children, blessed with a strong and tender love. On this point we may especially call to mind the radio message which we addressed to the people of Portugal, when the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary, which is venerated at Fatima, was being crowned with a golden diadem. (3) We ourselves called that image the messenger of the "royalty" of Mary. (4)

And the royal dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is clearly and openly meant and stated by those who call her "Lady," "Queen," and "Queen."

Already in one of the homilies attributed to Origen, Mary is called by Elizabeth, not only the Mother of my Lord, but also "Thou my Lady." (5) The same thing is found in the writings of St. Jerome where he introduces the following statement amidst various explanations of the Virgin's name: "We could realize that Mary means Lady in the Syrian language." (6) After him St. Chrysostom says the same thing in a more certain fashion in these words: "The Hebrew name 'Mary' means 'Domina' (Lady). In Latin, the Angel therefore calls her Lady." (7) That the Mother of the Lord, whose authority he Son made and caused to be born and to be called the Lady, might be without any stain of sin. (8) Moreover Epiphanius, the Bishop of Constantine, writing to the Sovereign Pontiff Hormisdas, says that we should pray that the unity of the Church may be preserved by the grace of the Holy and consubstantial unity of the Virgin Mary. Our Lady, the holy and glorious Virgin and Mother of God. (9)

Another writer of that same era thus solemnly salutes the Blessed Virgin sitting at the right hand of God: "We pray for the Lady ruler of mortal men, the most holy Mother of God." (10) St. Andrew of Crete frequently ascribed the dignity of a queen to the Virgin Mary. He has written this, for example: "This ever-virgin Mother, from whose womb He, being God, took on human form. He today transports from earthly dwellings as Queen of the human race." (11) And in another place he speaks of "the Queen of the entire human race faithful in reality to the meaning of her name, who is exalted above all things save only God Himself." (12)

Likewise St. Germanus speaks to the humble Virgin in these words: "Be seated, Lady, for it is fitting that you should sit in a high place since you are a Queen and glorious above all kings." (13) He likewise calls her the Lady ruler of all of those who dwell on earth. (14) She is called by St. John Damascene: "Queen, ruler, and lady." (15) and also "the Lady ruler of every creature." (16) Another ancient writer of the Eastern Church calls her "the fortunate Queen," "the perpetual Queen beside the King, her Son," whose glorious head is crowned with a golden diadem. (17) And finally St. Nicophorus of Toledo gathers together almost all of the titles of honor in this salutation: "O my Lady, my Ruler, Thou who governest, Mother of my Lord. . . . Lady among the handmaidens, Queen among sisters." (18)

These things in this present encyclical letter, so that we may renew the praises of our heavenly Mother, and so that we may encourage a more zealous filial reverence towards her, to bring spiritual gain to the souls of all men.

Since the Christian people, even long ago, rightly believed that she from whom was born the Son of the Most High, the One who "will reign in the House of Jacob forever" (19) the "Prince of Peace," (20) the "King of kings and the Lord of lords," (21) has received singular gifts of grace over and above all other creatures and since they took cognizance of the intimate connection between the Mother and the Son, they easily acknowledged the supreme royal dignity of the Mother of God.

Pope Cites Ancient Writers
Hence it is not astonishing that the ancient writers of the Church, basing their stand on the words of St. Gabriel the Archangel who foretold that Mary's Son was going to reign forever, (22) and on the words of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. (23) who, present in soul and body, she reigns together with her only begotten Son, amid the heavenly choirs of the angels and the Saints. And moreover, since a century was being completed from the time our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, proclaimed and defined the great Mother of God had been conceived without any stain of original sin. We, instituted this current Marian Year. (24) Now, with great consolation, to our fatherly heart. We see not only here in Rome, and especially in the Liberian Basilica, where great multitudes have manifested in a striking way their faith and their most ardent desire to be united to the heavenly Mother, but also in all parts of the world, that filial reverence toward the Virgin Mother of God has increased more and more, and that the principal shrines of Mary have been visited and are still being visited by many throngs of Catholic pilgrims gathered in prayer.

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also because, as the new Eve, she was associated with the new Adam.

Mary Shares Royal Dignity
And so it is that Jesus Christ alone, God and man, is King in the full, proper, and absolute sense of the term. Yet Mary also, although in a restricted way and only by analogy, shares in the royal dignity as the mother of Christ who is God, as His associate in the labors of the Divine redemption, and in His struggle against His enemies and in the victory He won over them all. From this association with Christ the King she obtains a splendor and eminence surpassing the excellence of all created things. From this association with Christ comes the royal function by which she can dispense the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom. Finally, from this association with Christ comes the unfailing efficacy of her maternal intercession with the Son and with the Father.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the most holy Mary surpasses all created things in dignity, and likewise that she is called by the name of Queen, over all things. As St. Sophronius says: "Thou hast, in fact, far surpassed every creature. . . . What could be more sublime than this joy, O Virgin Mother? And what could be greater than this grace which thou alone hast received from God?" (41) St. Germanus adds the words of praise to that greeting: "Thine honor and dignity surpass all created things." (42) And St. John Damascene goes so far as to say that "There is an infinite difference between God's servants and His Mother." (43)

In order to understand this most exalted grade of dignity which the mother of God has obtained above all created things, we should recall that the holy mother of God was, already, in the first moment of her conception, filled with such an abundance of grace as to surpass the grace of all the Saints. Hence, as our predecessor of happy memory, Pius IX, wrote in his Apostolic Letter, "The Indefectible perfect God 'so marvellously endowed her above all the angels and Saints with the abundance of all heavenly gifts from the treasury of the Divinity that she, always completely free from every stain of sin and entirely beautiful and perfect, possesses such a fullness of innocence and holiness that under God no greater than this is understood and that no one other than God Himself can ever know.' (44)

Now, in accomplishing this work of the redemption the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was certainly intimately associated with Christ. Appropriately, therefore, "Holy Mary the Queen of heaven and the Lady ruler of the world was standing, sorrowful, by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (45) Wherefore, as even in the Middle Ages, a very pious student of St. Anselm wrote, "As . . . God is the Father and Lord of all things preparing all by His power, so the Blessed Mary, regarding all things by her merits is the mother and ruler of all. For God is the Lord of all things, in each constituting by His command in its own nature, and Mary is the Lady ruler of all in restoring that to its original dignity through that grace which she has merited." (46)

As Christ is our Lord and King by a special title because He redeemed us, so the Blessed Virgin (is our Lady and Queen) because of the unique way in which she has co-operated toward our redemption by giving of her own substance, by offering Him willingly for us, and by desiring, praying for, and bringing about our salvation in a singular manner." (47)

From these premises the following argument is drawn. Mary, by the will of God, associated with Jesus Christ, the principle of salvation itself, in bringing about spiritual salvation in a way that was quite similar to the way in which Eve was associated with Adam, the principle of death, so that it may be said that the work of our salvation was accomplished through a certain "recapitulation," in which a virgin is instrumental in saving the human race. Just as a virgin was instrumental in making it subject to death, (48) Moreover it can also be said that this most glorious Lady was the beloved mother of Christ precisely "so that she might be made His associate in the redemption of the human race." (49) Actually, "It was she, the second Eve who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always most intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sustained by this union, happy, full, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust." (50) Hence we may certainly conclude that just as Christ the new Adam, must be called King, not only because He is the Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer; so, by a certain kind of analogy, the most Blessed Virgin is Queen, not only because she is the mother of God, but

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Queen of the Immaculate Heart

- Footnotes**
- 1) Cf. Constitutio Apostolicae MUNIFICENTIAE DEUS: A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 163-64.
 - 2) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 3) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 4) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
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 - 8) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 9) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 10) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 11) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 12) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 13) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 14) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 15) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 16) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 17) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 18) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 19) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 20) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 21) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 22) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 23) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 24) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 25) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 26) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 27) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 28) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 29) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 30) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 31) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 32) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 33) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 34) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 35) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 36) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 37) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 38) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 39) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 40) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 41) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 42) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 43) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 44) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 45) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 46) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 47) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 48) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
 - 49) Cf. A. A. S. XXXVII, 1950, p. 577.
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