

# Truths About Mary

October is dedicated by Catholic devotion to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of the Holy Rosary. This article explains why Catholics honor Mary.

**JOSEPH BREIG**

**I Was Not Astonished**

I was not in the least astonished at the astonishment voiced by many when they read (or heard) the reports of the Pope's remarks on widowhood. My years in journalism have taught me not to be amazed by failures in human communication. A good human communication was far from perfect in this instance.

Communication was highly inadequate also in the case of the talk in which the Holy Father directed the Jesuits to avoid the use of tobacco.

Come to think of it, this inadequacy is frequent and widespread in the handling, by press, radio and TV, of news originating in Vatican City.

**NOR WOULD I** draw the line there. I think that an objective study would show that people are poorly informed, by and large, about many events of each day.

The technologists have telescoped time and space for us. They have given us the instruments we need to get and to disseminate the news.

Our journalistic practices, however, have not kept pace. Indeed, from our point of view, there is a kind of Frankenstein aspect to the speed of modern communications.

We are too much hurried. The demand for faster, faster, faster reporting tends to prevent us from being thorough enough to be truly accurate.

And then there are the maddening problems of space in newspapers and magazines, of time on radio and TV, and of competition for the attention of the public.

**WE MUST NOT** blame too harshly the beleaguered reporter who unbalances what the Pope—or anybody else—says in his search for a striking lead for his story.

Nor can we withhold sympathy from the harassed man on the copy desk, handicuffed by head-line requirements, for simply writing: "Pope urges widows not to remarry," or "Pope tells Jesuits to stop smoking."

Neither headline is false, nor is the story under the headline false. The trouble is that both are so inadequate as to be false by omission.

The Pope did not really "urge widows not to remarry." That is, such was not the intent, the burden of the point of his talk on widowhood.

**WHAT THE HOLY FATHER** did was to remind us that widowhood, lived for Christian motives as a Christian way of life, is higher, as a state in life, than remarriage.

The state of widowhood is nobler, in itself, than the state of remarriage in the same way that virginity, for Christian motives, is higher, as a state than marriage.

But this does not mean that marriage is a lower state in life. It is a high state. It is simply not as high, as a state, as virginity.

**THE POPE DID NOT** "urge widows not to remarry." He could not issue a universal counsel as that. There are any number of cases where widows ought to remarry. The Pope knows this.

But the Pope was aware also that there is a tendency to look down upon widowhood.

Pope Pius wanted to correct this attitude. He wanted to restore appreciation of the value of the widowed state as a way to higher holiness.

That is what his talk was really about; but how many readers or listeners so understood him after seeing or hearing the reports of his remarks?

**SIMILARLY, THE** Holy Father reminded the Jesuits that theirs is a special way of life. As members of a religious society, they give themselves totally to the service of God and fellowmen.

For this service, they need special direction, training and discipline. And they ought to put aside everything that is superfluous. Smoking, said the Pope, is one of those superfluous.

The fact that he told the Jesuits to stop smoking was incidental to his brief review of what the religious life, especially the Jesuit life, is all about.

We journalists owe it to modern man to improve our reporting very, markedly.

It is well known that many Christians who are not Catholics find great difficulty over the Catholic concept and practice of devotion to Mary, the mother of Christ. A large part of this difficulty arises from the fact that they have been taught erroneous ideas as to just what Catholics believe about Mary.

A simple statement of the simple truths that all Catholics accept concerning the mother of Christ may help to remove some of the difficulty for men and women of good will.

There are also some Catholics who admit to a lack of strong devotion to the mother

of God. There are not many, but they are of a sufficient number to deserve attention. Their trouble is not that they have been taught wrong things about Mary, but that they have not learned, absorbed and applied enough of the truths about Mary. For them, too, a simple statement of the basic doctrines revealed about Mary, and of their natural consequences for the human mind and heart, may bring them to unguish with the majority of Catholics in devotion to God's mother.

For the sake of clearness, each Catholic doctrine concerning Mary will first be simply stated, then a reference to the proofs of the doctrine, as found in the Bible, will be given; and finally, the natural, practical effects of the doctrine on the hearts and lives of good Christians will be shown.

**By Rev. Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.**

**Our Mother**

Mary is truly and really the mother of all Christians.

**GOD REVEALED** His will that Mary should be a mother to all Christians in three ways.

First, He did so by selecting her to give birth to Christ. Who is the real, supernatural eternal life of all human beings who accept Him. By giving Christ to men she gave them life in a more important sense than even a natural mother is able to do. That is what makes a mother giving life to a child. That is what makes Mary, according to God's own plan, the mother of all men.

Second, she paid the price that all mothers must pay for the glorious office of motherhood. The price is suffering. God saw to it that she suffered as no other mother before or after her. She was counted a taste of all the sufferings that all other mothers ever endure, and thereby paid the universal price of motherhood.

It is simply unthinkable that God asked her to accept all this suffering for Himself alone. He did not need her suffering, and it she had belonged to Him alone His love would have spared her from suffering. But she was to belong to suffering humanity as a mother, and that reason was asked to suffer.

Third, Christ on His cross addressed her as the mother of men. St. John, stood beside her as the representative of all human beings. When Christ said to her, "Behold thy son," and to him, "Behold thy mother," He was putting into words what had been pre-ordained by God from all eternity, that Mary was to be called and to truly be the mother of mankind.

**EVERYBODY EXCEPT** the wail and the orphan knows what it is to have a good earthly mother. No one ever grows too old to remember what his mother meant to him through infancy, childhood and youth.

A good mother is a source of courage, of comfort, of joy even of undeserved forgiveness, to her children.

God intended that these same effects be experienced by all men who would ever look up to Mary as their mother.

They would have courage and confidence because of her nearness and her love for them. They would find comfort in their sorrows in sharing them with her. They would be filled with joy at the thought that someone so beautiful, so near to God, so concerned about their welfare, could be called upon at any time. They would be prevented from ever taking the last step into despair by the realization that no mother, much less the greatest mother of all, would stop pleading for her most wayward child.

It is these simple truths that combine to force the minds and hearts of all true Christians to look upon and to call upon Mary as their mother. And God Who revealed the truths looks down from heaven and smiles with love on those who do so, saying: "Know ye, that I myself have wished it so."

This article is available in pamphlet form for 10 cents from the Remediorist Fathers, Liguori, Missouri.



Pilgrims carry statue of Blessed Virgin Mary in procession at Walsingham, England, famous shrine of Our Lady.

their minds the importance of sanctifying grace, to assure them of the plentifulness of Christ's merits for every human being and to give sound hope to their striving to preserve and increase grace in their souls once it has been attained.

**Always A Virgin**

Mary always remained a virgin before, during and after the birth of her divine Son.

Two much abused texts of the Gospels are used by those who deny this doctrine.

The first is the fact that St. Luke (2:17) speaks of Mary as "bringing forth her firstborn son," as if he thereby indicated the second and third, etc., after the natural manner. But the words "first born" prove nothing, because this was a legal title among the Jews, signifying certain religious duties and obligations imposed on mothers in regard to their first born sons, whether they ever had any other children or not.

The second text is that in which St. Matthew (12:45) speaks of the "mother and the brethren of Jesus." But this proves nothing because the Aramaic word used in the original for "mother" was commonly used for our general word, "relatives" and because the sacred brethren of Jesus can be quite well identified as cousins or relatives other than brothers.

**ANYONE WHO** believes that the Bible is the revealed word of God must accept its unqualifying statements that Mary was a virgin before, during and after the birth of our Lord. Isaiah, quoted by St. Matthew, says, "a virgin shall conceive." St. Matthew says that before Mary and Joseph came together, "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." That Mary remained physically a virgin in giving birth to Christ is clear from the fact that Isaiah said not only that a virgin shall conceive a child, but also "shall bear a child."

That she always remained a virgin is clear from the insistence of the Bible on calling her a virgin, and from the fact that from the time of Christ this title has been given her by all Christian ages.

**THERE ARE** two almost insuperable effects of this truth on the hearts of all who accept it as clearly revealed in the Bible.

The first is that of special admiration for Mary. It has often been remarked that even degenerate pagans find themselves wistfully admiring the chaste and the pure.

With that admiration and reverence for Mary that arises from the knowledge of her virginity, there is always an irresistible desire to be pure.

God knows, as all honest men know, that weakness of the flesh is one of the most insistent effects of original sin, and one of the greatest dangers to salvation for all mankind.

Mary's virginity was intended by God to offset this danger. The very beauty it adds to Mary intensifies one's realization of the degradation of lust. Her virginity glorifies parenthood in chaste wedlock. It inspires some souls to life-long virginity for the love of God, and it moves sinners to repentance and reform.

## Waterfront Priest Says 'Two To Make A Deal'

Brutal brawls and crooked labor racketeering were described by the famous "Waterfront Priest" in a talk this week to St. Bernard's Seminary.

Father John Corridan, a Jesuit priest now on the faculty of Le Moyne University at Syracuse stated his opinion that legislation will not halt the corruption rampant in some unions.

"It takes two to make a deal," said the veteran of many dock strikes, "and wherever you turn up a corrupt labor leader it means somebody on management's side was in on the fix."

"Laws can help but cannot solve labor's problems," he stated. "The unions need grievance machinery inside their unions so they can get rid of racketeering elements."

What about Hoffa's election? It didn't surprise Father Corridan who thinks the Teamsters boss is more of a "front" than a "power" of his own. Whose exactly the real "power" is in the Teamsters union the Jesuit priest does not admit to knowing.

He sees the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee as one of the major steps toward cleaning up union racketeering. Hoffa is scheduled to appear before the Committee later this month. Father Corridan noted Hoffa's acceptance speech as indicating a strong respect for the Committee's position.

"Public opinion is a powerful thing," said Father Corridan. "Hoffa doesn't want to be branded by labor's supreme court as a traitor to labor. He might be able to fix an election, but a black-eye from the committee could doom him to defeat once the rank-and-file wake up. George Meany and the union leaders who have set up the ethics committee deserve our support and to be listened to by union members," stated the Jesuit.

**Sacristy Schedule Like Grand Central**

By FATHER JAMES I. TUCCO (N. C. W. C. News Service)

Vatican City — After the first impact of the colossal proportions of St. Peter's Basilica, first-time visitors become aware of activity in the left aisle of the great church.

A steady flow of priests, seminarians and visitors from all nations congregates along the left aisle, the location of the Sacristy of St. Peter's.

Large as many small churches, the sacristy is the hub of much of the basilica's religious life. Its traffic mainly priests from every land on earth who want to say Mass in St. Peter's.

It is presided over by a bishop sacristan who has a priest as his chief administrator who, for all practical purposes, manages the stream of traffic from behind his desk.

First of all, he keeps an appointment book for those priests who are waiting for a particular altar and assigns servers to each celebrant.

He receives Mass attendants and requests for candles for the marriages and confirmations that are administered every Sunday morning in the basilica. Each Sunday the sacrament of Confirmation is administered twice in St. Peter's. An average of 200 are confirmed weekly.

The Congregation of the Work of the Divine Prisoner has taken care of the basilica sacristy since 1956. The congregation, founded in 1919 by Father Giovanni Folci, devotes itself to the assistance of priests.

The 35 boys who serve the Masses range in age from 12 to 14 and come from various parts of Italy. They live in a seminary located near the sacristy, in the Palace of the Vatican Canons. After two years of study and service in the sacristy, they go to various diocesan seminaries initially to finish their studies.

In return for the services the boys render, the chapter of canons at St. Peter's Basilica pays half their seminary fees. The boys' parents are expected to pay the other half. If a boy is too poor, the chapter pays the entire fee for him.

Some youngsters in this purple cassock is a part of the memory of many priests throughout the world who have had the privilege of celebrating Mass at one of the basilica's many high altars.

A modern touch in the ancient church is the sacristy's unique feature—a coffee bar for those priests who want coffee after Mass.

The priest who regulates the activities of the sacristy from his desk has several functions.

**Making Marriage Click**

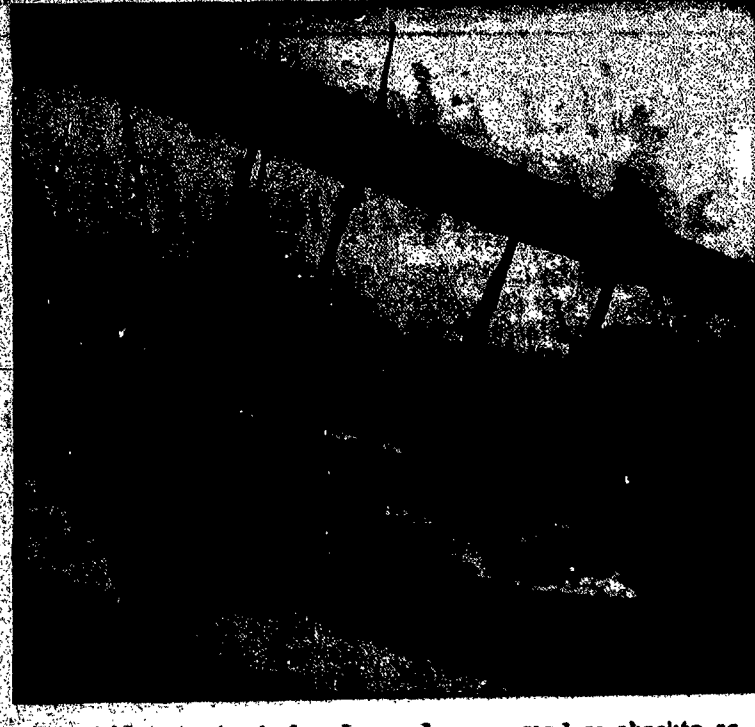
**Ounce Of Parent: Pound Of School**

By MSGR. IRVING A. DEBLANCO (Director, Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C.)

France sends out word from one study that 80% of the children going to catechism from the public schools abandon the practice of their religion by the time they are teenagers. Blame this, if you will, on immorality in the streets, a general atmosphere of paganism, a lack of balance between the Sign of the Cross, most hard never seen a crucifix around the house, 70% did not know the Our-Father or the Hail Mary.

Unless a father and mother start early to teach prayers to their children, one wonders if they did not also wait too late to teach them the Commandments.

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The achievements of American science seemed as obsolete as this ancient vintage bi-plane in the face of this week's globe-trotting paths of the Russian earth satellite 'Sputnik.'

## Around The World In Less Than 80 Days

Most every American who followed this week's story of Russia's artificial moon experienced at least a momentary case of "satellite jitters."

You couldn't help but glance at the sky in hopes, and with a bit of fear, of seeing the midjet moon streak along its 18,000 mph path around and around the world. Its 95 minute round trip makes the currently popular "Around the World in 80 Days" seem like a movie about the good old days when life was leisurely and less complicated.

At approximately the same time as the Soviet rockets lifted the satellite to its 500 mile high orbit, Pope Pius XII in Rome called Catholics of the world to a "fight to the end" against Communism.

The possibility of such a fight assumed grim proportions as Americans realized the Soviet satellite streaked across our nation six times a day. It had already hurtled over us on its orbit at least three times before most Americans were even awake on Saturday morning. It required little imagination to foresee the possibility of a Russian atomic attack if the Kremlin leaders decided on such a tactic.

The eerie flight of the earth satellite on its beep-beep course also served graphic evidence that "a fight to the end" is precisely what any military fight is bound to be — to the end of everything!

The Pope in his speech was clear in his emphasis that he did not mean a fight which would pit the military might of the free world against the Red enslaved nations. He said Christians must fight "with the weapons of Christ."

These "weapons of Christ" are nothing else but a practical application of Christian principles to modern problems — in family life, education, economic disputes, newspaper publication, radio and television programming, motion picture work, and special problems existing in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Pope Pius gave clear answer to those Catholics who have suggested that the Church come to a working agreement with Communist governments of Asia and eastern Europe. The Pontiff previously had threatened with excommunication any who accepted political office in Red run nations. He has consistently stated there can be no compromise with atheism.

His statement coming hard on the heels of the Soviet satellite launching was about the only courageous statement of the week. Statesmen subsequently scurried to make obsequious bows to the Soviet scientists who, we had been told so frequently before, were years behind the scientists of the free world.

Even the free world scientists quoted by newscasters and newspapers served the U. S. public a generous dose of brain washing telling us the Russian achievement was a negligible one even as they pressed for millions of dollars more to bring the American satellite program up to date.

This week was a full one with a medley of news including Hoffa's victory and the World Series. In the annals of history the week will stand as a new chapter — the dawn of the new era of space travel. Despite the consequences of the Soviet achievement, history will also note that a man in white could still thunder his defiance with a calm assurance that victory and peace will come to those who do battle armed not with rockets nor atoms but simply with "the weapons of Christ."

## Brooklyn Tablet Editor Forty Years At Desk

Patrick F. Scanlan has just completed his fortieth year as managing editor of The Tablet, newspaper of the Brooklyn Diocese.

His associates at the paper's office honored him with an anniversary award and cited his "fearless, militant and outstanding service to his country and to his Church and to Catholic journalism."

The veteran editor has witnessed the growth of America's Catholic press from its insignificant status nearly half a century ago to its present position of high quality journalism and widespread circulation. His own Tablet has a weekly subscription totaling 0,000,000.

Scanlan's "fearless and militant" handling of controversial topics has won him a host of readers even outside his own diocese. He has consistently exposed Communist penetration into American life and proved his charges by convincing documentation.

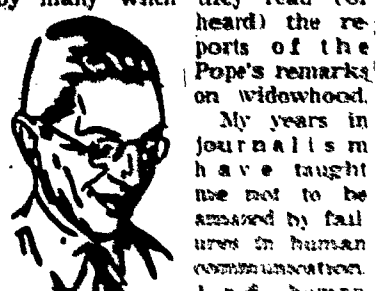
He was one of the most outspoken defenders of the late Senator McCarthy during the days of that statesman's investigation into anti-American activities. Scanlan repeatedly insisted the anti-McCarthyites were playing directly into the Communists' hands.

The Tablet editor previously championed the famous radio priest from Royal Oak, Michigan, Father Charles E. Coughlin in that priest's efforts to win better pay and better conditions for American workmen.

Currently Scanlan keeps his reporters busy getting inside stories of Communist pressures in government positions and labor unions.

When he first launched his editorial fire against the Reds forty years ago they were little more than an obscure Russian political party which won scant attention from the key newspaper men of the world. The Red tide of conquest which has since enslaved half the world's population is graphic evidence that Scanlan had a prophet's eyes. Today's headlines are the result, says Scanlan, of a complacent world.

And despite the toll of forty years the Brooklyn editor, except for a few grey hairs, is still the "fearless and militant" journalist of four decades ago. We hope he stays at his editor's desk for many more years yet to come.



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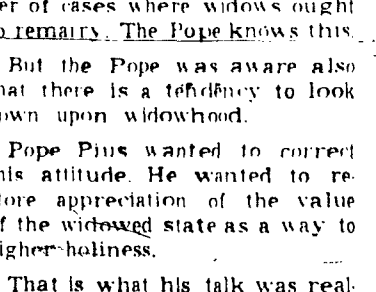
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