

# Mary, Mother of the Saviour, Symbol of the Church

## LORD

i am not worthy that you should come under my roof... speak but the word and my servant will be healed....



Symbol and text of the third Sunday after Epiphany.

## Silence Can Also Be An Eloquence

One of the most unfortunate as also unnecessary barriers on the widening ecumenical road to Christian unity is the divisive factor in Pope Paul's recent declaration of the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Mother of the Church, Mother of the People of God."

The Pontiff's obvious intent was anything else than to be an irritant to those Christians who do not as yet have the developed devotion to our Lady as do Catholics.

Pope Paul in his talk at the closing rite of the Vatican Council's third session this past autumn wanted to express in a simple, easily-understood way the deep theological insights of the Council's document on the Church.

This 30,000 word document concludes with a chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary as printed to the right of this editorial. Its lengthy and profound and often intricate expressions needed to be pictured clearly for the vast majority of both Catholics and other Christians who would either not read it or perhaps get lost in it.

The document states about our Lady that "the Catholic Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and piety as its most beloved Mother."

Just a year ago, the bishops at the Council engaged in very sharp debate as to whether or not the section on the Blessed Virgin should be published as a separate document of its own or as part of the over-all schema on the Church.

When a narrow victory was won to incorporate our Lady's chapter within the Church schema, many of the Protestant and Orthodox observers at the Council were jubilant that such action signalled the end of what many thought was "excessive" devotion to her. Even some Catholics thought at that time the Council was "downgrading" the Mother of our divine Lord.

Now a good share of the observers who were so jubilant a year ago are the critics of Pope Paul's action as if he reversed the course of the Council. What he did was simply to dramatize vividly the very action which caused them joy a year ago — to show Mary's greatest honor is rooted in the fact that she is a Mother, the Mother of our Saviour, and Mother of our Church which is the extension of the life of her Son through the centuries.

Perhaps the critics of this title are not as really as bitter against devotion to the Blessed Virgin as they may seem. They may be manifesting an instinctive reticence that afflicts all of us when we speak of our mother.

Christopher Morley wrote, "Every man is privileged to believe all his life that his own mother is the best and dearest that a child ever had. By some strange racial instinct of taciturnity and repression most of us lack utterance to say our thoughts in this close matter. A man's mother is so tissue and woven into his life and brain that he can no more describe her than describe the air and sunlight that bless his days."

Those of us who realize the truth of this situation can also understand that those who prefer to say little about our Lady may in reality have a deep but unutterable love for her. And in those areas where words are forever inadequate perhaps silence is as acceptable a devotion as are our inevitable feeble words.

—Father Henry Atwell

### Communion Day For U.S. Converts

Lexington (NC) — The national office of the Guilds of St. Paul here has designated Jan. 24 as general Communion Sunday for members of 400 guilds, clubs for adult converts in the U.S. and Canada.

The office recommended that the converts invite Non-Catholic friends to accompany them to Mass on the day. It also urged converts who are not members of the guilds to participate in the observance on the eve of the feast of the conversion of St. Paul.

The guild organization to assist adult converts was founded here in 1937 and has spread throughout the country.

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### I. Introduction — On the place of the Blessed Virgin in the Mystery of Christ.

52. Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, "when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4, 4).

"For us men, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." This divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and continued in the Church, which the Lord established as His body. Joined to Christ the Head and in the unity of fellowship with all His saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory "of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 4, 4-5).

53. The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave life to the world, is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. Redeemed by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God, by which account she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. At the same time,

however, because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all those who are to be saved. She is "the mother of the members of Christ."

54. Wherefore this holy synod, in expounding the doctrine on the Church, in which the divine Redeemer works salvation, intends to describe with diligence both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, and the duties of redeemed mankind toward the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, particularly of the faithful. It does not, however, have in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which theologians have not yet fully clarified.

These opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and yet very close to us.

55. The Sacred Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament, as well as ancient Tradition show the role of the Mother of the Saviour in the economy of salvation in an ever clearer light and draw attention to it. The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. These earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of the woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. When it is looked at in this way, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin (cf. Gen. 3, 15).

Likewise she is the Virgin who shall conceive and bear a son, whose name will be called Emmanuel (cf. Is. 8, 14; Mich. 5, 2-3; Mt. 1, 22-23). She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from Him. With her the exalted Daughter of Zion, and after a long expectation of the promise, the times are fulfilled and the new Economy established.

56. The Father of mercies will be preceded by the acceptance of her who was "predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. That is true in outstanding fashion of the mother of Jesus, who gave to the world Him who is Life itself and who renews all things, and who was enriched by God with the gifts which benefit such a role.

It is no wonder therefore that the usage prevailed among the Fathers whereby they called the mother of God entirely holy and free from all stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature. Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the radiance of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is greeted, on God's command, by an angel messenger as "full of grace" (Lk. 1, 28), and to the heavenly messenger she replies: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word" (Lk. 1, 38). Thus Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the Mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator.

Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert in their preaching: "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience, what the virgin Eve bound through her unbelief, Mary loosened by her faith."

Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her "the Mother of the living," and still more often they say: "death through Eve, life through Mary."

Lifetime Service

57. This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to His death. It is shown first of all when Mary, arising in haste to go to visit Elizabeth, is greeted by her as blessed because of her belief in the promise of salvation and the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother (cf. Lk. 1, 41-45).

This union is manifest also at the birth of Our Lord, who did not diminish His mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it, when the Mother of God joyfully showed her firstborn Son to the shepherds and Magi. When she presented Him to the Lord in the temple, making the offering of the poor, she heard Simeon foretelling at the same time that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce the Mother's soul, that "of many hearts thoughts might be revealed" (cf. Lk. 2, 34-35).

When the Child Jesus was lost and they had sought Him sorrowing, His parents found Him in the temple, taken up with the things that were His Father's business; and they did not understand the word of their Son. His Mother indeed kept these things to be pondered over in her heart (cf. Lk. 2, 41-51).

Can a Calvary

58. In the public life of Jesus, Mary makes significant appearances. This is so even at the very beginning, when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of miracles of Jesus, the Messiah (cf. Jn. 2, 1-11). In the course of her Son's preaching she received the words whereby, in extolling a kingdom beyond the calculations and bonds of flesh and blood, He declared blessed (cf. Mk. 3, 35; Lk. 11, 27-28) those who heard and

ed, when the Son of God took a human nature from her, that He might in the mysteries of His flesh free man from sin.

### Full of Grace

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kept the word of God; as she was faithfully doing (cf. Lk. 2, 19, 51).

After this manner, the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan (cf. Jn. 19, 25), grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to His disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold thy son" (Jn. 19, 26-27).

### Pentecost and Heaven

59. But since it has pleased God not to manifest solemnly the mystery of the salvation of the human race before He would pour forth the Spirit promised by Christ, we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost "persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts 1, 14), and Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation.

Finally, the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all guilt of original sin, on the completion of her earthly sojourn was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and the conqueror of sin and death.

### III. On the Blessed Virgin and the Church.

60. There is but one Mediator as we know from the words of the apostle, "for there is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all" (1 Tim. 2, 5-6). The maternal duty of divinity toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power.

For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ.

61. Predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented Him to the Father, in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith,

hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace.

### Mother by Grace

62. This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home.

Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.

For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. Just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by the ministers and by the faithful, and as the "goodness of God is really communicated in different ways to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude, but rather encourages to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary. It knows it through unfeigned experience of it and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may the more intimately adhere to the mediator and Redeemer.

### Symbol of Church

63. By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother.

By her belief and obedience, not knowing man but overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, as the new Eve she brought forth on earth the very Son of the Father, showing an undefiled faith, not in the word of the ancient serpent, but in that of God's messenger. The Son whom she brought forth is He whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren (cf. Rom. 8, 29), namely the faithful, in whose birth and education she cooperates with a maternal love.

64. The Church indeed, con-

templating her hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of "God in faith becomes herself a mother. By her preaching she brings forth to a new and immortal life the sons who are born to her in baptism, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God. She herself is a virgin, who keeps the faith given to her by her Spouse whole and entire. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps with virgin purity an entire faith, a firm hope and a sincere charity.

### Model of Virtue

65. But while in the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the followers of Christ still strive to increase in holiness by conquering sin (cf. Eph. 5, 27). And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. Piously meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word-made-man, the Church with reverence enters more intimately into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her Spouse.

Since she has entered "intimately into the history of salvation, Mary, who unifies and re-echoes in a certain way, the greatest teachings of the Faith in herself, when she is being preached and venerated calls the faithful to her Son and His sacrifice, and to love of the Father.

Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her exalted type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things. Hence the Church, in her apostolic work also, justly looks to her, who, conceived of the Holy Spirit, brought forth Christ, who was born of the Virgin that through the Church He may be born and may increase in the hearts of the faithful also.

The Virgin in her own life lived an example of that maternal love, by which it behooves that all should be animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church for the regeneration of men.

### IV. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Church.

66. Placed by the grace of God, as God's Mother, next to her Son, and exalted above all angels and men, Mary intervened in the mystery of Christ and is honored by a special cult in the Church. Clearly from earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honored under the title of Mother of God, under whose protection the faithful took refuge in all their dangers and necessities. Hence after the Synod of Ephesus the cult of the people of God toward Mary wonderfully increased in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: "All generations shall call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Lk. 1, 48).

This cult, as it always existed, although it is altogether singular, differs essentially from the cult of adoration which is offered to the Incarnate Word, as well to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is most favorable to it. The various forms of piety toward the Mother of God, which the Church within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine, according to the conditions of time and place, and the nature and ingenuity of the faithful has approved, bring it about that while the Mother is honored, the Son, through whom all things have their being (cf. Col. 1, 15-16) and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell (cf. Col. 1, 19), is rightly known, loved and glorified and that all His commands are observed.

### Devotion Fostered

67. This most holy synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and the practices and exer-

(Continued on Page 5)

## Non-Aligned Nations Sure to Increase

By GARY MacEON

In our recent presidential elections, Mr. Johnson carried more states than any previous president in our entire history, yet his most ardent admirer would not claim that he had more enthusiastic backing of the people than any predecessor.

Something similar happened at the opening of the current session of the general assembly of the United Nations. Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey of Ghana was named president by acclamation. Even a diplomat, however, would be hard put to pretend that the Ambassador of one of Africa's most outspokenly anti-western states had the wholehearted endorsement of many countries, including our own.

The reason for accepting Mr. Quaison-Sackey with relief, if not with enthusiasm, merit a few moments of reflection. Under the horse-trading "gentlemen's agreement" which cover such matters, it was this year the turn of the Africans to nominate for the coveted position.

Up to a few months ago, the leading candidate was the Sudan, and I think everyone breathed a sigh of relief when the overthrow of the dictator in that country forced it out of the running. It would be just too much to give the presidency of the Assembly to a state which had obstinately refused to allow the International Commission of Jurists to examine longstanding charges that it was committing genocide against a substantial part of its own citizens.

There was, of course, the additional reason that unanimity was necessary to get the Assembly under way while negotiations continued on Russia's refusal to pay the quota under the peace-keeping arrangements. But I believe there was another and deeper reason, namely, a new appreciation of the meaning of the third force and of what it can contribute to world peace.

When some of the new nations of Asia and Africa first began to proclaim themselves uncommitted or non-aligned, there

was a widespread reaction of outrage in this country. Many felt that we should deny aid to any country that refused to proclaim that the aims and methods of the Western democracies are obviously superior than those of the Soviet bloc. Gradually, however, we were forced to admit that non-alignment is a fact; and that it may be in our interest to aid a non-aligned state.

Our original thinking was further confused because the Soviet leaders were enthusiastic in their support of the non-aligned. We only gradually saw that their support was for tactical reasons. Most of those proclaiming their neutrality were in fact in sympathy with the Communists. The Soviet leaders hoped to use them to build their wooden-trunks.

What apparently did not seem important to them, though it should be important to us, is that at the philosophical level, non-alignment represents a Western victory. Communist doctrine makes no allowance for such a category. A government (in its

formulation) is the authentic expression of the will of the workers and thus by definition committed to fight capitalism, or it is a tool of the capitalists. Only within our political philosophy, which calls on each to pass a personal judgment on the facts, is there room for a category of non-aligned.

To call the non-aligned a "bloc" is itself an error. India's non-alignment and its objectives are essentially different from those of Yugoslavia and Egypt. There are different nations, forms of political organization, and it is in our interest to broaden that spectrum as much as we can.

I believe the role of the non-aligned is bound to grow. The nuclear state, which lessens the danger of direct confrontation between the giants, more to be feared is the escalation into major war of local conflicts, like Congo or Vietnam. In such situations, the presence of non-aligned nations is a political success, because it is on this side, provoking counter-