



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

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MOTHER MARY AND MOTHER CHURCH: INSEPARABLE

A very Joyful and Holy New Year to everybody. Today, the first day of the New Year, the Church celebrates the Mother of God. Mother Mary and Mother Church are one Mother, but they are both more than one Mother! Together they are one Virgin, where each were conceived of the One same Holy Spirit, Immaculate, without the mark of Sin. Mother Mary and Mother Church, each gives birth to a child of God, without sin. Mother Church gives spiritual birth to us in the Sacrament of Baptism, wiping away the mark of Original Sin. So we spiritually come forth from the womb of Mother Church without sin in baptism. Mother Mary gave birth to Jesus, whose nature is also sinless. And by the forgiveness of every sin, Mother Church continues to give new spiritual birth to the body and soul, for the sake of its Head, who is Jesus. Mother Mary and Mother Church are inseparable and both are Christ's Mother.

WOMAN BEHOLD YOUR SON

Mary or the Church cannot give birth to the whole Christ without the cooperation of each other. The Church was secretly constituted in her virginal womb she is totally one with the Church, as we are also called to be. Mother Mary first gave birth to the Human and Divine Body of God in the Person of Christ. He is True God and True Man. Mother Church gives birth in every Mass, to the Divine Sacramental Form of Christ in His New Risen Body of Eucharistic Flesh. Mother Church also gives spiritual rebirth to us, as Children of God, in our Baptism, when we come spiritually forth immaculately sinless, because Christ removed the Original Sin we inherited. It becomes our responsibility to remain sinless. The Church lives out Her role as Mother in conjunction with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ. It then stands to reason and faith that because Christ is both Head and Body of the Church, Mary too is our Mother. Her role as mother of the Church was prepared by Christ. When Mary was standing at the foot of the Cross, one of the last acts of Jesus was to entrust Mary to the care of His beloved disciple, John who represented all the Members of the Church. When Jesus saw his Mother and the Disciple there whom He loved, He said to His Mother, *Woman, behold, your son*. Then He said to the disciple, *Behold, your Mother*. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home (Jn 19:25-27). We too, are called to take Mary into our hearts as a Mother. In calling His own Mother, *Woman* and by not addressing John by name, but calling him, *Son*, it was the intention of Jesus to present Mary as the Mother of the Church. She is now the New Woman, the New Obedient Eve, the Mother of the New Living Creation, because Jesus is the *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all Creation* (Col 1:15). This means that Jesus is preeminent or surpassing over all others in death and new creation. It does not mean that He is a created being, because He always existed as the Word, made Flesh and is God.

CHURCH IS ALWAYS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF A WOMAN

The Church is effeminate because as a Mother She naturally gives birth to Christianity.

In the Book of Revelation, we read how the same St. John described the Church as a Woman. *A portent [a sign of warning], appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a Crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth* (Rev 12:1). The role of Mary's Motherhood was already anticipated by our Lord at the Wedding Feast in Cana. When the couple ran-out of wine, Mary told Jesus that they have no wine. Jesus said to her, *Woman, what concern is that to you and to Me? My hour has not yet come* (Jn 2:3). What Jesus is saying, is that it was not yet the time for Mary or for Himself to be manifested or revealed of their real identity, until His Glorification at His Passion, Death and Resurrection. The hour refers to the Hour of His Glory. Remember that the term *Woman* refers to the New Eve and the New, to be, Mother of the Living, and so in Jesus using the term *Woman*, at the beginning of His Ministry and then again towards the end of His Ministry on the Cross, He intended this term to be understood, as the call of Mary to be the Mother of the Church, upon His Death and Glorification. Her role as Mother of the Church began when Jesus died and rose from the Dead. The New Wine at Cana symbolises the New Covenant who is Jesus and who is Eternal Life. Best Life (Wine) until Last, meaning the best is yet to come in Heaven. We are the stewards in this story, called to also listen to Mary, when she says: *Do as he says*.

MARY PRESENT AT THE BIRTH OF CHURCH AT PENTECOST

Obviously, Mary was present at the Birth of Jesus, but it is very important to note that she was also present at the official Birth of the Church at Pentecost, surrounded by the Disciples. Mary is called to be both the Mother of Christ, Head and Body, which is His Church. She was always there to take care of Jesus and supported Him in infancy. At the age of **Twelve Years** He told His Mother that He must begin doing His Father's Mission. In the same way, Mary was also there with the infant Church, supporting Her at the beginning of its establishment. Mary died **Twelve Years** after Pentecost, leaving the Church to us, the New Disciples, to do the Mission of the Father.

MARY, MODEL OF MOTHERHOOD & OBEDIENCE

If we wish to find a model of Discipleship and Obedience to the Word of God, then Mary is set before us to attain the fullness of Grace she treasured by never sinning. Her Blessedness in Motherhood was not because she gave birth to Jesus but because of her steadfast obedience to the Will of God. She is Mother and Virgin, conceiving Jesus as a Virgin, not through her power but that of the Holy Spirit. Mary became Mother by the Grace of God, in the same way as the Church was conceived, not by *carnal (sexual) urge* (John 1:13), but by the Divine Will of God.

MOTHER OF SORROW, TRIALS AND FAITH

We are called to be faithful to the end, just as Mother Mary was faithful to Jesus right to the end. In this way, the Church, which includes all in authority, including parents and guardians, are called to imitate Mary in her devotion to God, by her obedience to God's will. She also remained faithful in trials and suffering, never abandoning Jesus out of convenience. Through Mary, we become true disciples of Jesus. Like St John, let us bring Mary into our home. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God is critical in learning how to be true disciples of His Word and a *mother* of those under our charge. Let us cultivate a strong devotion to Mary, through her school of the Rosary, so that we too can be one in union with Jesus in doing God's will. I wish you all a Holy and Grace-filled New Year. God bless, Fr. Brendan.