

OF MARY THERE IS NEVER ENOUGH

1. WHO IS SHE?

He that awaketh early to seek her, shall not labor: for
he shall find her sitting as his door.

—Wisdom VI: 15

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One only need look at a map of North America to see that the landscape is peppered with cities and towns named after the Blessed Virgin Mary. My own metropolis of Los Angeles was originally called *Nuestra Señora Reina de los Angeles*—“Our Lady Queen of the Angels.”* Landmarks such as

* The full name was actually *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula*, but a comprehensive explanation of this

Point Conception also bear reference to Her. Surely She must have held an important place in the lives of the early explorers for them to name so many places with Her in mind rather than after their wives and sweethearts. What kind of amnesia has overtaken us that we no longer understand what so moved the Spaniards, the French, and the Portuguese that they would praise the Blessed Virgin at every turn of coast, river, and mountain range as they explored the New World?

Why, we might ask, are so many chapels, churches, cathedrals, shrines, monasteries, convents, hospitals, orphanages and so on, all over the planet, named after this Woman who never traveled far from Her place of birth, never performed any great miracles in Her lifetime, and is only mentioned in passing in the Bible after the birth of Christ? What is it about Her that captured the devotion of kings and paupers, theologians and simpletons, explorers and blacksmiths, queens and scullery maids, Saints and sinners? Who could She possibly be? Could a myth carry such weight, provoke such ardor, inspire such devotion, and

colorful bit of historic nomenclature would take us far afield of the topic at hand.

sustain all this momentum over the span of so many centuries?

Of course, there are those who say that we Catholics put too much emphasis on Mary. Some go further and become downright derogatory. It has become fashionable in some circles to question Her Immaculate Conception (a natural consequence of denying the Fall and Original Sin), Her Virginity with respect to Saint Joseph and the birth of Jesus (ditto the collapse of piety), and Her glorious Assumption into Heaven (the loss of the sense of wonder). Such things are reduced to mere legend, stories to fascinate gullible peasants when the Faith was still young. Most people certainly don't call her "Blessed" let alone "Virgin," and one particularly obnoxious fellow comes to mind who once referred to Her as, "Just an incubator, nothing more."

My own quest in this matter began shortly after my return to the Church after a lapse of a dozen years. One of my first commitments was to say the Rosary daily, which brought me face-to-face with Mary's Immaculate Conception, Assumption, and Coronation. Questions were thus raised which demanded answers.

First I contacted a friend of mine, a man who had stayed within Peter's Barque all the while I had been away. A singularly devout man, he married a fine woman and together they raised a family of eight children*, all of them home-schooled. They had been praying that I would find my way clear to God again; and God had heard their prayers. If anyone knew about Our Lady, it had to be my friend, right?

"So tell me about Mary," I said to him. "Who is She? What is Her place in all of this?"

His answer surprised me. "To tell you the truth, I don't know. My family and I say the Rosary together every night, and we certainly observe all Her feasts, but I really don't know much about Her."

His Faith had been one of simple acceptance, and I appreciated that. But I knew that, for myself, I needed more in the way of knowledge. If my Faith was not founded on rock-sound reason, I ran the risk of falling away again. Not that feelings didn't play their part, but I needed to satisfy my intellect as well.

So I started digging.

* Nine as of this edition.

What I found overwhelmed me. It was no accident that most of the Catholic Churches in the world are named after the Blessed Virgin Mary. No mere “incubator” was She, but rather the most necessary and remarkable human being ever born. Clearly, She had played a part in my return to the Faith, a critical and essential part that only became obvious after the fact. There was no way I would have understood while the process was in progress, but I came to realize that Mary plays a vital role in the Salvation of every sincere follower of Christ. Every single one.

How sad it is that so many Catholics have been convinced by outsiders that we place “too much emphasis on Mary,” and so purged the Faith of all things Marian. In so doing, or rather undoing, we have deprived ourselves of a spiritual resource so powerful and breathtaking as to defy imagination.

Some have capitulated, but not all. Those “old fogies” who remain in the church after Mass, shunned by the modern liturgical specialists, murmuring Hail Mary’s amidst the chitter of so many tiny beads, are holding on for dear life to that same Mother bequeathed to us on Calvary:

When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.

After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.

—Saint John XIX: 26-27

That Mary became our Mother at that moment was understood without equivocation by the Fathers of the early Church. That She is still our Mother has been forgotten by many, but the realization is being rekindled all over Christendom as we turn these pages.

It was through Mary that the salvation of the world was begun, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated.

—Saint Louis Marie de Montfort
True Devotion to Mary

Do we dare rediscover what so many Saints understood as a matter of course, or do we choose to follow the lore of the modernists who rip their Rosaries to pieces in their tin pulpits? Should we revel in the darkness, knocking ourselves senseless against the damp walls of cold stone, or do we pursue the drafts of fresh air into the light of day? Can we continue to wallow in the mud of ignorance

to please our peers, or does honor and dignity require that we seek the waters of Truth and stand tall in the warmth of the bright and fiery sun? Do we dare to uncover the Treasure, the Cache buried under the sands of contemporary indifference, the same Trove transported to the New World aboard Spanish galleons, French transports, and Portuguese frigates, carried within the very hearts of the explorers themselves?

Nothing is equal to Mary, nothing but God is greater than Mary ... Every nature is created by God and God is born of Mary. God created all things and Mary gave birth to God. God who made all things made Himself from Mary and thus He remade everything He had made ... God is the Father of created things and Mary is the Mother of recreated things. God is therefore the Father of the constitution of all things and Mary is the Mother of the restoration of all things. God begot Him through whom all things were made and Mary brought forth Him through whom all things were saved.

Saint Anselm
Opera Omnia

Awaken, Church Militant! To the oars! (Orchestral flourish here.) The Catholic Faith is a grand adventure. Let us raise the anchor and depart these tepid doldrums. What awaits us over the horizon may surprise us, it may shock us, it may even

arouse within our lazy hearts feelings we've never felt before.

What have we got to lose?

Our souls! Do you hear? Our very souls!

To the oars, to the oars!

