

# Mary's Intercession is Necessary for Our Salvation

This enlightening and heartwarming article regarding the necessity of Mary's intercession for our salvation is taken from a section of a chapter of St. Alphonsus Liguori's book, *The Glories of Mary*. The extract proves that the intercession of Mary is even *necessary* to salvation. We say *necessary* – not absolutely, but morally.

*by St. Alphonsus Liguori*

## All Graces Are Given to Us Through Mary's Hands

**A**n ancient author, probably St. Sophronius, in a sermon on the Assumption, published with the works of St. Jerome, says "that the plenitude of grace which is in Jesus Christ came into Mary, though in a different way"; meaning that it is Our Lord, as in the head, from which the vital spirits (that is, divine help to obtain eternal salvation) flow into us, who are the members of His Mystical Body; and that the same plenitude is in Mary, as in the neck, through which these vital spirits pass to the members. The same idea is confirmed by St. Bernardine of Siena, who explains it more clearly, saying, "that all graces of the spiritual life

that descend from Christ, their head, to the faithful, who are His Mystical Body, are transmitted through the instrumentality of Mary." The same St. Bernardine endeavors to assign a reason for this when he says, "that as God was pleased to dwell in the womb of this holy Virgin, She acquired, so to speak, a kind of jurisdiction over all graces; for when Jesus Christ issued forth from Her most sacred womb, all the streams of divine gifts flowed from Her as from a celestial ocean."

Elsewhere, repeating the same idea in more distinct terms, he asserts that "from the moment that this Virgin Mother conceived the Divine Word in Her womb, She acquired a special jurisdiction, so to say, over all the gifts of

the Holy Ghost, so that no creature has since received any grace from God otherwise than through the hands of Mary."

Another author, in a commentary on a passage of Jeremias, in which the prophet speaking of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and of Mary His Mother, says that "a woman shall compass a man," remarks, that "as no line can be drawn from the center of a circle without passing by the circumference, so no grace proceeds from Jesus, who is the center of every good thing, without passing by Mary, who compassed Him when She received Him into Her womb."

St. Bernardine says that for this reason, "all gifts, all virtues, and all graces are dispensed by the hands of Mary to whomsoever, when, and as She pleases." Richard of St. Laurence also asserts "that God wills that whatever good things He bestows on His creatures should pass through the hands of Mary." And therefore the Venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts all to have recourse to "this Treasury of Graces" (for so he calls Her); for the world and the whole human race have to

receive every good that can be hoped for through Her alone. "Address yourselves to the Blessed Virgin," he says; "for by Her, and in Her, and with Her, and from Her, the world receives, and is to receive, every good."

It must now be evident to all that when these saints and authors tell us in such terms that all graces come to us through Mary, they do not simply mean to say that we "received Jesus Christ, the source of every good, through Mary," as the before-named writer pretends; but that they assure us that God, who gave us Jesus Christ, wills that all graces that have been, that are, and will be dispensed to men to the end of the world through the merits of Christ, would be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary.

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And thus Father Suarez concludes that it is the sentiment of the universal Church, "that the intercession and prayers of Mary are, above those of all others, not only useful, but necessary." Necessary, in accordance with what we have already said,

not with an absolute necessity – for the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is absolutely necessary – but with a moral necessity; for the Church believes with St. Bernard, that God has determined that no grace shall be granted otherwise than by the hands of Mary. “God wills,” says the saint, “that we should have nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary”; and before St. Bernard, St. Ildephonsus asserted the same thing, addressing the Blessed Virgin in the following terms: “O Mary, God has decided on committing all good gifts that He has provided for men to Thy hands, and therefore He has entrusted all treasures and riches of grace to Thee.” And therefore St. Peter Damian remarks, “that God would not become man without the consent of Mary; in the first place, that we might feel ourselves under great obligations to Her; and in the second, that we might understand that the salvation of all is left to the care of this Blessed Virgin.”

### **To Find Jesus – Pray to Mary**

St. Bonaventure, on the words of the prophet Isaias,

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,” (Is. 11:1), makes a beautiful remark, saying: “Whoever desires the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit, let him seek for the flower of the Holy Spirit in the rod.” That is, for Jesus in Mary; “For by the rod we find the flower, and by the flower, God.” And in the twelfth chapter of the same work, he adds, “If you desire to possess this flower, bend down the stem which bears the flower, by prayer; and so you will obtain it.” The seraphical Father, in his sermon for the Epiphany, on the words of St. Matthew, “They found the Child, with Mary His Mother,” (Matt. 2:11), reminds us that if we wish to find Jesus we must go to Mary. We may, then, conclude, that in vain shall we seek for Jesus, unless we endeavor to find Him with Mary. And so St. Ildephonsus says, “I desire to be the servant of the Son: but because no one will ever be so without serving the Mother, for this reason I desire the servitude of Mary.”

St. Bernard says, “that

as a man and a woman cooperated in our ruin, so it was proper that another man and another woman should cooperate in our redemption, and these two were Jesus and His Mother, Mary. There is no doubt," says the Saint, "that Jesus Christ alone was more than sufficient to redeem us. But it was indeed fitting that both sexes should work together in repairing the evil which both sexes had caused." Hence Saint Albert the Great calls Mary the "Helper of Redemption." The Blessed Virgin Herself revealed to Saint Bridget, that "as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so did She with Her Son redeem it, as it were, with one Heart." This is confirmed by Saint Anselm, who says, "that although God could create the world out of nothing, yet, when it was lost by sin, He would not repair the evil without the cooperation of Mary."

### **Mary Co-Operated in Our Salvation**

Suarez says, "that Mary cooperated in our salvation in three ways: first, by having merited by a merit of congruity or fitness the Incarnation of the Word; secondly, by

having continually prayed for us whilst She was living in this world; thirdly, by having voluntarily offered Her Son's life to God for our salvation. For this reason Our Lord has justly decreed, that as Mary cooperated in salvation of man with so much love, and at the same time gave such glory to God, so all men are to obtain their salvation through Mary's intercession.

Mary is called "the co-operator in our justification," for to Her God has entrusted all graces intended for us; and therefore St. Bernard affirms, "that all men, past, present, and to come, should look upon Mary as the means and negotiator of the salvation of all ages."

Jesus Christ says that no one can find Him unless the Eternal Father first draws him by the means of divine grace: "No one comes to Me unless My Father draws him." (John 6:44) Thus also does Jesus address His Mother, says Richard St. Laurence: "No one comes to Me unless My Mother first of all draws him by Her prayers." Jesus was the fruit of Mary, as St. Elizabeth told Her: "Blessed art Thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy

womb.” (Luke 1:42) Whoever, therefore, desires the fruit must go to the tree; whoever desires Jesus must go to Mary; and whoever finds Mary will most certainly find Jesus.

When Saint Elizabeth saw that the Most Blessed Virgin had come to visit her in her own house, not knowing how to thank Her, and filled with humility, she exclaimed: “And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” But how could this be, we may ask. Did not Saint Elizabeth already know that not only Mary, but also Jesus, had entered her house? Why then does she say that she is unworthy to receive the Mother, and not rather, that she is unworthy to receive the Son, who had come to visit her? It was because St. Elizabeth knew very well that when Mary comes, She invariably brings Jesus. And therefore it was sufficient to thank the Mother without naming the Son.

“She is like the merchant’s ship, she bringeth her bread from afar.” (Prov. 31:14) Mary was this fortunate ship that brought us Jesus Christ from Heaven, who is the living bread that comes down from Heaven to give us eternal

life, as He Himself says: “I am the living bread, which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” (John 6:51) And hence Richard of St. Laurence says, “that in the sea of this world all will be lost who are not received into this ship; that is to say, all who are not protected by Mary”; and therefore he adds, “As often as we see ourselves in danger of perishing in the midst of the temptations and contending passions of this life, let us have recourse to Mary, and cry out quickly: “O Lady, help us! Save us if You do not want us to perish!”

St. Bernard tells us that, as we have no access to the Eternal Father but through Jesus, so also we have no access to Jesus but through Mary. “By Thee we have access to the Son, O blessed finder of grace, bearer of life, and Mother of Salvation, that we may receive Him by Thee, Who through Thee was given to us.” This is the reason given by the saint why Our Lord has determined that all shall be saved by the intercession of Mary, and therefore he calls Her the Mother of Grace and of our salvation. 