Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Gospel text (*Jn* 19:25-34): Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. 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. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately Blood and water flowed out.

«Behold, your mother»

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Today we remember Mary, Mother of the Church. In this sense, we contemplate the spiritual motherhood of Mary in connection with the Church, which is —in itself— Mother of the People of God, since "no one can have God for Father, who has not the Church for his Mother" (Saint Cyprian). Mary is the Mother of the Son of God and at the same time Mother of those who love her Son and those "well-loved" by her Son, in accordance with that "Woman, behold your son; disciple: Behold your mother" (Jn 19:26-27), just as Jesus said. Giving his body to men and returning his spirit to his Father, Jesus Christ even gave his Mother to his friends.

And the greatest love is the one with which Jesus loves the Church (Eph 5:25), to which his friends belong.

Therefore, children adopted by God cannot have Jesus as brother if they do not have Mary as Mother because, while Mary loves her Son, she loves the Church of which she is an eminent member. Which does not mean that Mary is superior to the Church, but that She is "mother of the members of Christ" (St. Augustine).

The Second Vatican Council adds that Mary is "truly the mother of the members of Christ for having cooperated with her love for the faithful, who are members of that Head (Jesus), to be born into the Church." Furthermore, while remaining in the midst of the Apostles in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14), Mary —Mother of the Church— recalls the presence, gift and action of the Holy Spirit in the missionary Church. By imploring the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Church, Mary prays with the Church and prays for the Church, because "already assumed in the glory of heaven, she accompanies and protects the Church with her maternal love" (Preface to the Mass “Mary, Mother of the Church”).

Mary takes care of her children. We can, therefore, entrust to her the whole life of the Church, as did Pope Saint Paul VI: "O, Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, to you we recommend the entire Church and our ecumenical council!”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “What a loving Mother we have! Let's become like Her and imitate Her love! She had compassion for us to the point of not considering material loss and physical suffering at all.” (Saint Bonaventure)

- “The Mother of the Redeemer precedes us and continually confirms us in faith, in vocation and in mission. With her example of her humility and her availability to the will of God, she helps us to translate our faith into a joyful proclamation of the Gospel without borders.” (Francis)

- “At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve (‘mother of the living’), the mother of the ‘whole Christ.’ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who ‘with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,’ (Acts 1:14) at the dawn of the ‘end time’ which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 726)