

The Spiritual Incarnation of Jesus in us through Our Lady: our Marian Consecration

Homily given by Fr Serafino M. Lanzetta on 25th March 2021, Solemnity of the Annunciation, with the Marian Consecration of 26 people, taken under the form of a private vow.

The Solemnity of the Annunciation – the incarnation of God the Son in Our Lady’s womb is the feast of the world’s new beginning as well as the commencement of our spiritual generation as children of God.

Ave Maria, gratia plena. These words of the Angel echo today in this solemn liturgy and on this special day that re-present *in mystery* what occurred on the day of days, when God entering the womb of his Mother became man. A new creation began to be carried out: heaven and earth spoiled by sin were now made anew. Jesus’ human nature is the most perfect creation, the beginning of the restoration of mankind. He took from Mary our humanity, spotless and immaculate, as Immaculate was the *Theotokos*. The Annunciation and the consequent Incarnation of the Divine Word is the moment when grace triumphed over sin, obedience over disobedience, love over egoism and sin.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord, replied Mary to the Angel. Our Lady’s Fiat resounds in unison with the one of Jesus who in entering the world said: “Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire; but thou hast pierced ears for me. Burnt offering and sin offering thou didst not require: Then said I, Behold I come” (Psalm 39:7-8). The Word incarnate became the “property” of Mary, Her whole possession.

The Feast of the Annunciation is therefore the day to choose to make a special consecration to Our Lady. In fact, the profound reason of giving oneself completely to Mary as a slave (St Maximilian would add as “absolute property” or even as a “mere instrument” into Her hands) has to be found in the mystery of God’s incarnation that we feast today. God the Son in his infinite condescendence and love for us chose to shrink, so to say, to be contained and even more to be enslaved in Our Lady’s womb, as it were. This is what St Louis Grignon de Monfort states clearly in his *True Devotion to Our Lady*:

“Those who undertake this holy slavery should have a very special devotion to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Word on the 25th of March. Indeed, the Incarnation is the proper mystery of this practice, inasmuch as it was a devotion inspired by the Holy Ghost, first, to honour and imitate the ineffable dependence which God the Son has been pleased to have on Mary, for His Father’s glory and our salvation; which dependence particularly appears in this mystery, where Jesus is a captive and a slave in the bosom of the divine Mary, and depends upon her for all things; secondly, to thank God for the incomparable graces He has given Mary, and particularly for having chosen her to be His most holy Mother, which choice was made in this mystery. These are the two principal ends of the slavery of Jesus in Mary” (243).

Moreover, San Louis Grignon highlights also another reason for looking at our Marian Consecration from the angle of God’s Incarnation in Our Lady: Christ resides in Mary and reigns in Her. Our Marian Saint goes on:

“A second reason is because the principal mystery we celebrate in honour of this devotion is the mystery of the Incarnation, where we can only see Jesus in Mary, and incarnate in her bosom. Hence it is more to the purpose to speak of the slavery of Jesus in Mary, and of *Jesus residing and reigning in Mary*, according to that beautiful prayer of so many great men, “O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in us, in Thy spirit of sanctity” (246).

If we want to reign with Christ, or better to say, to have Christ reigning in us and through us in our families, workplaces, in our culture, in our Countries, it is necessary to enclose ourselves in Our Lady's womb by imitating Christ's example. It is fitting and morally urgent to become properties of Mary. In addition to this, St Louis says also that it is through Mary that Christ will reign in the latter times. As Christ came into the world through Mary, He will come again at the end of times through Her; His coming is prepared by Her. If we don't let Christ reign in us through Mary, as a new and spiritual incarnation, we may miss His final coming and be left out of His Kingdom.

The formation of the God-man in us can only happen by following the same pattern of Jesus' incarnation. Our Lady being the spouse of the Holy Spirit who generates the Son of God according to the human nature, She – as St. Maximilian M. Kolbe says – is the only one able to form in all hearts of men and of women the same God-man, by virtue of Her union with the same Holy Spirit. Only in Our Lady's womb can one be truly born and advance according to Jesus' wisdom, age and grace. St Maximilian puts it this way:

“The more thoroughly one reproduces in oneself the image of Christ, the more one approaches the Godhead, becomes divine, becomes man-God... Therefore, those who do not want to have Mary Immaculate as Mother will not have Christ the Lord for their Brother either. God the Father will not send them His Son, the Son will not descend unto their soul, the Holy Spirit will not form with His own grace the mystical body after Christ's model, since that all takes place in Mary Immaculate, full of grace: in Mary only... As it is for the likeness of the first-born, the God-Man, who was conceived only following the explicit consent of the heavenly Virgin, so also, and not otherwise, it is for other human creatures, who must in all things thoroughly imitate their Prototype” (SK 1295).

The greater our Love for the Immaculate, to the point of giving ourselves totally to her, with no reserve, the more perfect is our conformity to Jesus Christ. St Maximilian adds this important thought:

“...we are hers, of the Immaculata, hers without limits, most perfectly hers; we are almost *herself*. Through us, she loves the Good God. Through our poor hearts she loves her divine Son. We become the means whereby the Immaculata loves Jesus, and Jesus, seeing us as her property, almost a part of His most beloved Mother, loves her in us and through us. What wondrous mysteries!” (SK 508).

Here in a nutshell is the reason to be consecrated to Mary. The discourse of our two great Marian Saints leads to taking a Marian Consecration – a total and exclusive belonging to Mary, as Jesus did, for the perfect glory of God and for becoming indeed another Christ – a true Christian.

What should our response be then to such a great love showed to us in the mystery of God's incarnation? It can only be one: consecration with no limit to Mary. Slavery? Yes, as St Louis said. But even more: “absolute property”, a “nothing”, a “simple thing” an “instrument” in Our Lady's hands, as St Maximilian added. All these adjectives try to figure out how deep our perfect belonging to Mary should be.

This is why we have come to this day to consecrate ourselves to Mary in a more perfect way, by taking the Marian vow. The stronger the bond of consecration to Her is, the easier we come to say with St Paul: it is I who live, but no longer I, it is You Jesus who reign in me through Mary my Mother. It is You Mary who hold and live in me Jesus. Amen.