

# Theory 2

## HOW LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS WORK

What God has done for Mary and what God wants to do for us!

CCC 460 “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”

God did for Mary what He wants to do for us! He does this primarily through the Liturgy, sacraments, and prayer.

CCC 260 The ultimate goal of God’s plan “is the entry of God’s creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity.”

John 17:21 Jesus said: “...Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you.”

God has raised Mary to such a staggering height that many cannot accept what God has done for her because they blur the distinction between God, Mary, and us. Let’s begin by setting boundaries that we may preserve the infinite difference between God, Mary, and the rest of humanity.

God is the Father Almighty, the Source of all that is, the Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. He is eternal, infinite, unchangeable, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-Good. Neither Mary nor we possess these divine attributes on our own.

All that being true, God raised Mary’s being and activity to participate in a created way in what belongs to God, enabling her to be the human manifestation of the Spirit and associated with both the Son and the Spirit in the salvation of the world. That is why Mary rejoices in the Magnificat proclaiming: “The Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name.”

# Mary's Immaculate Conception

The great things God has done for Mary began with her Immaculate Conception.

God gave Adam and Eve a share in His divine life by the gift of the Holy Spirit. They rejected that gift. God gave it again to Mary so that she could live by His life dwelling in her.

That is the Immaculate Conception which is revealed at the Annunciation when Gabriel said to Mary, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you."

This phrase, "Full of grace," is the English translation of the Greek word "Kecharitomene," which means from the first moment of her existence, God filled Mary with the Holy Spirit and His grace. She was perfectly permeated by the Holy Spirit who is nothing other than the life of God so she could live His life.

Mary does not become God, she does not become the fourth person in God. However, by perfectly filling Mary with the Holy Spirit at her Immaculate Conception, God raised Mary to participate in the divine life, or as St. Peter writes, "a partaker of the divine nature" but in a way like no other, for God makes Mary the perfect human expression of the Holy Spirit.

## Mary's Cooperation

Once Mary shares in the life of God, then she can take part in the activity of God. To cooperate presupposes to co-exist, that is, to exist on the same level to work together.

To cooperate with the three divine Persons of God, Mary must share in their mode of existence, she must share in their divine life.

This gift was given at her Immaculate Conception. It is then that her co-existence with God began, raising her up to cooperate with God at the Annunciation.

At her Immaculate Conception, Mary is brought to the divine level so that she can cooperate with God the Father to generate the Son; cooperate with the Son in redeeming the world; and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to give birth to Jesus, to the Church and to Christians.

Her co-existence with God begins at her Immaculate Conception.

Her co-operation with God begins at the Annunciation.

God the Father generates the Son on the divine level; Mary generates the Son on the human level. Mary humanly cooperates in the divine activity. By her “Yes,” she allows God to become man and cooperates in the redemption of the world.

## What does Mary tell us about ourselves?

God’s plan is so much greater than we could ever imagine. God is not like a king who gives a beggar a morsal from his table. In that case the beggar is never raised beyond his limitations. God is the kind of King who raises us up to be His children, taken into the household, into the Trinitarian life. His plan is that we become partakers of His divine nature, as St. Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:4, and his co-workers, as St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 3:9.

When we were baptized, God placed His Spirit in our soul so that we could share in His being and his activity. Our being like Mary’s has been elevated to a supernatural level. We are sons and daughters of God. With God’s grace, with His life dwelling in our soul we co-exist with God which means we get to do what God does and become his co-workers in the salvation of the world. We get to do what God does.

In Christ we can now know the truth at the heart of God; we can hope to enter fully the Trinitarian Life; and we can love like God loves.

We get to live like God does yet remain fully human. We get to help save the world through prayer, sacrifice and love.

## Our Yes to God

All this happened in Mary because she said Yes to God, and it may happen in us if we let God be the main actor and initiator in our life.

So how are we to be divinely active in the world? Our job is to do three things:

- I. Say Yes to God unconditionally.
- II. With a heart of Gratitude, do what God wants you to do – do His will.
- III. Accept and offer up to Him all he allows to enter your life knowing this is the way the world is saved and recreated.

CCC 519 [Jesus] remains ever in the presence of God on our behalf bringing before him all that He lived and suffered for us.

## Jesus is an eternal Person

Eternal means “Present.” Every event from the life of Jesus remains PRESENT.

CCC 520 In all of His life Jesus presents Himself as our model.

CCC 521 Christ enables us to live in Him, all that He Himself lived, and He lives it in us. By His Incarnation, He, the Son of God, has in some way united Himself with each man. We are called only to become one with Him, for He enables us as the members of His Body to share in what He lived for us in His flesh as our model.

*“We must continue to accomplish in ourselves the stages of Jesus’ life and His mysteries and often to beg Him to perfect and realize them in us and in His whole Church...for it is the plan of the Son of God to make us and the whole Church partake in His mysteries and to extend them to and continue them in us and in His whole Church. This is His plan for fulfilling His mysteries in us” (St. John Eudes).*

**“His mysteries” simply mean the events from the life of Jesus.**

- Jesus makes the events from His life *present* so that what took place in Him can take place in us and make us like Him.
- Where does this happen? In the Mass and the sacraments.

**Jesus wants to put His life in us.**

- He wants to relive His life in us; He does this principally through the Liturgy (the sacraments).

CCC 1085 In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally His own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present...When His hour comes He lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father “once for all. His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past because...all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all...”

## The Holy Spirit is the Church’s living memory

(CCC 1099)

**The Prayer of Remembrance is the ANAMNESIS.**

The Holy Spirit recalls the saving events from the life of Christ in the Liturgy of the Word. Anamnesis is the opposite of “amnesia.”

- CCC 1103 In the Liturgy of the Word the Holy Spirit “recalls” to the assembly all that God has done for us.
- CCC 1104 Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us but actualizes them, makes them present. The Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. It is the celebrations that are repeated, and in each celebration, there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present (see also CCC 1363).

### **The Making Present of the Event is the EPICLESIS.**

The *Epiclesis* (“invocation upon”) is the intercession in which the priest begs the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, so that **the offerings may become the body and blood of Christ and that the faithful by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God** (CCC 1105).

That is why CCC 1370 can say:

“In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the Cross with Mary, united to the offering and intercession of Christ.”

In fact, the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice.

That is why I am a Catholic! The preaching may be better somewhere else, the music may be better somewhere else, the fellowship may be better somewhere else, but nowhere else is the saving event of Calvary made present so that we may stand in the fountain of grace that poured forth from the Savior’s side and drink in His divine life in the Eucharist!

The Sacraments always work but we receive the grace according to our openness.

CCC 1128 *ex opera operato* (literally: by the very fact of the actions being performed, i.e. by virtue of the saving work of Christ). It follows that the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient but by the power of God. From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and His Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister. Nevertheless, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them.

### **What should we do to open the doors of our soul to receive the grace of the sacraments?**

Daily meditative prayer with a resolution.