



# *Apostles for Today*

*Prayer and Reflection - May 2016*

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## *Mary, Mother of Mercy*

The human and experience and that of family, the relationship between mother and child, allows us to understand the authenticity of mercy.

Maternal mercy is a natural and special characteristic of a mother's heart which generates life. For the mother, the child is greatly loved because he or she is part of her life, and the more the latter suffers, the more he or she will be loved.

In the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Year of Mercy, Pope Francis says to us:

“No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh” (Misericordia Vultus 24).

Mary, Mother of Mercy, beyond the merely human, has cultivated the breadth of maternity through faith and obedience.

If the heart of a mother is a constant offering of love to her children, the heart of Mary is the most evident expression of the maternal heart of God to humanity.

Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, we see that her path as Mother was completely shaped in mercy for all humankind.

Mary, woman of attentive listening to God and to the events of her time. This is not a simple “listening”, a cursory listen, but a “listening with attention, acceptance and availability”.

At the Annunciation, she listens to the Angel Gabriel and with her Let it be done (fiat), accepts to be the mother of the Saviour. It is the ‘yes’ of a faith committed to God.

Mary woman of decision. On hearing that Elizabeth, her elderly cousin, was pregnant, she left in a hurry to serve her.

In the meeting with Elizabeth, the Magnificat proclaimed by Mary anticipated in a certain way the outpouring of the Spirit in the community of Jerusalem.

The prophecy and the mercy, the life and the works of Mary proclaimed in this canticle reveal that she actively practices the merciful dimension of its feminine aspect when she proclaims the mercy of Almighty God and at the same time proclaims a social dimension, calling for justice for the children of God who are disadvantaged and victims of injustice.

Mary, mystical soul, but also prophetic woman with a commitment of justice towards all peoples.

Mary, woman of action. While taking part in the wedding at Cana in Galilee, she notices the embarrassment that the young married couples would have experienced because of the lack of wine. No one needed to ask her: she acted with mercy. Here too we see the realism, humanity and consistency of Mary, attentive to the events of life.

Mary at the foot of the Cross, is a witness of the unbounded forgiveness of the Son of God, who supports in his flesh the dramatic encounter between the sin of the world and the mercy of God.

Pope Francis tells us that Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception.

The Mother of mercy forgives all of the atrocities suffered by her Son.

Saint Vincent Pallotti was a man intoxicated by the mercy of God.

On reading his writings, we find that he lives always as both an object and a subject of love. He sees his whole life and his whole being as a wonderful work of God's Infinite Mercy, which has as the object itself of His love the purpose of making him (Vincent) the perpetual miracle of His mercy in the way that he made of Mary the miracle of His grace.

St. Vincent Pallotti recognizes, as do we all, that Mary is full of grace, mother of mercy, Co-redemptrix of humankind, and invokes her in his prayers and supplications, over and over: to my beloved mother, “my dear mother of mercy”, hail mother of mercy.

Our founder, reflecting on the texts from the Acts of the Apostles which speak of the coming of the Holy Spirit, wanted to create a painting portraying the Pentecost scene. He saw Mary as Queen of the Apostles, giving them strength and courage. For this reason he placed his work under her protection.

Let us pray with Saint Vincent Pallotti, “Hail Mother of the Mercy of God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the heavenly court, mercifully embrace me, the Perpetual Miracle of Mercy, as you made Mary the miracle of grace” (cf. OCCC X, 356).

**For reflection:**

a) Mary gave her yes for all of her life. How do you live out your yes: in the priesthood, in consecrated life, as an individual, as a couple, in your family, your community and in the apostolate?

b) In the Magnificat, we see Mary as a contemplative and with a Christian consciousness of the socio-political situation of her time. To what point do we content ourselves with charitable action of almsgiving and “social work” and flee from the true and proper transforming demanded of a critical Christian conscience?

c) What is the experience of the love and mercy of God that I strive to live day by day in my life?

d) We are called by our spirituality to reveal through our life and apostolate the Face of the infinite love and mercy of God. How does this happen in my personal and apostolic life?

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