

Devotion to Our Lady is Necessary for Salvation

by *Father Patrick Perez*
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Good morning dear Fathers! Monsignori! Are there any Salesians of John Bosco here? I know there is more than that, the rest are too shy to put up their hands. Well happy Feast Day of St. John Bosco, to you, not only to the Salesian priests, but to everyone here. It is a blessing to all of us that you continue his work with the young people of the world. They are the hope of our future so God bless your work and God keep you.

I offer this talk today to Jesus through Mary in honor of Her Immaculate Conception in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary and also in honor of Her dear servant St. John Bosco.

Somebody will have to explain to me in the Mass this morning the prayer referred to him doing magic tricks? The Salesian priests will have to explain that one to me later on. It sounds intriguing.

As John said I'm speaking this morning on devotion to the Blessed Virgin, but not just in general, specifically, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as necessary for salvation. It sounds like a lot to say that, and in fact I've had some priests tell me, you know — maybe they weren't very good priests — but they said, "Oh I don't have much of a devotion to the Blessed Virgin you know, oh! the Rosary? I could take the Rosary, I could leave the Rosary, but you don't have to have a devotion to the Blessed Virgin."

Our Lady — Basis for Devotion to Her

Well I beg to differ. When our Lord was asked which was the greatest commandment, He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole mind and thy whole heart and thy whole soul." And He said, "The second is like it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If you truly love God, if you truly love God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost with your whole heart, and your whole mind, and your whole soul then you must also love what He loves. You cannot separate the two. You cannot say I love Jesus so much but His Mother is okay. No! If you love the Lord your God with your whole heart then you love His Mother. You try to love with the love that He has for His Mother. It is impossible for a human but we ask Him for the grace to love His mother and obey His Mother with the love that He had for Her and the obedience that He showed to Her.

Apart from the Godhead Itself, Jesus' greatest love is His Blessed Mother. Of course, the Trinity loves itself above all with a perfect love. That is one thing, but second in a category all by Herself is Our Lord's love for His Blessed Mother that He loves above all things save the Blessed Trinity Itself.

So, by definition this must be true of us, His followers as well. If we are really going to seek to follow Him, we have to seek to love His Mother as He did and as He does. If it's not true, then you can't say that you love Jesus. It's as simple as that. There's no, "You can't", you're a liar. If you say you love Jesus but you don't love His Mother then you're lying.

The Protestant Dishonor to Our Lady

Now I'll get into this more in a minute. I know many of you come from India or Sri Lanka or the countries in this area and you have your own thorns in your side. You have Hindus to deal with and Muslims and governments and these kinds of things. Well the thorn in our side in America is what they call Protestants. They are all over the place like red biting ants and cockroaches and they are most annoying and a thorn in our side because of their blasphemies and their attacks on Christianity. I don't think you have to deal so much with them, but every place has its own problems.

By this definition then, we must love Our Lady with the love of Jesus or we can't say that we truly love Jesus. But more than that if we love Him not only must we love what He loves we must try to imitate Him in all things. Of course the classical text, *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas Kempis is a good guideline for doing that, but so many, so many beautiful spiritual works help us in that direction as well. His Incarnation was accomplished by Our Lady's intercession in a sense. When Our Lady consented to do the will of God and be the Mother of the Second Person of the Trinity Incarnate, that was Her intercession in a very real way. And Our Lord subjected His very Incarnation to the condition of His Mother's intercession.

Likewise His miracles were thanks to Her intercession. Remember beginning with the wedding feast of Cana when Our Lady noticed that there was no wine and She said to Him, "Son, they have no wine" and He said, "Woman what is it to Me and to Thee," and then He changed the water into wine as His first public miracle. Well this was His entry into His life, His public life, His life of teaching, His life of preaching, His life of miracles and that was at His Mother's intercession and as well with Her permission and at Her bidding.

The Blessed Virgin holds a place unique in creation. Now this is where the Protestants back home start to have trouble with the Blessed Virgin, because for some reason they can't get around the fact that Our Lady is unique in creation. She's not God because God isn't created; She is not us because we were born in sin; but She is the Immaculate Conception, the first tabernacle, the holy and pure vessel that was made by Our Lord to hold Him those nine months while He was waiting to be born in Bethlehem and there ever after to be subject to.

So She holds a unique place in creation — Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, both by Her nature of being the Immaculate Conception and Her merits. She merited as well what She had. She was born the Immaculate Conception but She merited on Her own, many things, namely by cooperating fully and wholly with the plan of God. She merited and succeeded where the first Eve failed and She

contributed to our redemption in that sense. So She has a unique position above all men in a unique position between God and man.

Now for those of you who are familiar with the traditional liturgy of the Church we actually show this. There are three kinds of bows, for example, in the Traditional Mass of the Church; you have a slight bow of the head for the mention of the saint of the day, for the mention of the pope's name, and for the mention of the bishop in whose Diocese you are on the day of his consecration. You have a profound bow of the head for the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary and only the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It's more profound than the saint or the pope or the bishop. It's less profound than the third kind of bow which is reserved for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself which is a more profound bow like this. So even in the liturgy we separate out the *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, and *latria* that the Church shows to the various saints and to God and to the Blessed Virgin Herself.

Now we Catholics have always given Her this place without question. We don't question that, we never have. However, as I said there are those who do, namely the Protestants beginning with the Protestant revolt in the early Sixteenth Century, fifteen hundreds. Mind you, it is called the Protestant Revolt, not Reformation. Protestants like to call it the Reformation because they think that the Catholic Church was somehow corrupt and they reformed it gloriously along biblical lines. No, they destroyed the unity of the Church. They blasphemed Our Blessed Mother, Our Lord and His saints and everything that had come before them in His Church. So it is the Protestant Revolt first of all not the Protestant Reformation.

They have two main complaints when it comes to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

First of all they say that She was a woman like any other. She was just a woman like any other that somehow, I suppose, Our Lord chose at random, and decided to become incarnate of. She was a woman they say like any other.

And Scripture says — the other objection they have is that Scripture says that She can't be a mediatrix because we only have one mediator and that mediator is Jesus Christ Himself. So they say that when we pray to the Blessed Virgin, when we pray to the saints that we are in fact committing idolatry because Scripture says we only have one mediator, one intercessor and that is Jesus.

The Protestants base these opinions in what they perceive first of all to be a lack of scriptural evidence. Never mind that the Old Testament is full of references to the second Eve in Her qualities — and it is! If you read the Old Testament, knowing the details of the New Testament you see that Our Lord is prefigured and spoken of hundreds of times in the Old Testament as is Our Lady. What about though the common-sense aspect of theology?

Our Lady — Immaculately Conceived

Remember our theology is not just biblical. Biblical's good, biblical's our book, the book of the Catholic Church, we use it and we interpret it appropriately but theology isn't just reading the Bible, theology is using your noggin, its using your head a lot of times. You apply logic to Scripture and to true principles about God and that is how you do theology. When you apply logic to truth you can derive another truth and that is basically theology.

So what about that aspect then of theology? — the common-sense aspect? God the Son, the Holy Immortal would not possibly take flesh of a woman like any other. That you can derive from the nature of God. He could not take flesh of a woman like any other born with the stain of original sin, a common sinner like any other woman. That would be impossible for the Holy Immortal Who cannot tolerate the presence of imperfection or sin or error.

So Her uniqueness due to Her Immaculate Conception can be deduced from logic itself. She must have been the Immaculate Conception. Even had we never heard preserved in Scripture the words of the angel, "Hail full of grace!" we would have known that She was in fact full of grace from the first moment of Her conception because She could not be otherwise.

Our Lady — Mediatrix of All Graces

Now the other point that the Protestants make: the one mediator, the one intercessor Jesus Christ Himself — in which sense is this true and what does it not mean? That Jesus Christ is the one sole mediator in justice for our redemption is beyond dispute. He alone paid the price for our sins and that exactly [is] what one mediator means when we see it in Scripture. It means that He alone accomplished the atonement. He paid the price Himself. Now how do we know that that is what Scripture means? How do we know that Scripture means you can't pray to saints or the Blessed Virgin Mary? Because Scripture is itself full of examples of intercession of other human beings. We have examples to give you a couple here.

What we call mediation of grace. Our Lord's is the mediation of justice. He paid the price. The mediation of the saints, of the Blessed Virgin Mary is called the mediation of grace. A few examples; Jeremias; if you look at the second book of Machabees 15:14, he interceded after his death for his beloved city Jerusalem. The ancients in the Apocalypse; if you look in the book of Apocalypse [chapter 5,] verse 8, the ancients intercede for us the saints.

And one final example; if you look in the second letter of St. Peter 1:15 you will see that St. Peter promises his disciples that in Heaven he will intercede for them. So we know then from Scripture, it can't mean that there is only one mediator who prays for us in the way of grace, it must mean just in the way of justice, because in Scripture we have others examples of mediation of grace.

It holds therefore that by virtue of who and what She is, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary likewise has a place all of its own, all of its own. She has a place all of Her own in creation and Her intercession has a place all of its own. And what is that? (By the way, I know a lot of you have travelled a long way and are kind of tired. If you want to go to sleep, that's okay. You'll make me feel like I'm in my parish.) Well, what is Her place then? — Her unique place in intercession?

Is our Blessed Virgin Mary not the Queen of Heaven and earth? She is the Queen of Heaven and earth. Would it not be appropriate then that even the prayers of the saints ascend to Heaven through Her and likewise all graces from Heaven descend to us through Her? Has She not merited that? Indeed She has! Remember when we call Her our Queen, 'Hail Holy Queen,' or as we say in the 5th Glorious Mystery, the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven and earth, we are talking about She [Who] has absolute dominion over us. That is what a queen does. A queen is not like, you know, a parliamentary figure that we can have, you know, no confidence [in]: 'Sorry!' No, a queen is an absolute ruler in this sense and Mary is in that very same sense the Queen of Heaven and earth. And She has merited that. This is so by necessity of precept rather than necessity of means.

And what does that mean? She is the Mediatrix of All Graces because God wills it so. Not that it must be so but that God has determined because of His love for His Blessed Mother and Her merits that this is so. This is what you call the necessity of precept rather than of means. It's so because God wills it to be so not because it has to be by the nature of it. God Himself made His Own Incarnation subject to Her unique intercession. He made His Own Incarnation subject to His Blessed Mother's *fiat*. In Her the desires of the whole human race, the coming of the Messiah came to be fulfilled by Her word and permission and Her word and permission only.

Likewise, we have the graces of Our Lord's public ministry through Her intercession and according to the revelations given to Blessed Ann Catherine Emmerick, Our Lord even asked Her permission to undergo His passion. So even the grace of the atonement itself was by Her word and Hers alone. According to the revelations of Ann Catherine Emmerick Our Lord visited Our Lady and asked Her permission to undergo His passion.

That this relationship should be continued in Heaven comes as little surprise to us. It is in fact most fitting that as on earth below, Our Lady's intercession is necessary for salvation now in each specific case as it was before in the general case. There are those who wish to limit the office of Our Lady Mediatrix of all graces to the general case where She gave Her "Yes;" Her consent; Her *fiat* for the Incarnation — and therefore we have God Incarnate who went onto His public ministry, His Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Our Lady — Necessary for Each One's Salvation

But it is much more active and specific than that. It is an individual specific case of necessity of Her intercession for salvation — each one of us, not just the historical case of Her *fiat* at the Annunciation.

So what do the saints have to say about this subject? Well, I'll read you a few of the quotes of what the saints have to say about this subject — they are all in agreement. There is no saint, no spiritual writer in the history of the church who denies the necessity of Our Lady's intercession for each one of our personal salvation.

So its not too hard to find references about this. I will just give you a few here:

Saint Bernadine of Sienna, says, "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. Bernadine also says, "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 speak, over all the gifts of the Holy Ghost so that no creature has since received any grace from God otherwise than from the hands of Mary."

There is a spiritual writer Richard of St. Lawrence who says, "that God wills that whatever good things He bestows on His creatures should pass through the hands of Mary."

Also the Venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts all to have recourse to "this treasury of graces" (for so he calls Her). "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."

Another — this is from St. Alphonsus [de Liguori] — "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, should be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary."

A famous Jesuit theologian, Suarez, says, "The intercession and prayers of Mary are above those of all others not only useful but necessary."

St Bernard says, "God wills that we should have nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary."

And before St. Bernard, St Ildephonsus asserts the same thing. He says, "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."

Another one here, St. Peter Damien; he says, "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."

Now just a couple, couple more (ones) here; the evidence from the saints and theologians is so overwhelming that it's just wonderful to hear these.

Suarez again, the Jesuit theologian, 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; (and) 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 gave such glory to God, so all men are to obtain their salvation through Mary's intercession.

Just a couple more little ones here; St. Antoninus: “Whoever asks and expects to obtain graces without the intercession of Mary, endeavors to fly without wings;” for, as Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘The land of Egypt is in thy hands,’ then sent to him everyone that came for help saying, ‘Go to Joseph.’, so does God send us to Mary when we seek for grace, ‘Go to Mary.’, for “He has decreed,” says St. Bernard, “that He will (grant no) graces otherwise than by the hands of Mary.”

(“Our salvation is in Her hands.”) says Cassian, a spiritual writer: (“Our salvation is in Her hands.”) He says absolutely, “that the salvation of all depends on their being favored and protected by Mary.” He who is protected by Mary will be saved; he who is not will be lost.

And Saint — this is not a Saint — but Richard of St. Lawrence once again, “as we should fall into the abyss, if the ground were withdrawn from under our feet, so does a soul deprived of the help of Mary fall first into sin, and then into hell.”

St. Bonaventure says that “God will not save us without the intercession of Mary.” [And that] “as a child cannot live without a nurse to suckle it, so no one can be saved without the protection of Mary.” Therefore he exhorts us “to thirst after devotion to Her, to preserve it with care, and never to abandon it until we have received Her maternal blessing [in Heaven].”

Our Lady's Intercession — Example

Now we have a number of, so many, there are different examples of that. Just one that comes to mind — this is from an article that appeared in the *Catholic Family News* oh, almost seven years ago. And it was the case of this young black man in the South, Claude Newman; somebody was attacking his wife — he was totally illiterate — he ended up actually killing the man who was attacking his wife. And in prison, a Catholic prisoner had a medal and he said, “What is that you're wearing? He goes, “It's a medal.” But the Catholic prisoner was not a good Catholic; took the medal off, spat on the ground, and threw the medal down. And this Claude Newman picked it up and asked the guard [to give him] permission to put in on. From that night the Blessed Virgin appeared to him.

But, the point I'm getting to is [that] before his death, he had been in communion, in communication with the Blessed Virgin and he told the priest who received him into the Church, he

said, “Whatever you need, you ask me, and I will ask Her for you.” And so it is, many saints have written the same thing. He doesn’t say, “If you need something, ask me and I’ll talk to Jesus.” or “You ask me and I will talk to God the Father.” He said — he was about to be executed — he said to the priest, “If you need something, you ask me and I will ask Her for you.”

My dear faithful, we have every right to expect that this is true, given the overwhelming evidence from the theologians and saints and Fathers of the Church, not that we as Catholics are at all surprised by this.

Our Lady’s Intercession and — Fatima

But remember in more recent times Fatima bears all this out wonderfully. The Message of Fatima is one of the necessary intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Our Lord says that. Remember when Lucy says, well, you know, why, why the Immaculate Heart, you know, why, why not the Sacred Heart, and why Russia, why this, that and the other thing; she was asking the questions. And He said, “So that they will, they will know that it is My Mother that did this, and they will venerate Her Immaculate Heart alongside My Sacred Heart.”

That is the whole thing, what we’re holding out for in Fatima is the Holy Father’s public expression that the Blessed Virgin is the Mediatrix of All Grace by consecrating Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. Eventually it will be done. Our Lord will bring us to our knees before the throne of His Blessed Mother and this will be done. She will be recognized as the channel, the door, the Gate of — *Ianua Caeli* — the Gate of Heaven that we must go through. She will be recognized as that eventually, but as the prophecies say the longer time goes on, the more dire the consequences of delaying such a thing.

Summing Up

I just want to leave you with one final quote that I found particularly beautiful. And this is from St. Germanus. And it really encapsulates everything as far as I’m concerned. He says,

“There is no one, O Most Holy Mary who can know God but through Thee; no one who can be saved or redeemed but through Thee, O Mother of God; no one who can be delivered from dangers but through Thee, O Virgin Mother; no one who obtains mercy but through Thee, O filled with [all] grace.”

I think no one can say it more completely or better than that or in a way that encapsulates the sentiments of every truly Catholic heart. May the Immaculate Heart of Mary be adored and glorified and may we see Her Triumph after the Consecration of Russia. May we see Her Triumph over all those who doubt that She is our one and only Mother. Amen.

[Note: Subtitles have been added for ease of reading.]