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DAY 7

New Eve of Light and Life

This week, we've been looking at the meaning of trust, the heart of which comes through the examples of Abraham and Mary, who were blessed because they believed that what God had promised them would be fulfilled. But while Mary far surpasses Abraham as an example of faith, she also provides something that Abraham cannot: the grace to believe, the grace to trust.

Let me explain this crucial point.

Faith is a gift of grace. It's no human work. So how do we obtain it? We obtain it through Mary. Why do I say that?

Because Mary is the New Eve.

As we learned on Day 1, the old Eve brought about the wound of original sin, a wound that causes us to have a distorted image of God, a wound that causes us to doubt God's goodness, a wound that causes us to tend to hide from God.

The wound, then, is clearly about God. And so God uses another woman, a New Eve, to help heal the wound that the old Eve caused — a New Eve, a "woman," who was announced from the beginning, a woman who would be at enmity with Satan, a woman whose offspring would crush the serpent's head (see Gen 3:15). In a certain sense, God needs this woman's help. Why? Because, again, the wound has to do with God. So God has two problems: (1) He wants us fallen creatures to believe in his Word and to trust in his goodness, but that's something he can't force, because trust, like love, must be given in freedom. (2) Due to the wound of original sin, we already tend to distrust God, so when he draws close to us, we often run and hide.

You might say, then, that the New Eve is God's secret weapon because our wound doesn't have to do with her. After all, she's a creature like us. And best of all, she's a kind and gentle mother — and who can be afraid of such a mother?

So Mary can win hearts in a way that even Jesus Christ can't. What? Well, I say that because Jesus is God, and again, our wound has to do with God. That's why even today, after all he has done for us, people still avoid Jesus. But a mother, who is not God, can often win over such straying hearts. And what does our heavenly mother do when she wins such hearts? She brings them to Jesus. That's Mary's whole passion and purpose. She just wants to heal the wound. She just

wants us to believe in God and trust in his mercy. She just wants us to come to understand God's goodness and accept his Merciful Love.

And she's effective — not only because she's such a tender mother, but also because, as the Church teaches, she's a Mediatrix of grace.

By a "Mediatrix of grace," I don't mean that Mary is the source of grace. The Heart of Christ, pierced with a lance and overflowing with blood and water — that is the source of grace. But Mary leads us and brings us to that source of grace, the Fountain of Mercy. Also, she herself helps open our hearts to receive that mercy. Why? Because of what she went through on Calvary.

On Calvary, Mary's Heart was pierced with a sword, as Simeon had foretold (see Lk 2:35). But her pierced Heart is different from that of her Son's. Again, when his Sacred Heart was pierced, it became the Fountain of Mercy, the source of mercy. But when Mary's Immaculate Heart was pierced, it became an instrument of grace that opens hearts to receive God's mercy (see Lk 2:35). Now, of course, the piercing of her Heart hurt. In fact, it was the unfathomable suffering of her motherly Heart at Calvary that makes her Heart an instrument of grace, a Mediatrix of grace. And it's her suffering, more than that of any other creature that makes up for what is lacking in the suffering of Christ.

What? Is something lacking in Christ's suffering? According to St. Paul, there is. He says, "In my flesh, I complete what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ" (Col 1:24). Now, of course, in one sense, there's nothing lacking in Christ's suffering. In fact, his suffering and death on the Cross obtained the grace of salvation for everyone who has ever lived, is living, and will live, even to the end of time. In other words, the love that flows from the Lord's pierced Heart is an infinite ocean of mercy. Problem is, not everyone accepts, receives, and draws from such a super abundant source. They close their hearts to Christ's saving love. So really, the "lack" is on the side of sinful humanity — but we can help make up for that.

Through our suffering, lovingly united with Christ's, we can obtain for people the grace to accept his gift of salvation. For instance, I can pray and sacrifice for you, and it makes a difference. You can pray and sacrifice for me, and it makes a difference. But no human being makes more of a difference than Mary when it comes to helping people obtain the grace and mercy flowing from the Heart of Jesus. Why? Again, because Mary is the New Eve.

Mary truly is the New Eve who brings us to the New Adam on the new tree of life, the Cross. And once there, she lovingly encourages us not to eat forbidden fruit

but to drink from the blessed fountain of eternal life, the Fountain of Mercy. And through the grace of her suffering at the foot of the Cross, our gentle mother opens our hearts to receive the gift of salvation that comes to us in the love and mercy that flows from Christ's pierced side. Such saving faith truly is a gift of Christ through Mary. And such a gift leads the Church to rightly declare, "Death through Eve, life through Mary." 29

Today's Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.

Bring me, through Mary, to the Fountain of Mercy.

Twenty-Four Hours of the Passion of Our Lord, Jesus Christ – Reflection for 2:00 pm Hour

My Love, if a lance has wounded your Heart for me, with your hands I also beg You to wound my heart, my affections, my desires, and my whole being. May nothing remain in me that is not wounded by your Love. I unite everything to the excruciating agony of our dear Mother, who—because of the agony she feels on seeing your Heart torn open—collapses from love and sorrow. Like a dove, She flies into your Heart to take the first place—to be the first Reparatrix—and You establish her as the Queen of your very Heart, and the Mediatrice between You and creatures. I fly with my Mother into your Heart to hear how She makes reparation and how She repeats her reparations for the offenses that You receive. By the power of this wound and of your sorrowful Mother, I beg You to enclose everyone in your most beloved Heart—to protect, defend and enlighten the rulers of your Church. O my Jesus, after Your agonizing and most sorrowful death, it seems just that I should no longer have a life of my own. Rather, I will find my life once more in your wounded Heart—so that, whatever I do, I will always depend on your divine Heart. No longer will I give life to my thoughts—but if they should want Life, I will take it from Yours. My will shall no longer have life—but if it wants Life, I will take it from your Most Holy Will. And my love will no longer have life—but if it wants Life, I will take It from your Love. O my Jesus, your whole Life is mine! This is your Will—and this is my will also.