

Episode: A War of Love and Peace

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence. I ask your pardon for my sins, and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

Lord as we immerse ourselves in your presence in the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Sacrament always has special meaning when we contemplate Mary. And I know that the topic of Our Lady is the main topic of our monthly day of recollection. But using a phrase of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a great doctor of the Church who lived in the 12th century, “*De Maria, numquam satis*”—we could never have enough of Mary, because she is that shortcut, as the saints have shown us, she's the shortcut to Jesus Christ

And we ask Our Lord, Lord, how do you want us to look at your mother? The obvious answer is, as your own mother, as in your case, a little daughter with a mom who happens to be the Mother of God, and our mother, and Queen of Heaven and Earth, so a very powerful and perfect mother. And there's so many ways to look at Our Lady. And we should take advantage of all those ways since she is our Mother and Queen of Heaven and Earth.

But let's look at Sacred Scripture. She's revealed as our hope. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, the first prophecy in the whole Bible is about her and her Son. And more or less, the very last prophecy is about her and her Son in the Church, and she wants us to see her, yes as a mother, but at the same time, as a force behind overcoming evil, a force in extending the apostolate, a force of evangelization. What's said about the Blessed Mother does not stop at just connecting with her for comfort, we should. All the saints did that. St. Josemaria did that, he would draw a lot of comfort from the Blessed Mother, we should. But it doesn't stop there that's included. We ask Mary for help in our struggle, she's my mother, we ask for favors. She's my mother. But what's indicated by the Holy Spirit is the connection between Mary and extending the Kingdom of her Son. And even more specifically, Mary's connected with overcoming the great obstacles to apostolate which are those forces of evil. And we may be tempted to say, well, wonderful. But here I am living in a little corner of Chicago. I don't give impassioned speeches or discourses. Humanly speaking, I have very little influence on the culture on turning the tide regarding the forces of evil. I have such a little role to play on a human level. On a human level that's correct. But let's recall yesterday, Mary appeared to three little kids, illiterate shepherds, very poor, very destitute in some little corner of Portugal that would not be known today if Mary had not appeared, Fatima. And it was the Holy Father Benedict XV, a year

before those apparitions who is praying incessantly to the Blessed Mother. And he was urging everyone else to pray for an end to a great manifestation of evil, which was World War I, where the culture of death began with a bang, no pun intended, and where you'd have a million soldiers die in one battle. That was unprecedented, never seen what we call the modern weaponry resulted in a very high toll in human life, so much so that most of the young generation of that time in England and Germany, in France, Italy, Russia, as well, Austria. And it was Benedict praying for an end to the war. But how does Mary answer that prayer? She did not appear to him. At least not on record, she did not appear to any head of state. She appeared to three little insignificant, humanly speaking, three little, insignificant kids who didn't even know the whole Hail Mary. They would pray, they pray real fast and probably didn't think of what they were saying. And they didn't finish the prayer, at least the book I read. And what does Our Lady do? Well she gives them the big picture, I want you to spread the kingdom, I want sinners to come back again. She appears as someone who drives out evil. And she explains to these three little kids who don't know how to read or write. Obviously, they're aware of a big war going on in Europe, if that, and she's telling them all these things. She's asking them to take responsibility, to extend the kingdom of her Son and bring sinners back to her Son. And she explains to those little kids, that the reason why you have this terrible war, with such a high toll in human life, is because of the absence of her Son. And she says, well, the solution is to bring people back to my son. And so yes, it's Our Lady's will, that we, even though we have to just throw our heart into this, and as we struggle to be saints, even on a human level, we won't make the headlines where we are contributing to that extension of the Kingdom. And but we want to follow her instructions.

The prophecies concerning Jesus begin in Genesis. The first parents bring sin into the world, prompted by the devil, and God speaks to the devil, but he's really speaking to us. He's, the devil receives the first prophecies. And what is the devil told? The devil is told he's going to be defeated by a mysterious woman and her son. It's going to be combination of mother, a mother and son combo will conquer him, he brought into the world is going to be pushed out of the world, more or less, by this mysterious woman. And so Genesis says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman," talking to the serpent, "and between your seed and her seed, those who follow you and those who follow Jesus Christ," even though he's not mentioned, "he shall bruise your head." Other translations say she shall bruise his head. It's the same idea. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. And what does that mean? It's a prediction of the passion. Jesus will have a nail in his heel. And Mary will take that very personally, because she'll be there and she'll identify with the pain of her Son. So some translation says his heel, some translations say her heel, the Greek says her heel, the original Hebrew says his heel.

And what does that mean? Well, it also means that this defeat of the evil one will take a struggle. And I remember in 1993, to be exact on the Feast of the Assumption in Denver, Colorado during World Youth Day, the Holy Father who's very surrealistic, it's almost a million kids in this park, Cherry Hill Park, or Cherry Creek Park, and you have the Holy Father. And you have a big icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the New Advent, you have a beautiful crucifix on that altar. And then you have the Vicar of Christ. Speaking very strongly, loudly, forcefully saying that Our Lord is one that has won. But it's gonna take a big struggle to bring about the effects of the graces Jesus has won. And he says, and you are protagonists of that. You are being called to that, to bring Jesus Christ back into your cities and into your country. And, again, going back to take your pick, you know, St. Dominic, Juan Diego, the three Fatima visionaries. What can they do? They have no means. Well, at the left of that few means, or that as our Father says, that the left of that zero you see, you know, nobody's zero, but you know, in comparison to the big task, you feel so insignificant, and humanly speaking, we are. But to the left, that zero is that mother and son combination, and what an enormous figure that takes, and we can ask Our Lord in our prayer, why didn't you appear to your vicar when he was praying so hard for the end of the World War I? And why did your Mother appear to these little kids? And then Mary talks about communism. Communism had not started. Mary appeared

for the first time. Or the last time, excuse me, the last time in October. Communist Revolution began in Russia. But no one knew what communism was. And Mary was instructing those kids. Well, you know, Russia will enslave many countries with this regime that is so demonic, so evil. And she says, but my Immaculate Heart will triumph, if we clamor to her.

And what does our Father say? What is our apostolate? Our apostolate he says, it's a war of love and peace. And we have weapons. They're not weapons of violence; they're weapons of love. They're weapons of faith. And the chief weapon in Opus Dei, this weapon of love, of conquering, not by coercion, not by violating freedom, but moving other hearts to come back to Our Lord, which is a conquest of love. The weapon we have, the most important one, is prayer. And when he pulled Don Javier aside and out of the blue saying, the only weapon we have or the only arm we have in Opus Dei is prayer, even when you think you have all the human means. The only means we really have is prayer. And Lord, help me really believe this. And help me believe that what you need more than anything else, as your Mother reveals in different apparitions throughout history, what you really need, not the only thing you need, but the main thing you really need is my piety. My clamor to you. That's what you really need.

So, we see that's how Mary is depicted for the first time. We graduate to the very end of the Bible. And now, this prophecy of Genesis is further developed. Now Mary is this mysterious woman is less mysterious. And is now described as someone involved with a war, you know, a pretty serious war with the devil himself. "And a great portent appeared in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet. And on her head, a crown of 12 stars. She was with child. And she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery." Now, one may say, well, Genesis said that one of the pains of Original Sin, one of the consequences of Original Sin, was that moms would give birth in pain. But Mary's exempt from Original Sin, why is Mary depicted with birth pains? I mean, that's, that's the one effect of Original Sin that God makes very clear that that's an effect of Original Sin, that you're going to give birth with in pain. But theologians interpret that what this refers to is generating new life in Christ, winning people over to Christ, if that makes sense. The apostolate is uphill, requires a lot of prayer, requires friendship, requires sacrifice, you know, there's temptations, you know, that's what, it's not in the Catechism. But this is one interpretation that bearing new children in Christ requires a struggle. So that makes sense, anyway. And "she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another portent appeared in Heaven, behold, a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems upon his heads, his tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman." So that there's more detail here. And this prophecy is not some, okay, this is going to happen in 10 years from now, this prophecy is gonna go on until the end of time. This is what, this is what our apostolate involves, it's a struggle to win people over and it's a struggle against the evil one. But what Sacred Scripture makes clear, and you know, is that if we go to her, she wins. Our Lord is the victory that has overcome the world. Our Lady of Victory is not included in the litany we pray every day, but that's another title of Our Lady and the feast Our Lady of Victory was changed to Our Lady of the Rosary, I guess maybe to be more ecumenical, because the Our Lady of Victory was a title Mary received by the pope, because the Christians defeated the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto, through the Rosary. They shouldn't have, they shouldn't have won that game, that war, but they stopped the Turks from invading Europe, which would have caused Europe to become Islamic, and so the pope asked everybody to say the Rosary and then there's a big battle there, Battle of Lepanto.

So Mary is always victorious provided, because we're involved here, as always, as we go through the four Gospels, Our Lord doesn't work miracles without faith, and faith is prayer. Faith is a clamor to Our Lord. And there is a case, thank God not too many, but one case that Jesus says in St. Mark's gospel to be exact, he could not work a miracle because of their lack of faith. So Lord, we want to give you the faith you need

to do your work. The main force is the grace of God, but that grace comes when his followers speak to him and pray and show him faith, I need your faith. And Mary is Our Lord's second greatest gift that he could have given us. The greatest gift is the Holy Eucharist, because it's him. He can't do better than giving his total self. But his second greatest gift is his own mom. And as he gives himself totally on the Cross, which represents the Eucharist, the Body and Blood, and represents baptism, the water flowing out of his side, as he gives himself totally, he gives us these two great sacraments on the Cross in a special way. At the same time, he says, all right, and here's my life, I'm laying my life down, I'm shedding my blood for you, I'm giving you my body. I'm shedding water to baptize you. And here's my mom, you got your mom, use my mother. And I expect you to use my mother to push things forward.

And I remember the, keep praying for the outcome of the extraordinary congress. But I remember in Rome, which my sojourn in Rome coincided with Marian years, three of them. And I was able to see Blessed Alvaro in action. And at least, my recollection, because they were precisely Marian years, the theme of every get together was Mary. Not totally, but the theme was Mary. And the constant talk, especially on weekends, when he would make his pilgrimages, everybody, people would make a pilgrimage, if they could, and in the hopes that they would run into Don Alvaro. He wouldn't tell you where he was going. If he did, he'd probably, the whole..., you'd probably have hundreds of people there. And, but sometimes you would, they would run into him and participate in the pilgrimage with Don Alvaro. And he was excited about coming up with a different aspiration, every day or every few days. And he would really work at it. And he would, he was an engineer. So, he had, he had his own system. And at first, his system didn't work all that well. He had an image of Mary on top of his papers. And so, when he removed the image, he would say an aspiration and work on the paper, but then he got used to the image. So, he didn't always say an aspiration. So, he's trying to figure out, okay, how can I remind myself to say an aspiration every time I take a paper? So he would go through, it's not that we have to do that, okay, so he would vary the prayer card, or the holy card. So, he would take one off, and replace it with another one, just to help him be, remind him of praying to Mary.

And, well, communism wasn't just Blessed Alvaro, St. John Paul, Mary's prediction, the Fatima kids, but anyway, communism fell instantaneously. And now we have Centers in all these places. And years ago I remember in Villa Tevere there's a postcard from Moscow, there's a Center in Moscow that's huge. Anyway, in the beatification, in Santa Croce, and starting in these places, I remember he did complain, he complained that he was too busy. He was very busy, he complained to the pope. My first conversation with him, he complained because we were always trying to get him to come to the United States, because our Father never came in a major way. Fine, he had a layover in Florida, but I don't think that cuts it. And he was always clamoring to the Blessed Mother. And I remember one of our brothers at the get together, he said, hey, watch Blessed, he didn't say Blessed, watch the Father's eyes in the get together. So I said, why? He said, just do it. And so I did. I was sitting here, and he was there. And he would kind of looking up. And he looked at us, and then he would kind of look over us. And so, when the thing is over, I went up to the guy and said, yeah, he was kind of kept looking up. He said, do you know what he was looking at? I go, no. Well, turn around. Kind of like in the Shelbourne study, a big statue of Mary. He was always looking at the statue. And so I said, wow, he was praying throughout the whole get together. He says, yeah. I don't know, the guy said, I just caught it the last time I just noticed he was kind of looking over at people and I was wondering what he was looking at. And I turn around and there's the statue. And so I say, yeah, that's right.

So and when we see these big canonizations, it's kind of a sign of that, that victory of Our Lord, through Mary. The rest of the chapter 12 here of Revelation speaks about this, the struggle between Mary and the evil one and the evil one going after her and going after her child. And we tap into our Father's own

meditation, "Love of Our Lady is proof of a good spirit in works and individuals. Don't trust the undertaking that lacks this characteristic."

And as we finish up, we think about, we look at Blessed Alvaro, we look at our Father. Look at all these modern saints, Blessed Guadalupe, and we look at, not, we're not into crowds, and we're not into results, but we'll take them if they come, and we see these huge crowds at these canonizations, hundreds of thousands of people, unprecedented – well it helps with modern transportation and communication. And it would be wrong to say, well, St. Josemaria had so many gifts, that's why he's attracting so many people. He did have gifts. But a lot of people have gifts. Mary's behind that. John Paul, well, he probably has the record of any human being attracting people, and he was all about the Blessed Mother. He was always... he was Marian... you think about John Paul, you think about the Blessed Mother. And so you see, Juan Diego is a great saint, but, you know, his message didn't draw those crowds, that presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary, millions of people. And so with great faith, without getting caught up with the results, you know, amid this, you know, woke culture which is intimately connected with the evil one. We, with a lot of confidence, with a humble superiority complex, just as Our Lady wanted those three little kids at Fatima to change the world, well Our Lady wants us to change the world through our prayer, mortification and our personal apostolate. So we, I don't know we end our prayer, maybe we could end our prayer having recourse to both St. Josemaria and Blessed Alvaro, who are so devoted to Mary, and reveal, well, the secret of pushing the apostolate forward is her, is clamoring to her, working and doing what we can on a human level, but really clamoring to her. Lord, help us, give us the grace, so that we utilize this great gift to help you promote your Kingdom of love and peace.

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections, and inspirations which you have communicated to me in this meditation. I ask your help to put them into effect. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.