

## Episode: Our Lady and the Mystery of the Holy Trinity

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, 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 beg 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.

The month of May has a special fragrance in the Church, and not only because there are more flowers, but because it is the month of Our Lady, of Mary. It's the Marian month, and we bring flowers before the statues of our mother. We probably pray the rosary more frequently and a little more slowly. Maybe we have childhood memories, or we remember pilgrimages and rosary walks that we undertook in- in May, and it's a month where we feel more tenderness, and then right at the end, on the last day of this Marian month, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. May 31 in other years is the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady. This year, Mary cedes this day to the Holy Trinity, and we celebrate her feast day of the visitation on June the first. At first glance, these two truths of our faith, or these two realities, Mary and the Holy Trinity, can seem very different. Mary as Mother, seems close to us, warm, human, approachable, and that becomes palpable in the Gospel of Luke, where we read during those days, "Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste, to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, Most Blessed are you among women, and Blessed is the fruit of your womb." And Elizabeth praises Mary because she believed the message that God had sent her through an angel. It's such a human scene, a younger woman with great sacrifice undertaking this journey by foot or a donkey or in a cart, but certainly with great lack of comfort or all the amenities that we have nowadays. So with the spirit of service, she serves her older relative.

The Trinity, in contrast, seems immense. We can't grasp this mystery of our faith. It's almost intimidating. It seems like a truth for theologians, and not even for theologians, because we know how many controversies there were, how many people were condemned because of errors that they spread about the Trinity, it seems inaccessible for a normal person, and yet, in the words we just heard from Luke, we see the Trinity in action. The Holy Spirit is inspiring John to leap in the womb of Elizabeth. Elizabeth herself is filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Son- God, Jesus, the Son of God, is present in Mary's womb, and the Father is praised. So, how present is the Trinity in my life? Is my day structured according to the Trinity? Am I appealing to the Holy Spirit to help me pray like Jesus in order to be heard by the Father? Do I work invoking the Holy Spirit to inspire me so that I identify myself with the sacrifice of Jesus and am acceptable to the Father? Am I a friend in the Holy Spirit asking him for his love so that I can see Jesus in the others and be united with the Father?

You know, there's a theologian called Karl Rahner. He was very famous, especially after the Second Vatican Council. And he has a- he playfully teases Catholics when he writes, "Despite their orthodox confession of the Trinity, Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere monotheists. We must be willing to admit that should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged." Of course, as I said, this is just a playful provocation, because the doctrine of the Trinity can never be dropped, can never be changed, it is a dogma of the Church. And he says, well, "Most of religious literature could remain virtually unchanged." Well, that is certainly not true for St. Josemaria, who always encouraged us to distinguish the three persons of the Holy Trinity, but never to separate them. We should deal with each person, individually, with the Father, with the Son, with the Holy Spirit, but knowing that each is not a part of God as if the Son or the Holy Spirit or the Father were like a third of God. Each one is God, and when we invoke the Holy Spirit, we immediately also invoke the Son and the Father. They are all in each other and inseparable. And St. Josemaria not only encourages us to distinguish the three persons without ever separating them, he shows us exactly how to get there. He once wrote, "talk to the three persons, to God the Father, to God the Son, to God the Holy Spirit, and so as to reach the Blessed Trinity, go through Mary. Our Lady exists precisely to bring us into the very life of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so to reach the Blessed Trinity, go through Mary. Go through Mary, not around her, not beyond her, through her."

There is a beautiful and touching scene in the writings of St. Josemaria that has always moved me deeply, he says that he tries to reach the Trinity of heaven with upper case T, through that other trinity, lowercase t, of Earth, the trinity of Earth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. He says they are more accessible. He invites his listeners to approach this trinity of the Earth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph and he describes- he imagines himself entering the house of Nazareth. He's standing at the- at the door, and he wants to approach Jesus directly, but he feels ashamed to do so, because he feels unworthy and feels the weight of his miseries. So, he goes to Mary and Joseph, and he imagines Mary taking the child Jesus by the hand, and him, Josemaria by the other hand, and bringing them together. This is so profoundly Christian, the scene. God does not save us through cold ideas or theories. He saves us through relationships. The deepest reality in our lives is not power, it is communion, or rather, communion is the greatest power. The Trinity, who is the creator God, the Almighty, eternal God, he is perfect communion of divine persons. We believe in one God, we believe in only one God. But our God is not lonely. Our God is communion of persons. He is a family of persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father gives himself eternally to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the Son eternally receives himself from the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the living love between them. And into that eternal exchange of love enters a woman from Nazareth, Mary, a creature, a daughter of Israel, a young woman who says yes, yes to God, yes to her calling. And from that moment on, all humanity has a door into the intimacy of God.

Perhaps many people, many of you listening today, feel spiritually tired, and there is reason for that. The world is noisy. People are anxious. We are hyper connected and lonely at the same time, we fill ourselves with screen images. Families are fragile, friendships are thinner. Politics becomes ever more tribal and angry, technology accelerates faster than wisdom. Wisdom can't keep up, even prayer can become hurried and distracted. And into this atmosphere here and now in our lives comes the revelation of the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and he comes not as- as a mathematical puzzle or as a riddle which we can't solve, but as the announcement that the ultimate reality is love, not power, not chaos, not loneliness, but love. And Mary, our mother, helps us believe this, that God is love, because she lived inside that love more fully than any creature ever has. St. Josemaria loved repeating the traditional invocation in the Catholic Church, Hail Mary, daughter of God the Father. Hail Mary, Mother of God the Son. Hail Mary, spouse of God, the Holy Spirit, greater than you, none but God, daughter of the father, mother of the Son, spouse of the Holy Spirit, a unique relationship none of us can have in that fullness of grace that Mary had.

But those are not poetic decorations, they describe the whole mystery of salvation into which you and I are incorporated.

Let us meditate on each of these titles. Mary is daughter of the Father, of God the Father, the Father eternally- chooses her from all eternity. He thinks of her as the mother of his son. He prepares her by filling her with grace from the first instant of her conception. And Mary has more grace than all the angels and saints together. The slightest amount of grace is bigger than the whole of nature, and so Mary is above and greater than any of the angels, any of the seraphim and cherubim.

Mary is also mother of Jesus, mother of the Son of God, mother of the Eternal Word. Sometimes people imagine holiness as tension, maybe even as scrupulosity or as perpetual anxiety to be perfect. But look at Mary. Mary is completely receptive to God. She's totally open, and she's poor of spirit. She calls herself the "Handmaid of the Lord." She- she knows that she has to receive everything from God, and there's no resistance in her soul. No duplicity, no bitterness, no self-assertion before God, and therefore she becomes luminous and transparent. Holiness is not becoming less human, it is becoming transparent to divine love to let God's light shine into this world. The saints are people who turn on the light in this world, they spread the beauty of God with which they have fallen into love. Christianity is astonishingly concrete. God does not merely send ideas into the world, he sends his Son through the body and heart of a mother. Jesus received his humanity from Mary, his eyes, his voice, his gestures, his body and blood shed on the cross, and in every Mass on the altar, he received them from Mary. And no one like Mary can resonate with the words of consecration, "This is my body. This is my blood." Mary united her sacrifice with that of Jesus on Calvary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus began breathing, began beating beneath the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sometimes we become accustomed to these truths and no longer tremble before them. Jesus, the eternal word of the Father, did not want to be conceived in time without her consent, her free consent was the condition for our redemption. And she envelops Jesus with her body for nine months and through her, he inspires John the Baptist in Elizabeth's womb to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The role that humans play in the life of Jesus are perpetuated in the Church. Every grace of Jesus passes through her. She is the Mediatrix, the mediator to the Redeemer. Every grace goes through her hands. And we can really call her Queen of the Universe, dispenser of all graces, the almighty supplicant who is more eager to help us, then we are to ask her- to ask her help. "One Hail Mary," says St. Alphonsus de Liguori, "one Hail Mary per day is enough for salvation." Anyone who prays one Hail Mary per day can be confident that Mary will guide them to heaven, and the same is true if we pray for our family members to Mary. Alphonsus de Liguori also encourages us by writing that "whoever remembers to invoke Mary in temptation can be confident that he did not consent to sin." The eternal Son of God had a human mother, and this motherhood never ends. It extends now to the whole church and to each one of us.

St. Josemaria says, "we can never hope to fathom this inexpressible mystery, nor will we ever be able to give sufficient thanks to a mother for bringing us into such intimacy with the Blessed Trinity." Notice that phrase carefully, "Mary brings us into intimacy with the Trinity," not merely into devotion, not merely into moral improvement, into intimacy with the Trinity. The Triune God wants to feel at home, in you, in me, in our body and soul, in our heart, and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit want us to trust God and to be at home in him. We are home to him, and he is home to us. Christian life is not fundamentally self-improvement. It is participation in divine life which came into this world through Mary. And then Mary is spouse of the Holy Spirit. This language can sound strange to modern ears, unless we understand it properly. It means that the Holy Spirit overshadows Mary with divine fruitfulness.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, all his life, asked himself, who are you Immaculate Conception? He had founded the Militia of the Immaculate Conception and he was puzzled by the self-revelation of Mary at Lourdes, where she said, "I am the Immaculate Conception." And he- he said, Well, why doesn't Mary say I am immaculately conceived? Why does she say this rather strange formulation. Why does she use that- that "I am the Immaculate Conception." And so, Maximilian Kolbe was meditating on this right up to the moment he was arrested by the Gestapo. Actually, he finished writing the solution that he found in prayer two hours before he was arrested, so it was really a last minute grace. And what he said was, "The uncreated Immaculate Conception, is the Holy Spirit conceived eternally of the Father and the Son." And this Holy Spirit is creator spirit as we invoke him, he is this immaculate conception in the Trinity, is generative, virginal, total and absolute self-giving. Mary is the created Immaculate Conception. She too is total receptivity, and she is generative virginity, and like a wife that takes the name of her spouse, Mary is Mrs. Holy Spirit. Her last name is Immaculate Conception from the Holy Spirit. So, Mary spouse of the Holy Spirit, Immaculate Conception. All authentic Christian fruitfulness is born this way as a gift of grace. There is nothing that is not given by God we want to grasp like the first sin, grasping the fruit from the tree, but in order to receive, we must first let go. Not through nervous activism can we receive, not through my ego, not through domination, but through docility to grace, it requires the peace of soul that has learned to wait patience, the science of peace.

Mary teaches us the action of the Holy Spirit. She teaches interior silence, availability, listening. Perhaps one of the greatest spiritual crisis today is our inability to be silent. We carry entire worlds inside our pockets. We get nervous if we don't look at our screens. We receive notifications, messages, news, endless commentary, and very frequently, also outrage and- and we notice this, this lack of true leisure, this lack of ease, we become uneasy, and then we wonder why prayer feels difficult. Nazareth teaches another rhythm, quiet work, meals, together, conversation, manual, labor, prayer, rest, hiddenness, love expressed in ordinary things. And when the Holy Trinity crowned Mary as Queen of the Universe, he crowned the years of her hidden life of cleaning, washing, cooking, dealing with her neighbors, all of that was crowned as path to holiness and to glory. This is why St. Josemaria loved the Holy Family so much and called her the Trinity on earth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Of course, he didn't mean another divine Trinity. He was far too theologically precise for that, he meant something deeply human and deeply consoling. God has made his life approachable, accessible, even domestic. The Trinity of Heaven reflects itself mysteriously in the home of Nazareth, and perhaps this is especially important today, because modern people are starving for home, not merely houses, but homes, a place where one is received without performance, known without fear, loved without calculation, Nazareth becomes the school of divine intimacy. Sometimes we imagine mystical union with God as something extraordinary and inaccessible. But look at the gospel, where did Jesus spend most of his earthly life, not preaching, not performing miracles, not in public glory. 30 years of his life were hidden in a workshop with dust, tools, conversations with fatigue, but also with meals, with family, affection and Mary was there for all of it.

St. Josemaria understood something profoundly important. That the Trinity comes to dwell in kitchens, offices, highways, classrooms, nursing homes, airports, spreadsheets, diapers, emails, friendships and exhaustion, all that makes up your ordinary life, my ordinary life is not an obstacle to divine union. It is the place of divine union, of mystical union with God. Sometimes people think holiness means escaping ordinary life. No, the Incarnation means God enters ordinary life, and Mary is the first person to welcome him there. There's a deeply comforting realism in St. Josemaria's Marian devotion. It is affectionate without becoming sentimental, cheerful without becoming superficial. He had humor, warmth, humanity. One of the dangers for serious Christians is becoming slightly grim, as if sanctity required emotional rigidity, but genuine love of Our Lady softens the soul, makes it younger, simpler, more trusting. St. Josemaria frequently said that he wanted to become a child before God and children know something

adults often forget. One reaches the father through the mother, very naturally. There is no competition between Mary and the Trinity. Mary exists entirely for the Trinity. Everything in her says, "Do whatever he tells you," like at the wedding at Cana, she never keeps anything for herself. She magnifies the Lord with her whole life. The closer we get to Mary, the closer we get to Jesus, the closer we get to Jesus, the deeper we enter the life of the Father and the Holy Spirit. And this is why the Rosary is so powerful. People sometimes dismiss repetitive prayer because they misunderstand love. Love repeats. A mother repeats. Lovers repeat, children repeat. The rosary slowly places us inside the mysteries of Christ through the eyes of Mary, and gradually our soul becomes calmer, more recollected, more contemplative, more available to grace. In a fragmented world, the rosary unifies the heart. In an anxious world, it teaches spiritual rhythm. In a distracted world, it teaches presence and Mary gently educates us in Trinitarian life, in giving us a Trinitarian structure. Perhaps some listeners feel unworthy today, burdened by sin, discouraged, spiritually mediocre, tired of beginning again, that too belongs in this meditation, because St. Josemaria never preached perfectionism, he preached divine filiation, being beloved children of God, being the prodigal son who returns to the Father's embrace and Mary helps us believe that. St. Josemaria wrote in his first book, which was on the Holy Rosary, "the beginning of the way at the end of which you will find yourself completely carried away by love for Jesus is a trusting love of Mary." A good mother does not humiliate weak children, she lifts them, encourages them, cleans them, she begins again with them. Sometimes our spiritual life becomes too self-conscious, too centered on our own performance. Mary redirects our gaze away from ourselves, toward God, toward trust, toward gratitude, toward beginning again peacefully. During this Marian month and on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, let us go to Mary not as a detour, but as the path God himself has given us through Mary to Jesus, through Jesus in the Holy Spirit to the Father. Holy Mary, daughter of the Father, mother of the Son, spouse of the Holy Spirit, bring us into the life of the Blessed Trinity.

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