

62. *The presence of Mary*

If we want to understand Mary's place in our life of prayer, we must begin by reflecting on her own prayer. It would be presumptuous to infringe on the communion of love between our infinitely perfect God and the most pure Virgin Mary. It is an inviolable holy of holies. At best, we can stand on the threshold, adore, and remain silent. But it is permissible, without violating the mystery, to seek to glimpse a few aspects of the prayer of the holiest of all God's creatures.

Above all, we are not to think of Mary's prayer as a reality remote from us in time and space. There is nothing more relevant within our grasp. Let us slip into her prayer, the way one slips into the shadows of a chapel.

In the presence of the Most High Majesty, she, the lowly daughter of man, adores. She sings a pure hymn of praise to the One who deigned to bend down over her lowliness, to do great things in her and through her.

Mary prays for, or rather in the name of, her innumerable children—an excellent way of praying for those we love. How many of these children forget their God! They fail to thank him for his lavish gifts, and do not beg his forgiveness or acknowledge his sovereignty! But fortunately, their Mother is there. What they neglect to do, she does in their place.

She intervenes for each one of us individually before her Son, offering the stammering prayer of one, the groping good intentions of another. She intercedes for all: for those who are suffering, for those threatened by temptation, for those who refuse to give themselves to God, and for those who are facing death.

Mary prays the way mothers do. I mean that she carries her children to her God, and offers them the way she once offered the Infant she held in her arms.

Do you see how I am answering your question on Mary's place in the prayer of Catholics? I will first speak to you of the place we hold in Mary's prayer. The reason is that our best prayer is the one the Virgin Mary offers in our name and on our behalf.

The Christian who wants to pray begins by kneeling close to his praying Mother. After he has been drawn into her recollection, he enters the company of his God through mental prayer. Then it is Mary's turn to become present to his prayer. If there is anything on earth that touches her motherly heart, it is the sight of one of her children trying to speak to the Lord and listen to him. Just as we shield a fragile flame from the wind with both hands, so Mary, with her all-powerful prayer, protects the mental prayer of her child.