



# THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

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## Co-Redemptrix

A clear understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary's role in the plan of redemption constitutes an infallible guide in times of doctrinal confusion and false ecumenism. In terms of Divine Revelation, Mary is not an « added extra » for Catholics only. Our acknowledgement of her is not out of deference or mere devotion. Our Lady played a substantial and necessary part in mankind's redemption, so much so that, without her express consent at the Annunciation, the Incarnation would never have happened. This is the opinion of the great Church Fathers: St Augustin, St Gregory the Great and St Leo the Great.

By her « fiat » Mary became voluntarily the Mother of our Redeemer. She could have refused and there were many reasons why she could have. Mary knew only too well what Gabriel's annunciation would mean for her. She knew and understood the messianic prophecies. She knew that salvation would come of suffering and pain.

By a special grace of the Holy Ghost, Mary discerned that God did not merely ask her to clothe His only begotten Son in flesh and blood. After all, did she not belong to God already? God need not ask but merely inform. Mary understood that God asked her not only to become the earthly mother of the Saviour but more importantly, to cooperate with Her Son in the accomplishment of His saving mission.

Just as Eve had played a defining part in our downfall from grace, God willed that another Eve play a defining part in our resurrection from sin. The great 20th-century theologian Garrigou-Lagrange says that it is *proxima fidei* (of a certitude close to divine faith) that « the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Redeemer, is associated with Him in the work of redemption as secondary and subordinate cause, just as Eve was associated with Adam in the work of man's ruin. »

The doctrine of Mary as the second Eve was universally accepted in the 2nd century. The Fathers did not regard it as the fruit of personal speculation but as the traditional doctrine of the Church supported by the words of St. Paul which describe Jesus as the second

Adam who is the cause of spiritual renewal, in comparison to the first who was the cause of our spiritual ruin.

Every early Church Father understood St Paul's teaching: that death came about of an interplay between the first Adam and Eve, and that redemption came about of an interplay between the new Adam, Christ, and a new Eve, his Mother. It is necessary therefore to regard the doctrine of Mary as the second Eve, associated with the redemptive work of her Son, as an apostolic tradition.

It was not merely by having conceived the Redeemer physically, by having given Him birth and nourished Him, that Mary is associated in the plan of Redemption. Rather, it is through her self-offering in union with her Son and through her free, salutary, and meritorious acts.

Eve contributed morally to the fall by yielding to the temptation of the devil, by disobedience, and by setting up Adam's sin; Mary, on the contrary, co-operated morally in our redemption by her faith in Gabriel's words, and by her free consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation and to all the sufferings it entailed for her Son and herself. Without the first Eve, no sin. Without the second Eve, no redemption.

It is important to understand: Mary's association with Jesus in the redemption is not like that of the Apostles, but something still more intimate. St. Albert the Great teaches: «The Blessed Virgin Mary was chosen by God not to be His minister but to be His consort and His helper according to the words of Genesis: Let us make him a help like to himself. »

From Rue du Bac, to Lourdes to Fatima, passing by La Salette, Pontmain and elsewhere, Mary would have us give to her the place and recognition which is rightly hers. Mary is not an optional extra that non-Catholics are free to disregard. To ignore Mary is to ignore Christ in His desire to associate Mary in His saving work.

On the feast of the Annunciation, let us all repeat with Mary: « Fiat mihi secundum Verbum tuum. »

**Fr. John Brucciani, Prior**

# PRE-REFORMATION MARIAN DEVOTION

On the eve of the Reformation, England was a country and the English a people profoundly devoted to Mary, the Mother of God. « The liturgy and its prayers and ceremonies; cathedrals as well as parish church with its storied windows, its paintings, its sculptured ornaments, the embroidered hangings for its walls and altars; popular devotions; personal ornaments; household furniture; poetry, in its hymns, its minstrel tales, roundelays: all told of Mary; all set forth her praises; all taught that Christ's mother should be honoured above and invoked before every other saint. » (Dr E. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, 1854).

Long before Walsingham, the Venerable Bede (8th century) wrote: « To her we sing - Who bore in time the world's eternal king. - And peerless in the human race has found - A mother's joys by virgin honours crowned. » Bede gave our Lady the titles of « Mother undefiled » and « *Virgo incomparabiliter benedicta*. » Bede's contemporary, the great English monk and scholar Alcuin, named her « his sweet love, his honour, the great hope of his salvation, the Queen of Heaven, the flower of the field, the lily of the world, the fountain of life. » These and similar tributes from numerous pre-medieval ecclesiastical writers demonstrate that our Lady was very much recognised and revered in pre-Norman England.

England's special relationship with our Lady is most manifest in our country's long-standing belief in the Immaculate Conception. The 11th-century liturgical calendars of the Old and New Minsters of Winchester (the Anglo-Saxon cathedral of Winchester, now replaced by the present cathedral) show entries for a feast called *Conceptio Sæ Dei Genetricis Mariæ*. The feast can also be found in the 11th-century Pontificals of Exeter and Canterbury. These episcopal benedictions show that the feast not only commended itself to the devotion of individuals, but that it was recognized by authority and was observed by the Saxon monks with considerable solemnity. In other words, there is evidence of the widespread celebration of this feast in England before the Norman Conquest.

The feast, deemed Anglo-Saxon and eccentric, was eclipsed for a time following the Norman conquest. It resurfaced several decades later and was propagated by Abbot Anselm, nephew of the great Anselm of Canterbury. The devotion spread to France and elsewhere. Interestingly, St Bernard would speak out against the new way of honouring Mary which, although widespread in the Eastern Churches, was foreign to the Western tradition. In good, clerical fashion, the great St. Bernard was rebuffed by the Englishman Nicholas, Prior of St Albans, who wrote that the heart of Mary was pierced

twice: once as she stood at the foot of the Cross, and again when Bernard wrote his letter against her feast!!

There is not enough room to describe the theological debate that developed around the possibilities of Mary Immaculate. Blessed Duns Scotus (d.1308), the university of Oxford and England argued for Mary's Immaculate Conception. In the words of Gerard M. Hopkins, Scotus "fired France for Mary without spot."

The fierce theological debates surrounding Mary and her privileges were the consequence of love for Our Lady and her honours and privileges that burned in all classes and sections of society, starting in England. They are a wonderful testimony to the *sensus fidei* of the common faithful.

This appreciation of our Lady and her role in our Redemption was manifest in the dogged and ever-growing devotion to her patronage. The first votive masses of our Lady are attributed to Alcuin. During the Middle Ages, in this country, in Cathedrals and parish churches, special altars were dedicated to Our Lady, and, at these, every day, a Votive Mass in her honour was said. The « Mary Mass » or « *Ladymass* » was celebrated early in the morning, to allow workers to begin their day under her protection. In 1399, the English Primate Archbishop Arundale, at the request of King Henry IV, ordered that all Cathedral, collegiate, monastic and parish churches should ring the Angelus not only in the evening (as was commonly done throughout Europe) but also in the morning. Within a hundred years the Angelus was rung, as now, three times a day (morning, noon, and night) until abolished by order of Thomas Cromwell in 1536.

In addition to the parish churches, England was full of sanctuaries and shrines of Our Lady. Walsingham, of course, was world-renown, but in London alone there were famous shrines in Westminster (Our Lady of the Pew), at St. Paul's, All Hallows - Barking, Muswell Hill and Islington, to name but a very few. Before the great martyr-bishop Thomas drew the crowds to Canterbury, Our Lady was venerated there.

Five hundred years of Protestantism has not been enough to expunge England's once vibrant devotion to Mary. Many places contain references to Mary (Maryvale, Ladywell, Maryfield), in which grow plants such as « *Lady's mantle* » or « *Virgin's Bower* » or the humble Marigold.

As one last evidence of England's fierce devotion to Mary: Henry VI, in his statutes for Eton, mandated the daily recitation of all 15 decades by the students, and the statutes of Magdalen College Oxford require the president and fellows to say 5 decades daily. ♣ JB

# PRIESTLY CELIBACY

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Recent Vatican controversy about the publication and authorship of the book *From the Depths of our Hearts* by Pope Benedict and Cardinal Sarah, offers us an opportunity to talk about priestly celibacy.

The new book challenges a revolutionary agenda: the push for a married clergy. The agenda's purveyors argue that, because many—if not most—of the apostles were married men, “clerical celibacy is merely an ecclesiastical institution especially of the stricter discipline in the Latin Church.” (Stickler, *The Case for Clerical Celibacy*) If historical contingencies established the practice, they reason, might not modern accommodations reverse it?

The suggestion, however, overlooks a crucial distinction: while the ancient Church did indeed ordain married men, these were expected to practice continence after having received major orders. In reality, priestly celibacy is the constant tradition from the time of the apostles. “All the documentary evidence we have supports this and there is no contrary evidence”, writes Fr. Joseph Fessio in his foreword to Cardinal Stickler's classic study of the question. This only stands to reason, as even the married priests of the Old Testament were bound to strict chastity within their allotted time of offering sacrifices in the Temple. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same must apply to the priests

of the New Testament, who are “made for that unique sacrifice which is the sacrifice of the altar, the continuation of the sacrifice of our Lord”. (Mgr Lefebvre, *Priestly Holiness*)

St. Raymond of Peñafort, a thirteenth-century Dominican friar and renowned doctor of canon law, comments on why the Church expects strict chastity in her priests, including those married before ordination: the first reason is so that they:

may obtain in all sincerity that which with their prayers they ask from God . . . ; the second reason is that they may pray unhindered (1 Cor. 7:5) and exercise their office. They cannot do both things together: that is, to serve their wife and the Church. (quoted in Stickler)

So if, in the beginning, “the actual prohibition to marry remained somewhat in the background”, writes Cardinal Stickler, it nevertheless emerged later “when the Church imposed the prohibition against marriage on those celibates from whom virtually all the candidates for sacred orders were exclusively recruited.”

**Priestly celibacy, then, was the uninterrupted, uncontested law (*jus*) of Christian antiquity.** In time, a new legal norm (*lex*) arose from this consonance: ordinands were not to be married. Yet this subsequent legislation only formalised what the original custom bespoke, even anticipated.

Catholic theology conceives the priesthood as a spousal office. So priestly celibacy is, first and foremost, a theological stipulation. As such, this law expresses the will of the Church before the will of any individual priestly prospect. As recently as 1992, the pope would write that the sacrament of Ordination

configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. The Church, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her Head and Spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord. (John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*)

Configured to Christ by the indelible mark in his soul, the pope explained that the priest is forever espoused



**On Sunday 29th March, the bishops of England and Wales will renew England's consecration to Mary as her dowry. As King Richard II once gave England as a gift to Our Lady, so we are invited to give ourselves, as the people of this country, to Mary. This Rededication is a both a personal promise of the people of our country, and a renewal of the entrustment vows made by King Richard II in 1381.**

**Our own prayer of consecration will take place during benediction on that Sunday. We will be rededicating England to Mary our Mother, as her dowry.**

to a mystical bride, and his life “ought to radiate this spousal character”.

Of course, naturally speaking, celibacy is a demanding commitment. The priest’s human weakness is a constant reminder that his virginal vocation “can only be lived out if it is nourished by a living faith . . . . When this faith grows weak, the determination to persevere fades; when faith dies, so does continence.” (Stickler) The history of Protestantism testifies to this trend. Once the reformers “denied the Sacrifice of the Mass and the divine presence of the Victim and replaced them with a meal, a simple memorial, right away they did away with celibacy as well.” (Mgr Lefebvre)

The 21st century knows only too well the shameful sight of an unfaithful clergy. Even so, whatever the sexual deviancy in question, the sight is nothing substantially new. An attrition rate is manifest throughout Church history. As an example, St. Peter Damien’s *Book of Gomorrah* leaves its modern readers with a shocking synopsis of eleventh-century clerical impurity.

The scandalized rightly acknowledge that something must be done, but they must channel their indignation responsibly: they must pray to the Lord of the harvest for holy priests (cf. Mt. 9:39). *Holiness* is the crux of the matter. To the contrary, the world’s clamouring for a married clergy is utterly ruinous to the Catholic faithful. It is the clamouring for a theological chimera, a priest of God actively embracing two brides. In effect, it is the clamouring for an *un*-holy clergy, adulterous before God and impotent before their true bride, their flock.

**Fr R. Hennick**



**WEEKLY CONFESSIONS**

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

**BENEDICTION & ROSARY**

Sunday 18:00

**CHAPEL CLEANING - VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED.**

**SPRING CLEAN FOR EASTER  
AND HOLY WEEK PREP  
WED. IN HOLY WEEK - 08TH APRIL 10:00 AM**

	<b>Liturgical Calendar March 2020</b>	<b>Mass</b>
1	<b>First Sunday in Lent</b>	7:30 Low
	<i>2nd Collection for District seminarians</i>	9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
2	Lenten Ferial	7:15
3	Lenten Ferial	7:15
4	Ember Wednesday	7:15
5	Lenten Ferial	7:15
6	Ember Friday - 1st Fri - Holy Hour 18:00	7:15 / 19:00
7	Ember Saturday - 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00
8	<b>Second Sunday in Lent</b>	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
9	Lenten Ferial	7:15
10	Lenten Ferial	7:15
11	Lenten Ferial	7:15
12	Lenten Ferial	7:15
13	Lenten Ferial	7:15
14	Lenten Ferial	7:30 / 12:00
15	<b>Third Sunday in Lent</b>	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
16	Lenten Ferial	7:15
17	Lenten Ferial, comm. St Patrick	7:15
18	Lenten Ferial	7:15
19	<b>St. Joseph, Spouse of the BVM</b>	7:15 / 19:00
20	Lenten Ferial	7:15
21	Lenten Ferial	7:30 / 12:00
22	<b>Laetare Sunday</b>	7:30 Low
	PTA Bake Sale for St. Michael's	9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
23	Lenten Ferial	7:15
24	Lenten Ferial	7:15
25	<b>Annunciation of the BVM</b>	7:15 / 19:00
26	Lenten Ferial	7:15
27	Lenten Ferial	7:15
28	Lenten Ferial	7:30 / 12:00
29	<b>Passion Sunday</b>	7:30 Low
	<i>Consecration of England as our Lady's Dowry</i>	9:00 Sung
	18:00	18:00 Benediction
30	Monday of Passion Week	7:15
31	Tuesday of Passion Week	7:15



**Rosary for St. Michael's School**

Thanks to parents' initiative, the holy rosary will be recited between Masses each Sunday for the protection and welfare of St. Michael's School. This extra spiritual help comes at a time when State intervention seeks to erode the fundamental parental right to their children's education.