

## SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD

Lourdes Pinto, to priests and consecrated women, Germany

To understand the purest essence of spiritual motherhood we must receive the gift of Mary's suffering of "solitude."

- Third Stage of Mystical Incarnation—Marian Dimension

Through the grace of mystical incarnation, Conchita reflects Mary's life and becomes a faithful echo of her maternal heart. Mary, the co-redemptrix, will teach her to have a maternal heart that throbs in unison with Jesus' Heart, with the redemptive and glorifying objective: the glory of the Father and the salvation of mankind.

- **"The solitude" of Mary as given to Blessed Conchita**

Conchita, A Mother's Spiritual Diary edited by Fr. Philippon, O.P.

**Mary's solitude is the most perfect association with the redemptive act of Christ.** The drama of our salvation is decided at the very moment when Jesus was abandoned mysteriously by His Father, and when He Himself abandoned Himself, in response, with confidence and love, into His hands. It is the consent of a man in supreme agony. (p.132)

Jesus explains to Bl. Conchita the mystery of Mary's "interior solitude" that obtains for her the grace to be the Spiritual Mother of Mankind:

You had for long pondered the first solitude of Mary, that is, the exterior solitude, but you had not thought about the cruelest and the bitterest, the interior solitude which tore her to pieces and in which her spirit felt an agony on account of being abandoned. (p.132)

The martyrdom of Mary after My Ascension was not caused solely by My material absence. She suffered terrible tests of abandonment like to that I Myself underwent on the Cross. My Father united her to Mine which gained so many graces. (p.132)

As coredemptrix, Mary heard in her soul so wholly pure the echo of all My agonies, humiliations, outrages and tortures, felt the weight of the sins of the world which made My Heart bleed, and the moving sorrow of the abandonment of heaven which obtains graces. (p.132)

The Heart of Mary obtained these graces in the martyrdom of a solitude in which she was left, not by men (she had St. John and the Apostles and many souls who fervently loved her), not by Me in My Body (she consoled herself with the Eucharist and with her living and perfect faith), but by the Trinity, which hid itself from her, leaving her in a spiritual and divine abandonment. (p.132)

Solitude is participation in the inmost Passion of Christ's Cross and a consequence of the mystical incarnation. (p. 130)

- In the **document of the Congregation for the Clergy**, "Eucharistic Adoration for the Sanctification of Priests and Spiritual Maternity," the Church tells us: (*Simple Path* p.360)

The VOCATION to be a spiritual mother for priests is LARGELY UNKNOWN, SCARCELY UNDERSTOOD and, consequently, RARELY LIVED, notwithstanding its FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE. It is a vocation that is FREQUENTLY HIDDEN, INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE, but MEANT TO TRANSMIT SPIRITUAL LIFE.

- **Birth of the "New Adams and Eves" at the Foot of the Cross** (*Simple Path* p.364)

Jesus waited until He could share His Passion with them, until He was agonizing, to call them forth to become mother and son/disciple. They could not be mother and son to each other without first being victims of love, one with Christ's Passion. **Union with Christ at the Cross is at the center of Mary's motherhood and at the center of St. John's son/discipleship.** At the Cross, they come together, and their relationship acquires a new meaning and a new fecundity because it has the fire of pure and perfect love. When it reaches maturity, it blossoms as Spiritual Motherhood. (*Simple Path* p.364)

Jesus speaks to Conchita about the maternity of Mary

At the foot of the Cross, all her children were born. My death gave them life in the heart of My Mother. But before her death She had to manifest this maternity on earth, gaining, by the sufferings of My absence, an infinitude of graces present and future for her children.

Her title of Mother of mankind, Mary won by the martyrdom of her solitude after My death. Has the world been aware of this? Does it appreciate it and is it grateful for it? The time has come when the children should show they are real children, showing their veneration for this heart broken by this subtle and most painful martyrdom, lived through for the sake of their own happiness. There, Mary gained graces for each and every man. It is time for her to be thanked" (Diary, June 30, 1917). (*Conchita, A Mother's Spiritual Diary* p.131)

Mary Magdalene, united to Mary, is also a spiritual mother

Through her (Mary Magdalene) piercing of love at the foot of the Cross in union with Mary, she receives her full identity as a spiritual mother. For the one that is dying is her Beloved as well, the Lord and Master of her heart. She is also experiencing the helplessness of Christ on the Cross. Her Master is dying—her "Rabbouni" (Jn 20:16) is fading away, her Jesus, her Life, her ALL. She suffers WITH Jesus no longer two but one

in His sacrifice of love. As one with Mary, her spiritual maternity is born. (*Simple Path* p. 366)

- **Holy relationships between men and women that shine the Light of Christ**

She is also his companion. The Lord said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). No one is more apt to accompany and help man than the woman Mary. The relationship of Mary and St. John shows that Jesus meant the complementarity between man and woman to find expression, not only in marital relationships oriented towards having children but also in spiritual relationships that bring spiritual life to many. (*Simple Path* p.365)

An essential part of the Lord's redemption is to restore the Father's intention for women-men relationships. Pope Francis on June 15, 2018 condemned all forms of abuse of women, but he went further: He taught that they need each other to become fully who they are. He said: "**a man without a woman beside him - whether as a mother, as a sister, as a bride, as a working companion, as a friend - that man by himself is not the image of God.**"<sup>1</sup> A man is not a man until he is able to love and be loved by women in his life. Likewise, women need men. But the love we need to give and receive is God's love, Christ's crucified love, not as the world gives which is selfishness and has led to our ruin. – Fr. Jordi Rivero

Having united Mary and the beloved disciple, Jesus, "knowing that all was now finished," said, "I thirst" (Jn. 19:28). His earthly mission was fulfilled. With Saint John and Mary Magdalene begins a new lineage of renewed men and women, cleansed in the Blood of the Lamb; new Adams and new Eves formed in the heart of the New Adam and the New Eve. It is the beginning of a covenant of love with Christ through Mary. (*Simple Path* p. 366-367)

The Church is discovering the urgent need for priests to have such spiritual mothers. As Christ purifies hearts in the fire of His Sacred Heart, He restores men and women's ability to truly love and complement each other in the service of the Kingdom. In our brokenness, we may find it hard to believe that a mother-son relationship between women and priests is possible or even desirable. We tend to think only of the dangers that stem from our fallen nature, but we also need to believe that Christ at Calvary poured out His Spirit to make all things new. He established spiritual motherhood when he joined the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John as mother and son. The Lord continues to raise up relationships between spiritual mothers and priests, but this is possible only to the extent that they are truly victim souls, one with The Victim! (*Simple Path* p.368)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope-francis/mass-casa-santa-marta/2018-06/pope-santa-marta-mass-women-exploitation.html>.

- **137. Mothers Are the Strength of Priests** —Simple Path, p. 369

(IV Station of the Cross: Mary Meets Jesus)

*Walk with Me in My passion. Through Mary, My Mother, I received the strength and zeal I needed to continue to the Cross... She was not only My consolation but also My strength. My Mother knew and accepted My mission... In Her great and pure love of God, she encouraged Me and brought Me to the Cross. It was she that encouraged Me to begin My mission at the Wedding at Cana... Do you see the importance of holy mothers for My priests, who are living images of My Mother? My priests need these holy mothers to help strengthen and encourage them. (2/20/09)*

- **Spiritual Motherhood Lived in the Martyrdom of Mary**

Spiritual Motherhood is not a program nor a new apostolate nor something that you do following a set of rules. We become spiritual mothers as we come to know intimately the passionate love of our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Cross and choose to respond passionately. **Spiritual motherhood is a GIFT of the Holy Spirit that grows as the Spirit heals our feminine hearts through the precious Blood of Jesus and transforms us to become a new creation.** (*Simple Path* p. 367)

"She nourished Me to be a Victim attaining the supreme immolation of her soul when She delivered Me up to be crucified. It was one and the same sacrifice, Mine on the cross and the one which took place in her heart... (Conchita, A Mother's Spiritual Diary p.127)

On June 29, 1917 she receives a great illumination. Mary is in the heart of the Church and she bears the entire Church in her maternal Heart. At the **foot of the Cross she was constituted the spiritual Mother of mankind**, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost produced in her a new fullness of grace in view of the accomplishment of her maternal mission: in faith, in absolute self-surrender to the divine designs, in her ardent love, in her humble obedience, impelling her to continue on the work of her Son: "In her own flesh, it fills up what is lacking in the suffering of Christ" (Col. 1:24). **Mary, Mother of the Church engendered all her children for God, through the sorrows born out of her love.**(p.130)

But this is a secret of Mary:

"Her Heart is presented with roses, but underneath are found thorns. The roses signify graces for her children, acquired with almost infinite sorrows, with tears and with martyrdoms the weight of which I alone was capable of measuring. It is quite natural for a mother, and so much the more Mary, to **keep for herself the thorns and the sorrows: it is the roses and the tenderness that she presents to her children, not the sacrifices**" (Diary, June 30, 1917). (p.130)

- **"A new phase of your life has begun"**

And likewise, for you (Conchita), you have begun a new phase of life which will be a reflection of that of Mary. It will appertain to you to imitate her without losing any suffering, which united to Mine will be of worth. **Under this form, super-naturalize all your sorrows of solitude that they may become fertile for the benefit of your other children**" (Diary, March 21, 1917). (p.130)

Therefore, a spiritual mother must be a mother of the Cross, a victim soul who lays down her life for love of her spiritual children. The Ven. Archbishop Luis Martinez understood the power of spiritual mothers and encouraged Conchita to persevere in love:

You, too, like Jesus, must love the Father on behalf of all your children and for all the souls that God has linked with you through the outstanding grace of spiritual maternity.... Some of your children will love the Father with many limitations. You must supply for them. Perhaps some of them—may the Lord not permit it!—will never love. You must love for them. With what desire you must try to love for all in order that the Father may not lack even a spark of love from your spiritual family. (*Simple Path* p.371)

Jesus wants Conchita to give Him holy priests. United to Him, she will belong to priests in the sense that her life will be an oblation for them. Jesus tells her:

This will truly be a solace to My heart, giving Me holy priests. Tell Me you accept, that you will belong with Me to priests always since your mission on behalf of them will continue in heaven.

Yet here you have another Martyrdom. **What priests will do against Me, you will feel, since it is in this that basically associating yourselves to My priesthood consists, in that you feel and you suffer because of their unfaithfulness and wretchedness.** In this way, you glorify the Trinity. We will have the same reasons for suffering. (quoted, *Simple Path* p.375)

- **Priests Need to Receive the Gift of Spiritual Motherhood**

In light of the urgent need for renewal of the priesthood and of knowing that spiritual mothers for priest are "meant to transmit spiritual life" to them, we can see why Cardinal Hummes, as prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, wrote: (*Simple Path* p.379)

We cannot do without a spiritual motherhood for our priestly life... It has always silently accompanied the chosen ranks of priests in the course of the Church's history. It is the concrete entrustment of our ministry to a specific face, to a consecrated soul who has been called by Christ and therefore chooses to offer herself, with the necessary suffering and the inevitable struggles of life, to intercede for our priestly existence, thereby dwelling in Christ's sweet presence...

**This motherhood, which embodies Mary's loving face, should be prayed for because God alone can bring it into being and sustain it.**

- **Urgency for Spiritual Motherhood**

**141. Bring Life to My Priests** —(*Simple Path* p. 385)

*You, My little ones, are the consolation of My suffering Heart because you each have united yourselves to Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of all. As I gaze at each of you, I see her beauty radiating from you. Allow her to form each of you to perfection.*

*I need you, My faithful ones, to bring life to My Missionaries of the Cross (Legionaries of Christ). It is My hidden martyrs of love, in perfect union with the Queen of Martyrs, that will raise up My Apostles of Light. Know that I have taken My abode in each of your hearts; therefore, **radiate the humility and purity of My Mother.***

*Do not grow weary in your hidden lives of suffering all with Me, for you are My holy remnant that God the Father will use to purify My Church and pierce the darkness penetrating Her. Therefore, go forth, My daughters, as My holy warriors with Mary to seize the dragon and cast him into hell.*

*I bless you with My Precious Blood and seal you with the power of My Cross.*

- **Mary's last years were the most fertile**

"It is a great honor for souls when the Father calls them to associate them with Redemption; with the co-redemption uniting them with Me and Mary; with the apostolate of the Cross, that is, with that of innocent suffering, of sorrow full of love and pure, expiatory and salvific sorrow on behalf of the culpable world" (Diary, June 23, 1918). (p.133)

**The solitude of the Mother of God is the supreme configuration to Christ Crucified.** Her **spiritual maternity** is amplified therein by the salvific suffering which springs from love and charity reaching their peak. Thence comes the perfect joy which flows from the Cross of Christ, and which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Ibid., p.133)

- **Pastoral riches of this new devotion**

The solitude of the Mother of God helps understand the value of human suffering for the salvation of the world, when it is joined to Christ's suffering.

**Sorrow of itself has no value. It is a consequence and a fruit of sin. But love has the prodigious power to convert it into the price of redemption. The most fertile apostolate is the apostolate of the Cross.** (Ibid., p.134)

**Pure love is of far greater apostolic fecundity than the most outstanding works accomplished with less than love.** It is at the eve of life, in silence and isolation, in prayer and in sacrifice, that God's Mother attains her maximum of love and her fullness of apostolic fecundity in the service of the Church of Christ, just as Christ Himself did not save the world in the luster of His Word and of His miracles, but on the Cross. (p.135)

United with all the holy women of God we pray this prayer written by a Mother of the Cross, inspired by Bl. Conchita: (*Simple Path* p.377)

My Lord and my God, give me a loving and humble heart, a courageous heart full of zeal and boldness, a tender heart, a meek and docile heart that will be willing to take, one by one, the thorns that pierce Your most tender Heart, and pierce with them my heart with no other desire but to be Your consolation in every moment of my life.

My heart is wounded for love of you, My Lord; and moved with profound compassion, together with Mary, Blessed Conchita, and all the Holy Women that have walked on the path of Spiritual Motherhood from the beginning of time, I offer myself completely as a victim united with the Victim, for the sanctification of every priest and the salvation of every man in every walk of life! Jesus, my Savior and my God! Save them! Save them!