

Gospel for Monday after Pentecost: Mary, Mother of the Church

Gospel for Monday after Pentecost, memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 19:25-34)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the scripture), “I thirst.” A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was

already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

Commentary

This is one of the most commented upon passages in the Gospels, so it is difficult to add anything new.

Without pretending to be original, we could highlight two points:

—The verb “standing,” a translation of the Latin verb “stare” used by the Vulgate, indicates that our Mother was next to the Cross due to a personal, totally voluntary decision – much more than merely enduring a trial that has been imposed almost by force.

—Saint John speaks of the “Cross of Jesus.” In reality, no confusion was

possible with the crosses of the two thieves nearby. What is highlighted is the spiritual meaning of the Cross of Jesus, our Savior, the source of our salvation and all grace. Thus the evangelist is pointing to the very personal contribution of the Virgin Mary in the work of Redemption.

Hence the Church has chosen this passage for the memorial that we are celebrating today, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. As a complement to meditating on the Gospel provided for the Mass, it may be helpful to read again some words from the corresponding Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments: “Having attentively considered how greatly the promotion of this devotion might encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety,

Pope Francis has decreed that the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, should be inscribed in the Roman Calendar on the Monday after Pentecost and be now celebrated every year.”

Therefore, let us try to strengthen this “maternal sense of the Church” in our own lives, by realizing that we are instruments in the hands of God and his Mother, who exercise their fatherhood and motherhood partly through us. And let us not hesitate to pray frequently the aspiration that is part of the Litany of Loreto: *Mater Ecclesiae, ora pro ea, ora pro nobis!* “Mother of the Church, pray for the Church and pray for us!” Above all, if some events or remarks make us sad or worry us.

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