

Meditations: August 22, Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the feast of our Lady's Queenship.

- Making Mary queen of our lives
- Need for purification
- A heart eager to serve others

TODAY'S FEAST invites us to raise our eyes and contemplate the Queen of all creation: the Virgin Mary. On this day we can meditate on St. Josemaría's words: "God grant that a

hymn of thanksgiving may rise from our lips: for the Blessed Trinity, in choosing Mary as the Mother of Christ, a Man like us, has brought each one of us under the shelter of her maternal cloak. She is the Mother of God and our Mother.”^[1] Feeling sheltered under Mary’s cloak fills us with trust in adversity and joy in success. Knowing that Mary is the Queen of our life gives us the assurance of her intercession when we confront difficulties, and we joyfully offer her the first fruits of our struggle to grow in love.

Nevertheless, celebrating Mary’s queenship over our lives can also generate a certain “unease.” Normally, we prefer to emphasize our freedom and independence rather than the dominion that another person may have over our life. Therefore, we could even come to think that, to maintain a good relationship with our Mother, we

need to renounce “being ourselves.” However, if we consider this a bit more deeply, we realize that, just as there is a type of dominion that takes away our freedom, there is another type that, on the contrary, makes us happy and releases energies within us that lead us to become the best person we can be. It is the dominion of love, through which we open ourselves to the will of another person and which leads us to our own fulfillment.

“We joyfully share the splendor of having Jesus as our King: his reign of love transforms sin into grace, death into resurrection, fear into trust.”^[2] Christ’s reign consists in the transformation of our lives: He lifts us up and makes us children of God. In a way, this is what happened to the Virgin Mary. By accepting to be the Lord’s servant, her life changed completely. Our Lady didn’t become less, but quite the opposite: with her

“yes” to God’s will, she became the Mother of God and would eventually become the Mother of all mankind. We can ask her to help us say “yes” to God’s plans, which are far greater and more ambitious than we can imagine. As Saint Josemaría wrote: “You have never felt so absolutely free as you do now, when your freedom is interwoven with love and detachment, with security and insecurity; for you do not trust yourself at all, but trust in God for everything.”^[3]

FOR MARY’S queenship to be manifested in our lives, we need to purify our heart from everything that might separate us from her. “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you” (Ez 36:25). To

draw near to Mary and to the reign of her love is to open ourselves to inner purification, so that we can receive her Son's grace without any kind of hindrance.

The first act of purification in our lives is brought about through the waters of Baptism, bringing us from a state of separation from God to being his children. Our Lady, as Queen of our life, helps us to preserve this close union with the Holy Trinity. Sometimes her tears will help to cleanse the wounds of our sins; other times, she will pour the balm of her tenderness into our souls when we are tempted to lose heart; and in moments of joy, she encourages us with the aroma of her perfume, helping our soul sense a deep presence of God.

On our part, this purification requires a daily effort to cleanse our soul in order to let God reign in our

heart. Saint Josemaría asked one of his sons: “Do you have a desire for rectification, purification, mortification, to have closer contact with our Lord, to increase your piety, without drama or external show, with naturalness?”^[4] If we want our Lady to truly be queen of our hearts, so that she may make us good children of God, we should ask ourselves during this time of prayer: What corners of my life require purification? Do I try to make my affections and thoughts pass through the heart of Mary? St. Josemaria advised: “Ask the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and your Mother, to make you know yourself and weep for all those foul things that have passed through you, and which, alas, have left such dregs behind. And at the same time, without wishing to stop considering all that, say to him: Jesus, give me a Love that will act like a purifying fire in which my poor flesh, my poor heart, my poor

soul, my poor body may be consumed and cleansed of all earthly wretchedness. And when I have been completely emptied of myself, fill me with yourself. May I never become attached to anything here below. May Love always sustain me.”^[5]

PURIFICATION is the first step towards enjoying the freedom that our Lady wishes to grant us through her queenship. Having given Mary to us as our Mother, Jesus entrusted her with a very specific role: to forge within us a new heart, capable of the same affections as her Son’s. Thus Mary helps make the prophetic words of Ezekiel a reality in each of us: “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within

you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ez 36:26-27). Isn't the main job of a good mother that of helping her children to live joyfully in this world, and to give glory to God?

Our Lady's dominion consists, therefore, in spreading the infinite love of her Son. From Jesus she learned that a true kingdom is not based on privileges or honors.

"There is a worldly or common idea of a king or queen: a person with great power and wealth. But this is not the kind of royalty of Jesus and Mary. Let us think of the Lord; the royalty and kingship of Christ is interwoven with humility, service and love. It is above all serving, helping and loving."^[6] Mary exercises her queenship by watching over us and offering us her motherly protection. But to receive this love and transmit it to those closest to us,

we need to possess a new heart that is eager to serve others. Our Lady helps us understand that it is worthwhile breaking through the shell of our selfishness and open ourselves to her Son's grace and to the needs of all men and women. Like the servants in the parable of the wedding of the king's son, our Mother never tires of inviting us to discover that only when we seek to do God's will does our existence become a great celebration. "I have prepared the banquet; I have slaughtered the calves and the fattened oxen, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast" (*Mt 22:4*).

We can end this time of prayer by addressing our Mother with some words of Saint Josemaría: "Holy Mary, 'Queen of Apostles,' queen of all those who desire to make the love of your Son known, you understand our miseries so well. Ask Jesus'

forgiveness for our shabby lives – for what could have been fire and has been ashes, for the lights that have gone out, for the salt that has turned insipid. Mother of God, you are omnipotent in your petition. Obtain for us, along with forgiveness, the strength to live truly a life of faith and love, so we can share our faith in Christ with others.”^[7] Mother, help us to have a heart as free and clean as yours.

^[1] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 275.

^[2] Francis, Homily, 20 November 2016.

^[3] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 787.

^[4] St. Josemaría, *In Dialogue with the Lord*, no. 22.

^[5] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 41.

[6] Benedict XVI, Audience, 22 August 2012.

[7] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 175.

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