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Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother

From chapter 4.

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The life of our Lady teaches us, as St. Josemaría wrote, that great sanctity doesn't require spectacular deeds. Rather it is found "in the hidden and silent sacrifice of each day.... To become God-like, to be divinized, we must begin by being very human, accepting from God our condition as ordinary men and women and

sanctifying its apparent unimportance. Thus did Mary live. She who is full of grace, the object of God's pleasure, exalted above all the angels and the saints, lived an ordinary life."

We see reflected here one of the essential features of our Lady's earthly existence, and therefore of the call to lead a holy life that her own life represents. This is one of the marvelous and simple truths that we discover by entering the home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. A person seeking to serve and please God can find the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier in ordinary life, in the midst of daily work and ordinary occupations. Mary's life teaches us with great clarity that it is possible to be fully immersed in one's daily occupations and, at the same time, to divinize them. It is possible to be "contemplatives in the middle of the world," keeping up an intimate

dialogue with God in the normal activities of our day.

To attain this goal, we need to strive to direct our daily activity to God. And if the greatness of the ideal should ever threaten to overwhelm us, the consideration of our Lady's faithful response can spur us on. Moreover, let us never forget that we have in our hands not only the treasure of her example but also her constant help, since she reigns alongside her Son in heaven and is always ready to come to our assistance with her maternal affection and care. As soon as we invoke her, and even beforehand, Mary comes to our help, although quite often her effective and loving protection passes unnoticed to us.

Let us also remember that our Lady's path, like her Son's, does not turn aside from the Cross. We should not fear the Cross, because there, if we

look towards and follow Mary, we will discover as she did the joy that floods our soul when we forget about ourselves and entrust ourselves to Jesus' redeeming love. Her maternity, exercised to the fullest possible extent alongside her Son on Calvary, is a strong yet gentle invitation to accompany her and share in her self-giving for the salvation of the world, embracing her as our Mother....

We discover the rich treasure of the Cross in daily effort to understand others and show them generosity; in small, everyday opportunities to serve others – even when it is hard – occasioned by our family life, work environment and social dealings; and in penance and sacrifice, sought out and loved in our ordinary occupations. We find it the joyful testimony of our temperance, of our love for holy purity, and of solidarity with the suffering and needs of all mankind, especially those who are

weakest. We find it in avoiding every occasion of sin; in fleeing from temptation; and in quickly returning to God through sacramental confession. As John Paul II told us, Mary brings us the light and help we need to return to the house of the Father, to undertake the path of repentance for sin, which leads to the joy of knowing we are God's children.

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