

## The Mystical Rose

“The close and intimate union between Christ and his mother determines our picture of our Lord and at the same time our picture of Mary. The Mother of God stands before us as the great Woman who has been formed into the likeness of Christ and who forms Christ in others. In Christ and with Christ everything is always directed towards the Father” (Chronicle Notes 1955, 183).

The original features of Father Kentenich’s teaching on Christ and love of Christ take as their starting-point a formulation he made in 1955. In it he worked out three dimensions of “our” picture of Christ: “Our picture of Christ has three dimensions. It shines out to us from three main points of view. That is to say: We have fallen in love with our Lord’s fundamental relationship to his Father, to his Mother, and to immortal souls. We could also say: Our picture of our Lord is Marian and apostolic, while being oriented to the Father. Or: Our Lord’s union with the Father, with Mary and with souls has captured our hearts” (Chronicle Notes 1955, 182f).

“Hail Mary, because of your purity keep me pure in body and soul. Open to me your heart and the heart of your Son. Give me souls and keep everything else for yourself.”

“The people who overlook Mary, who according to the Father’s plan should always be at your side, have not understood the fullness of your work, its whole power and full light.”

### Through Mary to being gripped by love for Christ

That is the thought we want to stress particularly when we take in the whole mentality of people today. Our Blessed Mother’s relationship to Christ is the soul of her soul. If I belong to her, if I accept the subjective order of being, my love for Mary, my intimacy with her, must be related to Christ. That is to say, the vast Christ-river flows more strongly in the Mother of God than in any other created being. In her we find the strongest current, which must take hold of me. My love for Mary must be related to Christ through and through, and if it is not related to Christ, it has not taken its bearings from the objective order of being. Everything depends on whether, through the Blessed Mother, we come in an outstanding way into the river bearing us to Christ. It is obvious, through Christ we come to the Father in the Holy Spirit.

So how can we describe the instrumental character of my bonding to Mary, my love for Mary? I think I would have to put it this way: It must be a love for Mary that leads to a vital and vitalising bonding with Christ. Slowly we approach a favourite thought. What sort of love for Mary must it be? One that leads me to a vital and vitalising bonding with Christ. What does that mean? My whole personality must be re-vitalised through clinging to the living Christ. If you can find the time ... Please read the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius X ("Ad diem illum laetissimum", 1904). In it you will find the simple and clear explanation of the words: "Vitalis Christi cognitio" (a vital knowledge of Christ). What does our Love for Mary give us? A vital knowledge of Christ. (From: "Christ my Life", p92f)

### Mary as the Way to Christ's Re-Birth Today

I could now take up any number of starting-points. I could start with the idea - think of Guardini - of the "post-modern era". You can distinguish between ancient times, the middle ages, the modern era and the post-modern era. That is to say, we are living at such a turning point of history that people simply believe that war are justified in calling it the "post-modern era".

What does that imply? We are simply living at a time - how should I put it? - when we have to expect a new divine initiative after the devil has undertaken his diabolical initiative. God has to take a new initiative. Now let me tell you one of my personal favourite ideas. You see, history repeats itself - salvation history. Salvation history began with the birth and the "Yes" of the Blessed Mother. If the present-day world wants to find its way back to Christ, our Lady must give birth to Christ once more. Allow me to presuppose that you inwardly accept this. But when you think about it, or talk about, you will have to explain it in a new way and also study it in a new way, otherwise you will never understand the profound depth of Schoenstatt and its covenant of love. The Mother of God wants to create a whole new world, she wants to bring about a new world from here, Christ should be re-born!

"We thank you for all the gifts we have received in such abundance - that you have chosen Schoenstatt and Christ is born again there."

Do you understand what that means? ... Our Lady is not just the way to a deep and tender love for the Father, she is also the way by which Christ will be born in our present times, in the new era.

I do not know whether I can express what I want to say in just a few words. I see it this way: If we do not hold onto our covenant of love as the source of life, not merely of ideas, but as the source of life for all we want to achieve, even superficially seen, well, goodness me, we have nothing to be proud of! Look, what talents do we possess? If we are really honest and look at ourselves as we are, we are pygmies, Lilliputians. If we were to trust in our abilities, in our achievements, good heavens, everyone will say: They've got a screw loose! ... We need to believe deeply that we have to do no more than lead the Mother of God onto the battlefield everywhere, and give her the opportunity to give birth to Christ once more.

The Prophet Isaiah (40, 28b-31)

Yahweh is an everlasting God,  
he created the boundaries of the earth.  
He does not grow tired or weary,  
his understanding is beyond fathoming.  
He gives strength to the wearied,  
he strengthens the powerless.  
Young men may grow tired and weary,  
youths may stumble,  
but those who hope in Yahweh renew their strength,  
they put on wings like eagles.  
They run and do not grow weary,  
walk and never tire.

God speaking clearly to us as the God of history

Jesus shows us his Father:

“Jesus replied: ‘I tell you most solemnly, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does himself ...’ (John 5,19f).

“To have seen me is to have seen the Father. ... The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work” (John 14,19b 10b).

God cares for each one of us and for the least detail:

That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the glowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these (Mt 6,25-29).

God directs my life:

Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? (Mt 10,29); every hair on your head has been counted (Mt 10,30).

God takes an interest in each person: The history of the lost drachma (Lk 15,8-10), the lost sheep (Lk 15,1-7), and the lost son (Lk 15,11-32).

God speaking softly in my life

“There are moments in every person’s life when they become aware of a plan that can be followed up through their lives” (de Largaude).

We try not to make any plans of our own, but instead try to discover God’s plan according to the law of the open door. Then we make it the guide for our own plans, the measure for all we do, and the subject of our teaching ...

Faith in Divine Providence

St Augustine explained: “Religion is unthinkable unless a person believes at least one thing - that a Divine Providence keep careful watch over our souls.

The most difficult problem for Christians today is practical faith in Divine Providence. I am not speaking of a very general belief in Divine Providence. It is not difficult to believe in a Divine Providence as it has shown itself in the past centuries. The difficulty, the gnawing and shattering difficulty begins in the here and now, that is to say, in world events today, in the planning of divine love, wisdom and omnipotence, or in a God the Father who holds the reins of world events firmly in hand and guides everything to a clearly

envisaged and willed goal. That is what we call practical faith in Divine Providence.

As we have already shown, there are not a few Christians who uphold all the defined dogmas faithfully. ... They can also repeat without any special difficulties what they have learnt about the content and meaning of the teaching on Divine Providence. In addition they can say many beautiful and joyful things about God's intervention in the early Church and the Middle Ages. The fear, the darkness, the crisis begins when the incomprehensible events of history today are touched upon and come up for discussion. ... That is the sad fate of many Christians today, even if they have been taught the dogmas and can talk brilliantly about religious truths. Their faith has remained in their minds, it has not passed over to their hearts and their lives, it has not matured to become practical faith in Divine Providence.

The whole structure of our faith in God, the whole organism of our world of faith, becomes present in our lives through practical faith in Divine Providence. ... Through it we again become sensitive to essential values. Practical faith in Divine Providence constantly penetrates into our wills, hearts and emotions.

The Uniqueness of my Relationship to the God of Life

God's personal interest in each one of us has two main qualities: It is infinitely tender and infinitely attentive. That is to say, it is as though in his Son the Father has given us a mirror in which we can see and understand how infinitely tender and attentive his father love really is, even if we do not grasp fully how such deep love on God's part for each one of us can be reconciled with his other qualities.

God's personal interest in us:

"God considers you just the way you are. He calls you by your name. He sees you, he understands you, because he made you. He knows what is going on deep inside, he knows all your special feelings and thoughts, he knows your talents and inclinations, your strengths and your weaknesses. He sees you when the day is full of joy and when the day is full of suffering, he shares in your fears and your memories, in the rise and fall of our courage. He has counted the hairs on your head and the inches of your height. He embraces you and holds you in his arms; he picks you up and puts you down; he

watches your face to see whether it is smiling or swimming with tears, whether it is healthy or ill. He looks tenderly on your hands and feet; he hears your voice, the beating of your heart and every breath you breathe. You cannot love yourself more than he loves you; you cannot draw back more from pain than he hates to see you suffering; and when he sends you suffering, it is as though you wanted it yourself for the sake of the greater blessing that will flow from it. ... So let us try with God's grace to understand correctly where we stand and what he means to us - immeasurably tender and merciful - but, despite all his mercies, he will not swerve even a millimeter from the path determined by eternal Truth, Holiness and Justice ..." (based on Newman).

When we reflect on what has been said, we will find that the mind enlightened by faith is here offered a practical way of understanding, at least to some extent, the Biblical picture of the Father in the light of special and specific Divine Providence.

### God's Plan of Love

Paul de Lagarde had this to say: "There are moments in everyone's life when they become aware of a plan that can be followed up throughout their lives. It is a plan they have not designed and which they do not carry out. The thought behind this plan thrills them as though they had thought it out themselves, and carrying it out brings them blessing and growth, although their own hands do not work on it. Getting to know this plan, thinking about it and committing oneself to carrying it out, is true religion and the pledge of eternal life."

We try not to make any plans of our own, but try instead to discover God's plan through the law of the open door and make it the guide for our own plans, the measure for all we do, and the subject of our teaching. ... We are not the sort of people who want to banish childlike trust or the conscious union of human helplessness with divine omnipotence to the realm of fables or sagas.

Unless we have a deep faith in Divine Providence we will not have enough strength to withstand evil, we will not have enough enthusiasm to do what is good, and no motivation to climb the heights of heroism.

The person who believes in Divine Providence, who lives in the shrine of their own hearts, will experience that they are deeply anchored in God, and that God values and supports them. The person who has no faith in Divine

Providence will experience that they are deprived of their personality, used as a thing, and absorbed by the masses.