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Marian Mariology

CHAPTER 28



The veneration of Mary, when properly understood, permeates the entire life of the Church; it is a dimension of dogma and of piety, of Christology and of ecclesiology. This dimension needs to be made explicit today in connection with the problems of humanity. Mariology expresses something fundamental to the Christian life itself, to the Christian experience of the world.

Sound Mariology has always been understood in Christological terms. If the Gospel revealed nothing more than the fact that Jesus Christ, God and man, was born of Mary, this alone would be sufficient for the Church to love her and to draw theological conclusions from pondering this relationship of Mother and Son. We need no other revelations. Mary is a self-evident and essential *datum* and dimension of the Gospel.

Chapter one centers on Catechesis flowing from Byzantine Marian spirituality with commentary by Brother John M. Samaha, S.M. Chapter 2 discusses Mariology today with commentary by Rev. Professor Michael Lapierre, S.J. The remaining chapters are commentaries on various Marian topics by Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (1914– 2000).

Chapter 28

Mother of Divine Providence

by Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

Today's Gospel on the marriage feast at Cana tells us everything we need to know about Our Lady as the Mother of Divine Providence. The Church has given her this title because she, better than anyone else, is the perfect teacher of what Providence should mean in our lives. She teaches us to *believe* there is a Providence of God. She teaches us to *trust* in His Providence. And she teaches us to *cooperate* with Divine Providence in our lives.

How does Our Lady teach us to believe that there is a Providence? She does this in showing us by her example to see a Divine purpose in whatever occurs in our lives. When they ran out of wine at the marriage feast in Cana, she might have said to herself, "Well, what do they expect? The people drank so much there there was no wine left and the marriage feast is still going on." But instinctively Mary saw in the situation a providential act of God. She recognized what we are so slow to see, God's divinely ordained purpose in every person, every event, every joy, and every pain that we experience.

What this means is that, like Mary, we should understand there is no such thing as chance with God. Nothing just happens. Everything has a divinely intended purpose, and that purpose is to bring us closer to God. Viewed in this way we see that every creature who touches our lives is meant to be a grace from God. Does this include our mistakes and the mistakes of others? Yes, it does. We make mistakes but God never

makes a mistake and what about the mistakes of others? He uses even the wrongs that we do to mysteriously lead us back to Him, at least by giving us the opportunity for a humble repentance if we have done wrong, and patient acceptance when somebody else may wrong us.

Moreover, Our Lady is Mother of Divine Providence because she teaches us to trust in God's goodness and wisdom always, no matter how painful or hopeless a situation may seem. Humanly speaking, once the wine ran out at Cana there was nothing else to do except resign oneself to the obvious. But not Our Lady. Knowing her Son to be Who He is, even before asking Him, she told the stewards to fill the jars with water. Talk about trust in God's Providence!

Like her, beyond recognizing the constant and loving activity of God in our favor, we are also to be confident in the future. Mary had no doubt that her Son would work the miracle of changing water into wine. But the pre-condition for the miracle was His mother's confidence in her Son's answering her request.

None of us can see the future, but only God. There are many things He asks us to do here and now and wants us to trust that we shall not be deceived in what we hope for. Does this mean that God will, if need be, work miracles in our favor? Emphatically, yes.

Finally, Our Lady teaches us that beyond believing in Divine Providence and trusting in His loving care, we are to cooperate with the graces that He is frequently putting into our lives. These graces are the persons whose lives touch ours. They are the events that we experience, and too often take for granted all day.

Notice the way Mary acted after she found out that there was no more wine. She realized that something should be done, and she did it. Like Mary, we too are to see that part of God's Providence is the effort we make to respond to every providential opportunity that God puts into our lives.

I know I am speaking to the right audience when I say that for many of us God's Providence is what He sends us without our asking, and what He removes without our wanting. Some of us have the blessed privilege of caring for the children here at St. Mary of Providence School. Others have been blessed with the gift of a child that, in the eyes of an unbelieving world, is retarded or otherwise disabled. Still others are such persons ourselves; we know that we lack what other people have or that we have what others who are called "normal" are without. No matter. The key to happiness in this life and especially in the life to come is not to complain if

what God's Providence sends us is painful, and not envy if we do not have what others possess, and not be angry because our desires are not always satisfied.

It is on this last level of teaching us always to accept God's will, with patience and gratitude, that Our Lady is especially the Mother of Divine Providence in our lives.

Prayer

Let us close with a prayer: "Mother of Divine Providence, teach us to see God's loving will in everything. Teach us to trust, as you did, that the promises made to us will be fulfilled. Above all, Dear Mother, teach us never to resist any grace that your Son sends us, no matter how costly our cooperation with His love may be."

End
