

**MARIALIS CULTUS:  
FOR THE RIGHT ORDERING AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF POPE PAUL VI  
FEBRUARY 2, 1974**



**From the Introduction**

“...we do not cease with vigilant solicitude to concern ourselves with whatever can give orderly fulfillment to the renewal of the worship with which the Church in spirit and truth [cf. Jn 4:24] adores the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ...‘venerates with special love Mary the most holy Mother of God’”

(cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 103, and *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 8)

*Highlights and Selected Quotations*

**Part One Section One: The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy**

2 (About the revision of the General Calendar)...Give prominence to celebration of appropriate days of the work of salvation...To include the commemoration of Christ’s Mother in the annual cycle of the mysteries of her Son; including December 8, Immaculate Conception.

4. Advent: “...by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mary awaited her Son [the faithful] are invited to take her as a model and to prepare themselves to meet the Savior who is to come. ... proper balance to “prevent tendency (as has happened at times in certain forms of popular piety) to separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference – Christ.”

9. ...makes reference to the tradition of the Saturday Mass for Our Lady

10. We are pleased to note how the Eucharistic Prayers of the Missal, in admirable harmony with the Eastern liturgies, contain a significant commemoration of the Blessed Virgin.”

12. The Lectionary [now] contains a larger number of Old and New Testament readings concerning the Blessed Virgin

14. The commemoration of the Blessed Virgin occurs often in the Missal, the *Lectionary* and the Liturgy of the Hours – the hinges of the liturgical prayer of the Roman Rite.

**Part One, Section Two: the Blessed Virgin as the Model of the Church in Divine Worship**

16. Mary as a model of the spiritual attitude with which the Church celebrates and lives the divine mysteries.

17. Mary is the attentive Virgin, who receives the word of God with faith .... The Church also acts in this way, especially in the liturgy, when with faith she listens, accepts, proclaims and venerates the word of God, distributes it to the faithful as the bread of life. And in the light of that word examines the signs of the times and interprets and lives the events of history.

18. Mary is the Virgin in prayer. The Visitation, the Magnificat, ... “and there rang out in prophetic anticipation the voice of the Church”... Cana, Mary as the Virgin in prayer; Praying with the Apostles [Acts 1:14]...We have here the prayerful presence of Mary in the early Church and in the Church throughout all ages, for, having been assumed into heaven, she has not abandoned her mission of intercession and salvation.

19. Mary is also the Virgin-Mother...This was a miraculous motherhood, set up by God as the type and exemplar of the fruitfulness of the Virgin- Church, which becomes herself a mother

20. Mary is, finally, the Virgin presenting offerings...Presentation of Jesus in the Temple [Lk 2:22-35]. This union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption reaches its climax on Calvary. There she united herself with a maternal heart to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth and also was offering to the eternal Father.

21. Mary is above all the example of that worship that consists in making one's life an offer to God. “Your will be done” [Mt 6:10].

## **Part Two: The Renewal of Devotion to Mary**

24. ... the piety of the faithful and their veneration of the Mother of God has taken on many forms according to circumstances of time and place, the different sensibilities of people and their different cultural traditions. Hence it is that the forms in which this devotion is expressed, being subject to the ravages of time, show the need for a renewal that will permit them to substitute elements that are transient, to emphasize the elements that are ever new and to incorporate the doctrinal data obtained from theological reflection and the proposals of the Church's magisterium.

### **Section One: Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesial Aspects of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin**

25. ...in the expressions of devotion to the Virgin the Christological aspect should have particular prominence.

26. It seems to us useful to add to this mention of the Christological orientation of devotion to the Blessed Virgin a reminder of the fittingness of giving prominence in this devotion to one of the essential facts of the Faith: the Person and work of the Holy Spirit

(MC quotes Lumen gentium, St. Ambrose & St Jerome) ... Mary crafted by the Holy Spirit into a new creature; Spirit consecrated her, transformed her -- “Abode of the King,” “Bridal Chamber of the Word,” “the Temple,” “Ark of Holiness” ...Titles rich in Scriptural references

26. Examining more deeply still the mystery of the Incarnation, they saw in the mysterious relationship between the Spirit and Mary an aspect redolent of marriage, poetically portrayed by Prudentius: “The unwed Virgin espoused the Spirit,” and they called her the “Temple of the Holy Spirit.”

28. Mary's ecclesial mission...Our common brotherhood as the children of the Virgin Mary The Church and Virgin Mary collaborate to give birth to the Mystical Body of Christ... an example of the Church's concern for the poor.

29. In conclusion, therefore, we repeat that devotion to the Blessed Virgin must explicitly show its intrinsic and ecclesiological content: thus it will be enabled to revise its forms and texts in a fitting way.

### **Section Two: Four Guidelines for Devotion to the Blessed Virgin: Biblical, Liturgical, Ecumenical and Anthropological**

30. ... a general need of Christian piety that every form of worship should have a biblical imprint - Marian piety cannot be exempt. What is needed is that texts of prayers and chants should draw their inspiration and their wording from the Bible, and above all that devotion to the Virgin should be imbued with the great themes of the Christian message.

31. ... encourages piety to be in harmony with the liturgy, not suppressed; along with warning of not mixing practices of piety and liturgical acts in hybrid celebrations... Harmonize with the liturgy not merged into it.

32. Takes an ecumenical tone, notes our common devotion to Mary along with the Orthodox and Anglicans...Catholics should show caution in expressing devotion to Mary that is not in accord with sound doctrine.

35. Mary as example... She is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which ... she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God because she heard the word of God and acted on it, and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions ... meant to be applied in a contemporary context... "How can this be?" How does God reveal his message through the People of God?

### **Part Three: Observations on Two Exercises of Piety**

The Angelus

The Rosary

Conclusion

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