

(English translation)

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Mary, Humanity Fulfilled¹

Young people want to be authentic; they feel the need to be free from everything that blocks them from being real. In Our Lady, there was only authenticity, because in her there was not « herself » in the negative sense, but only the plan of God on her, without any encrustations of the old self.

Then, almost everyone thinks, and young people in a special way, that man and woman, in order to be complete, necessarily need each other and that they cannot fulfil themselves if not in the completion with the opposite sex. Now Mary, who is *alone*, was totally devoid of this idea. She is outright the spouse of God and bore Jesus in virginity. She is complete and contains all of humanity in her; that is, God sees her as the prototype of the human being, whether it be man or woman is of no importance – the human person in his/her perfection who finds his/her realization in relationship with God.

If a young man or woman seek each other out in order to mutually complete themselves egotistically, in practice there are two egoisms added together; each one wants to be him or herself and, with all the good things that they can say to each other, in the end they are using each other. The full realization of a man or woman lies in being in relationship with God. That is where we must aim to in order to be complete. That then, in both overcoming their egoism, two human beings join in matrimony and form a new beauty for the life of humanity that continues on, this is another point.

When Jesus spoke about matrimony, he elevated man and woman in their union to being his collaborators, but also says about them: “whoever is not ready to leave wife and children, cannot be my disciple» (see *Lk 14:26*).

So even though united one with the other in the family, God wants man and woman alone with Him, complete in him/herself, able to be the first to love.

Another need that is strongly felt by young people is that of overcoming certain oppressive systems of authority; they are convinced that no one can ever exercise their leadership role well if not united with those who have the role of assisting them. The need to feel co-responsible is practically discovered, because before having different roles in society, we are all equal, we are brothers and sisters. The extreme opposite of this unsatisfied need is the anarchy to which young people are attracted, not negating at the root a certain way of exercising authority, but whichever type of authority.

Well, Mary, even in the exceptional state in which God had created her, was obedient in those things that she need not have been. For example, she went to the Temple to be purified, she who was the purified one par excellence, because she felt that she needed to respect tradition until the time was ripe for it to be overcome. Certainly, Mary was never eccentric in her way of being.

She teaches us that the transformation of society does not happen through global protesting that breaks out into anarchy, but by accepting, even through suffering, those mental schemes that we feel are obsolete, knowing that from this suffered acceptance will come forth a renewed society.

This is the radical change that Mary is suggesting to us.

Another example has to do with the unisex fashion trend. This style also wants to demonstrate equality, the parity between sexes, and this is all fine. But there is a substrate that is not good in this

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fashion: there is a desire to confuse the sexes, a mixing that could mean something absolutely negative. We have to go against this. Our Lady really belonged to the female gender: she was a woman. And in considering her in this perspective and not more, like we did before, synthesis and prototype of humanity but as a woman, we realize that she did not make any confusion in her being just that. In her come to light all the characteristics of femininity; she is really the woman who serves God with her specific talents, not wanting to be part of another, but being herself, fully and completely.

Today then, people are used to dressing and acting in a casual way: and it's not just a style – there is a philosophy undergirding it. It's like saying: I'm not at all interested in wealth, conventions, etiquette – we are not slaves to anything. And this is positive, but not otherwise positive is the sense of disorder that renders relationships with others difficult and creates discomfort for them.

Also here Mary is the answer: she was poverty personified – she owned nothing. She only had a stable in Bethlehem in which to give birth to her son, she was the wife of a carpenter. However, we cannot think that she did not take care of herself and Jesus too; we can imagine that she was the one to sew that precious tunic for Jesus which, at the foot of the cross, was cast for lots and not divided up because made from one woven piece. Mary's poverty does not signify neglect and ugliness; it was an authentic poverty, synonymous with that simplicity that is beauty. Nothing is as poor as nature, as the sea, as a flower, as the grass.... This is the poverty, the simplicity that Mary teaches us and that responds to the aspirations of young people.

What can we say about the deep spiritual need that exists in young people, their seeking in spiritual values that gives meaning to their lives? Young people today instinctively feel the need for prayer, for meditation, against a world that measures everything with doing. This is why Westerners turn to the Orient with its certain mystic which attracts them. They go there hoping to find the value of a spiritual life. Now, Our Lady was always considered the contemplative type par excellence, even if we see her as « active » because she is a mother, because she played an active role in the Church after Jesus' death; but in Mary action was not separate from contemplation.

Therefore, this spiritual quest finds an answer in her. If young people were to deeply enter into Mary's life, they would find her fathomless depth of inner life.

Another characteristic of today's world is the desire for life to be an adventure, the desire to travel so as to break the monotony of daily life, in order to have a more colourful existence. When we do not manage to physically travel elsewhere, or when we feel that to go from here to London or from London to New York is too little, then one tries to escape the daily routine through drugs, which is the latest negative expression of this need to travel.

Even if the parallel is daring, the one who responds to the desire to make of life an adventure, a trip, is again Mary, because all of her own plans went up in smoke and she followed God's plan. And all this in no « normal » manner, but even with angels who appeared to her – at the basis of her adventure there were exceptional external events.... Certainly, Mary's life was a journey all the way to the Assumption, which will always exceed any possible dream and realization of those who want to « travel. » Let's think of the Annunciation – it would be enough to think just of this – ; or the birth of the child Jesus, or the Magi who went to bear him gifts. Let's think of Mary during the public life of Jesus, or when, at the foot of the cross, she finds herself holding her dead son, God, and she becomes mother of humanity. And finally, let's think of her Assumption into heaven. In contact with such strong supernatural realities, one can feel the limitations or the absurdity of other « trips, » one trip alone appears to be important: the trip with her from this life up to heaven.

Finally, one of the most typical phenomenon of this last decade: young people feel that they have to throw out the old structures, and they are right, because there is something outdated in them, stationary, that smacks of lack of life. The structures that we know are institutions that often violate people's rights, because they want to impose a certain outcome: they want to build a certain type of person, but in the meantime they destroy the human being.

Mary as a young woman went against one of the age-old costumes of her time: while all Jewish girls were getting married and aspired to form a family, to have children, she instead consecrated herself to God in virginity. As a Jewish girl, she was part of the synagogue, therefore, of the customs of the Old Testament. Mary, however, in order to follow Jesus, overcame this condition; she stepped out of the Old Testament to enter into the new law, that of Jesus. She left the old system of laws to become a follower of Jesus, to be part of the new system brought by her Son. No one like Mary can understand the desire of young people to eliminate the old structures, and can orient them towards the Church, that structure that renders the life of the Trinity on earth possible.

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