



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.com

Marian Mariology

CHAPTER 41



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 41

An Interview: Jesuit Theologian and Author

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

Jesuit Fr. John A. Hardon, is a well known theologian, author and lecturer. He was born in Midland, PA. His father died while performing an act of charity not long after the family moved to Cleveland. He was raised by his mother. After completing his university studies under the Jesuits, he entered the Society of Jesus. He earned his doctorate in theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. Father Hardon worked for Vatican Radio and broadcast the canonization of St. Maria Goretti. He taught dogmatic theology for twenty years and set up the Catholic Home Study Institute in Leesburg, Va. He currently resides at the University of Detroit where he writes, lectures and works in the field of catechetics.

You are well read and well informed. Can you describe the situation we find ourselves in today in the Church, especially the United States.

FATHER HARDON: In the present day the Church is going through a revolution imposed from the outside. Not just Catholicism or even Christianity, but ideas that are basic even to rational sanity are being challenged by those who control the media. And depending on how influential they are, the Church is in corresponding trial. Because the United States is the most socially media conscious country in the world, the Church in the United States is going through her heaviest crisis. What the Church has taught for 2000 years-- is being opposed, questioned and challenged by

venerated on Saturdays from the early Church. Because on the first Holy Saturday, between Good Friday and Easter Sunday Our Lady's faith among all the followers of Christ was the only one that remained absolutely intact. Because of this were born three names through the centuries- Our Lady's Day, Mary Day and Faith Day. The First Saturdays are especially for the sins of unbelief but, particularly for those who have abandoned their faith because they wanted to do their own will. They rationalize their immorality by writing books defending their infidelity.

Eucharistic Adoration was stressed by the angel and also by Francisco. What are your observations on this?

HARDON: I would say any authentic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, either strengthens our faith in the Real Presence and devotion to the Holy Eucharist or it is not authentically Catholic. Except for Our Lady, we would not have the Holy Eucharist. It was only because she became the Virgin Mother of the Son of God that we have the Holy Eucharist. I've been telling priest students over the years, the Eucharist began the day of the Annunciation, in Mary's womb. The Eucharist is the living Jesus Christ. Except for the body and blood that He received from Mary, He could not have, on Holy Thursday night, said "this is my Body, this is my Blood ..." It is because Mary gave her Son his body and blood that we now have the Eucharist.

The same living Jesus-- identical, no qualification-- that she conceived and gave birth to and Who is now in heaven, is on earth in the Holy Eucharist. Devotion to the Holy Eucharist is, I would say, the goal of devotion to Our Lady because in my judgment the essence of a devotion to the Sacred Heart is devotion to Jesus Christ really present on earth. Our Lady is to lead us to the love of her Son and that love is no abstraction. That love is alive and has a pulsating human heart now on earth, thanks to his Mother.

End

alien ideas on the part of those who control the media and the result has been widespread indoctrination contrary to the teachings of Christ.

How would you apply the Fatima message to this situation?

HARDON: I would say, following the lead of our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, I believe the most fundamental message of Fatima is the imperative of the verb "repent" or the noun "repentance."

Whatever has happened to sin? I believe the central message of Fatima is repentance. But you don't begin to being to even want to repent, unless first of all you are conscious of having done wrong-- having sinned and offended God. And there is disorder, mainly with the individual, down deep inside the human heart. The great need is that people realize they have acted contrary to the Divine will. Therefore, they have sinned. Sin is always, *always* followed by disorder. The great need is repentance which means a recognition not only that others have sinned, but that I have sinned, that I acknowledge my guilt before God-- repent. The tragic disorders wherewith human society is now being plagued will be removed, in God's providence, in the measure that people repent.

What would you say is the highest priority of the Fatima apostolate today?

HARDON: I think the top priority of those belonging to the Blue Army, or the World Apostolate of Fatima, is first for themselves to know the faith, then live the faith and thirdly and most importantly for our purpose, to share the fiat with the members of their own family, then with everyone. They should share the faith, not only with those who enter their lives, but they should even go out to enter other people's life and take on something of the zeal of St. Paul. Proclaim the Gospel and part of the proclamation, of course, will be that people have to repent. The main reason why after almost 2000 years since the Incarnation, most of the human race is not yet Christian is because human beings do not want to admit that they are sinners. Peter's first sermon on Pentecost Sunday was to tell people-- repent.

Has the Fatima message had a direct impact on your own life and ministry?

HARDON: Much of what I have spoken and written, certainly since my graduate studies in Rome, has been deeply motivated by what I understood was the essential message at Fatima.

I learned from Fatima that Our Lady, having first obtained from her Son, to work a physical miracle continues obtaining from Him other physical

miracles like at Lourdes, but she especially wants her Son to work moral miracles of surpassing the natural laws of the human will. I believe it is more difficult to convert a hardened sinner than it is to raise a Lazarus from the dead. And Mary is capable of working such miracles. My priesthood has taught me devotion to Our Lady and expecting her to work miracles of conversion. She'll do it.

I believe that Fatima is especially the sign in our age of the moral miracles that God wants to work in a proud, self-preoccupied, pleasure-intoxicated mankind. Miracles are being worked. I tell people to expect miracles. And the most important kind of miracles you should ask God to work through Our Lady's intercession.

What would you recommend to our readers and apostolate members to help them attain personal holiness?

HARDON: First, pray, that's imperative. I believe all members of the World Apostolate of Fatima should daily examine their consciences on how much and how fervently they have prayed. We are not praying enough.

Second, I believe the members of the Fatima apostolate should better understand their Faith and be sure they have access to information on the Faith, especially to what the Vicar of Christ is telling us.

Look at the thirtieth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus describes the seed falling on unfertile ground. The first seed fell on unfertile ground because, as Christ explained, these persons received the word of God, but failed to understand it. Therefore, the devil came along and stole it from their hearts.

Third, they must share their faith. This is the apostolate. Use all the media we've got. Start writing letters; start engaging in spiritual conversation.

Fourth, to grow in holiness, members of the Fatima apostolate must be willing to suffer. Never run away from the cross; embrace the cross and like Our Lady, stand close to the cross of Christ. It is especially in loving to deny ourselves and take up our daily cross, in embracing and not merely not running away from-- not merely stoically enduring suffering-- but loving the sufferings that God puts into our lives to show our love for Him that I believe that members of the Fatima apostolate can grow in sanctity.

Our Lady requested that we offer prayers and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners.

HARDON: Yes, we should specify when we pray, that we are asking for the conversion of sinners. Even specify particular sinners that we know. Sacrifice, of course, means that surrender of something precious to God. The most effective prayer is the prayer which is joined with a sacrifice, meaning giving up what I like-- ah, that prayer is powerful at the throne of God.

Our Lady taught the children to say after each decade of the Rosary ... "Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy."

HARDON: It is a prayer whose center is the awareness of sin and sin offending God. In other words, the one who says the prayer is a sinner, praying both for himself and for others. He is asking God's mercy-- mercy for those who are not repentant, so they might obtain repentance-- mercy from God that He might lessen the punishment of the pain and the suffering that is due to sin both for himself and others.

When we say the "Decade prayer" the phrase "lead all souls to heaven ... " does not mean that we are asking that all the deceased go to heaven. We ask the good Lord to lead all the poor souls to heaven, lead all the faithful departed to heaven You are not asking for those who are in hell to be saved. Some people misunderstood. What we are praying for is a mitigation of the suffering of those who have died if they are in purgatory as well as a lessening of their stay in purgatory.

Please comment on the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that was requested at Fatima?

HARDON: This is most important. In fact, whatever the Blue Army can do to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by promoting devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be blessed by Our Lord. Even as Our Lady is to bring everyone to her Son, so devotion to the Immaculate Heart is to intercede our devotion to the Sacred Heart of her Son.

The difference between devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary is that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is devotion to Jesus Christ, the living God in human form, whose human heart is the heart of the living God. Devotion to the Immaculate Heart is devotion to a creature. Our Lady was not divine. However, in devotion to the Immaculate Heart, the word "immaculate" is crucial, referring to her sinless heart. I believe, the essence of devotion to the Immaculate Heart is to strive through Our Lady's intercession to obtain the grace of dying a sinless death. We came into the world with sin to ask her for the grace of dying without sin. This is the greatest gift we can obtain from her Son through her Immaculate Heart.

That leads us to the First Saturday devotion in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

HARDON: Devotion to Our Lady on Saturdays goes back to the beginnings of the Church. I believe that principal sin for which the five First Saturdays should expiate is the sin of unbelief or disbelief or infidelity. Our Lady was