

Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time (English Mass)

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost (Latin Mass)

October 15, 2023

Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us.” (Hail, Holy Queen Prayer)

This particular line of the Hail Holy Queen prayer addresses Mary as a most gracious advocate. This address stands out for us because we have mostly likely heard that same title (advocate) used in reference to the Holy Spirit. Jesus, Himself, refers to the Holy Spirit using this title when He spoke to His apostles and disciples as recorded in Saint John’s gospel: *“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.”* (John 14:26). For Mary to be addressed as an advocate, the Church had to be clear in its definition. The Church Fathers did not desire to spread confusion among faithful Christians who might assume, by using this title, the Church attributed to Mary the same acts of worship equal to that which we offer God in the person of the Holy Spirit. This clear distinction would find its place not first in the minds of Christians. Its initial proclamation would be found in the hearts of our Jewish ancestors. So very much of what we know and believe as Christians, first finds its origins with our Jewish ancestors. To understand Mary using the title advocate, we must understand the Jewish meaning of the title “Queen Mother.”

If we consult our Bibles, we will notice the title “Queen Mother” is not used until much later in Israel’s history. To explain this fact, one only needs to remember that God was the primary leader of His children. He used the patriarchs, judges and prophets to shepherd His flock. Much later in her history, Israel would beg God for a king to govern their daily lives similar to the various kings who led the tribes and nations who resided upon their borders. To refresh your memory, Saul was the first king of the people. He was later rejected by God, due to Saul’s no longer obeying God, and replaced by David. David would have relations with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who would bear him a son Solomon. It was during the reign of King Solomon that the role of the “Queen Mother” would find its meaning.

To understand the role of Bathsheba, the “Queen Mother,” let us compare her with Bathsheba, “Queen” and wife of King David. In the First Book of Kings, we read of Bathsheba going to see King David to implore his decision concerning her son as heir to the throne. *“Bathsheba went to see the king in his bedroom. Since the king was very old, Abishag the Shunammite was serving him. And Bathsheba bowed down in homage to the king, who asked, What is your desire?”* (1 Kings 1:15-16). You will notice how Bathsheba approached King David, her husband, respecting his position as her king. One chapter later, king David is dead and her son Solomon sits upon the throne as king. Now, let us look at the difference when she as “Queen Mother” approaches the King. *“So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. The king stood up to greet her, bowed to her, and sat down on his throne. Then the king had a throne brought for his mother, who sat down at his right hand.”* (1 Kings 2:19). Did you notice

the difference? It is now the King who bows to his Mother, the Queen, and she assumes a position of authority as his right hand. His word is still the ultimate law for all subjects, including her, but her position as intercessor has changed. As the Church Fathers read and began to understand the role and importance of the “Queen Mother,” they would naturally begin to apply this same role and authority to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus.

For Mary to be addressed under the title “Queen Mother,” we must first acknowledge her son Jesus as King. Remembering that the Gospels were written after they were first proclaimed orally, we can correctly assume the Church has always believed Jesus to be King. This title was directly given to Him by Heaven itself through the words of the Archangel Gabriel. *“So the angel told her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end!”* (Luke 1:30-33). This would be further stressed in the greeting the Blessed Mother would receive as she visited her kinswoman Saint Elizabeth: *“And why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”* (Luke 1:43). Even Jesus, Himself, would acknowledge His own Kingship as He stood condemned before Pilate: *“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is not of this realm.”* (John 18:36).

My family, our belief in Mary as Queen Mother and advocate, is built upon the previous beliefs of our Jewish ancestors and the teachings of the first Christians, the Apostles. Yes, it was those two sources that helped us to later offer to Mary, as Queen Mother, our petitions. We ask her to approach her Son, the King of Creation, and offer our needs. As always, she only offers to her Son those petitions which are in union with His Divine Will and never will she contradict His Word. My family, this is just another beautiful reason to be Catholic. We acknowledge and honor Mary as the Queen Mother, and our Mother. So, as her children, let us daily ask for her to assist us through her intercession, her prayers.