

CTK Mission Principle #7:

We the people of Christ the King, called by God our Father to be surrendered to the Lord Jesus, in the power of His Holy Spirit, in the heart of His Church.

- **to be a people committed to a relationship with the Saints, especially Mary, the Mother of God, with the authentic devotion to her that “proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.” (Vatican Council II, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, #67)**

In the first reading today we see the healing power of the Holy One of Israel manifested for a pagan, Naaman the Syrian. He is miraculously cleansed through the intercession of the great prophet Elisha, who instructs him on how to be freed from his leprosy by plunging into the Jordan. This, of course, is also a foreshadowing of Elisha’s great successor, St. John the Baptist, and how he too assists One Who also plunges into the Jordan, not to receive healing but to give it, especially through the waters of baptism, our Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture is filled with examples of men and women being used by the Lord as the instruments for the building of His Kingdom. Elijah, for example, was a very great intercessor in prayer, praying to stop up the Heavens and praying again later for the Heavens to be opened and the rain to fall, and, most famously, praying that the fire of God would descend visibly before the People of God that they may know Who it is that calls them to serve Him. These great men and women of God frequently had three related ‘ministries’ in their lives: they prayed, with great power, they taught the people the things of Heaven, and they showed by their lives how one ought to live in the service of God. It has been the experience of the People of God from the beginning that the ministry of many of these great men and women did not end with their deaths but continued, and their presence continued to be manifested to the People of God, still interceding and teaching and supporting them from their new place in the great Kingdom of Heaven. This role is wonderfully demonstrated in the Book of Maccabees.

The leader of the Maccabees has a vision and in it sees Onias, the martyred high priest, who introduces him to Jeremiah, the long dead great prophet:

¹² What he saw was this: Onias, who had been high priest, a noble and good man, of modest bearing and gentle manner, one who spoke fittingly and had been trained from childhood in all that belongs to excellence, was praying with outstretched hands for the whole body of the Jews. ¹³ Then likewise a man appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and dignity, and of marvelous majesty and authority. ¹⁴ And Onias spoke, saying, “This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God.” ¹⁵ Jeremiah stretched out his right hand and gave to Judas a golden sword, and as he gave it he addressed him

thus: ¹⁶“Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with which you will strike down your adversaries.”

In this example, a glimpse is given of the Heavenly Realm and the great Saints actually interceding for the People of God. This role is of course brought out in the New Testament as well. The Book of Revelation gives us wonderful descriptions of the Saints around the Throne of God. The event of the Transfiguration itself shows the magnificent interplay between Heaven and Earth as Moses and Elijah appear to the Lord Jesus, Peter, James, and John on Mt. Tabor.

Of all the great intercessors who have gone before us none has the status and significance of the Mother of God herself. Mary’s role as our Mother, given to us by the Lord Jesus while He hung on the Cross and is wonderfully described again by St. John in Revelations, where we are identified as:” her offspring...those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.” (Rev. 12:17).

From the beginning the Church has honored her and recommended a relationship with her. The options for this relationship have taken many forms, chief among which is the Brown Scapular, the Rosary, and the Consecration to Mary. The Second Vatican Council, wishing to re-emphasize the importance of Mary for the Catholic faithful—lest some should think, wrongly, that a devotion to her was somewhat passé or out of date, taught quite clearly:

She is "the mother of the members of Christ . . . having cooperated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head."(3*) Wherefore she is hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity. The Catholic Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother. *Lumen Gentium*, #53

The *Catechism* reiterates this teaching: “‘All generations will call me blessed’: ‘The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.’” The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs....The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.” #971. The Church clearly invites each of us to have a deeper relationship with the Mother given to us as our Mother.

Reflection Questions:

For the individual: What am I doing to grow in my relationship with the Mother of God?

For the family: How can we as a family deepen our common relationship with Mary?

For the parish: How can we as a parish become more connected to the Mother of God?