

EDITORIAL

My mother Mary is the Mother of God. Mindful of her humanity and her human way of doing things, God ordained in His eternal wisdom that she freely consent to become the mother of His only-begotten Son, the Word spoken by the Father. All that Mary is and has, she is and has only because she consented to mother the divine Word. Since she was to be the mother of God, she received all the special gifts God reserves to His most intimate friends. Her motherhood of the Christ is the drop of water in which all the colors of the rainbow can be seen individually.

Made before time or matter began, this special ordination of God with regard to His human mother is only part of the context of God's plan for the government of His creation. This plan includes such truly awe-ful events as God's becoming Man and such trivial happenings as befall us at every instant of the day. Divine providence decrees the great and the small; it is the context of all our virtuous and vicious actions, disposing us to virtue and drawing us from vice by the example of others or by a growing awareness of the deformity of sin.

But Mary has been assigned other activities in the history of the human race. In recent times, she has appeared to special individuals with a message for the contemporary world. Within the last century, she has appeared at least three times, and always with the same message: pray and do penance. The message of La Salette in 1846 centered around this double need; Lourdes, while highlighting the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, also indicated the need, and finally the apparitions of Fatima in 1917 made the need quite explicit. These warnings and pleas from heaven can not go unheeded. Yet amid our achievements we seem to forget these heavenly messages despite their frequency and urgency.

Just last year, Pope John issued an encyclical on the Rosary which received surprisingly little publicity and comment. For a period of more than three years, he has, in almost every public statement, appended an appeal for prayers for the success of the Council. This past July, he issued a special encyclical calling Christians the world over to do penance for the success of the Council.

Our mother, the Church, is crying and preaching the need of penance and prayer. This plea, increasing in intensity as the days come and go, is part of divine providence, that providence which directs Mary's activities,

her communications with men, and even the appeals of Christ's vicar on earth. The communications and instructions of the Holy See are manifestations of the love of God for His Church and creatures. The Pope's plea for prayer and penance is part of the grand plan whereby all men and all things are to be brought to their highest perfection.

As Mary cooperated with the angelic request, so is it for us to respond to the pleas of the Pope and our Blessed Mother for prayer and penance.

October 11 is the day for our celebrating Mary's divine motherhood; it is the day on which the Second Vatican Council opens. We must prepare; we must sustain our efforts over the whole time of deliberations; we must do our share. It is the request of Pope John; it is the Marian message of the past century. Prayer and penance!