

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

Our Blessed Mother Mary: Her Suffering and Ours

Joshua Mazrin

Hi, and welcome back. My name is Joshua Mazrin, and in this talk we're going to be reflecting on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and she is an example of how to deal with suffering. As we look into her life, all the sufferings that she endured, and also how we can lean on her, how we can approach her, and ask for her assistance. And even receive God's grace through her in times of our own suffering, in times when we witness our family members, our friends, and our loved ones suffering. And that we can even take their needs and commend them to the Virgin Mary as well. So let's begin in prayer.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You for this opportunity to serve You, to come together to meditate and reflect on Your truth, Your beauty, Your goodness, and Your mercy. We ask that You would pour forth the anointing of Your Holy Spirit upon us right now, in the name of Jesus. That You would give us disposition of openness to whatever it is You desire to speak to us. O Mother Mary, we ask that - especially as we meditate on your life, on your role in the Heavenly Kingdom - that you would intercede for an increase in grace, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, in docility to the spirit, your well-beloved spouse. That you would also teach us of the interior life, teach us to trust as you trust, to trust your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. And we ask all this through your glorious intercession. And so we say Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. Our Lady, Mother of Sorrows, pray for us. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It's such a blessing to be on this journey, retreat, these meditations, and these reflections with you. It's good for me to go over these things as well, to constantly be reminded that we have to look to the Virgin Mary, that we have to ask for the infilling of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and that God just has so many plans for each one of us. So in this talk, as I said, we're really going to reflect on Mary and her role in our suffering by looking to her example, as she suffered. And also just the wonderful treasury of graces that are available to us through her intercession and through Marian devotion.

So, of course we know that all good Catholic doctrine and dogma is the authentic interpretation of scripture. So for us to approach Mary, the best thing for us to do

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

would be to look into the bible, where she's primarily shown in the New Testament. But in order to understand the New Testament, we have something called typology, which is: There are types of things in the Old Testament that find their fulfillment in the New Testament.

So, to begin, I want to call to mind the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham, who God promised would have descendants as countless as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore. He waits for a long time, and even tries to kind of push this prophecy to happen by having Ishmael, his son. And eventually, he finally has Isaac. And then what happens? You'll remember the next part of the story is that later on, when Isaac is a teenager, you know, a well, able-bodied young man, Abraham calls him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah.

So Abraham, truly being this man in faith - our father in faith actually - willingly consents to this. And he gets Isaac, and he gets wood for the altar, and the fire, and the knife, and they start going up Mount Moriah together. And Isaac notices that they don't have a ram for an offering, so he asks his father, and Abraham responds in such an interesting way. Pay attention to the words that he uses. He says "God will provide Himself for a sacrifice." Abraham might not have known what he actually meant, or the truth behind these words, but Isaac very well could have just got up and ran away. He could have overpowered his father. But he knew that he was going to be the one that was going to be sacrificed. Abraham was well advanced in years at this point, and Isaac was a young man, you know, in great physical condition.

So Isaac consents and puts himself on the altar, Abraham ties him down, and right as Abraham's going to sacrifice his only son, his legitimate son that's meant to be the person, the heir through whom the fulfillment of all these prophecies and promises, the generational blessing that was going to be given to the whole world. And the angel steps in and stops Abraham because his willingness and faith in trusting God was enough that all these promises would come to be. So then they spot a ram in the thorn bush, and they go and they cut it out, and they sacrifice this ram that, because he was cut out of this bush, is wearing a crown of thorns.

So fast forward to where we find the true fulfillment. Of course, we see the connection. Of course, also, even that Mount Moriah is in the same mountain range as Calvary. So Jesus is crucified in the same mountain range that this sacrifice was going to happen. And we see the similarities, the parallelism, where Jesus is consenting to the offering to His Father. But also, on Calvary, there's another person that's there. Mary's there. And just like Abraham, she comes and she trusts in the will of God, and she goes to offer her only Son up to the Father for all of our sake. But Mary has to go through with it. Mary does actually sit and watch her

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

only Son be offered, on that same mountain range, up to the Father for our sins. And the church says that she even participates in this. It says that Mary suffers the fullness of the crucifixion in her heart.

So Mary is not only going through suffering where she's witnessing, just as if any of us are going through suffering as maybe we lost a loved one, or we have somebody in our family, or one of our friends that has cancer is in the hospital. Mary not only has to watch this, where she actually loses her only Son, but she participates in the suffering. And this calls to mind Simeon's prophecy to her. He says "And to you too, a sword shall pierce your soul, that the thoughts of many would be revealed." So in a very interesting way, in a very unique and singular way, for all of us, Mary participates in the saving action which brings redemption to all of us, to all mankind.

So she's there not only to be an example, but also to do something for us. And this is why, on the cross, Jesus looks up, and of the seven things He says to us - so, you know, He's dying on the cross, the things that He chooses to say must have so much importance, so much weight that He would say them at such crucial time when He was in so much anguish. He looks down at Mary and John, the beloved disciple, and says "Woman, behold your Son." "Son, behold your mother." Jesus gives us this gift, this gift of a spiritual mother. He gives us His mother for ours, to take care of us and the whole church. And He does it as such an intense and important time. He finds it of such great importance, that this needs to happen. And He does it in a time of suffering so that, particularly when we're going through suffering, we have a mother to help us.

So who is this mother? Who is Mary? We have so many great teachings on Mary throughout the church. We have all these doctrines, and dogmas, and old devotions, and I'm sure you see all the groups at your churches that will pray the Rosary, and you have The Knights of the Immaculate, The Militia Immaculata, that group, and you have The Legion of Mary, and you have all these devotional groups to Mary. But who is she? I want to kind of focus first on The Annunciation. An angel appears to her says "Hail, full of grace," "kecharitomene" "Hail you, who have already been perfected by grace." That's what that word means in Greek by the way. It's one of only two places that something similar is used in the Greek, but it's the only place that it's used that particularly to talk about a person.

So the angel showing up and using this word in the tense and the grammatical way that it's used is called the perfect passive participle, which means an action that is conveyed on a person that has already happened to completion, and it is accomplished perfectly. So Mary, he's saying "You, who have already been perfected by grace," the action of her receiving grace has already happened and

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

she's been perfected in it. It's already happened, it's in past tense, and it happened to her.

Basically, he's referring to the Immaculate Conception. And we think of the Immaculate Conception as just Mary having sin kept from her, but we'll talk about it a little more after we go through Mary's responses here, but the Immaculate Conception actually gives Mary her identity. It's the grace given to her in view of her being the Mother of God, in virtue of her being Mother of God, which gives her this deep and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.

So the angel shows up and says "Hail, full of grace." And look closely at Mary's responses. She is this perfect woman filled with the Word of God. She sits, and she meditates, and she wonders what kind of greeting this is, and then the angel expounds on it. And she responds by asking these important questions, of "Well, how is this going to be accomplished?" Kind of like "Well, how will this be?" And she goes through this perfect way of responding to God's Word, where she's in this position of docility. And she responds by, in faith, "How is this going to happen? How is it going to apply to me? How does this happen in my life?" And then she stands on it. She does the Magnificat, you know, "Be it done to me according to Your Word." And then later on, "All generations will call me blessed." These two responses of such great faith. She gives her "Yes," her fiat, and she does this in times of when God's calling her to do something, but also in times of suffering. So she's just this great woman of the Word.

And here, as she gives the fiat - this is where I want to call our attention back to what I was talking about with the Immaculate Conception - the Holy Spirit overshadows her again. Because it already happened at her Immaculate Conception. She's already filled with the Spirit from the moment that she comes into existence. Because of this, she has this intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit unlike anyone else. We call her the spouse of the Spirit, but Maximilian Kolbe even says the word "spouse" is far too weak, because nothing can explain the depth and reality of the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit, where they're two beings - one creator and one creature - but they are so intimately united that they live one life. Mary does everything through the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit does everything through Mary.

So every blessing, every grace that God is giving us, He is pouring out through His Spirit of love, and mercy, and truth, and He does so through His well-beloved spouse, Our Lady. And that's why we call her the mediatrix of grace. So if you can't see already, there's a great importance to going to her. Because, just as Jesus gives her to us on the cross, He desires to bless us through His mother. He desires that we receive healing through her, so much so that even His public ministry

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

started with her. Mary is present at the wedding feast at Cana, and they run out of wine.

So, of course, we see Mary is primarily concerned with our eternal salvation. Her main goal is to get us to Jesus. That's what she wants. It's constantly to bring us to her Son, bring us to her Son. But she's also concerned with everything in your life. She's concerned with the spiritual good, but she's also concerned with your temporal well-being. And this is how Jesus' public ministry started. So they show up to her and say "We ran out of wine," which was a big, big, big, big no-no at Jewish weddings. They would celebrate for a week straight, and there was a lot of wine.

So they run out, and it's this very simple but completely human need. "We ran out of wine." And Mary goes to Jesus and says, gives this problem to Him, and He responds "Well, what is this to do with you and Me?" And that's something that's often mistranslated. A lot of people will translate it and we read it as Jesus saying "Well, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." But really, He's saying "What is this to do with you and Me?" And then when He says "My hour has not yet come," in the Gospel of John when He says "My hour," the hour is always referring to Calvary. He's already referring to the Passion. That's what we talked about at the beginning: That hour that Jesus is there, the reason he says at Cana "What is this to do with you and Me?" is because He knows that she's going to be there at Calvary when they complete this act of salvation together.

So she's there to start His ministry by bringing this, and right after Jesus says "What is this to do with you and Me?" she turns to the servants and just says "Do whatever He tells you." So right there, she starts His ministry. So she intercedes for the very beginning of Jesus bringing healing, and mercy, and teaching, and truth, and salvation to us. She starts it. She intercedes for it. And then He even references the fact that she's going to be there at the end.

So obviously, Mary has this such an important role. And to go back into the Old Testament again, the reason for this is that, in the Old Testament, in the Davidic Kingdom... So we know that when the angel comes and says "You will bear a Son, and He will sit on a throne of David, His father." You know, we're going to the new heavenly Jerusalem, the city that David established. We're not going to the new Heavenly Sinai. So in heaven, it's just the recapitulation, it's the fulfillment of the Davidic kingdom. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He fulfills as the new David. He's the Davidic king.

Well, in the Davidic kingdom, it was set up in a very specific and even hierarchical way. So Jesus takes twelve disciples because David had twelve officers. Jesus picks one of those to be what we call the Pope, the vicar of Christ, Peter. And in

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

the Davidic kingdom, David had one prime minister. So Jesus is modeling this whole thing... His kingdom, which is the church, is the fulfillment of the Davidic kingdom, and He'll be the everlasting Davidic king. But also, interestingly enough, think about how many wives David and Solomon had. It wasn't any of the wives that became the queen. They had something called the Gebirah, which in Hebrew means "Great Lady." And the Gebirah was the Queen Mother, so it's the mother of the king, and she was the one.

And this did a couple of things, but one of the simpler things is that having the mother be the queen showed the dynastic succession. It showed that this person who's the king now is the rightful heir. But it also cleared up some of the, you know, confusion that might have come with having so many wives. But one of the things that the Gebirah, this Queen Mother, would do is she was called the principal intercessor for the people. The people would come and they'd bring their needs to the Queen Mother, and then she would go to the king and say "Grant me this request, and do not refuse me." It was actually her juridical role. It was like a legislative kind of thing. She had an actual hierarchical role, where people would bring their needs to her and she would bring them to the king. Well, what does that sound like for us?

Also, they would call the Gebirah "The mother of my Lord." So when Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and she goes to Elizabeth, what does Elizabeth say? "What is to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me." She's getting down, she's giving praise and adoring the Christ child that's in Mary, and John the Baptist leaps in her womb and is pre-sanctified. But she's also saying "You are the new Queen Mother." She gives that title. She said "The mother of my Lord." So we see this importance that Mary has in this Davidic kingly role. She's the Queen Mother. So we are actually supposed to bring all of our needs to her, and it's actually her job to bring them to the Son.

So she continues this. The church says that she continues this saving role uninterrupted in heaven, so she never stopped. The moment of passing in her earthly life, being assumed, body and soul, into the heaven, she continues from heaven sitting in this role as the Queen Mother for all of us. And God did it in such a perfect way where He gives us this loving, empathetic, sympathetic, merciful mother. That's even what she comes as when she appears as Our Lady of Guadalupe. She's like your merciful mother. She's come to bring mercy. She brings God's mercy to us.

But we have a woman who was given to us on the cross, she's our spiritual mother, she's the Queen Mother. She's literally given the ability, she's given the authority, to go to God, to go to her Son, the king, and ask for these things. And then,

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

because of her union with the Holy Spirit, she actually brings those graces to us. And this is a woman that went through suffering herself, that suffered poverty. This is the woman that had to fly the flight into Egypt for two and a half years because she was afraid that her Son was going to be killed, the Herodian dynasty was going to kill her Son because of the prophecy that He would be the king. She was living a life of poverty. She goes through all of the normal human sufferings that we all do. She, of course, went through the loss of family members. She even goes through the loss of her husband Joseph, because by the time Jesus' ministry starts we don't see him in the picture.

So Mary is this perfect example of how to go through human suffering, but also she suffers more than all of us. Because the capacity to suffer comes with the capacity to love. And because of her union to the Holy Spirit, she had a greater capacity to love, which means that she has a greater capacity to understand what she's losing. So in Calvary, not only is she suffering the pains of the crucifixion, but her love for Jesus is so much further beyond what any of us could comprehend that she suffers this immensely. The church actually says that the suffering was so intense that Mary almost died. She almost died in emulation of her Son, as the suffering that she was experiencing was so, so intense.

Here we have a woman that truly understands suffering, and she truly understands us. She gives us this great example, but she also gives us the tools to receive healing and grace from God. So that's why we should take up these great devotions, that's why we should really entrust ourselves to her, that's why should bring our petitions to her, and that's why we would really accept her. Bring her into your home, bring her into your life, just as John Paul II did, and bring Mary into your heart as your mother, because she wants to take care of you. Pray to her, but do so in an intimate way. Don't just go through the mindless recitation of the structured prayers. The Hail Mary is beautiful, all of the other different Marian prayers are beautiful. But just as all other prayer and devotion, we have to be doing so from our heart.

I will say though: give special attention to the Rosary. You see all the old religious with their habits, they'd wear the Rosary on their left side? Did you ever think about that? It's because knights back in the middle ages would wear their sword on their left side and they'd unsheathe it, because most people were right-handed. So they wear the Rosary there because it's a spiritual sword, it's a weapon that we take up against the powers of evil, against Satan, because it's said that Mary crushes the head of the serpent in Genesis 3:15. She crushes the head of the serpent in our lives.

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

So pick up that Rosary and really cultivate your devotion and your personal relationship with her. Because she will crush the head of the serpent, and all of the difficulties in your life, and all of your suffering, and really just the spiritual battle that we all kind of are a part of - which is real, it is absolutely real, and we all encounter it. But also, the Rosary in such a special way, because eighteen of the twenty mysteries that we have in the Rosary - so this is including the ones that John Paul II added - eighteen of the twenty deal directly with the life of Jesus. They're pulling this from the scriptures. And as you're praying the words which, just to give practical advice, the praying of the Hail Marys, and the Glory Be's, and the Our Father should kind of be like your timekeeper, but what you focus on is the mystery you're meditating on.

So, in reality, what you're doing is you're meditating on scripture while praying the words of scripture, the anointed Word of God. And, as Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit will remind you all things that I have taught you." So the Holy Spirit and His relationship with Mary here, Mary will pray, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit will come and fill you. And you really meditate, and you make these mysteries present to you and yourself present to them. And this is how we really get a glimpse of the heart of God, and also the heart of Our Mother, who's there to walk with you. And as you hold the Rosary, she holds her hand through all of these difficulties and sufferings.

So that's what I would really offer you. Mary is this merciful mother that comes to bless us, to lead us through all of our difficulties. She comes to bring restoration in all areas. And as we really need it today, she brings restoration to the family, you know. She is this perfect example of motherhood, and she elevates motherhood, and what does motherhood do when it's elevated? But it elevates fatherhood. And then the elevation of motherhood and fatherhood elevates this family. And we need to bring the reemphasis on the family in today's culture, so then you have these people to endure these sufferings with. So, again, thank you for joining me, and let's just end in a prayer.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank You and we praise You for Your love and Your mercy. We ask that, after this example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we would truly know how to walk in trust. We would walk in trust, and thankfulness, and gratitude, particularly in times of suffering. And we say glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thank you, and God bless you.