

With Mary, "Mother of Hope..."

Mary teaches

"The virtue of hope, even when everything seems to be meaningless."

The Virgin Mary "teaches us the virtue of hope, even when everything seems to make no sense: she always trusts in the mystery of God, even when it seems to be overshadowed by evil in the world," Pope Francis stressed at a general audience on May 10, 2017.

Let's look at Mary, the Mother of Hope. Mary spent more than one night on her mother's journey. From her first appearance in the history of the Gospels, her figure stands out as if she were the character in a drama. It was not easy to respond with a "yes" to the angel's invitation: and yet, even though she was a woman in the prime of her youth, she responded with courage, even though she knew nothing of the fate that awaited her. At that moment, Mary appears to us as one of the many mothers of our world, courageous to the extreme when it comes to welcoming into her womb the story of a new man who is being born.

This "yes" is the first step in a long list of obediences! - that will accompany her journey as a mother. Thus, Mary appears in the Gospels as a silent woman who often does not understand everything that happens around her, but that she meditates on every word and every event in her heart.

In this disposition, there is a very beautiful aspect of Mary's psychology: she is not a woman who gets depressed in the face of life's uncertainties, especially when nothing seems to be going in the right direction.

Nor is she a woman who protests violently, who invariably opposes the fate of life which often reveals a hostile face. On the contrary, she is a woman who listens: do not forget that there is always a great relationship between hope and listening, and Mary is a woman who listens. Mary welcomes existence as if it were given to us, with its happy days, but also with its tragedies that we wish we had never encountered. Until the supreme night of Mary, when her Son is crucified on the wood of the cross.

Until that day, Mary had almost disappeared from the storyline of the Gospels: the sacred writers make us listen to this slow eclipse of her presence, her silence before the mystery of a Son who obeys his Father. But Mary reappears precisely at the crucial moment: when many of his friends have fled in fear. Mothers do not betray, and at that moment, at the foot of the cross, no one can say what was the most cruel passion: that of an innocent man who dies on the gallows of the cross, or the agony of a mother who accompanies the last moments of her son's life. The Gospels are laconic and extremely discreet. They observe with a simple verb the presence of his Mother: "was" (Jn 19:25), she was.

They say nothing of her reaction: if she cried, if she didn't cry... nothing; not even a word to describe her pain: in these details, the imagination of the poets and painters will rush in, offering us images that have entered the history of art and literature. But the Gospels only say: she "was". She was there, at the worst moment, at the most cruel, and she was suffering with her son. She "was".

Mary "was", she was just there. Here she is again, the young woman of Nazareth, her hair now grey because of the years past, still struggling with a God who only needs to be embraced, and with a life that has reached the threshold of the densest darkness. Mary "was" in the thickest darkness, but "was". She did not leave. Mary is there, faithfully present, every time that a lit candle has to be held in a place of fog and clouds. Nor does she know the destiny of the resurrection that her son was at that moment opening for all men; she is there out of fidelity to God's plan of which she proclaimed herself a servant on the first day of her vocation, but also out of her instinct as a mother who simply suffers, every time there is a son who goes through a passion. The sufferings of mothers: we have all known strong women who have faced many sufferings from their children!

We will meet her again on the first day of the Church, the Mother of Hope, in the midst of this community of such fragile disciples: one had denied, many had fled, all had been afraid (cf. Acts 1:14). But she simply stood there, in the most normal way, as if it were something completely natural: in the first Church wrapped by the light of the resurrection, but also by the trembling of the first steps it had to take in the world.

That's why we all love her as our mother. We are not orphans: we have a Mother in heaven, who is the Holy Mother of God. Because she teaches us the virtue of hope, even when everything seems to make no sense: she always trusts in the mystery of God, even when it seems to fade away because of evil in the world. In moments of difficulty that Mary, the Mother that Jesus offered to all of us, always supports our steps, that she always says to our heart: "Rise up, look ahead, look at the horizon," because she is the Mother of hope. Thank you.