

Missionary Families of Christ

MARY AND THE MFC CORE VALUES

Our Core Values define who we are and what we hold important in our life and mission. MFC is consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we look to our Mother Mary as the personification of and the model for living out our Core Values. Just as our Core Values function as our constant guideposts as we proceed with our life and mission, so Mary likewise is our guide.

Centered on Christ

Mary of course is the mother of Jesus our Lord. What other human person more than her would be centered on Christ? Jesus was her own Son. She gave birth to him and she witnessed him die, only to see him live again.

Jesus grew up with her. With the amazing things told about her son at his birth, “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). With everything that Jesus said and did, as he grew up, she “kept all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:51). The heart of Mary is full of knowledge and experiences of Jesus, and full of wisdom coming from the fruit of constant and intense reflection.

Mary is the model of faith and trust. We too must have faith in Jesus as Savior, and trust in God’s eternal plan for us. And just like her Son Jesus, Mary is our model in our obedience to the Father, in our faithfulness to His call, and to total submission to His divine will. She is our model for holiness, being conceived without sin, and walking intimately with Christ.

Evangelistic and missionary

Mary is our inspiration for evangelization and mission, by which we bring the good news of salvation in Jesus to the world, and as such, by which we become involved in spiritual warfare. From Genesis to Revelation, Mary plays a key role in the defeat of the enemy. There is enmity between her and the ancient serpent (Gn 3:15), and right at the start there is the promise of a Redeemer, the offspring of the woman, who will deal the death blow to the head of the serpent. In turn, Revelation describes the conflict between the woman and the dragon, with the dragon defeated by the angels of her child (Rev 12).

Indeed, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption” (Gal 4:4-5). Having given birth to the Savior, Mary is rightfully the mother of missions.

Focused on the family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were a family. For about 30 years they lived a normal (can such be so with the Son of God?) family life. Mary must have experienced much astonishment as well as anxiety as Jesus grew up (Lk 2:48).

On the cross, Jesus gave his mother to his disciple John. John was to be her son, as she was to be his mother (Jn 19:26-27a). As such, Jesus also gives her to us as our mother. She is the mother of all Christians, here personified by the beloved disciple.

Just like John, we take Mary into our individual homes (Jn 19:27b). We are a family, with God our Father, Jesus our brother, and Mary our mother.

Being community

Mary was there in the upper room where the disciples “devoted themselves with one accord to prayer” (Acts 1:14), awaiting the promise of the Father. On the day of Pentecost, they were all baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the community of Christ’s disciples, the Church, was born.

But Mary was not only present when the Church was born. She has a much bigger role. As the Church is the body of Christ on earth, and as Mary is the mother of Christ, then she is also the mother of the Church.

In the life and mission of the Church, Mary is there right in her midst, praying and interceding. She is the heart of our life as community.

Living a preferential option for the poor

The canticle of Mary, the Magnificat, is a wonderful hymn of praise. In it she says that God has “lifted up the lowly” and “the hungry he has filled with good things” (Lk 1:52b-53a). Mary proclaims the messiah of the poor, her own Son, who would “bring glad tidings to the lowly” (Is 61:1), and who would “judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicted” (Is 11:4a).

Salvation involves liberation—from sin as well as from poverty. In the work for social justice, we are encouraged by Mary’s words, that God has “dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart” and “thrown down the rulers from their thrones” (Lk 1:51b-52a). In our quest for justice there will be a reversal of fortunes, with the hungry filled and the rich sent away empty (Lk 1:53).

Looking upon Mary as the lowly handmaid now called blessed by all ages (Lk 1:48), we confidently look to God’s mercy and provision for the poor, as we do our share in living out a preferential option for the poor.

Exercising servant leadership

Even as she is the mother of God, Mary is our model for servanthood. At the Annunciation, Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38). She acknowledged her “handmaid’s lowliness” (Lk 1:48a). In humility, openness and trust, she accepted what she could not understand. She was obedient, allowing herself to be used according to God’s purpose.

In her desire to serve those in need during the wedding at Cana, Mary confidently “said to the servers, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’” (Jn 2:5). In our call to service, Mary shows us the way—by

being sensitive to people's needs, by being confident in God's help, and by being totally submitted to God's will and direction.

Being a servant to the Church

Mary was present when the Church was born on Pentecost. As such, she is present in the Church's mission, which started that day, to proclaim the good news to the whole world.

In fact, with her yes, with the faith she professed at the Annunciation, Mary precedes and prefigures the Church. As such, she remains ever at the heart of the Church and her mission in the world. It is Mary's soul that proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and her spirit that rejoices in God the Savior (Lk 1:46-47). Mary is our inspiration for being at the service of the Church in her mission.

(SG. Oct 7, 2019)