

Homily: 7th Sunday of Easter: Cycle C: 2022: Acts 7: 55-60; Ps. 97; Rev 22: 12-14, 16: 17-20; Jn 17: 20-26

“Loving God in body and soul in imitation of Our Blessed Mother Mary”

1. **We are called to live the way of Christian love more and more on a daily basis as I have been speaking about the last few Sundays.** It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to do so. To love in a Christian way means to give of oneself to the other and to keep God’s holy word. The Blessed Virgin Mary more than any other human being lived this to the fullest. She is the model both of motherhood and also discipleship for all of us. From the time of her **Annunciation** in which she trusted God - despite not understanding fully how she was to be the mother of the Messiah: Jesus - when she said to the Angel, “*Let it be done to me according to thy Word,*” to **the Wedding feast at Cana** when she told the bride and the groom and the stewards, “*to do whatever Jesus tells you* (the same message goes for us),” to **standing under the cross of Jesus** and hearing from His dying lips, “*There is your son,*” (representing all of us) and to St. John, “*There is your mother*” (Jesus asking all of us to have a special place in our hearts for Mary), to finally being there in the Upper Room with the frightened Apostles during the original Novena, from the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus back to the right hand of the Father, to the day of **Pentecost** Sunday, deep in prayer when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and brought about the birth of the Catholic Church. It’s an amazing thing: Mary’s faith, and it is even more amazing how much she will help us in our life of Faith if we turn to her and love and devotion. Please make a resolution to **pray daily** a set of the mysteries of the Rosary in honor of her and to humbly ask for her prayerful assistance, so she can teach us how to love her Son Jesus better. Do it as a family. Make it a priority, in love.
2. Mary is the model of **the feminine genius** according to our late Holy Father St. Pope John Paul II in which God gives women **the ability to love on such a deep level**, which should teach us men not to live by reason and intellect alone, but also in our hearts. You can’t live in your head or you are incomplete (man’s tendency); you can’t simply live in your heart or you are incomplete (woman’s tendency).

Both head and heart need to be integrated: this is part of the reason why God made us male and female to complement one another ontologically on the human level, and to make us realize that ultimate completion of our being only occurs in a deep personal union with Him. This is also why the current increasing confusion about gender and sexual identity is ultimately **a trick of the devil**; a modern version of the ancient heresy of **Gnosticism** which radically separated the spiritual and physical in humans and life - instead of integrating them as we do in the Catholic understanding of the human person. **Each person is either a male or a female** – not 10 different possibilities! The call to holiness is the call to integrate our physical nature as male or female with our intellect and heart in the choices we make in our wills. This is also why Jesus says in the Gospel of John “to love Him is to keep His words.” It’s not enough to say we love Jesus in our intellects, in the thoughts of our minds - or even in our hearts, in our feelings, but we must choose in our wills to imitate Him, in how we live in our freedom as human beings made in the image, and called to grow in the likeness of God on a daily basis. And tied into this is offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to God in holiness (see **Romans 12:1-2**). If we are perpetually confused in our identity as male or female we can’t do this; and the devil knows that! *Pray for healing for all those in our world, esp. many of the teenagers and young adults, who are confused in their gender/sexual identity that they discover in God that they are a male or female person and are called to live a holy life in their body and soul.*

3. **The Holy Spirit**, the third person of the Trinity, who is the bond of personified love between the Father and the Son, is the one who teaches us how to love, to remember what Jesus has taught us and lead us into all truth as Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John in His Last Supper discourse (chapters 14-18). The Church has also always seen the Holy Spirit as **the Divine spouse** of the Blessed Virgin Mary; in that, it was through His love and creative power overshadowing her that she miraculously became Mother of Jesus: God’s eternal Son made man for our salvation. Let’s ask Mary to help us be docile to the **HS**: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.* God bless you.