

The Eucharistic Mary

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IT should come to us as no surprise that the most significant gospel events concerning Mary's mothering of the Son of God should find their parallel in the Eucharistic liturgy and the Eucharistic Prayer.

FIRST

As in the *Magnificat* Mary proclaims the eschatological reversal at the heart of the Kingdom of God so the Church in its Eucharist is offering an act of praise and thanksgiving to the Father for everything he has accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification.

At the heart of the *Magnificat* Mary rejoices because through the holy One—to be born of her—all things *are to be restored to their first perfection*.

The usurper is to be cast down and the broken are to be lifted up. In the same way every Eucharist recites the story of God's goodness in creation and his restoring of all things in the new Creation in Christ.

And *into* the divine programme of new creation the Eucharistic community is drawn both as it makes Eucharist in the great prayer, as it enters into God's renewing of all things in the intercessions and as it is sent forth in the dismissal; to accomplish the second part of the church's great act of worship—its liturgy in the world.

It is a *Eucharistic Mary* who gives thanks for redemption in the Magnificat and it is a Eucharistic Church that gives thanks for that same work in the central actions of its liturgy.

SECOND

Mary in her virginal conception is *overshadowed by the Holy Spirit* that she may bear within her the Son of God, and bring forth the Word made flesh.

Because the Father also wills that the church should experience, receive and know the true presence of Christ his Son at the heart of the Eucharist so the Father sends the Holy Spirit. In the Eucharist, the church invokes the Spirit upon both the holy gifts and the holy people in order that the real presence of the crucified and risen Christ may be a reality.

Only through the overshadowing of the Spirit is the eternal Son truly present in the womb of Mary. Only through the overshadowing of the Spirit is the eternal Son truly present in the central action of the Eucharistic assembly.

THIRD

Mary is the recipient of the sword of sacrifice which pierces her being as she participates in the redemptive offering of Christ at Calvary.

The Lukan prophecy of the sword – made by Simeon to Mary in the Temple – and the Johannine picture of the Mother of Jesus – at the foot of the Cross – are really two moments within a single event.

Mary's YES to God that she would be the God-bearer was a YES that began in the joy of carrying the Christ child with her but ended as she gazed on her Son on the Cross. For the sacrifice that Mary began to offer in her fiat was a sacrifice she only completed at Calvary.

Mary does not make a sacrifice independently of the work of her son—her sacrifice is united to his.

Within Christ's grand oblation of himself in his life and in his death for us all there is conjoined the sacrifice of his Mother. Neither could have been made without the other.

At the heart of the Eucharist we participate in the same sacrifice which Christ offers once and for ever.

The Eucharistic sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the Eucharistic oblation of ourselves to the Father through the Son, in the Spirit, is a sacrifice we can only offer because it is conjoined to the one, true, pure and immortal and ever-prevailing sacrifice of Christ.

At every Eucharist there is one sacrifice—Christ's and ours—and within that conjoined sacrifice is mingled the sacrifice of the one who knew—at Calvary – that her sacrifice was finished and accomplished as far as in her lay—as it is finished and accomplished by Christ as far as in him lay—and as it finished and accomplished by us in this place on this day at this hour.

