

## **BRIEF REFLECTIONS**

By Rick McKinney, 1998-2026

### **ALL THE WORLD IS A STAGE**

It seems, as Shakespeare wrote, "All the world is a stage, and men and women are but players in it." However, the players, I believe, are actually performing in an audition so as to be chosen as actual participants in the divine nature both now and in the life to come.

### **BAPTIZED BY FIRE:**

Jesus is said to be the one that baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus himself said, "I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!" He also asked James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Thus it may well be that baptism by fire refers to the fiery trials of suffering that most all must endure and that purifies the faithful.

### **DESIRES OF THE GOD:**

It is said that God has no desires, but He does, it appears have desires, such as that all men be saved. And God desires to see His children seek Him, thank Him, trust Him, love Him and obey Him. He will accept dutiful obedience, but He can't accept mistrust or disobedience.

### **EVERYONE HAS THE SAME THREE PRIORITIES**

Everyone seems to have the same three priorities in life. 1) Doing what I feel I want to do or not want to do; 2) Doing what I feel I have to do or not do; and 3) Doing what I feel I ought to do or not do. Of course, if one has the mind of Christ, who always did the Father's will, then doing or not doing becomes much more simple, even when it is tough.

### **FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE – PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT – FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT**

Faith looks to the past for strength to make the next step. Hope looks to a future full of glory. And love does its work of beauty in the present. So, it seems to me that faith, hope and love have a generalized locus in the past, future and present and, in a way, so does the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father created us in our past and the witnesses of others and our own positive experiences with God gradually builds a trustful faith that is generally earned from those past witnesses and experiences. For most of history Jesus is the long promised messianic hope in the future and a now is long-promised returning, future savior. However, the Holy Spirit communicates God's life and love in the present.

## FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME

Both Saint Peter and Saint Paul began their journey in Jerusalem, the symbolic center of God's kingdom and power on earth, and at the end of their lives moved to Rome where they were martyred, the symbolic center of worldly power on earth at the time. But surprisingly, not much later, Rome destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and became itself the symbolic center of God's catholic or universal kingdom on earth.

## GOD'S CONSUMING FIRE

Could it be that God's consuming or purgative fire of love and truth is a somewhat similar experience for all those here on earth, for those in purgatory (or the Judgement) and perhaps even for those in hell who have definitively resisted the truth? Those in heaven, of course, have already been consumed by the fire of God's love and truth through the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said that Jesus would be the one to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Mt. 3:11, Lk. 3:16) and Jesus asked James and John, "Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism (affliction) I am baptized with?" (Mk. 10:38). He also said, "I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!" (Lk. 12:50). The author of Hebrews states, "Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:11-13). And, "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28-29, Dt. 4:24).

## GOD'S LOVE IS PERHAPS THE ONLY ESSENTIAL TRUTH

It would seem that all essential truth flows from the one truth that God is Love. From that one truth flows, the truth of the Trinity for love requires that there be more than Oneness. From it flows the truth of the incarnation and death of the Savior for true love is sacrificial in nature. From it flows the truth of the resurrection, for love triumphs even over death. From it also flows the truth of our final sharing in God's nature and character, for love is transformational and eternal.

## A GOOD HOMILY OR SERMON

A good homily or sermon ought to be Interesting, Informative, Insightful, and Inspiring. It also helps if one repeats the main points at the end.

#### HAPPINESS GENERALLY DEFINED:

Happiness is being content with the people, circumstances and gifts you have been given. Unhappiness is not being content with the people, circumstances and gifts you have been given. Of course, happiness in this life is generally ephemeral for it is often based on perceived circumstances. However, lasting happiness, which is joy, is dependent on union with Christ and not one's circumstances, and it is possible to have joy amidst great suffering and even persecution. There is no happiness in the next life except that which is in union with Christ for in the next life there is only lasting happiness.

#### HOLY COMMUNION - THE BODY OF CHRIST

He took. He blessed. He broke. He gave. And they took and they ate. We are His body. He has taken us out of the world. He has blessed and given thanks for us. He has broken down our self-centeredness and divisiveness. He has given us His own self and each other. And we are consumed in his life and love. If we are the body of Christ than it is we in the Eucharist who are in a sense taken, blessed, broken, given, and consumed.

#### HOLY COMMUNION - OFFERERS AND RECEIVERS

In Holy Communion God offers His Son and receives back His Son with the fruit of His Son's offering, God's people. The Son offers Himself to the Father on behalf of the ones He loves and receives His Father's love and His people's loving offering of themselves. The priest offers a fitting sacrifice and receives a servant's reward. The People offer themselves and their gifts and receive the body and blood of Christ. Creation offers itself in the bread and wine and receives a transformation and the Father's pleasure. Even Mary, our mother, the spouse of the Holy Spirit, offers her only son so that he may no longer be her only child. The Holy Spirit makes it all happen. The Eucharist means thanks-giving, receiving and giving, and all the participants - Father, Son, Spirit, and the body of Christ present - are offering and receiving in one sacred communion of persons. The Eucharist encapsulates within itself the eternal banquet of giving and receiving in the Trinity of divine communion to which we have been invited. The Father gives the Son and receives the Son's offering of himself as well as those sharing his body. The Son gives himself and receives the offering of ourselves. We, the body of Christ offer ourselves and receive Christ in the consecrated body and blood of Christ. And all this offering and receiving is done in the unity of the Spirit. Even non-sentient creation in the wine and the bread share in this unity.

#### HOLY COMMUNION - TRANSUBSTANTIATION:

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is hard to grasp, but we know that appearances do not always represent reality. In reality, we know that the sun does not go around the earth.

We also know that in certain films a protagonist switches bodies with another person or even with a “shaggy dog.” The substance of the person is now in another body, who may look nothing like the old person and talk nothing like him, but appearances do not always represent reality. Similarly, the humble wafer and wine can be transformed into the real substance of God incarnate but in their appearance they remain unchanged. There are numerous Eucharistic miracles that attest to this transformation.

#### HUMAN KIND’S ENCOUNTER WITH GOD THE SON:

Could it be that the story of how Adam encountered Eve in the garden, after having named all the animals and finding none suitable for himself, and finally declares, “this at last is bone of bone and flesh of my flesh,” could it be that this is in some sense a story about how God encountered human kind after having superintended the development of thousands and thousands of species and finding none suitable to bear His image, none to bear His likeness, none to be incarnated into, none to be His mate, finally declares to Himself, that this at last shall be bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, this one shall become my bride? If so, then is it any wonder that God would move heaven and earth, even to the laying down of His own life, to redeem the one whom He had betroth. The Biblical story begins with the joining of the man and the woman in the garden, and ends with the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride. It is a love story. Indeed, it is the ultimate love story.

#### HUMILITY IS AN INTRINSIC QUALITY OF THE ALMIGHTY; BUT HOW CAN THIS BE?

In the fullness of time, the Almighty became a human infant, nay an embryo, nay a blastocyst, nay a single human cell, and it appears that was His plan all along. Humility is in God’s DNA before time began for the Almighty is also the All-humility and His omni-presence knows no time or space. God desired and continues to desire to extend the character of His Triune family to the human family and out of humility and love He chose a humble vessel to accomplish His divine purpose and that vessel was Mary.

#### HUNGER AND FAITH: KEY INGREDIENTS FOR A TRANSFORMED SACRAMENTAL LIFE:

It is written, “How much more will God give good gifts to those who ask.” The key to unlocking God’s good gifts is to ask, to hunger, and to seek “in expectation” that He will indeed be generous. The question comes as to whether sacraments produce virtuous dispositions in the hearts of recipients or whether they become fruitful only if recipients, cooperating with God’s grace, come to them with properly disposed hearts. In the Catechism one finds both answers for, as in many truths, it is not an either or proposition, but a both and.

### IN THE BEGINNING GOD SAID...

In the beginning God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light and energy and inanimate matter. Then God said, “Let there be life,” and there were living things and living creatures. Finally, God said, “Let there be love,” and there were human beings, made in God’s image and likeness and enabled by God’s Spirit in their spirits to know Him and to love Him with all their hearts, with all their minds, with all their wills, with all their words, and with all their self-sacrificial strength; and to love their neighbors as their selves.

### IN THE FULNESS OF TIME:

Saint Paul writes, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children” (Gal. 4:4-5). But what kind of time was it? Well, it was in the first century A.D. and professional Roman soldiers had secured its cruel peace, the Pax Romana, throughout the Mediterranean world with well-engineered roads, bridges and aqueducts. Greek was the common language of the educated throughout that world. There were no more pirates prowling seas and trade and travel, from one distant place to another was safer than it had ever been. Letters of correspondence or epistles and gospels could be copied and transmitted from one city to another. The old local gods seemed petty and small and many religions and philosophies competed with one another. People were in a seeking mode and the time was ripe for a new purposeful way of living and of new way of seeing life and death. It was indeed the fullness of time and a few centuries later it would probably be too late for Pax Romana would have fallen away.

### IT IS ALL ABOUT THE BRIDE:

In the mind of Christ, it is indeed all about His bride, the Church, and He eagerly awaits their nuptial union. In couples dancing it is the woman and her performance that is in the foreground of people’s eyes, and it is the man’s role to lead his partner in ways that showcases that performance. So also, as we take Christ’s lead, and He showcases us, his bride, to all the host of heaven watching and indeed all creation.

### MERCY AND MYSTERY IN THE JUSTICE OF GOD:

The Just one died unjustly in order to justify the unjust.

### DWELLING IN CHRIST AND BEING INDWELLED BY CHRIST:

He in us and we in Him like a sponge in the ocean. He lives in us and we live in Him. Of course, we are the ones dependent on Him and yet He desires our participation in glorifying Him by becoming gloriously like Him, and while depending on Him and interdependently with others in His body, we spread His glorious work upon and to all others.

#### LOVE DEFINED:

- 1) Recognizing and Appreciating the Unique Value of a Person;
- 2) Wanting (and Praying) for the Loved One's Best Interest; and
- 3) Working Wisely (and perhaps Prayerfully and Sacrificially) for the Loved One's Best Interest.

#### LOVE'S COMMON VOICE IN UNION:

Those persons in Marital Union, Holy Communion, and Divine Union all voice the same words. "I am in my beloved. My beloved is in me. We are one together."

#### LOVE IS NOT CHEAP:

Love without sacrifice is cheap and not worthy of the name (Jn. 3:16).

#### LOVING GOD, NEIGHBOR AND OUR SELF IS ETERNAL LIFE:

Eternal life consists in truly knowing and loving God, one another and ourselves. So, as Jesus said, the first commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself (Lk. 10:27, Jn. 17:3 ,26).

#### MARRIAGE AND THE VESTED INTEREST OF SOCIETY AND SPIRITUAL HOLINESS

Marriage is the oldest institution in the world and predates any civilization. The marriage institution has never been all about "the couple" and fairness for "the couple" for it is the institution that creates families and brings forth new human beings into the world – children. Human children take some two decades or more to fully develop and need identifiable persons to provide for their health, education and welfare in a hopefully stable, long-term, loving environment. Society has little vested interest in couples and what couples do or don't do, but it does have a strong vested interest in the family, the basic unit of society whose stability and long-term cohesiveness has been integral to the production and stable development of its citizens. This interest is not just about the nuclear family but also about the identity of children in that society. Children have a specific biological Mommy and Daddy who hopefully love them and are committed to their welfare and upbringing. Normally, children also have brothers and sisters and cousins and aunts and uncles and grandparents. They have an identifiable family tribe they belong to. Monogamous, heterosexual marital unions have been the foundation of these family units and society has a vested interest in promoting their welfare and long-term cohesiveness. It does not have a vested interest in non-conjugal sexual unions or in temporary conjugal sexual unions for these do not produce stable families. Same sex marriage redefines marriage with a near total focus on the needs of and fairness for "the couple" and is contrary to the vested interest of society to promote

that crucial institution which creates stable family units. Redefining marriage to include consensual plural marriages is almost certain to be the next step in the redefinition of marriage. Same sex marriage is contrary to the nature of parenthood and its mutually supporting roles of fatherhood and motherhood as well as the lived-in models to what it means to be a man and a woman. It is contrary to the human nature that was made in the image and likeness of God as complementary male and female beings. It is contrary to the biological nature of most-all species which presses for conjugal sexual reproduction. And finally, it is contrary to the spiritual nature and its call for holiness, chasteness, and surrender to the loving God who made us in His image and likeness. Having said that, it is important, although not easy, to lovingly promote the inherent dignity of each individual while at the same time promoting the dignity of the conjugal marriage relationship and the families it produces.

#### OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH CHRIST

The Church has rightly established in Christ its sacraments or ordinances for coming into an encounter with Christ such as baptism, confession, first communion, confirmation, ordination and others. Now, these objective experiences are not always or necessarily personal in nature but may lead to personal experiences and encounters of Christ which are desirable. In the early church and in some evangelical or Pentecostal churches baptism may have followed a conversion experience and elders praying over someone may elicit a subjective experience of being baptized in the Spirit with speaking in tongues. However, while subjective experiences of encountering Christ are important to one's personal faith and prayer life, since they are subjective in nature, they are often quite varied and feeling based and thus not as certain and reliable as objective means and measures of one's faith experience which the Church believes God ordinarily works through.

#### PETER SAID I AM NOT, AND JESUS SAID I AM

Thoughts on Good Friday: I note in today's long reading of the Gospel of John that in the Garden twice when the soldiers ask for Jesus the Nazorean, Jesus says "I AM," but twice the first words that Peter says in the courtyard of the high priest, are, "I am not." And those words of denial came after his related last words about his willingness to lay down his life for Jesus. The truth is, we are all Peter, not just fearful deniers of the truth to save our own skins, or those living in denial, or those who do not know their true selves, but more to the point, we are all not the I AM. We are not God or even little gods. Jesus is the only I AM, and yet he loves and laid down his life for all of we little "I am nots."

### The PRODIGAL SON'S INHERITANCE AND OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

The parable of the prodigal resembles our own story in Christ, but instead of our older brother resenting our return, Jesus Christ, our older brother, went searching for us and gave his life for us. Normally one waits for an inheritance after one's parents die. The prodigal son could not wait for his father to die so he asked for it beforehand and was given his one third share for in those days the oldest brother got the double portion. If his older brother died while rescuing him then he would get all his brother's inheritance which he did not deserve when he returned home. Our inheritance in Christ is similar for Christ did die for us and we do get his inheritance which we do not deserve, but because Christ was raised from the dead, we, together with Christ, receive an eternal inheritance and we can begin using it now on this earth and receive far more in heaven. Is this not a great and merciful God and is this not a great inheritance deal?

### RESSURECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS NOW IN HEAVEN

Since heaven is not in our chronological space and time but has its own everlasting time and space could it not be that the saints in heaven already share in the bodily resurrection as well as sharing in the beatific vision and God's divine nature and do not need to wait for the end of chronological space and time. Saint Paul even wrote that the dead in Christ will rise first and not be preceded by those who are alive (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We also know that bodies of many saints who have passed on have flesh that show no signs or only limited signs of corruption and could not this also be a sign of their current incorruptible bodies in heaven?

### The SPIRIT GOD HAS AND HAS NOT GIVEN YOU

God has not given you a spirit of self-sufficiency or of insufficiency, but one of godly power. Nor has He given you a spirit of self-interest or indifference, but one of godly love. And He has not given you a spirit of self-indulgence or of impulsiveness, but one of godly control and a sound mind. *Adapted from 1 Timothy 1:7.*

### The SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL REST UPON HIM – MY TAKE ON ISAIAH 11:2-3:

The Spirit of wisdom (the when and how in life) and understanding (the whys of life), the Spirit of counsel (the where in life) and of might (courage and perseverance), the Spirit of knowledge (the who and what in life) and the fear of the Lord (reverential trust and not wanting to disappoint), and his delight will be the fear of the Lord (joy filled, passionate devotion).

### T-A-A-R-A-A – A FAMILIAR WAY TO PRAY

T – Thanking God our Heavenly Father for sonship and all His many gifts and blessings.

A – Adoring and worshiping (hallowing) our wonderful God for who He is and what He does.

A – Asking God to do as He desires in us and that His kingdom come and His will be done.

R – Repenting for our own wayward debts and inattentiveness and forgiving others.

A – Asking in petition for our own daily needs, especially to become more like Christ.

A – Asking in intercession for the needs of others: family, friends, neighbors, leaders, those who are hurting or have hurt others, and those who have passed this life or are passing.

#### The TEST OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS TRUTH:

Religious experiences, be they conversion experiences, sacramental experiences, divine encounter experiences, listening experiences, praying experiences, scriptural reading experiences, ministering experiences, receiving ministry experiences, and other religious experiences are meant to lead to godly transformation. Otherwise, they may be for nought. It would also seem that a key to determining essential religious truth is the impact of that truth on forming godly character.

#### TRANSCENDENCY AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

God as Father is aptly named because God, the creator is first of all transcendent. He is not like us. He is Spirit and is outside of space and time which He created. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-good. Fathers beget or begin a process, conception, that takes place inside of a mother for a long period of time. Human mothers are immanently involved in this nine month process and there is close biological, physiological and psychological (usually) connection between mothers and their children, like an invisible umbilical cord. For instance, there are generally far more complaints interfering mothers-in-law than those of fathers-in-law. A father often has to choose to step up for his children, especially if he is not married to their mother. However, good fathers often are drawn psychologically to their children and the choice of stepping up is not a problem, but usually the primary caretaker is the mother. It is more proper to call God father because He chooses to be committed to His image and likeness and He chooses to be drawn immanently and intimately into our care, which He did in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God also has maternal nurturing attributes, but God as mother overemphasizes His non-inherent immanence and female goddesses often are related to earthly fertility cults. And it was not for nothing that Old Testament prophets railed against such cults. Calling Catholic priests Father is proper for they are not only “Persona Christ”, but “Persona Patri” as well.

#### TRANSDIMENSIONAL REALITY

“What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” No mind can conceive what God has prepared because we are creatures of limited dimensions – height, width, length, and time, but God, the great “I Am” who created the universe, exists beyond those dimensions. Indeed, according to the

mathematics in string theory, cosmologists believe that when the universe began some 13.7 billion years ago it began with ten or eleven dimensions, but only the four we know continued to uncoil. We can not even conceive of a dimension of space beyond the three we know, just as a two dimensional cartoon creature can not conceive of three dimensions, and yet a three dimensional spatial being can view the whole cartoon and chose to plant his fingerprint on a certain frame or write something down on another. Similarly, the Lord works his wonders into the brief frames of our time on this earth and may even leave us written words of revelation. Yet if He should actually enter our narrow dimensions of time and space, what wonders to behold, but what lies beyond the veil of this earthly life, we can not even imagine.

#### The TRINITY AS REVEALED IN THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISSAC AND JACOB;

The triune nature of God appears to have been revealed to Moses when God tells him that He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Ex. 3:6). When Moses asks God His Name if the people ask, God (Elohim) responds, I Am who I Am (YHWH) ... “You are to say to the sons of Israel, Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”. This is my name forever. This is my title for all generations (Ex. 3:13-15). Notice how each ancestor is given “the God of” terminology for each of their lives appear to reveal persons in the Trinity. No individual in history is more associated with fatherhood than Abraham, the “father of many nations” and the father of three major religions. Isaac is best known as the long-promised son given over to sacrifice as is the Christ, the Son of God. Jacob is the blessing seeker who became the blessing bestower at the end of his life. And it is the Holy Spirit that those in Christ have come to know as “the” blessing, for Jesus said, “If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk. 11:13). And on Pentecost Luke wrote, “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” (Ac. 2:37-39). The family of Abraham, Issac and Jacob and its long history, as related in the Scriptures, reveals who God is as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and what God’s nature and character are like.

#### The TRINITY - THREE PERSONS IN ONE:

The concept of God in three persons is hard to grasp, but it may be helpful to consider that two persons can make one couple. Many couples and many twins experience a very close, intuitive connection, and they sometimes seem to just “know” when something upsetting happens to the other. Their knowledge of the other often allows them to speak for that

person. How much more is the intimate closeness and communication of the one God in three persons.

#### TRUSTING THAT GOD IS ABLE, WILLING AND WISE:

Trusting God means that you believe He exists and that He is willing, able, and wise to save you, to help pull you up out of the mucky hole you have dug. It is similar to a man who has fallen and is clinging to a branch down a deep cliff. If someone comes along and silently offers him a hand, the man has to ponder certain questions about the person who has offered him a hand. Questions like, is this a child's hand or an old person's hand and is this person able to pull me up. Or does this person will my good or is it the hand of my enemy? Or is this person wise and perhaps has a mule or horse that is also pulling me up? Know that God is indeed able, willing and wise to save you, to form you into His likeness, and to use you to manifest His kingdom, His power, and His glory. For His kingdom is manifested in love, His power is manifested in transformed lives, and His glory is manifested in the wise ways in which He does these things.

#### WATCH THE DIRECTIONAL PATH OF YOUR LIFE

Watch and guard the thoughts of your head and the feelings of your heart for they direct the decisions and choices of your will. Watch and guard the decisions and choices of your will for they direct the words, actions and inactions of your daily behavior. Watch and guard the words, actions and inactions of your daily behavior for they direct the general habits that you forge in life. Watch and guard the general habits that you forge in life as they direct the formation of your soul's character. Watch and guard the formation of your soul's character for it directs your destiny in this life and the next. *Adapted from various other authors.*

#### The WOMB AND THE WOUND:

It can perhaps be said that each person has a womb of fruitful creativity and a wound of hurt and loss. The good or ill effects of the fruit of the womb and the fruit of the wound largely depend on how well that person allows God to perform his transforming work within that womb and within that wound. Of course, our Lady, the mother of God the Son, epitomized this fruit from the beginning at her son's incarnation and birth, all the way to her pierced heart joining of her son's grievous and sacrificial passion, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and outpouring of His Spirit at Pentecost.

#### The WOMAM - MARY OUR MOTHER

God did not win our deliverance by the deeds of a mighty general, or by the proclamation of a courageous politician, or the by invention of a creative scientist, or by the words of an inspired prophet, no, He delivered us by the simple but wondrous act of a woman giving birth

to a child, and that child growing up and giving up his life in death for us all. From before time began God desired and chose a mother for His only begotten Son (1 Eph. 1:4, Gal. 1:15). She is the same Mother of all the living in Christ, the new Eve (Gen. 3:20) and as the mother of our glorious king, she is more than capable to present our requests to God with a special wrapping of love (1 Kgs 2:19-20). We all need a good mother and isn't grand that in all the world we have but one mother. And she is good because God shared his own earthly mother with us (Jn. 19:26-27) and she, while no goddess, is now glorified in heaven (Rev. 12:1-6, 17) and intercedes most graciously. We just need to ask.

#### WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD:

Priests are not only "persona Christi," they are also "persona Patri." Fatherhood is different than motherhood. Mothers are intimately and imminently "attached" to their children who come forth out their bodies, and for many mothers an invisible umbilical cord remains between them and their children all their lives. However, biologically fathers are not so intimately and immanently attached to their children. A father stands as more of a transcendent figure who then chooses to love and be connected to his children. Similarly God is one who is transcendent above His creation and yet chooses to love his children, those made in His image and likeness, not because He is driven to do so, but because He so chooses. There is a reason why the prophets of old preached against the baals and fertility cults of their day. God is not mother. There is no such thing as female priests. There can only be female priestesses with all the fertility cult connotations the term implies.

#### WOMEN ARE THE LOVELIEST OF ALL GOD'S CREATURES

Women are the loveliest of all God's creatures and the loveliest of all is Mary, our Mother. Women are remarkable for from their midst they bear forth persons created for eternity. No angel of heaven nor demon of hell can do such wonders. It is also women who often are the comforters and care givers. It was they who were at the cross, comforting Jesus. It was men who fled or kept handing him over and over to other men and to his suffering.