



CATECHESIS 07

MARY & THE LAST BATTLE

The Apostles of the End Times

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Three years before he was elevated to the chair of Peter, then Cardinal Wojtyla made a six week visit to the United States on the occasion of her bicentennial and the country's hosting of the 41st International Eucharistic Congress. At the end of his trip he offered some very somber words which were reported at the time in the *Wall Street Journal*,

“We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. This confrontation lies within the plans of divine Providence...”¹

Some speculated that given the timing and location of his remarks that the soon-to-be Pontiff was alluding to the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the then Soviet Union. To say that this struggle was humanity's “greatest historical confrontation” is to belittle the scope of human history. What then, could Wojtyla have been referring to?

Fast forward eight years to 1984. Worried about the progress and development of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, Cardinal Carlo Caffarra wrote a letter to Sr. Lucia Santos, the visionary of Fatima, for prayers. Not expecting a reply, he was surprised to find these words of warning in her letter,

“Father, a time will come when the decisive battle between the kingdom of Christ and Satan will be over marriage and the family. And those who will work for the good of the family will experience persecution and tribulation. But do not be afraid, because Our Lady has already crushed his head.”²

Although their words are years apart and in different contexts, these two servants of Mary are speaking of the same battle that St. Louis de Montfort taught would accompany the “end times”: the final confrontation between Mary and Satan. The question we may ask ourselves at this moment in history is, “Are we approaching this ‘last battle?’” We must affirm, as the Catechism teaches us, that in a certain sense we do live in the “last days”.

Paragraph 670 instructs us,

Since the Ascension God's plan has entered into its fulfilment. We are already at “the last hour”. “Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect.” (670)

Placing then, the renewal of our consecration to Mary within this historical context we can develop this catechesis in three points.

1. Absolute enmity between Mary and Satan
2. Remolded in Mary

¹ <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/john-paul-iis-warning-on-final-confrontation-with-the-anti-church>

² <https://aleteia.org/2017/05/19/exclusive-cardinal-caffarra-what-sr-lucia-wrote-to-me-is-being-fulfilled-today/>



3. The last battle

1. Absolute enmity

Humanity's last confrontation with evil will be the recapitulation of its first. "God has established only one enmity", writes St. Louis de Montfort.³ The "one enmity" that Montfort is referring to is that between the woman and the serpent. Shortly after our first parent's fall in the Garden of Eden, the Book of Genesis tells us that God then turned to the serpent who had seduced them into sin, and warned him, *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in ambush at his heel* (Gen 3:15).

The "woman" referred to in this enmity is not the first Eve, but the New Eve, Our Blessed Mother. As Eve was responsible for allowing the reign of sin to enter the world, so Mary, the New Eve will be responsible to stamping it out and establishing in its place the reign of Christ. Until that happens, however, St. Louis de Montfort understands that the enmity placed between Mary and Satan is so "irreconcilable" that it "will last and even go on increasing to the end of time".

To understand why this enmity between Mary and Satan is an absolute and irreconcilable one, we can turn to the catechesis given by St. John Paul II in 1996. In his catechesis, the Holy Father spoke of two causes behind the "absolute hostility" between "the woman and the devil": Mary's immaculate conception and her humility.

a) Immaculate Conception

"The absolute hostility put between the woman and the devil thus demands in Mary the Immaculate Conception, that is, a total absence of sin, from the very beginning of her life."⁴ This "absolute hostility" which results in an absolute power over Satan is none other, says the Holy Father, than the "most notable effect of [Her Son's] redeeming work." What Christ would accomplish on Calvary as the absolute victory over Satan, would first be lived in His Blessed Mother. Dare we say then, that even before Christ's victory—but always in light of it—she was the first to possess freedom from the triple enslavement of sin, sensuality, and self-love.

"By drawing our attention to Mary's special holiness and her complete removal from Satan's influence," the Holy Father goes on to say, "the title *full of grace* and the Protoevangelium enable us to perceive, in the unique privilege the Lord granted to Mary, the beginning of a new order which is the result of friendship with God and which, as a consequence, entails a profound enmity between the serpent and men."⁵

Thus, we already begin to pick-up on the idea, that the enmity, as recorded in the words of Genesis, will not only be between Mary and Satan, but between her offspring and his. We will touch on this in more detail a little later.

The deeper "why" behind Mary's "absolute enmity" hinges on her role in the work of redemption. "St Irenaeus presents Mary as the new Eve, who by her faith and obedience compensated for the

³ *True Devotion*, 52

⁴ General Audience, Wednesday, 29 May 1996, <http://totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-mary-mother-of-god/the-immaculate-conception/>

⁵ *Ibid.*



disbelief and disobedience of Eve.” “Such a role in the economy of salvation,” teaches St. John Paul II, “requires the absence of sin.”

The argument is one of fittingness. “It was fitting that like Christ, the new Adam, Mary too, the new Eve did not know sin and was thus capable of co-operating in the Redemption.”⁶

That Mary’s freedom from sin’s enslavement and “her complete removal from Satan’s influence” follows upon Christ’s work of redemption, is an unfailing sign of hope for us. What she received prior to the Paschal Mystery is offered to us, post-Paschal Mystery. What she received in anticipation of Christ’s Death and Resurrection, we are invited to receive as a result of said Redemptive act.

“Sin, which washes over humanity like a torrent, halts before the Redeemer and his faithful Collaborator. With a substantial difference: Christ is all holy by virtue of the grace that in his humanity derives from the divine person; Mary is all holy by virtue of the grace received by the merits of the Savior.”⁷

St. Louis de Montfort’s teaching is that we are called to share in this grace of redemption in Christ through Mary.

And as our *Directory of Spirituality* instructs us,

“We must learn to be enclosed with Christ in Mary’s womb, where at the moment of the Incarnation, we were included...By consecrating ourselves as slaves of the Virgin, we want—in the likeness of Jesus—to enter into the womb of our Mother and be born again.” (79; 83)

Concretely, being “born again” means firmly resolving each and every day to carry forward the work of conversion begun either many or only a few years ago.

Our *Directory of Spirituality* also reminds us that, “a religious who is not willing to go through the second and third conversions, or who does nothing concrete to achieve them, does not actually belong to our spiritual family, though he may be with us in body.” (42)

It is not enough to profess to be childlike slaves of Mary, we must be truly born of her sinlessness by concretely renewing and deepening the work of conversion in our very lives.

2. Remolded in Mary

If we want to share in the freedom of redemption, that is the freedom of the children of God, we must, says St. Louis de Montfort become true children of Mary. Only Mary’s children, her true slaves of love, will ultimately share in the irrevocable victory over Satan.

The Saint of the Vendee, describes how to do so in his *True Devotion* by comparing the work of a sculptor to that of a mold. He writes,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ General Audience, Wednesday, 29 May 1996.



“There is a vast difference between carving a statue by blows of hammer and chisel and making a statue by using a mold. Sculptors and statue-makers work hard and need plenty of time to make statues by the first method. But the second method does not involve much work and takes very little time...Mary is a mold capable of forming people into the image of the God-man.”⁸

The secret, he says, is that,

“Anyone who is cast into this divine mold is quickly shaped and molded into Jesus and Jesus into him. At little cost and in a short time he will become Christ-like since he is cast into the very same mold that fashioned a God-man.”⁹

Christian holiness, as St. Louis de Montfort sees it, follows the paradigm of the Incarnation. To be holy means to become another Christ. Becoming holy in this way is best achieved by freely depending on Mary, and this is the path that we as members of the Religious Family have chosen as our sure path to holiness. Our *Directory of Spirituality* reminds us, “To consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary is to follow the way that He followed coming into the world: the way that He uses and will always use.”¹⁰

To depend “totally and completely on God through Mary”¹¹ is to avoid the pitfalls of those who trust in themselves. If there is anything that opposes Mary to Satan, it is her example of love of God over self-love. Her humility in recognizing her complete dependence on God is what we are called to imitate by placing at her disposal every aspect of our life, down to our very being. Thus, we follow God’s perfect design of holiness.

As St. Louis de Montfort says continuing with the idea of Mary as *forma Dei*¹²,

“I think I can very well compare some spiritual directors and devout persons to sculptors who wish to produce Jesus in themselves and in others by methods other than this...But those who accept this little-known secret of grace which I offer them can rightly be compared to smelters and molders who have discovered the beautiful mold of Mary where Jesus was so divinely and so naturally formed. They do not rely on their own skill but on the perfection of the mold. They cast and lose themselves in Mary where they become true models of her Son.”¹³

Montfort goes on to say, “You may think this a beautiful and convincing comparison. But how many understand it? I would like you, my dear friend, to understand it.”¹⁴ In understanding it, we must keep in mind that being molded by Mary into the likeness of Christ means anything but passivity. For St. Louis says, “Remember that only molten and liquefied substances may be poured into a mold. That means you must crush and melt down the old Adam in you if you wish to acquire the likeness of the new Adam in Mary.”¹⁵

⁸ *True Devotion*, 219

⁹ *Ibid.*, 219

¹⁰ *Directory of Spirituality*, 83

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84

¹² Quoted by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort in *The Secret of Mary*, 16, 267.

¹³ *True Devotion*, 220

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



Again, the word comes to us: conversion! Our renewed consecration is a call to renewed conversion of heart. We must drive from our hearts the lure of sin, sensuality, and self-love.

Finally, let us conclude by trying to speak some light into the mysterious “last battle”.

3. The Last Battle

We began this catechesis with the anecdotes from the lives of St. John Paul II and Sr. Lucia wherein both of them alluded to a final battle. Sr. Lucia’s words in this regard were more explicit. She placed the last battle on the front of marriage and the family.

Her words were certainly prophetic. The attacks on marriage and the family from our de-Christianized and secular world are certainly a sign of the times. Nevertheless, should we narrow the scope of the “last battle” to only marriage and family?

I believe our understanding of the “last battle” in the context of Marian consecration needs to take a broader scope.

As mentioned to earlier, the “last battle” is none other than the recapitulation of the first. Like the first battle, I believe the last one hinges on freedom. The two competing ways to live freedom stand at the heart of Mary’s enmity with Satan. *Fiat* fights against *non serviam*.

In Mary, with Mary, through Mary, and for Mary, God is calling us to live in “true freedom”. Satan on the other hand is slaving away to have us live in “fool’s freedom”. Back in my nerdy days, I used to have a rock collection. Knowing that my collection would never glory in the presence of real gold, I had to settle for “fool’s gold”, an imitation rock with all the glitter and shine, but without the value of gold.

The freedom found in following Satan’s seductions is the same. It has all the glitter and shine of “freedom” without the substance of freedom. Only in Christ do we find true freedom. St. Louis de Montfort’s secret is that Mary brings us into lived experience and possession of true freedom in Christ, in the fastest and most secure way. Why? Because she is the mold. It was through her free act of will, that True Freedom Incarnate entered the world.

Thus, our final word after conversion is humility. It was Mary’s humility that ushered in the reign of Christ and the reign of true freedom. We must acquire a share in her humility.

To be exalted with Mary in the irrevocable victory over Satan, we must be humbled. We must renew the effort to acquire the third class of will and highest degree of humility that St. Ignatius calls to seek in the Spiritual Exercises.

In this Post-Ascension age, we can certainly say we are already in the “final days”. The battle lines are already drawn: either we march behind the banner that reads “Freedom for God” or we are marching behind the one that dares to utter “Freedom from God”.

As predicted by St. Louis de Montfort, the seed of Satan—those marching for “Freedom from God”, “will persecute more than ever in the future those who belong to the Blessed Virgin”, i.e.



those we repeat with her *Fiat*...my freedom is “for God”. Nevertheless, he also assures us that “Mary's power over the evil spirits will especially shine forth in the latter times, when Satan will lie in wait for her heel, that is, for her humble servants and her poor children whom she will rouse to fight against him.”¹⁶

Those whom she “will rouse to fight” are her slaves of *true devotion* whom she will make the “apostles of the end times”.¹⁷ We are called to be those “apostles”.

As a fitting complement to this catechesis, I invite you to re-read paragraphs 45-59 of St. Louis de Montfort's *Treatise on the True Devotion*.

As Mary remained *standing* at the Cross of Her Son, in her “burning love” for the redemption of souls, so she remains standing alongside the Church in these “final hours”. Her maternal governance over the end times is a lesson to us of the true greatness of human freedom, that is, the willed sharing in the great work of redemption. *Fiat O Maria! Rege O Maria!*

Supplement: *True Devotion*, 45-59

45. To Mary alone God gave the keys of the cellars of divine love and the ability to enter the most sublime and secret ways of perfection, and lead others along them. Mary alone gives to the unfortunate children of unfaithful Eve entry into that earthly paradise where they may walk pleasantly with God and be safely hidden from their enemies. There they can feed without fear of death on the delicious fruit of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They can drink copiously the heavenly waters of that beautiful fountain which gushes forth in such abundance. As she is herself the earthly paradise, that virgin and blessed land from which sinful Adam and Eve were expelled she lets only those whom she chooses enter her domain in order to make them saints.

46. All the rich among the people, to use an expression of the Holy Spirit as explained by St. Bernard, all the rich among the people will look pleadingly upon her countenance throughout all ages and particularly as the world draws to its end. This means that the greatest saints, those richest in grace and virtue will be the most assiduous in praying to the most Blessed Virgin, looking up to her as the perfect model to imitate and as a powerful helper to assist them.

47. I said that this will happen especially towards the end of the world, and indeed soon, because Almighty God and his holy Mother are to raise up great saints who will surpass in holiness most other saints as much as the cedars of Lebanon tower above little shrubs. This has been revealed to a holy soul whose life has been written by M. de Renty.

48. These great souls filled with grace and zeal will be chosen to oppose the enemies of God who are raging on all sides. They will be exceptionally devoted to the Blessed Virgin. Illumined by her light, strengthened by her food, guided by her spirit, supported by her arm, sheltered under her protection, they will fight with one hand and build with the other. With one hand they will give battle, overthrowing and crushing heretics and their heresies, schismatics and their schisms, idolaters and their idolatries, sinners and their wickedness. With the other hand they will build the temple of

¹⁶ *True Devotion*, 54

¹⁷ *True Devotion*, 58



the true Solomon and the mystical city of God, namely, the Blessed Virgin, who is called by the Fathers of the Church the Temple of Solomon and the City of God. By word and example they will draw all men to a true devotion to her and though this will make many enemies, it will also bring about many victories and much glory to God alone. This is what God revealed to St. Vincent Ferrer, that outstanding apostle of his day, as he has amply shown in one of his works. This seems to have been foretold by the Holy Spirit in Psalm 58: "The Lord will reign in Jacob and all the ends of the earth. They will be converted towards evening and they will be as hungry as dogs and they will go around the city to find something to eat." This city around

which men will roam at the end of the world seeking conversion and the appeasement of the hunger they have for justice is the most Blessed Virgin, who is called by the Holy Spirit the City of God.

Mary's part in the latter times

49. The salvation of the world began through Mary and through her it must be accomplished. Mary scarcely appeared in the first coming of Jesus Christ so that men, as yet insufficiently instructed and enlightened concerning the person of her Son, might not wander from the truth by becoming too strongly attached to her. This would apparently have happened if she had been known, on account of the wondrous charms with which Almighty God had endowed even her outward appearance. So true is this that St. Denis the Areopagite tells us in his writings that when he saw her he would have taken her for a goddess, because of her incomparable beauty, had not his well-grounded faith taught him otherwise. But in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary must be known and openly revealed by the Holy Spirit so that Jesus may be known, loved and served through her. The reasons which moved the Holy Spirit to hide his spouse during her life and to reveal but very little of her since the first preaching of the gospel exist no longer.

God wishes to make Mary better known in the latter times.

50. God wishes therefore to reveal Mary, his masterpiece, and make her more known in these latter times: (1) Because she kept herself hidden in this world and in her great humility considered herself lower than dust, having obtained from God, his apostles and evangelists the favour of being made known. (2) Because, as Mary is not only God's masterpiece of glory in heaven, but also his masterpiece of grace on earth, he wishes to be glorified and praised because of her by those living upon earth. (3) Since she is the dawn which precedes and discloses the Sun of Justice Jesus Christ, she must be known and acknowledged so that Jesus may be known and acknowledged. (4) As she was the way by which Jesus first came to us, she will again be the way by which he will come to us the second time though not in the same manner. (5) Since she is the sure means, the direct and immaculate way to Jesus and the perfect guide to him, it is through her that souls who are to shine forth in sanctity must find him. He who finds Mary finds life, that is, Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. But no one can find Mary who does not look for her. No one can look for her who does not know her, for no one seeks or desires something unknown. Mary then must be better known than ever for the deeper understanding and the greater glory of the Blessed Trinity. (6) In these latter times Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, power and grace; in mercy, to bring back and welcome lovingly the poor sinners and wanderers who are to be converted and return to the Catholic Church; in power, to combat the enemies of God who will rise up menacingly to seduce and crush by promises and threats all those who oppose them; finally, she must shine forth in grace to inspire and support the valiant soldiers and loyal servants of Jesus Christ who are



fighting for his cause. (7) Lastly, Mary must become as terrible as an army in battle array to the devil and his followers, especially in these latter times. For Satan, knowing that he has little time - even less now than ever - to destroy souls, intensifies his efforts and his onslaughts every day. He will not hesitate to stir up savage persecutions and set treacherous snares for Mary's faithful servants and children whom he finds more difficult to overcome than others.

51. It is chiefly in reference to these last wicked persecutions of the devil, daily increasing until the advent of the reign of anti-Christ, that we should understand that first and well-known prophecy and curse of God uttered against the serpent in the garden of paradise. It is opportune to explain it here for the glory of the Blessed Virgin, the salvation of her children and the confusion of the devil. "I will place enmities between you and the woman, between your race and her race; she will crush your head and you will lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. 3:15).

52. God has established only one enmity - but it is an irreconcilable one - which will last and even go on increasing to the end of time. That enmity is between Mary, his worthy Mother, and the devil, between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin and the children and followers of Lucifer. Thus the most fearful enemy that God has set up against the devil is Mary, his holy Mother. From the time of the earthly paradise, although she existed then only in his mind, he gave her such a hatred for his accursed enemy, such ingenuity in exposing the wickedness of the ancient serpent and such power to defeat, overthrow and crush this proud rebel, that Satan fears her not only more than angels and men but in a certain sense more than God himself. This does not mean that the anger, hatred and power of God are not infinitely greater than the Blessed Virgin's, since her attributes are limited. It simply means that Satan, being so proud, suffers infinitely more in being vanquished and punished by a lowly and humble servant of God, for her humility humiliates him more than the power of God. Moreover, God has given Mary such great power over the evil spirits that, as they have often been forced unwillingly to admit through the lips of possessed persons, they fear one of her pleadings for a soul more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her threats more than all their other torments.

53. What Lucifer lost by pride Mary won by humility. What Eve ruined and lost by disobedience Mary saved by obedience. By obeying the serpent, Eve ruined her children as well as herself and delivered them up to him. Mary by her perfect fidelity to God saved her children with herself and consecrated them to his divine majesty.

54. God has established not just one enmity but "enmities", and not only between Mary and Satan but between her race and his race. That is, God has put enmities, antipathies and hatreds between the true children and servants of the Blessed Virgin and the children and slaves of the devil. They have no love and no sympathy for each other. The children of Belial, the slaves of Satan, the friends of the world, - for they are all one and the same - have always persecuted and will persecute more than ever in the future those who belong to the Blessed Virgin, just as Cain of old persecuted his brother Abel, and Esau his brother Jacob. These are the types of the wicked and of the just. But the humble Mary will always triumph over Satan, the proud one, and so great will be her victory that she will crush his head, the very seat of his pride. She will unmask his serpent's cunning and expose his wicked plots. She will scatter to the winds his devilish plans and to the end of time will keep her faithful servants safe from his cruel claws. But Mary's power over the evil spirits will especially shine forth in the latter times, when Satan will lie in wait for her heel, that is, for her humble servants and her poor children whom she will rouse to fight against him. In the eyes of the



world they will be little and poor and, like the heel, lowly in the eyes of all, down-trodden and crushed as is the heel by the other parts of the body. But in compensation for this they will be rich in God's graces, which will be abundantly bestowed on them by Mary. They will be great and exalted before God in holiness.

They will be superior to all creatures by their great zeal and so strongly will they be supported by divine assistance that, in union with Mary, they will crush the head of Satan with their heel, that is, their humility, and bring victory to Jesus Christ.

Devotion to Mary is especially necessary in the latter times.

55. Finally, God in these times wishes his Blessed Mother to be more known, loved and honoured than she has ever been. This will certainly come about if the elect, by the grace and light of the Holy Spirit, adopt the interior and perfect practice of the devotion which I shall later unfold. Then they will clearly see that beautiful Star of the Sea, as much as faith allows. Under her guidance they will perceive the splendours of this Queen and will consecrate themselves entirely to her service as subjects and slaves of love. They will experience her motherly kindness and affection for her children. They will love her tenderly and will True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin 10 appreciate how full of compassion she is and how much they stand in need of her help. In all circumstances they will have recourse to her as their advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will see clearly that she is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way of approaching Jesus and will surrender themselves to her, body and soul, without reserve in order to belong entirely to Jesus.

56. But what will they be like, these servants, these slaves, these children of Mary? They will be ministers of the Lord who, like a flaming fire, will enkindle everywhere the fires of divine love. They will become, in Mary's powerful hands, like sharp arrows, with which she will transfix her enemies. They will be as the children of Levi, thoroughly purified by the fire of great tribulations and closely joined to God. They will carry the gold of love in their heart, the frankincense of prayer in their mind and the myrrh of mortification in their body. They will bring to the poor and lowly everywhere the sweet fragrance of Jesus, but they will bring the odour of death to the great, the rich and the proud of this world.

57. They will be like thunder-clouds flying through the air at the slightest breath of the Holy Spirit. Attached to nothing, surprised at nothing, troubled at nothing, they will shower down the rain of God's word and of eternal life. They will thunder against sin, they will storm against the world, they will strike down the devil and his followers and for life and for death, they will pierce through and through with the two-edged sword of God's word all those against whom they are sent by Almighty God.

58. They will be true apostles of the latter times to whom the Lord of Hosts will give eloquence and strength to work wonders and carry off glorious spoils from his enemies. They will sleep without gold or silver and, more important still, without concern in the midst of other priests, ecclesiastics and clerics. Yet they will have the silver wings of the dove enabling them to go wherever the Holy Spirit calls them, filled as they are with the resolve to seek the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Wherever they preach, they will leave behind them nothing but the gold of love, which is the fulfilment of the whole law.

59. Lastly, we know they will be true disciples of Jesus Christ, imitating his poverty, his humility,



his contempt of the world and his love. They will point out the narrow way to God in pure truth according to the holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world. Their hearts will not be troubled, nor will they show favour to anyone; they will not spare or heed or fear any man, however powerful he may be. They will have the two-edged sword of the word of God in their mouths and the blood-stained standard of the Cross on their shoulders. They will carry the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, and the holy names of Jesus and Mary on their heart. The simplicity and self-sacrifice of Jesus will be reflected in their whole behaviour. Such are the great men who are to come. By the will of God Mary is to prepare them to extend his rule over the impious and unbelievers. But when and how will this come about? Only God knows. For our part we must yearn and wait for it in silence and in prayer: "I have waited and waited."