

Fr. Perozich comments —

So many times these past years people ask me, “Father, what can we do about all the moral degradation in the world, in the church, the ambiguity, the lack of clarity, the upset of morality, the poor catechesis at all levels, bad liturgies, and so forth.

My usual response is the “Benedict option”, to pull away from the those things which disturb your peace with God, to be with others of like mind for prayer, worship, holy living, and taking Jesus out into all parts of your life as you can: the church, politics, charity, education, and so forth. After the foray into those areas where sin may be evident, come back to the Benedict option “far from the madding crowd” for refreshment of your soul once again.

Fr. Linus Clovis offers us an excellent reflection to do so with Mary, the Mother of God given to us by her uncreated and eternal Son, Jesus. She is the preeminent creature chosen to lead other creatures in the battle against Satan wherever he lies: in our own souls, in the church, in the world.

God has spoken through her appearances in Fatima, Lourdes, Tepeyac, and other places, revealing the nature of demonic activity in the world, and asking us to battle with her under the power of her Son Jesus for our salvation and that of the whole world.

“Therefore, at this time, when the faithful “are bewildered by the storm of controversies over sex abuse, over corrupted priests and bishops and cardinals, over Church doctrine, over the current Holy Father himself, and, frightened by the global tempest that rages over matters once seemingly settled but now openly contested: sexuality, gender, family, marriage and the very nature of humanity” they can always turn to Mary,” said Fr. Clovis.

“ Since the battle is fought in human hearts, the Virgin’s victory and reign will come through the sacrifices of the modern day apostles, the children of Mary, the lovers and adorers of the Eucharist, who have the spirit of surrender that leads to martyrdom for the faith or, at the very least, remain firm in their witness to prayer, sacrifice, love, peace, and truth in this present, difficult hour.”

In the gospel Jesus reveals that all power has been given over to Him as the Son of God. He shares this power with all of us according to our ability to receive it, so that we can share it with others.

Mary, free from sin from conception, has it fully to share from Jesus for us. She is concerned with mercy, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life for us her children.

Some things are retained by Jesus. While He is the source of mercy, and Mary is called the Mother of Mercy, Jesus rightfully holds the power of justice for punishment for sins. Mary does not. She is a dispenser of the mercy of her Son for repentant sinners to whom He desires to extend mercy for our salvation. We imitate her in showing mercy as we too have received this gift.

The triumph of the Immaculate Heart promised at Fatima is the spiritual re-conquest of the entire world. The reign of Mary will see the destruction of sin, its structures and its consequences. In the words of St. Louis, “the power of Mary over all the demons will shine particularly in the end times, when Satan will strike at her heel, that is to say, on the humble slaves and poor children of Mary, who are called to battle against the gates of hell” (Ibid, no. 54). Since the battle is fought in human hearts, the Virgin’s victory and reign will come through the sacrifices of the modern day apostles, the children of Mary, the lovers and adorers of the

Eucharist, who have the spirit of surrender that leads to martyrdom for the faith or, at the very least, remain firm in their witness to prayer, sacrifice, love, peace, and truth in this present, difficult hour.

Let all of us, then, in the tempest-tossed Church, cry out to her saying: “our eyes are on Thee; they look to Thy shining Sweet Star of the Sea.”



Fr. Linus Clovis addressing the 2019 Rome Life Forum at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Steve Jalsevac / LifeSiteNews



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Why Catholics must rely on Mary in battle between ‘Church and anti-Church’: priest

[Blessed Virgin Mary, Catholic, Linus Clovis, Pope Francis, Rome Life Forum 2019, Salve Regina](#)

ROME, May 17, 2019 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) – With the battle between the “Church and the anti-Church” now an open confrontation, Catholics must have confidence in the help of Mary, the Mother of Mercy, Fr. Linus Clovis told participants at this year’s Rome Life Forum.

The Mother of God is God’s greatest creation and Satan’s greatest enemy, he said in a Friday address titled *Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae* (read full text below).

“The supreme grace of Christ’s incarnation would not have been possible without Mary’s consent, which results in her being inseparably bound up with His redeeming power,” said Fr. Clovis, a priest of the Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia.

The Blessed Mother manifests her mercy under four titles: health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, and help of Christians, Fr. Clovis pointed out.

And while she intercedes to heal physical afflictions, Mary’s “first and greatest concern will always be to provide remedies for the four spiritual wounds inflicted on us by original sin and by our personal sins: the wounds of concupiscence, of weakness, of ignorance and of malice,” he said.

Therefore, at this time, when the faithful “are bewildered by the storm of controversies over sex abuse, over corrupted priests and bishops and cardinals, over Church doctrine, over the current Holy Father himself, and, frightened by the global tempest that

rages over matters once seemingly settled but now openly contested: sexuality, gender, family, marriage and the very nature of humanity” they can always turn to Mary, said Fr. Clovis.

“Since the battle is fought in human hearts, the Virgin’s victory and reign will come through the sacrifices of the modern day apostles, the children of Mary, the lovers and adorers of the Eucharist, who have the spirit of surrender that leads to martyrdom for the faith or, at the very least, remain firm in their witness to prayer, sacrifice, love, peace, and truth in this present, difficult hour,” he said.

Fr. Clovis holds a [doctorate in Mathematics](#) and degrees in Theology, Canon Law and Latin Literature and is board member and spiritual director of the Population Research Institute (PRI) and Family Life International, and archdiocesan spiritual director of the Legion of Mary in St. Lucia.

The theme of the sixth Rome Life Forum is “City of God vs. City of Man — Global One World Order vs. Christendom.” The two-day conference is hosted by Voice of the Family and co-sponsored by [LifeSiteNews](#), [Associazione Famiglia Domani](#) (Italy), [Family Life International New Zealand](#), and the [Society for the Protection of Unborn Children](#) (UK).

LifeSiteNews is pleased to present
the full text of Fr. Clovis’s address:

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae

The best known prayer to Our Lady, after the angelic salutation, is the Hail holy Queen, where she is also greeted as Mother of mercy. In both those titles, the humble Virgin of Nazareth is closely associated with her Son, who is the King of kings and yet ever merciful to sinners.

According to Seneca, the greatness of a leader, be it king, queen or president, consists in relieving plight of the wretched. In

this vein, David instructed Solomon about the care he should have for the poor: “For he (the king) delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight” (Ps. 72:12-14). While the Davidic kingship, like all human kingships, is a participation in the divine kingship, it is meant, above all, to reflect the divine governance.

The absolute and universal kingship of the triune God is exhibited in His providential care for all that He has made, even feeding the birds of the air who neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and who do not fall to the ground without His knowledge.(Mt. 6:26, 10:29). Great is His love for His creatures, and so great is His love for the human race that God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, at the fullness of time was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4) and became man (Jn.1:14). This man, Jesus Christ, is God because, in what is called the hypostatic union, human nature and the divine nature are united in a single Person, who is God the Son. Jesus then is one divine Person who is fully God and fully man and also universal king.

As man, Jesus is the universal King for three reasons. First, He is King of creation by virtue of His Divine Personality (Jn. 1:1; Phil. 2:6), that is, this Person, independent of his nature is king (Col. 1:16-17) . Second, by reason of the hypostatic union and His fullness of grace from which we have all received (Jn. 1:16), He is the Head of all creation, (Eph. 1:22) which receives from Him its ultimate and most august consecration. Christ proclaimed this kingship to Pilate saying that His kingdom was not of this world, (Jn. 18:36) that it was opposed to the kingdom of Satan and that its citizens partake of the lot of the saints in light. Third, he is king by right of conquest. He subjected all things beneath His feet when, by His humility and His obedience unto death, He gained victory over Satan, over sin and over death.

Mary participates in the kingship of her Son. First, as the Mother of God made man, she shares in the dignity of her Son and hence, connaturally in His universal kingship. Second, the Incarnation of God the Son (Lk. 1:31; Eph. 2:6) places Mary in a unique relationship with each Person of the Blessed Trinity, namely, her election to “the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son and, in consequence, the Father’s Daughter of predilection and Temple of the Holy Spirit” (Lumen Gentium §53). Thus, Mary, by her fiat, became the mother of Jesus who, by His hypostatic union and His fullness of grace, is King of the universe from which her queenship arises. Third, Mary, by her close union with Him in His humiliation and suffering, was associated with His victory over sin, Satan and death (Gn. 3:15; Jn. 19:25-27) and so is really and truly associated with Him in His kingship (2Tim. 2:10-12).

Mary is therefore associated with Christ’s kingship in a true, even if in a subordinate, manner from which many consequences follow. As universal King, Jesus has power to establish and promulgate the New Law engraved on our hearts (Jer. 31:31-33), to propose doctrine for belief, to give souls sanctifying grace with the accompanying virtues, to judge the living and the dead. Mary participates in this universal kingship as the dispenser of all the graces, which are imprinted in an interior and hidden manner on our minds, in our hearts and on our wills and, which she merited both with and in dependence on Jesus. She also participates in His kingship exteriorly by the fact that whilst on earth she was the exemplar of all the virtues, that she helped to enlighten the Apostles, and that she continues to enlighten us when, for example, she manifests herself in sanctuaries such as at Guadalupe, at Lourdes and at Fatima. It follows that she does not participate in the royal judicial power of punishing sin, since she is called, in virtue of her mediation of all graces, the Mother of mercy and not Mother of justice.

Mercy is a virtue of the will and, as St. Thomas notes, it is the virtue of the powerful and the good who alone are capable of providing assistance to those most in need of mercy. Mercy is found, first and foremost, in God, whose power is most gloriously revealed in sparing and in forgiving repentant sinners. Extrapolating from the Augustinian teaching that it is more glorious for God to draw good out of evil than to create out of nothing, St. Thomas held that the justification of sinners by grace is the greatest of God's works both in itself and because it is something done for the unworthy.

The virtue of mercy is found also in Mary, who begot the Author of grace and who, even during her life on earth, unobtrusively distributes grace to others. Her mission of distributing grace began within days of the Incarnation when, hastening to Zacharias's house, she greeted Elizabeth, who, filled with the Holy Spirit and recognizing the grace given, declared "when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy" (Lk. 1:41). Mary's merciful intervention at Cana resulted in the grace of Christ's first miracle and also, in the grace by which the disciples' faith in Him was confirmed (Jn. 2:11). The graces obtained from her prayer with the apostles in the Upper Room brought about the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). The supreme grace of Christ's incarnation would not have been possible without Mary's consent, which results in her being inseparably bound up with His redeeming power.

Mary's universal mediation must always be understood as being subordinate to that of Christ. Christ, since He is the direct bearer and representative of God's influence on creation, draws the human race closer to the Godhead. Even so, Mary is the only creature, out of all His creation, whom God approached and with whom He united Himself.

Even though the merits Christ won by His sacrificial death on Calvary are superabundant and sufficient in themselves, Mary,

by cooperating in Christ's redeeming sacrifice, became an integral part of that sacrifice. In the words of St. Bernard, "there is no doubt that Jesus Christ alone was more than sufficient to redeem us; but it was more becoming that both sexes should cooperate in the reparation of an evil in causing which both had shared." That is, through Mary's cooperation a comprehensive sacrifice was made for the human race, the merits of which, because she shared in obtaining them, she is able to distribute to poor pitiful sinners.

Principal manifestations of mercy

Four of the titles contained in the Litany of Loreto highlight Mary as the Mother of mercy who distributes grace to poor sinners: Health of the sick, Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted and Help of Christians. These titles highlight Mary as a gracious advocate who turns her eyes of mercy towards those suffering bodily sickness that she may heal their souls, console them in their afflictions and to provide strength for overcoming difficulties.

Health of the sick

The many miraculous physical cures obtained through Mary's intercession declare her to be Health of the sick but, as with Christ, her true purpose is directed to the healing of spiritual infirmities. Her first and greatest concern will always be to provide remedies for the four spiritual wounds inflicted on us by original sin and by our personal sins: the wounds of concupiscence, of weakness, of ignorance and of malice.

As with cause and effect, there is an intrinsic relationship between sin and suffering. Sin, which seriously wounded human nature, lies at the bottom of all suffering, both physical and spiritual. Its malice is such that it attempted to eliminate God but,

the very act contrived to do this brought about its own destruction. Although sin can never again crucify the Lord of glory (1Cor. 2:8), it is still capable of doing unspeakable harm. Hence, we require an intercessor who can apply the graces that will heal the wounds of our sinful desires, of our weakness in the face of temptation, of our nescience of the will of God and of the habit of our rebellion.

Innumerable miraculous icons, statues and images of Mary can be found throughout the world and through many of them she distributes her favors. In so doing she mirrors her Son's solicitude in restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, wholeness to the crippled and lame, while illustrating her deep and limitless empathy for human misery. Places blessed with Marian apparitions are of particular interest since there invariably she echoes her Son's call to repentance and to live the Gospel message (Mt. 4:17). Like her Son, her primary concern is for the salvation of souls.

Her maternal solicitude for sinners finds its acme at Lourdes, where, in 1858, she appeared eighteen times to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous, with a call to conversion and penitence. Bernadette was asked not only to pray for sinners but also to undertake penitential exercises such as "kissing the ground," "drinking from the spring and washing in it" and "eating of the grass growing there" for their conversion. She was also told to inform the priests that people should come to the site in procession and that a chapel should be built. On February 25th a spring was discovered where several people were cured after washing in the water. These cures are indicative of Mary's desire to bring health to both body and soul.

Refuge of sinners

Of all God's creatures, Mary is not only the greatest and holiest but also the most approachable, the most gentle and the

most helpful. Holiness naturally detests sin because of the injury it inflicts on the soul. Mary's holiness qualifies her as the perfect Refuge for sinners since, having a great desire to bring sinners to repentance, she welcomes them with her Son's gentleness. She knows that her Son's sacrifice was the only remedy for sin and its consequences. Sin's most lethal consequence is that it slowly slithers into a state of brazen self-sufficiency where the conscience is deadened as the will is progressively weakened and the intellect darkened. Mary not only frees sinners from the bond of sinful habits by the power of her intercession but she also obtains their reconciliation with God by the merits of her Son. Additionally, she protects them from Satan, and from anything that could lead to fresh falls, while helping them to learn the sweetness of penance.

At her many shrines countless numbers of sinners have been converted and, many condemned criminals owe their last minute conversion to her intercession. In tears, she appeared to the two children near La Salette in the French Alps, lamenting the region's violation of the Lord's Day and the blasphemous use of the Lord's Name. She complained that she could no longer hold back the hand of her Son: "It is so strong and so heavy that I cannot hold it back any longer."

However, she did hold it back. Even today, when the sins of the world seem to reach saturation point, she holds back the hand of her Son and manifests herself more than ever as the Refuge of sinners. David, the repentant sinner, declared that the eyes of the Lord are on the just (Ps. 33:16) but experience has shown that the eyes of His Mother are on both the just and the sinner. Indeed, the eyes of Mary are the eyes of a mother; and a mother not only watches over her child to prevent it from falling but, should it fall, she picks it up, attends to its injuries and comforts it.

Comforter of the afflicted

Whilst affliction comes in many forms: physical, moral, spiritual, emotional and mental, it is hardest to bear when it appears purposeless and, is compounded if the sufferer feels that the pain must be borne alone. In such cases, despair can quickly set in. Suffering makes a soul either bitter or better for the simple reason that pain and affliction are conditioned by love, whether by an exaggerated self-love or by love of God. In the former, pain eats into the heart and poisons the soul, while in the latter, suffering becomes the greatest single means of perfection.

Sin is seldom seen as the principal fountain of grief and consequently, sinners have little sorrow for their offenses against God. The two thieves crucified with Christ were both guilty, both condemned, both in agony, and initially both blasphemed but, at one point, perhaps on seeing the anguish of Christ's Mother, one stopped and passed judgement on himself. "We are only paying for what we have done" (Lk. 23:40-42). By converting worldly sorrow into godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10), he entered Paradise, with the Redeemer.

The sixth spiritual work of mercy is "to comfort the afflicted." Comfort is brought by accompanying the one suffering, by being present, by listening compassionately, by sharing the experience as best one can and by empathizing. "Blessed be ... the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:4). Even during her life on earth Mary can be seen as the Comforter of the afflicted. Her presence on Calvary was a consolation to Jesus, especially after the abandonment He felt in the Garden when the Apostles slept. Equally, her presence was an undoubted consolation to the Apostles especially when they gathered around her in prayer (Acts 1:14).

The Book of Genesis relates that God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night (Gn. 1:16). For those alone at night the latter is often a

comfort. Mystically, the sun symbolizes Christ, the greater light that rules the just, that is, those who live in the clear day of divine grace. The moon symbolizes Mary, the lesser light that rules sinners, that is, those who are in the night of sin and are to be enlightened and brought to the comfort of repentance. According to Innocent III, whoever is in the night of sin, let him cast his eyes on the moon, let him implore Mary.

Help of Christians

Under the title Help of Christians, Mary's universal mediation in its practical application extends to the entire work of salvation, from the first grace of conversion to the grace of final perseverance. Help is an effect of love. Since Christ entrusted to Mary all those whom He redeemed, she loves them as her children and helps them in their difficulties and assists them in living a virtuous life.

Two inscriptions in Greek dating from the first centuries of Christianity relate to the Virgin Mary: θεοτοκος (Theotokos, Mother of God) and βοηθεια (Boetheia, the Helper). Many Church Fathers referred to Mary explicitly as "βοηθεια" including St. John Chrysostom in 345, Proclus in 476, Sebas of Caesarea in 532 and St. John Damascene 749. The oldest prayer addressed directly to Mary, the [Sub tuum praesidium](#), invokes her as Help of Christians. This prayer, with Praesidium translated as "an assistance given in time of war by fresh troops in a strong manner", was found on a papyrus dating, at the latest, from the end of the third century.

History is replete with stories of Mary's intervention at critical times in the lives of individuals and nations. She wrought the instant conversion of rabid anti-Catholics, such as Alphonse Ratisbonne, 1842, and Bruno Cornacchiola, 1947, the conversion of Mexico in the 16th century, the victory of Lepanto in 1571, of Vienna in 1683, the defense of Constantinople against the

Saracens in 718, the conquest of the Albigensian heresy by St Dominic and her Rosary, the protection of the Poles against the Swedish army at Jasna Gora, Czestochowa, 1655, the graces poured out abundantly by the Miraculous Medal, the Brown Scapular, the Rosary, the calls to conversion at Lourdes, La Salette and Fatima.

The Salve Regina succinctly expresses the universal belief in Mary's power to assist us in our necessities: "To Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears." Since distress is felt in the soul, it is the soul that needs the greatest comfort. By her participation in Christ's sacrificial death, Mary has been sealed for the labour of comforting souls. She is ever ready to help us and, as a Mother, knows what is best for us, in health and in happiness, in sickness and in sorrow. There is room in her heart for all the children of God.

Conclusion

Two years before his election as Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla's warned that: "We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. ... We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. ... It is a ... test of 2,000 years of culture and Christian civilization with all of its consequences for human dignity, individual rights, human rights and the rights of nations."

The confrontation is now open. The faithful are bewildered by the storm of controversies over sex abuse, over corrupted priests and bishops and cardinals, over Church doctrine, over the current Holy Father himself, and, frightened by the global tempest that rages over matters once seemingly settled but now openly contested: sexuality, gender, family, marriage and the very nature of humanity. The prophet's lament, are relevant to our

times: “There is no truth and no mercy and no knowledge of God on the earth. Blasphemy and lying and homicide and theft and adultery have inundated it ... they break all bounds and murder follows murder” (Hos.4:1-2). Yet in the midst of this deluge of evil, Our Lord’s words to Sister Lucia are consoling “it is never too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary”.

The root of the battle is sin and, according to St. Louis Marie de Montfort, “God has made an irreconcilable enmity that will last and grow until the end of the world and it is between Mary, his Blessed Mother and the devil. It is between the children and servants of the Virgin and the children and subjects of Lucifer. In fact, the greatest enemy of Satan that God has raised up is Mary, his Blessed Mother, to whom he gave since the beginning of earthly paradise, even though at this point She existed only as a thought in his mind; to whom He gave so much abhorrence to this enemy of God, so much capacity to unmask the evil of this ancient serpent, so much strength to overcome, battle and crush this arrogant monster, who fears her more than all angels and all men, and in a way, even more than God himself” (True Devotion to Mary, no.52).

The triumph of the Immaculate Heart promised at Fatima is the spiritual re-conquest of the entire world. The reign of Mary will see the destruction of sin, its structures and its consequences. In the words of St. Louis, “the power of Mary over all the demons will shine particularly in the end times, when Satan will strike at her heel, that is to say, on the humble slaves and poor children of Mary, who are called to battle against the gates of hell” (Ibid, no. 54). Since the battle is fought in human hearts, the Virgin’s victory and reign will come through the sacrifices of the modern day apostles, the children of Mary, the lovers and adorers of the Eucharist, who have the spirit of surrender that leads to martyrdom for the faith or, at the very least, remain firm in their witness to prayer, sacrifice, love, peace, and truth in this present, difficult hour.

So then, even though “Deep night hath come down on this rough-spoken world, and the banners of darkness are boldly unfurled”, let us not lose heart but, rather remain confident that the eyes of Mary, our most gentle Queen and merciful Mother, are turned towards the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. Let all of us, then, in the tempest-tossed Church, cry out to her saying: “our eyes are on Thee; they look to Thy shining Sweet Star of the Sea.”