



FS400 Provincial Letter 9 (May 2016)

### Mary: Our Mother, Sister, Companion on the Way of Perfect Love

Dear Young People, Dear Lay Mission Partners, Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Salesian Family,

The peace of the Lord be with you always! In the past month we listened to our Patron Saint Francis de Sales talking to us about prayer. This month, being the month of May, the Month of Mary, we ask him to tell us something about the role of Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, in our striving to grow in the life of devotion, i.e. in sanctity, in perfect love.

According to St. Francis, Mary is present at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the Way of Perfect Love. She is present at the beginning, when we make the crucial decision to live a life of devotion, i.e. to convert to God with all our heart. This decision is made in the presence of Jesus and Mary, thus: "Jesus Christ in His mercy looks down upon you from the heights of heaven and graciously invites you. He says, "Come, my dear soul, to enjoy an everlasting rest within the arms of My bounty, where I have prepared undying delights for thee in the abundance of My love." [...] The Blessed Virgin as a mother exhorts you, "Take courage, my child; despise not the desires of my Son, nor the many sighs which I have cast forth for thee, thirsting with Him for thy eternal salvation." (*Philothea*, Part I, Chapter XVII, Consideration 4)" The devout soul replies: "O holy Virgin! Beloved Mother! **I choose thee for my guide**. I put myself under thy protection. I offer thee a particular respect and a special reverence." (*Philothea*, Part I, Chapter XVIII, Election 3)

As we walk the Way of Perfect Love, St. Francis urges us to let ourselves be carried by Mary: "Please, honour, reverence, and respect with special love the sacred and glorious Virgin Mary. She is the Mother of our sovereign Father [Jesus!], and consequently she is our Mother in a special way. Let us run to her, and, as her little children, **cast ourselves into her arms** with a perfect confidence. At all times and in all occurrences let us call upon this dear Mother. Let us invoke her motherly love. Let us endeavour to imitate her virtues. Let us bear a true filial affection toward her." (*Philothea*, Part II, Chapter XVI)

Perfect Love unites us perfectly to God who is infinite Love. Mary is uniquely united with God, because of the "surpassing way" in which God redeemed her, i.e. through her Immaculate Conception. "[Mary] was redeemed in a surpassing way. At the appointed time the torrent of original sin behaved like the river Jordan in Joshua's time of old (Josh 3:16-17). As the Jordan river held back its flood out of respect for the passage of the Ark of the Covenant, so the torrent of original sin drew back its waters in reverence and awe at the presence of the true Tabernacle of the Eternal Covenant. In this way God gave his glorious Mother the **blessing of the two states of human nature**: she possessed that innocence which the first Adam had lost and she surpassingly enjoyed that redemption which the second Adam gained for her." (*Theotimus*, Book II, Chapter VI)

As we reach the end of our Way, we may look up to Mary, "the mother of fair love", of whom St. Francis says: "At least as she came to the end of her mortal days, her charity surpassed that of the seraphim [...] She never committed a venial sin, as the Church holds. Hence, for her there was no change or delay in her progress in love but, by a perpetual advance, she rose from love to love. [...] Maternal love is the most urgent, the most active, and the most ardent of all forms of love. Maternal love is an indefatigable and insatiable love. How much, then, must it have worked in the heart of such a Mother and for the heart of such a Son? [...] The heart of the Virgin Mother remained perpetually inflamed with the holy love she received from her Son. [...] Hence, it is true that this Mother is '**the mother of fair love**'. She is the most worthy of love just as she is the most loving, and the most loving just as she is the most beloved Mother of this unique Son. He in turn is the most worthy of love, the most loving, and the most beloved Son of this unique Mother." (*Theotimus*, Book III, Chapter VIII)

Wishing you and me a happy Month of Mary, in Jesus Mary Joseph StFrancis DonBosco, I am,

Yours affectionately, Fr. Lanfranco M. Fedrigotti, Provincial