

THE FMA MAKE MARY'S FIAT THEIRS

(Obedience – Art. 32) and (The Service of Authority – Articles 114 & 52)

Mary, the obedient Woman. It is true that even Mary, just like the girls of her time, dreamed of the coming of the Messiah. What she did not know was how it would all come about. God the Father had enveloped Mary with His grace from the moment of her conception and had prepared in her a home suitable for His Son Jesus. "Hail, Full of Grace," said the Angel to Mary, "You will conceive and bring forth a Son and you will call Him Jesus." "I do not know a man," Mary answered. "Fear not, Mary... The Holy Spirit will descend upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. The One who is to be born, therefore, will be holy and called the Son of God." (see Lk. 1:26-28)

It was no easy thing to understand the words of the Angel – only a pure soul, like Mary's, would be able to exclaim: "Behold (here I am), I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done unto me as you have said." Only a soul like this would be able to welcome into her womb the Most Pure of all Purity: Jesus. Only she could face with fortitude the consequences of her "Behold, here I am": to go in haste to the mountains, bearing in her womb her Son, to the aid of her cousin Elizabeth, who was also expecting a son who would be called His Precursor; to forget herself so that she might hear said to her: "The minute your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leapt for joy." Was this a miracle of her *fiat*? Mary's "yes" made the Precursor leap for joy in the womb of his mother. (see Lk. 1:39-56)

Mary obeys the Word of God from the very first instant, abandoning herself to Him. From the depths of her heart, Salvation is born: Jesus. In Mary, her "Yes" and the gift of herself are joined together. The most profound moment of her *fiat* was lived at the foot of the Cross of her Son. Without the Cross, there is no full and total "yes". This is the most painful moment and, at the same time, the most fecund one in which she abandons herself, while still not understanding God's "why". At the moment of her Son's being taken down from the Cross, she receives Him with delicateness and envelops Him with tenderness. In the depths of her heart she felt that this was not the end. Her son had to rise. Through her "yes", Mary contributed to the redemption of the world.

For us, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians called to a service of authority, no other path than Mary's exists. To say "yes" to the One who entrusts a mission to us, is simply, as our Constitutions say in Article 114: "to live in an attitude of interior poverty and of openness to the Holy Spirit; to express with a mother's heart the strong and gentle love of Mary." Mary was full of grace; therefore, her obedience was full of grace, even if it was not easy. We, too, need to live a life of grace in order to live obedience. To do so, a profound Sacramental life which draws continually from the Eucharist and from the Sacrament of Reconciliation is indispensable.

Thus, she needs to be an FMA who is open to the Holy Spirit and who cultivates God's grace in her heart. She must put the person at the center of her mission and feel that she is a Sister among her Sisters, without harboring a fear of not being recognized in her "authority" because, as Mother Mazzarello used to say: "Our True Superior is the Blessed Mother." She ought

to create an atmosphere of trust in which each Sister feels happy to belong to the Community, to the Institute, and to the Church. She needs to undertake her mission as a true service and not as some form of power. She must serve like Mary, in silence and without drawing attention to herself – going quickly to help the Sisters and the young in the Educating Community in their need.

Kneeling down at the end of the day, she ought to say to the Lord: You are the One who has sustained me along this day. Thank you for all that I was able to accomplish and please fix whatever was not done very well. She ought to beat her breast in asking pardon if: she had not been docile to the Holy Spirit or she had not known how to say like Mary: "Behold, here I am" when facing certain trying or difficult realities; when unable to express that love with which God loves her; or when unable to help her Sisters go courageously to the peripheries - the fringes - bearing the joy of having Jesus in their heart and thus being able to thank God for that "hundred-fold" which He gives us each day, even when, unfortunately, we sometimes do not merit it.

Living the service of authority with and like Mary makes us great in God's eyes because He who has called us to serve will give us our recompense and His recompense is immense. All of us, whether in huge or little things, are called to live obedience with and like Mary.

- ◆ What do I recognize in myself that might impede me from living obedience fully and with joy?
- ◆ Am I ready to undertake serenely all the consequences of my "yes" said to the Lord when a service in the Community is asked of me?
- ◆ What is my greatest certainty in considering authority? Do I recognize and accept this task and correspond to it with all my heart?

(see Art. 52)