

AT OUR COMING TOGETHER IN THE EVENING

(October 1960 editorial)

When, in 1947, several couples and I decided to place the Teams of Our Lady under the patronage of Mary, it was not, believe me, to follow a fashion or adopt an easy option. It was our faith in the Virgin's unique mission in the Kingdom of God and in our unlimited trust in her motherly solicitude that guided us.

It is not only a question of making room for Our Lady in your devotions and to give her a quick greeting from time to time. You must be very keen to seek a deeper understanding of the mind of the Church – which, by the way, only reflects the mind of the Lord – on Mary's admirable place in 'God's plan'. Failing this, your devotion to her – supposing you have one – will be purely sentimental and you will not be very proud of it. Fear of what people may say, will prevent you ever talking about it.

There is a Marian theology that the greatest among the Fathers and Doctors of the Church have helped to elaborate and which is a wonderful and substantial food for mind and heart. It is from this spring that we must draw. The series of eight study-topics on the Mystery of Mary¹, that we ask all teams to study sometimes during their first six years of existence² is, it seems to us, a good initiation, but only an initiation. It is throughout his/her life that a Christian must endeavour to progress in the discovery of Mary.

To know and to live out: to know the Mystery of Mary so as to live it out. Be on your guard against the temptation - that threatens intellectuals - to be satisfied with purely notional knowledge. Mary is not a concept. Mary is alive, loving, present. She is constantly at work in the Mystical Body. Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus wrote: *"I understood that, if the Church had a body made up of different members, she did not lack the most necessary, the noblest of all members: I understood that she had a Heart and that this Heart was ablaze with love. I understood that Love alone made the members of the Church function and that, if Love were to become extinct, the Apostles would no longer proclaim the Gospel and the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood"*.

Saint Theresa goes on to say: *"Yes, I have found my place in the Church and this place, oh my God, it is you who gave it me: at the Heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be Love"*. What is true of Saint Theresa is even truer of Mary; but in addition, in trust and humility, in openness and availability - in a word: in love - we must submit to the influence (in the deepest sense of the word) of our mother Mary – an influence that seeks, not to monopolise our mind, our heart and our life, but to direct them towards God and take hold of them and offer them to God.

Souls that are fashioned, moulded by Mary, are a soil perfectly prepared for the sowing of grace. At our coming together every evening, when we are all – all 10,000 of us³ – at Mary's side, singing our love for her⁴, I wished that, during this new team year, we would form a powerful coalition to ask her to give us minds and hearts like hers in order that, in us and through us, the Lord may bring forward his Reign.

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¹ This study topic was, of course, written before the Second Vatican Council. For the latest teaching on the 'Mystery of Mary', see Vatican II document *"Lumen Gentium"* para. 53-69 and the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" para 963-975 – Translators.

² This practice seems to have been discontinued - Translators

³ 100,000 would be nearer the mark today! - Translators

⁴ in the words of the Magnificat - Translators