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## Mary is the Mediatrix of Advent Hope

In suffering with her Divine Son as He died on the cross, Mary cooperated in the work of the Savior, in an altogether singular way, by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning love, to restore supernatural life to souls. As a result she is our Mother in the order of grace. This motherhood of Mary in the order of consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside the saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation....Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix. (Lumen Gentium 61-62)

Advent is the season of hope. It is a time when we wait expectantly, and with great joy, for the coming again of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we wait, we remember. From our earliest days, we were taught to honor Mary, the Mother of God, and to follow her example, her "yes" to the Angel's message from God the Father. As a community of faith, each year we recall the Advent and Christmas scenes that celebrate the wonders of God's great gift of Himself to us. We share in the profound hope of the Prophet Isaiah speaking on behalf of God's chosen people, and the entire human race, who longed for the coming of the Messiah. "On that day a shoot shall sprout from Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.... Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted."

Finally, we hear the words of John the Baptist, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Quoting Isaiah, he admonishes us "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths!"

For us Mary was—and still is—the embodiment of Advent hope. She stands with us as we wait in joyful hope for the

coming of our Lord. She speaks for us when she accepts the divine call to be a steward of God's love, one who receives gratefully, and nurtures and shares generously, all the gifts that she has received from a good and gracious God.

During Advent especially, we reflect on the gift of hope. In times of economic uncertainty, when the world seems darkest, and when many are tempted to give in to despair, Mary, our mother in the order of grace, reminds us that Christ has come and that He will come again this Christmas and at the end of time. When our nation is at war and families are separated, Mary's witness as mediator of her son's manifold gifts and graces reminds us in a powerful way that God's promise of salvation as already been fulfilled. We are called to be an Advent people, a people of "obedience, faith, hope and burning love" like Mary, because God has blessed us and given us all the grace we need to be His sons and daughters.

Mary was the first Christian disciple, the first to commit her whole life to following Jesus Christ. Mary was also the first Christian steward. She received gratefully the gift of God's only Son. She accepted—without fully understanding it—the awesome responsibility to nurture and develop this gift and then to share Him generously with others. When she searched for Him, and then found Him in the temple, she questioned Him and learned that His mission would ultimately take Him from her. Once again, she accepted what she did not fully understand—pondering these things in her heart, Scripture says. When she told the servants at the wedding feast in Cana: "Do whatever he tells you," she was speaking to us as well—sharing with us her confidence in Him and carrying out her singular role as our mother in the order of grace. What should we do as disciples and stewards in hard times? Whatever Mary's divine son tells us.

Mary is the mediator of Advent hope. She intercedes for us, she helps us and she shares with us the grace of her Divine Son.

During this time of expectant waiting, Mary

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shows herself as our advocate and benefactor, the Mother of Holy Hope, who teaches us to be a faithful and responsible steward of all God's gifts.

Let's use this Advent season wisely, as Mary would. Let's be open and attentive to God's Word. When He comes—in our prayer, in the Holy Eucharist, in our service to others and in many other hidden or unexpected ways—let's say "yes" to Him as Mary did. And let's share Him generously with others as faithful disciples and evangelists.

And when times are tough because of family

illness, unemployment, emotional difficulties or problems at work, let's look to Mary our Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix. Mary, our mother in the order of grace, shows us the way to Jesus. She assures us that will come again. She gives us hope.

O Mother of Holy Hope, pray for us this Advent season and help us to be faithful stewards of God's grace. Help us to wait patiently, and with joy in our hearts, for your son's return. May we do God's will always. Amen.

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