



45. The Immaculata – the Ideal Image of the Human Person

The Blessed Mother's special mission is ultimately based on God's plan of redemption, which gives her a special position and role in the work of redemption as the permanent helpmate and associate of Christ. Thus the Blessed Mother is the Bride and Mother of Christ.

However, this is not the full picture. The special grace of the Immaculate Conception, and the sinlessness that follows from it, makes the Blessed Mother the ideal image of human beings. The way God envisaged human beings, and created them in Paradise, is made visible in the Blessed Mother. In the vast context of the history of ideas Fr Kentenich saw the importance of the Immaculata at the turning point from a theocentric to an anthropocentric worldview. Until the 16th century philosophers, theologians and artists asked themselves: "Who is God?" So the focal point of their thinking was the question about God. This changed at the beginning of the modern era: with the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the development of the natural sciences. Martin Luther struggled with the existential problem: "Where can I find a just God?" The natural sciences discovered the power of the human intellect and technology. So today the dominant question is: How do people see themselves? What role do they play in history? What is their responsibility for creation? Where are their greatness and their limits? How do they relate to God – if there is such a thing as faith in God?

God does not give a theoretical answer to the question about the image of human beings and their role in world history; he reveals it in the Blessed Mother. So making God's Covenant more specific in a covenant of love with the Blessed Mother takes on a special meaning when viewed in relation to the questions and developments of our times. Fr Kentenich understood himself in a very special way as the herald of this image of Mary, and as an educator of Marian people.

The text presented here illustrates this point. Theological explanation is connected with heartfelt enthusiasm, so this text bears witness to our founder's mission and becomes a special challenge to us.

The teaching on the Immaculata in this conference is seen in connection with the beliefs and convictions that existed before the dogma was pronounced. In his talk Fr Kentenich repeatedly and exclusively used the Latin technical terms, which have been left in the text. However, a translation and/or explanation follows:

Mediatrix = Mediator (Feminine form). Gives expression to the belief and conviction that the Blessed Mother is "Mediatrix of all graces".

Sponsa = Spouse.

Consors = Consort, Associate.

The text also plays with concepts taken from the story of creation:

Fiat = Let there be. At the same time it is the answer of the Blessed Mother at the Annunciation: Let it be done to me.

Factum est = It came to pass; "And it was so."

Descendat = May he (the Holy Spirit) descend.

The text is taken from the concluding conference of the "Dankeswoche 1945" – Week of Thanksgiving 1945 in Heinrich Hug (ed): *Hier war Gott: Chronik 1939-45 (God was Here: Chronicle 1939-1945)*, Berg Sion 1999, S. 375-396.

One day those words were spoken – those effective, wonderfully effective words: "*Fiat Maria! Et facta est Maria!*"¹ They are to be spoken again today. What are we expecting? A completion of the miracle of Mary, a completion in every respect of the complete human being, the fully redeemed person in the sense of being completely holy!

This places us in the thick of the tumultuous waves of our present times. The battle of our present times concerns the image of human beings. It is an ancient battle. Please note: Was it by chance that in the last few years the Church has placed a double crown on the head of the Blessed Mother – the crown of the Immaculata? The Blessed Mother is revealed as the *Sponsa Christi*. Now the Church is on the way to placing the crown of the Mediatrix on her head. The glories of the Blessed Mother are again revealed in a perfect way. As the *Consors Christi* she is the Mediatrix, the general mediator of grace. "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper who will be like him".² We see the perfection of this likeness in the Immaculata, the perfection of the human person. The person who is fully human, who is fully Christian, the fully redeemed human being, is thus presented to us in our times in the image of the Blessed Mother. In the image of the Blessed Mother, the Immaculata and Mediatrix, we are shown the sun of attainable human dignity and human nobility.

We know, my dear Schoenstatt Family, that dogmas do not just present clarity to the mind, they also point out the direction for our personal striving and struggles. Dogmas are also an answer to the needs of a time. *Fiat – descendat!* The Blessed Mother has to work the miracle of Mary in us once again. In which direction? We want to grow more deeply into the ideal of the person, the complete human being, as exemplified by the Blessed Mother, the complete Christian, the completely holy person, the completely redeemed person.

The image of humankind has to be saved! This image of humankind is greatly endangered today. By creating new gods people are attempting to fill the vacuum that has arisen as a result of removing God. Sometimes this "god" is science, sometimes feelings, sometimes material things, sometimes the stomach, sometimes the machine. People became tired of discovering God in themselves, so they looked outside themselves. Human beings are seen as a component, a part of a machine, while human society is itself a machine.

These are the depths to which human beings have sunk. Such spiritual currents came to a certain climax in 1854. The Church in its leader, the Pope of that time, felt that all were heading for the abyss. Human beings were being degraded! The intellectual niveau, the spiritual niveau, the supernatural niveau was falling. The supernatural sphere was being eradicated. There is no grace, there is no Triune God. Widespread sections of the Church were being drawn into this vortex. Now look at the amazing courage of the Pope! In this situation the Pope simply placed the ideal of the human person, the full image of the human person, the fully redeemed person, the Immaculata, in a

¹ Let there be Mary! And there was Mary!

² Gen 2,18.18

quite unique way before the eyes of the world. Let us recall, if I see things correctly, this is the first instance in which the Church has proclaiming a dogma, that of the Immaculate Conception, without being forced to do so by heretical tendencies. Usually the Church proclaims that a truth is a dogma if it has been attacked by heretical forces. In this instance there are no heresies. Instead there is obviously an attempt to oppose a dreadful need of our times with a dogma. It took tremendous courage to place the ideal image of the human person before the eyes of the present times when the image of humankind had been disfigured.

Pius IX expected great things of this dogma. In 1904, in his jubilee encyclical, Pius X returned to Pius IX's words and noted: The expectations the Church had of this dogma have only been partially fulfilled. We would say that the image of Mary had not saved the image of the human person sufficiently. The words of transformation, that miraculous saying: "*Fiat et facta est Maria consors et sponsa Christi*"³ has not yet become a complete reality.

We find the same thought expressed by Leonardo a Porto Maurizio. He died at the beginning of the 18th century. On his tomb in Rome we will find a quotation or a copy of a letter he himself wrote, in which he confesses: When the Immaculate Conception has been declared a dogma, a doctrine binding in faith, and its influence is felt, the world will be at peace. I can understand the connection very well. The false image of the human person has torn the world apart today. God and human beings are inter-dependent. Human beings co-operate in creating history. At the heart and centre of the revolution today is the revolution involving the image of the human person. So salvation can only come to the German people and Fatherland, indeed, to the whole world, if the image of the Immaculata, the image of the full human person, the full saint, the fully redeemed human being, is again seen everywhere and imitated everywhere. That is to say, when Mary, as the *consors et sponsa Christi*, has become a perfect reality in all people and in the whole world. Please understand the great mission of our Family. We are Mary; year by year since 1914 we have increasingly become Marys. Today we are expecting the perfect miracle of Mary as the miracle of Pentecost. What does that mean? A deeper knowledge and a complete realization of the ideal image of the human person.

Will it be worth our while to pause here and look up longingly to the image of the Immaculata? The sun of human dignity and greatness shines out towards us.

Wouldn't we like to turn our gaze to the Mediatrix? Here, too, we find that the image of the human person is being saved. The sun of human nobility shines out towards us. If we want this double crown to be placed again on our heads today – the crown of God-stamped greatness, the crown of God-stamped nobility – we will have to say: Then the Pentecost miracle, as a Marian miracle, will have been completed in us. So let us send up the beseeching cry in this sense: "*Descendat Maria consors et sponsa Christi, ut Fiat – et Fiat – Germania sancta mariana!*"⁴

Can you feel what a profound content is placed in that saying? Our quiet meditation could then point out the Immaculata and the Mediatrix to us. The more we lift the veil from the God-willed image of human beings, and the more we see the ideal of the God-stamped image of human beings before us, the more our longing will grow in strength, the more wistfully we will look into our times and world, and the more actively we will want to draw heaven down to us.

1. First yardstick: The sun of human dignity and greatness, as it is revealed to us in the Blessed Mother, in the Immaculata, is **the sun of immaculateness and purity**, the sun of an unbroken fullness of natural and supernatural life, the sun of victorious strength and an immeasurable union in love. A first statement, an important statement, which shows us the direction for our striving and struggles. It is the object of our longing, but also the object of our hope. This is the only way we

³ Let there be Mary, and Mary came into existence, the Helpmate and Bride of Christ.

⁴ Mary, descend as the Consort and Spouse of Christ, so that Germany may become a holy, Marianland.

want to leave our Pentecost hall in the hope that the Triune God will respond to our earnest petition and speak his “*fiat*” and “*Facta est*”. Isn’t the image of the Blessed Mother, the image of the Immaculata, also the image of immaculateness and purity? She is unspotted, she has not been stained by any flaw, she has not even been stained by inner chaos, outer conflict, the rebellion of her drives. Above all she is untainted by the powerful chaos and rampage of her sexual drives. An ideal image!

Please take a look into the world in which this truth has been declared a dogma; look into the world that has proclaimed the dogma! Everywhere we see the opposite. Truly, when we compare the present times with the ideal image that has been placed before our eyes, we will know that the Immaculate Conception has by no means radiated its full effectiveness. Countless people see the “blond beast”⁵ as their ideal; human drives, the sexual drives, are engaged in orgies. And the Blessed Mother? How do we see the Blessed Mother? Immaculate, untouched, free from the rebellion of her drives. “*Fiat Maria!*” Mother, if only I were like you! That is insufficient: Mother, if only I were you! Isn’t that part of the longing for Paradise that has been awakened in us in the image of the Blessed Mother, through emphasizing the prominence of the Immaculata? Hasn’t the profound meaning, the profound longing for inner freedom, for inner purity, especially freedom from the power of our sexual drives, been awakened in us? God is wonderful in the measures he takes. He has not just given abstract ideas to the world, because he knows human nature. So he has given us this captivatingly lovely visual aid in the image of the Immaculata.

Can you notice that when we dig more deeply, all of us without exception feel that the law of membership,⁶ this rebellion, is also to be found in us? Paul expressed it in these classic words: “In fact I do not do the good I want, but the evil I hate”.⁷ Yes, it is also the case with us. We are almost inclined to accuse the Creator of all, and tell him as we shake our heads in amazement: You have been terribly daring! You have combined the most contradictory levels of being in us human beings, and given us the task to connect them into a harmonious whole. On the one hand there is matter, on the other the spirit. Look at the contradictory tendencies we have in us! How much daring it took to create humankind! And this daring on God’s part, we have to admit, has been unsuccessful in countless instances. It failed in the root, in Adam and Eve, and since then God’s “handiwork” has been a failure everywhere.

There was only one occasion when this daring was a perfect success in someone who was only human: In the Immaculata! There she stands, the Blessed Mother, with the moon under her feet – the symbol of all that is changeable not just in the world, in world events, but also in our own lives. She has it completely underfoot. “Mother, if only I were you!”

Please think of this: Here we have a corrective not only for our thinking, not only for a general longing of humanity, brought home to us in a concrete form. It is not just an illustration of a great idea, oh no, it also strongly and profoundly hooks into the elemental striving in our nature to rise higher. Thanks be to God that we have within us not only a drive that drags us downwards, but also a drive that drives us upwards. So we also have the strong urge within us to rise upwards. Why is it that the starry skies make us so happy? Why is it that when we hear wonderful descriptions of nature, as we did in the “*Ver Sacrum*”⁸ play when we climbed the mountain in spirit, why is

⁵ An allusion to the racial ideal of National Socialism (Nazis) of the blond and blue-eyed human being, as well as the ideology of following the *Führer* with unbridled drives.

⁶ Reference to Ro 7,23: “...but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”

⁷ Ro 7,19.

⁸ Holy Springtime. Fr. Kentenich is referring to the play performed in 1935 by the students in the Pallottine Minor Seminary in Schoenstatt. It portrayed an ancient Roman legend of a people in crisis that sacrificed the best of their youth, sending them out to settle a new land. This poetic 3-act play was written by one of the Pallottine teachers, Fr.

it that a profound, almost sobbing longing is awakened in us to climb upwards? Please try to imagine, for example, a virginal springtime, or the whiteness of snow, or the pure eyes of a child. Notice how they awaken all that is great within us. As Goethe put it: "Two souls dwell in my breast ..."
Two souls – the one drags us elementally downwards, the other elementally upwards. Take all the wonders of our world and then place the image of the Immaculata in their midst. Please compare the image of the Immaculata with all these symbolic wonders. The image of the Blessed Mother outshines all these wonders. So if we look into this ideal image, the upward tug to the heights, the longing for wholeness, for perfection, the longing for an unbroken nature, for overcoming all that is sickly in our poor, weak nature must be awakened.

We are living in strange times. What can non-Catholics give humankind? Only moral values, an abstract ideology in relation to morality. Please place the image of the Blessed Mother on this high moral plane, with her morally unbroken nature, before the eyes of the people, and before our own eyes, as she really is. It is the Immaculata in all her unbroken wholeness who shines out before us Catholics. The miracle of Mary has to become an increasing reality in us today. We know to whom the Blessed Mother owes this freedom from every blemish: Christ. Since she is the *Sponsa Christi*, since she is the *Consors Christi*, she is spotlessly pure, she is completely untouched. "*Fiat Maria sponsa et consors Christi!*" We call out once again, and when the Blessed Mother speaks those words, and when God speaks the words of transformation, as he did at Pentecost, we are told that suddenly "*Et facta est!*" – it came to pass. For us this will mean that we will grow strongly into the control of our drives, into the integrity of our whole being, into the wholeness of our whole nature. This is how we can describe the new person!

“... That new people may come into existence
who are strong and free on earth
in joy and suffering
as Christ was”.⁹

Being without stain is something negative. The Immaculata is something positive. There is a fullness of life, a natural and supernatural fullness of life. A supernatural fullness of life means being filled with grace. God is Love! Oh, if only we were so filled and gripped with this awareness! God cannot do anything else, he has to love, he wants to love, his desire to love is immeasurable. If only human beings could understand how to remove the obstacles to God's desire to love, God's willingness to give himself! The only obstacle to God's willingness to give himself is sin, it is selfishness, self-centredness! The Blessed Mother did not know this obstacle.

There you have the first measure for the fullness of grace contained in the vessel of the blessed among women.

2. The second yardstick is the strong attraction of a great task, **a great mission**. The obstacles in her nature were removed. She was unspotted, untouched, without stain, not even touched by selfishness, and, on the other hand, there was the attraction of a mission stamped with God's features. Her mission consisted in being *consors et sponsa Christi* and hence *Mater Christi*. You now have the two measures of her fullness of grace.

Applied to myself, to us, my dear Schoenstatt Family, can you guess how strongly God has touched us, how strongly he moved through our ranks when we made the Inscriptio? Through the Inscriptio we have removed, at least in principle, the most essential opposition to God's desire to give himself to us. What is that? Our sickly ego, our self-adoration! So you may take it in faith that from the moment we freed ourselves from self, at least in principle, an endless stream of God's love has

Gerhard Hermes, and inspired a whole generation of Schoenstatt members who saw in this their ideal and mission. Fr. Hermes drew on a report of an ancient religious practice in central Italy mentioned in the works of Titus Livius (Book 22, chapters 10 and 11). See J.Klein, Heinz Schäfer (Limburg, 1955), p. 41-43.

⁹ *Heavenwards*, Hymn of Thanksgiving, vs. 6, p.165.

flowed through our ranks. Am I imagining things when I say that since the Inscriptio the stream of grace flowing from the shrine has become more powerful? If we compare it to the volume of water in a river, we would now have to say it has become a torrent. Will this torrent soon become a sea?

When we talk about community graces that are placed at the disposal of a community, we can measure how many graces were placed at our disposal at the beginning in 1914, in 1939, and since we made the Inscriptio. To express it symbolically: Whoever gives themselves to the Family today may expect to receive considerably more grace than those who espoused themselves to the Family ten years ago. Why? Look at the image of the Blessed Mother: Any opposition to God's willingness to communicate himself to her was removed, and, on the other hand, there was the strong incentive of her task. She was to become the *consors et sponsa Christi, Mater Christi*. So the saints and theologians tell us that the fullness of life, the supernatural fullness of life, reached a degree and measure in her to the greatest extent possible to a human being. From this you can understand the saying of St Bernard: God could have created a greater world, but he was unable to create a greater Mother.

You may not get stuck with this supernatural fullness of life. The image of the Blessed Mother with her unbroken nature also reflects to us the image of her fullness of natural life. You can feel that today everything cries out for life, life, dynamism, dynamism! For the sake of life people sell the truth for a mess of pottage. Where is the fullness of life? Mother, if only I were you! *Fiat, fiat, fiat!* Let us repeatedly call out this petition to heaven, but let us do it with the Blessed Mother. If the living God utters the same words, they will become words of transformation, and that means: "*Facta est Maria!*" The full image of human beings, the completely holy, the completely redeemed person, will then increasingly become a reality in us. The supernatural stream of life will grow in us, but at the same time so will the natural stream of life. We may not take it for granted that a created being, a being like the Blessed Mother, contains and unfolds the highest conceivable degree of natural life and reality.

Can you feel what those words imply?

Please note how clear her **mind** must have been because everything was unbroken. Original sin has clouded our intellects. What about the Blessed Mother? You will find a sample of the clarity of her intellect in the Magnificat. It is a compendium of the whole of Sacred Scripture, it summarises all that she had discovered in the Bible.

Notice how her **will** must have had an elementally unbroken strength. Everything converges on her great ideal, the ideal on which God has stamped his features: *Ecce ancilla Domini!* We see her there, built into God! We see her there enraptured by God, orientated to God. All that we learn about her in the Bible is elementally directed to one great goal.

What about the glow and warmth of her **feelings**? Please take note of what I have said so often on other occasions: The genuine image of humanity, the genuine image of the Blessed Mother. So she stands before us as the high ideal of a natural and supernatural fullness of life.

3. The third yardstick. The radiant image of human dignity and greatness has a third ray – it is the ray of **victorious strength**. Our present times shudder under one trial of strength after another, but what sort of trials of strength are they? Are they not the trials of an elephant's strength? They are the trials of strength of a wild and bloodthirsty tiger. We Catholics, especially our young men, have to be careful not to be confused about the concept of strength. We often see the image of the Blessed Mother in quite the wrong light as the image of softness, of sentimentality, of what is feminine and weak. The image of the Blessed Mother purifies our concept of strength. What does true strength consist in? True and genuine strength is moral strength; genuine strength is the supernatural victory of grace over all that is natural in us; it is the victory of grace over the devil. The victory of grace, that is the great ray proceeding from the Immaculata in order to reveal the true image of humanity to us. Wouldn't you like to examine this step by step in the image of the

Blessed Mother? The victory of grace over what is purely natural is most perfectly and brilliantly expressed in the Immaculata. She is untouched by every power of the devil – that is how we see her! In the Proto- Gospel she is characterised as the great bringer of salvation. Together with our Lord she was to crush the head of the devil. This portrays the whole meaning of world events already at their beginning. That is her great task; that is why she was always victorious over the power of the devil. That is why the great miracle of grace that took place in her was never broken. She stands before us victorious over the drives, victorious over nature, victorious in grace. She stands before us victorious over the devil and the influence of the devil.

In this context it is possible that we have often asked ourselves: How did it happen? Did God make a fool of himself? Everything he created was good, humankind was also good. But what are people today like? God has suffered a tremendous fiasco in the way he has formed and moulded human beings. Or so it seems! However, the ultimate answer is given by the image of the Blessed Mother. God did not experience a fiasco in the Blessed Mother. This is also the reason why we love the Blessed Mother so much. In her we see the tremendous image of humankind take on the form God had envisaged and planned from all eternity. All our longings are awakened and constantly re-awakened when we look at this image. Try to understand the confession made by the theology professor at that time: He would despair of humankind when he looked at people. We don't need to go into a concentration camp to do this, we only need to be on our streets, in our trains, wherever we may be. How much confusion, how much is broken in human nature! We can understand why people prefer to have a dog rather than people around them; they lavish far more care and love on a dog than on the development of a human being. Look at how the ideal image of a human being has been degraded! The dogma of the Immaculata had to be proclaimed even if only for the sake of human beings. Whoever believes in the Immaculata, whoever keeps the image of the Immaculata in view, will believe again in the greatness and dignity of people.

So let us repeat: Mother, if only I were like you! It honours us. Woe to those who caricature the image of the Immaculata, who reject the Blessed Mother, who refuse to give the Blessed Mother that space in their thoughts. Mother, if only I were like you! You may not think that this victoriousness, and the tremendous victory over nature and the devil won by grace in the Blessed Mother, applies to me alone. No! Here you have the proof that grace will ultimately win the victory over the whole world and the whole of humankind. The Blessed Mother is the guarantee that grace will win the victory everywhere; that grace will ultimately have the last word also over the devil. It is not possible to look at the image of the Blessed Mother often enough. Everything within me urges me to look at her image again and again, so that I can drink my fill, so that I can fill myself with the Blessed Mother, with the sense of victory, with the victorious formation of the image of the human person marked by God.

Let us continue. You may not think that this victory of grace over nature, the complete victory over nature and the devil in the life of the Blessed Mother, was won without a battle! Of course, it was not the battle we have to fight, a battle against evil. Here again you have a great description, a proof, of how superficial people today have become. When they talk about a battle, they usually mean a battle against what is below. However, there is also a battle upwards by which we grow into God's wishes. ... Have we any idea how great the battle was in which the Blessed Mother was engaged? It was a battle between noble, purely human and natural motherly love, and her love for the whole world, her love for redeemed humankind. I am sure you will agree that I am right when I say that there has hardly ever been a created being who possessed such a profound love for God, and knowledge of God, as the Blessed Mother had. When we see how our Lord broke down under the burden of sin, we will see how much the Blessed Mother must have felt the burden of the sin of the whole world. This gave rise to the urge to erase the burden of sin, to honour God once again, to tear up the account of our debt. On the other hand there is this profound understanding; she was deeply shaken by the need of broken human life, of sinful humankind!

Let us go on and consider: Is there any other being who has loved so strongly and fervently as the Blessed Mother? She loved our Lord with an immeasurable love. We men have no antenna for this. That is also why we do not understand how strong the Blessed Mother was. From this vantage point can you begin to grasp the moral strength of the Blessed Mother under the Cross? She freely and willingly chose to offer up the person she loved most – our Lord. He meant more to her than her own life! What strength of soul!

My dear Schoenstatt Family, have we also not reached the climax of our soul's strength in the Inscriptio? Through it we sacrifice what we love most. There is absolutely nothing that we are not prepared to place on the altar of sacrifice. Notice that whoever looks at the image of the Immaculata is given a wonderful corrective for his or her concept of victory and strength! You can give yourselves a lesson in morality in the schools, but everything remains merely in the intellect, the heart is not gripped! In the Blessed Mother the image of a perfect human being shines out to us. Fiat! Today I want to call out again and again: *Descendat Maria consors et sponsa Christi, ut fiat Germania sancta mariana!*"

You see, the *sponsa Christi* is so noble because she is also the *consors Christi*. You can feel that she exemplifies the full image of the *consors Christi* in such a classic way because she is the *sponsa Christi*. So, *Fiat Maria!* Through our union with Christ, through our graced union with Christ, the ideal image exemplified in the Blessed Mother has increasingly to be copied in our lives.

4. The fourth yardstick. The radiant image of human dignity and greatness also reveals to us the ray of an **unbroken depth of loving union**. Please note what profound and immeasurable love must have been alive in God at the moment he envisaged the image of the Blessed Mother. Eternal Wisdom designed the plan, eternal Wisdom made the choice, and immeasurable Mercy gave life to this ideal image. In all her glories the Blessed Mother is the classic visual aid given by eternal Love to humankind.

We have to look into how everything was created. We could follow up all that has happened in our personal histories. Everything is a proof of God's love. What an immeasurable, loving union! What a tender and fervent love must have filled the Blessed Mother towards God, the heavenly Father, our Lord, the Holy Spirit! We like to look for a yardstick to measure the degrees of love. Let us mention a few. Take a few, quick measures for love.

The fewer the obstacles, the greater the love. The Blessed Mother knew no obstacles. All morbid self-centredness had gone, so how great must not her love for God have been?

The greater the measure of grace, the greater must be the measure of love! We are told that God loved her and removed all obstacles. Isn't the being, the whole being of the Blessed Mother, an incarnated gift of God, an incarnated gift from God? Think of all we know about her endowment: Bride, virgin of virgins, Mother of God. Just try to visualise this for a moment! Hers is an immeasurable calling, an immeasurable sea of grace.

Compare this, please, with ourselves. How great must the Blessed Mother's love have been for our Lord! So, *Fiat Maria!* The *Fiat* was spoken once. *Et facta est Maria!* Today we await a Pentecost miracle, a new miracle of Mary! And when those words are spoken, "*Et facta est Maria!*" we will also to feel how strongly our fervent love for God, for Christ, for being gripped with love for Christ, will grow.

I think I had to say this to you after the thanksgiving celebration. Now God is speaking his "*Fiat*" – let there be Mary, let there be Mary, the *sponsa et consors Christi* in us and through us, that is, the complete human being, the complete saint, the complete Christian, the person who is completely redeemed! Are we able to say already today: "*Et facta est Maria*"? And Mary became a reality! After ten, after twenty years? Feel how our tasks are growing! Like the Blessed Mother we want to be not just *sponsa*, but also *consors Christi*. That was the stimulant, that was what roused and inspired the living God to show her his love and grace in such endless measure. We too will always

be *consors Christi* with the Blessed Mother and in the Blessed Mother. So, go out into the world always!

Has the sea of grace grown? At the turn of the century we proclaimed the century of saints, a century of saints, at least in some of our Family circles. The Blessed Mother has to become the Mother of saints. Please read the "Prayer of Leaders".¹⁰ We who live in the world depend on canonisable saints. That is why our Family has to become a Family of saints. The ideal of human beings depicted in the Blessed Mother is the *altera Maria*; the little miracle of Mary has to become a reality. When does it become a reality? Not just when we strive and struggle to attain it. We feel how tired our soul is, we are unable to keep going – the miraculous word has to be spoken, the word of transformation: *Fiat!* Not only the Blessed Mother has to speak that word, not only must we reach out towards it, the Triune God has to speak it. The word of transformation is an omnipotent word. That is the great event, that is the great gift, we expect to receive from this week; it is what we beg for. We believe and hope – and hope confidently and victoriously – that the living God has spoken that word of transformation.

That is why I have deliberately painted the picture of the Blessed Mother for you. The image of human dignity and greatness, which shines out to us in Mary, the *Sponsa Christi*, reaches its climax in the Immaculata. We also look up to the Blessed Mother as the great *Consors*. "*Fiat, descendat Maria consors Christ!*" The radiant image of the *Consors* shines out to us in its climax in the Mediatrix. Human nobility is the nobility of freedom with which she freely wills and chooses to follow the least wishes of eternal Love, and consciously offers her freely willed and chosen co-operation in the redemptive work of eternal Love. A world on its own! Nevertheless, you can feel that it isn't child's play to become Mary. You can feel that what we want as a Family has not been drawn out of thin air; it is the result of feeling our way respectfully towards discovering eternal Wisdom's great plans of salvation. You can feel that the programme for the year is not just a plan for a year, but for a century. You can feel that all that we have said until now, starting with the Founding Document, all that we have wanted until now, is something like a summary, a certain peak performance in the programme for the century. Everything resonates – a beginning, an end; an end and a beginning of all we have said until now.

¹⁰ Cf. *Heavenwards*.