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“From that hour the disciple took her into his home” (John 19:28).

Acts 1:12-14; John 19:25-34

With Pentecost, the Easter season ends and Ordinary time resumes. We might say that the mysteries we have been absorbing these past 50 days now become an "ordinary" part of our lives. Baptism means that we are carrying the death and resurrection of Jesus and applying his mind and heart to everything we do.

Today is also a Marian feast that reminds us of Mary’s maternal role for the community gathered at Pentecost. The disciples preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit are about to experience something Mary had already experienced three decades earlier when the Holy Spirit overshadowed her in Nazareth and Jesus was conceived in her womb. Pentecost repeats this divine/human conception as the same Holy Spirit enters the disciples, and they become the body of Christ, the church.

Today’s Gospel returns us to the foot of the cross, where Simeon’s words to Mary in the temple are fulfilled: “A sword of sorrow will pierce your heart” (Luke 2:34). The church born in wind and fire on Pentecost includes the mystery of Jesus’ crucifixion and death as a “sign of contradiction” to the world.

Mary is the perfect model for discipleship, and all her liturgical and doctrinal feasts remind us that we, too, are meant to say “yes” to the Word by conceiving, carrying and birthing Christ in our lives. From his cross Jesus entrusted Mary to the beloved

disciple, and “from that hour he took her into his home.” We are invited to do the same. Pope Francis’ enthusiasm for Marian devotion is more than his encouragement to say the rosary or make novenas; it is a way of life that invites us to share Mary’s intimate participation in the life of her crucified and risen son. The rosary has been a point of entry for many believers into the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of Jesus through the eyes and heart of Mary. Millions of Catholics benefit from this simple practice. We honor Mary by taking her into our hearts and assenting to God’s will as she did when she said, “Be it done to me according to your Word.”

This emphasis on Mary is also an important counterweight to the all-male leadership in the church as a way to say to bishops that if you want to follow Jesus, become more motherly in your pastoral care and deepen the “feminine genius” of the Holy Spirit in your spiritual lives. If the church really wants to be a sign of contradiction, it can confront the old boy rules that still run the world by being what it pretends to be from the top down and actually is from the bottom up -- Holy Mother Church.

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