



# The Marian Journal

Keeping members and friends of the  
Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos informed.

<<October 2009>>

Volume 1, Number 1



*Rooted in the  
ancient...  
reaching for  
tomorrow.*



*We are an  
Independent  
Autocephalous  
Catholic  
ecumenical  
religious order  
dedicated to  
promoting  
devotion to the  
Blessed Virgin  
Mary, under her  
special Orthodox  
Church title, the  
Theotokos.*



**Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos**  
*(Ordo Sanctissimae Theotokos, O.SS.T.)*

## To Jesus Through Mary

"If, then, we establish solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only to establish more perfectly devotion to Jesus Christ, and to provide an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. If devotion to Our Lady removed us from Jesus Christ, we should have to reject it as an illusion of the devil; but so far from this being the case, devotion to Our Lady is, on the contrary, necessary for us - as I have already shown, and will show still further hereafter - as a means of finding Jesus Christ perfectly, of loving Him tenderly, of serving Him faithfully." - St. Louise de Montfort

"If anyone does not believe that Holy Mary is the Mother of God, such a one is a stranger to the Godhead." - St. Gregory Nazianzen (390 A.D.)

## Marian Devotion

The rationale for devotion to Mary, and devotion means honoring her and seeking her intercession, is simple and forceful. Mary's primary role in the divine scheme of salvation revealed in Scripture is to lead all her children to her Son. The Genesis 3:15 prophecy of the Woman and her seed in battle with the Devil reaches its climax in Revelation 12 where the Woman's seed now includes not just the Son but also all His followers. The author of Revelation had already laid the groundwork for this startling image with John 19 in which the "beloved disciple" (symbolizing all believers) is given the Woman as his Mother by her Son. In Marian devotion and in Marian appearances throughout history and throughout the world we see this Scriptural portrait come to life with the Mother of all believers leading them to salvation in her Son. She is not the Savior and she is not the source of salvation but she leads us to the Savior and to salvation. This is the mission assigned to her by God that we see in Scripture. The fundamental theme of Marian devotion is of going "to Jesus through Mary".

## Diversity of Denominations

The Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos is truly an ecumenical religious order. Although our Order is in the Catholic faith tradition of religious communities over the centuries, each member is free to follow Christ within the denomination of his/her own choice. With Christ as the foundation and center of our community, we remain dedicated to promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her special Orthodox Church title, the Theotokos.



***No longer bound by monastery walls, the Lord's service is exercised by the Community in the world, in God's creation.***

***Our Order is established as an "urban abbey" or "monastery without walls".***



***Totus Tuus***



## Diversity of Marian Views

With this diversity of denominational affiliations, comes an equal diversity of Marian views. A wide range of views on Mary exist at multiple levels of differentiation within distinct Christian belief systems. In many cases, the views held at any point in history have continued to be challenged and transformed. Over the centuries, Roman Catholic Mariology has been shaped by varying forces ranging from *sensus fidelium*, to Marian apparitions, to the writings of the saints, to papal encyclicals.

Anglican Marian theology varies greatly, from the Anglo-Catholic (very close to Roman Catholic views) to the more typically Protestant Evangelical views. Eastern Orthodox theology calls Mary the Theotokos, emphasizing her status as the mother of God incarnate in Jesus, but not the mother of God from eternity.

Protestant views of Mary vary from denomination to denomination. They focus generally on interpretations of Mary in the Bible, the "Apostles' Creed", (which professes the Virgin Birth), and the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, in 431, which called Mary the Mother of God. While some early Protestants created Marian art and allowed limited forms of Marian veneration, Protestants today do not share the veneration of Mary practiced by Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. Martin Luther's views on Mary, John Calvin's views on Mary, Karl Barth's views on Mary, and others have all contributed to modern Protestant views.

A better mutual understanding among different Christian groups regarding their Mariology has been sought in a number of ecumenical meetings which produced common documents.

Within Anglican Marian theology the Blessed Virgin Mary holds a place of honor. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, a number of traditions revolve around the Ever-Virgin Mary and the Theotokos, which are theologically paramount.

Yet, as an active theological discipline, Mariology has received the larger amount of formal attention in Roman Catholic Mariology based on four dogmas on Mary which are a part of Roman Catholic theology.

We believe that the Most Holy Mary Theotokos is the Mary for all Christians. Regardless of our individual denominational backgrounds, we all share the basic Christian beliefs held about Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. We choose to celebrate our commonalities instead of concentrating on our differences. As we continue to promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, we do so in hope that others might find in Mary resources for reconciliation, rather than reason for conflict.

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## Saying "yes" to God

"Why was I put on this earth?" "What is God's will for me?" "Does the Lord have a particular call for my life?" These are the questions that have inspired generations to search for their own ultimate purpose. But be prepared, the real answers may radically transform your existence! Are you ready to progress from a mere "purpose-driven life" to a "mission-driven life"?

We live in a time when most people talk about choice as some freedom they have and that to take away someone's choice somehow limits them. This "me-



***The Urban Abbey  
is about the quest  
for simplicity in  
the midst of the  
chaos of modern  
life.***



***"Henceforth all  
generations will  
call me blessed."  
~ Luke 1:48 ~***



***Mary, the  
Theotokos, pray  
for us to do the  
father's will for  
our lives.***

centered" view fails to connect us with a greater truth – the truth that God has a plan for each and every one of us. God desires our happiness through living holy lives. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, each person receives a "call" or "vocation" from God to holiness and service. This call is lived out as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person.

Discerning a call to religious life is about praying and waiting. It is about listening to God and trusting your heart. It is about a process where God's invitation to "come and see" will be a time full of grace. It is about allowing God to nurture you as you are transformed and committed to serving God's people.

Whatever our call, we are first and foremost called to a life of holiness! Before we were born, God had a plan for each of us. Nothing will make us happier than following this plan that God prepared for us. We live in a society that tells us to live for ourselves, that tells us to seek our own happiness. But selfish ambitions can strangle your life out of you and leave you empty. Only in following God will we truly be happy. Only in seeking God's will, will we be able to experience life to the fullest. As Jesus said: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

## **A Message from the Abbot**

Dear O.S.S.T. Family and Friends,

~ *Totus Tuus* ~ "Totally Yours"

It is with excitement and incredible joy that I write this message for the inaugural issue of *The Marian Journal*. The Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos was established on the eighth day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We are a small community of believers on a journey to seek spiritual growth and our place in the life of the Church. Many ask what our spirituality is. Are we Benedictines, Franciscans, Augustinians, or Dominicans? The spirituality of the Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos is without reservation Marian, yet also enriched by all these other traditions while at the same time being a trailblazer, establishing a new spirituality to meet the needs of men and women of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos is a warm and diverse religious community of Monks, Tertiaries, and Companions who are committed to embodying the message of God's unconditional love and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the church, in our community, and in the world! We are truly an Order committed to doing "whatever it takes" to promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to bring "all things together in Christ" and with Christ to build this world, brick by brick – so to speak, until Christ takes what we together have built and raises it up to the Almighty Father as the best fruits of our labor.

As Disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, we firmly believe that the core of our mission and ministry as a community of faith is rooted in our dedication and honor of the Holy Theotokos. Just as Mary was asked by Almighty God to bring his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, so the O.S.S.T member is dedicated to bring Jesus into this world of ours. All Christians are called to be the "body of Christ" today in the here and now of human existence. Members of the Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos are called and dedicate themselves in a special way – an act of solemn profession. How blessed we are



**Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos**

**Our Lady of Peace Abbey, Atlanta, GA.**

**Our Lady of Solitude Abbey, Mater, AZ**

**Our Lady of Divine Providence Abbey, Roanoke, VA**

**Our Lady of Poverty Abbey, New York, NY**

**E-mail:  
DomRobert@osst-abbey.org**

**We're on the Web!  
www.osst-abbey.org**

to share this ministry with you for, without question, you are God's reminder to us of the ministry which has been entrusted to us.

On behalf of the members of the Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos, it is our fervent desire to both serve and be of service to God by ministering to and with you. In every way, my hope and prayer is that you will always be open to and allow the Spirit of God to speak to your heart and that the warmth, welcome, and atmosphere of love and care that you encounter through this community of faith will restore, refresh, and renew your spirit as we seek to glorify God "in spirit and in truth."

Know that you have an open invitation to come join us. We look forward to sharing and celebrating our journey of faith with you.

Wishing You God's Peace and Abundant Blessings,

*Dom + Robert - Bishop - Abbot, O.S.S.T.*



**God Calls You  
The Church Needs You  
Come Join Us!**

**"Here I am, Lord, I am coming to do your will! Yes, my God, I want it: your law is deep in my heart" Psalm 40:8-9**



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