

## Mary, Queen of Confessors

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Originally, the title of confessor was given to Christians who professed their faith in times of Christian persecution and therefore had to suffer persecution, expulsion, torture, mutilation and imprisonment, but not directly undergo martyrdom. With the spread of Christianity and the decrease in persecution of Christians in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, this designation was also given to those Christians who lived a holy life, such as our king St. Edward the Confessor.

The word confessor is derived from the Latin *confiteri*, 'to confess; to profess'. It is now given to saints who lived a holy life and died in peace. The title thus distinguished them from the martyrs, who were those that had undergone death for their faith. Sometimes, it is associated with another title, such as pope, bishop or doctor.

Today we are venerating our Blessed Mother as their queen. The Confessors, as just said, didn't die for their faith, but they took their cross, and carried it till the end. They demonstrated numerous different ways to attain the same unique aim: to go to Heaven. Jesus never said that we had to die by the physical martyrdom to follow him. His only request is: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."<sup>1</sup>

Another time, he said to his disciples who were asking about their reward:

"Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."<sup>2</sup>

If Jesus promised such a reward to anyone who follows him, what could he offer to the woman who gave him birth, and pledged Her life to Him? Nothing more than being above all of these confessors of faith. Proclaiming Mary as their queen is an invitation and a comfort for us to remain faithful till the end, to convert our way, to constantly amend our life, to devoutly beg from her the blessings we could be afraid to ask directly to God.

All the confessors showed a great devotion to Mary. Whether being doctors, bishops, or simple priests or lay people, their prayer and confidence to the Mother of God never ceased. They took Her as their model, their example, their guide, and She showed them the way, a perfect path of silent acceptance of their fate, of the mission they received from the Lord, of the cross they had to joyfully carry in order to attain eternal salvation. Some of these confessors are universally known, but most of them will remain unnoticed until the Last Judgment.

Let's ask to Mary today to remain humble and discreet, always following God's will. Our life is in Her maternal hands. Although being the Mother of the Messiah, She always chose the

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<sup>1</sup> Mt., XVI, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Mt., XIX, 28-29.

last place, always letting Her Son and His disciples coming first. When She withdrew to the Upper Room with the Apostles, She took the last place. All of them, writes Saint Luke, “together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, persevered in prayer.”<sup>3</sup> The sacred writer was well aware of the merit of the divine Mother; he should therefore have named Her first. But, says one interpreter, as Mary was placed after the Apostles and the holy women, Saint Luke lists the people present according to the place each one occupied. She who was the first became the last, says Saint Bernard, so it is right that She became the very first.

“By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: ‘Thy will be done.’ [...] By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the ‘Mother of Mercy,’ the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. and our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender ‘the hour of our death’ wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.”<sup>4</sup>

Regina Confessorum, Ora pro nobis!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Acts, I, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 2677.