

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I was writing last week's article, I realized how hard it is to put into words the thoughts of the mind and movements of the heart. I hope I am up to the task this week as we look at the Luminous Mysteries.

The first Luminous Mystery (or "Mystery of Light") is the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist. Gazing upon the face of Christ in the Baptism, we see the illumination of the Holy Spirit, as He descends on Christ like a dove. The voice of the Father speaks from heaven: "**This is my Son, my beloved in whom I am well pleased**" (Matthew 1:17). One of the graces here is that by our baptism, we have put on Christ Jesus. He lives within you and me. The beautiful, innocent face of Christ is washed in the Jordan so that our marred, sinful faces may be washed. In baptism, God the Father washes us in the Blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live in you and me, and the Father calls us beloved children. He's pleased with us! Really. I often am not pleased with myself, yet the Father is pleased with me! When the Father looks at me, He sees Christ! Sit with that reality for yourself. **Mary:** help me to recognize the sacred dignity I have as a beloved child of God.

The second Luminous Mystery is the miracle at the wedding at Cana. Gazing upon the face of Christ, we see the light of joy in His face, celebrating with the happy couple their marriage. Mary, always attentive to the needs of her loved ones (and we are all her loved ones), sees the need of the couple – they have run out of wine. She goes to *her* beloved Son, Jesus, and tells Him of the need. Is Jesus' face perplexed at this moment? To perform a miracle is to begin the climb to the Hill of Golgotha and His death. But Mary's trust wins out, and Jesus changes the water to wine. **Mary:** help me to fly to you in my need, trusting that there is nothing that there is nothing you ask of Jesus that He will refuse.

The third Luminous Mystery is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is travelling around bringing the Kingdom of God – by preaching, healing, and driving our demons. There were beautiful times when He was accepted and acclaimed. Other times when people rejected Him, and sometimes they even tried to kill Him. I can see the face of Christ exhausted, barely able to keep His eyes open as the crowds kept coming to Him for healing and wisdom – so exhausted He was able to fall asleep in a boat in the middle of a huge storm! I see the compassionate face of Christ as He reaches out to touch the marginalized and unloved. I see the sad face of Christ as those whom He loves so deeply reject Him. I see the stern face of Christ as He commands demons to flee. **Mary:** help me never to be afraid to come to Jesus when I am in need.

The fourth Luminous Mystery is the Transfiguration. Jesus takes Peter, James and John up the high mountain and He is transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appear as well, talking to Jesus about His coming death. Jesus' face is aglow with divine radiance! As Venerable Fulton Sheen has said (and I paraphrase): if you put a lamp into an alabaster vase, it glows; and if you put Divinity into a human nature, it glows. Jesus is showing these disciples the glory of His Divine nature before the crucifixion. He wants them to be strengthened so they won't fall away, won't fall into despair. **Mary:** help me to see Christ's face in all the trials of my life, knowing that He is there in the bad times, as well as the good.

The fifth Luminous Mystery is the institution of the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, Jesus says to His disciples, "This is my Body... this is my Blood." He makes the Passover new by being Himself the Lamb that is slain and eaten. Now in the Eucharist, we gaze on the face of Jesus. Really! He shows us Himself – veiled again, so we're not overwhelmed by His glory – so we can make a choice to love Him. Every time we come to Mass, we have the chance to gaze on the face of Christ, and receive His Sacred Heart – His flesh into our flesh. Every time we go to Adoration, we have the opportunity to spend "face time" looking at Him, and *letting Him look at us*. **Mary:** may I never tire of gazing on Jesus' face, but may I fall ever deeper and deeper in love with Him!