



# Allocutio



## PRAESENTATA CURIA

Allocutio 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016

### Mary bore the greatest fruit

“A good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit” (Matt 7:18). We heard those words in the Gospel a few days ago.

My immediate reaction on hearing those words was to think of Our Lady. She bore the greatest fruit of all time. As we say in the Hail Mary, “and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus”.

But what does good fruit do? It feeds nourishment to people. And Jesus nourishes us with faith, hope and charity as well as many other great spiritual life-supports. Mary’s Son inspires, he gives hope in the face of difficulties and darkness, he encourages us by forgiving us our past falls and urging us on to better things, he gives people direction and helps them live better lives. He nourishes the world with the gift of charity which has even extended beyond the bounds of the Church with people seeing authentic love as something to be aspired to and to live by.

But fruit does not just give nourishment. Fruit often dies and begets further fruit. It falls into the ground. “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit” (JN 12:24). Jo Cox MP was killed. Did you hear much of her before she died? She is now a household name all around the world. But Jesus too was killed and his name is known everywhere across thousands of years and so much has been done in his name: care of the poor, hospitals, education, respect for life.

But there is another fruit he bore and that is life after death. Through his death he won for us life eternal. He not just showed us but has it awaiting for all who follow him. The greatest fruit Christ will give us is the Resurrection into eternal life. And rightly he gave that eternal life already to her. She bore the greatest fruit and that fruit won for her the Assumption.

Jesus often spoke of seeds falling onto the earth. Mary is of the earth. To belong to this world is to belong to this Universe of matter which embodies spirit. It is the spirit that gives life but it has to grow and mature in the soil of this earth. And that has to involve not just earthy things but having to rub shoulders with a people, the people of her family, society and history. Mary is



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the product of an earth in which sin has left a great wound in people. Mary had to bear the brunt of this as we all do but she had to bear a particular suffering. She loved her own people, she was steeped in her family's and nation's history and it must have been galling for her to see her son, the good fruit of her womb, treated as a criminal and a traitor of God.

She had belonged to a good family who had taught her the Torah and the Prophets. How well did she frame her Magnificat. She brought Jesus up in the practice of his tradition. How well he knew and how well he could quote the Bible! How steeped in prayer. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit so how much a sword must it have been that she was in effect accused of bearing bad fruit. Because by condemning Jesus as having sinned against God a wretched judgement was inflicted on her and her motherhood.

The fruit she bore sunk into the ground and rose up victorious. With his Resurrection she was vindicated. And this must remain a source of hope and encouragement to all who try to live by God's law and wonder if it is all for naught. Mary is saying to us: "No, if you work on yourself to be a good tree then you can only bear good fruit. And even when despite your best efforts it all seems to come to naught remember what I went through: my good fruit Jesus condemned as rotten fruit. But it is never so."

So let us follow Mary's way, trying to be good, being humble before God knowing that without his aid we are nothing, turning non-stop to God for help, trying to live to heroic levels the life of faith, hope and charity as she did. The good tree cannot bear bad fruit. With Mary let us become good trees and plants in God's garden and we can only bear good fruit.