

Another Advocate?

In the popular Catholic devotional, *The Glories of Mary*, St Alphonsus Liguori writes:

It is true, of course, that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of justice between human beings and God, and that, by virtue of His own merits, He can obtain for us and wants to obtain, pardon and grace as He promised. But in Christ, human beings cannot help recognizing and fearing the Divine Majesty, which belongs Him as God. So it was necessary to appoint another Advocate, to whom we can have recourse with less fear and with greater confidence. And the second Advocate is Mary.

I feel very strongly about such teaching because it distorts the image of the merciful and compassionate Saviour of the Bible. True, as sinners we ought to fear the God of Justice and Holiness. However, reconciliation with God cannot be obtained by applying to a "second Advocate" who is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. Peace with God is found in Christ for He is the manifestation of the goodness and mercy of God to sinners.

The Bible presents Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Advocate of the faithful before God. "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2). He is the 'propitiation' – he has appeased God's wrath against sinners, and there is no other way to become right with God. He does not plead 'innocent' for the people he represents; he pleads 'guilty' and then points to his blood as the sufficient payment for their sins.

We will not say a single word against the blessed mother of our Lord. Nor do we dare dishonour her by giving her titles and roles that only belong to her son, her Saviour and Lord.

There is none other whom we can approach "with less fear and greater confidence" as Liguori imagines. Any sinner can come to God through Jesus Christ for the Bible assures us that in him "we have **boldness** and access with **confidence** by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3:12).

During his earthly ministry, many came to Jesus. Did He ever forbid anyone? Did He ever reject a repentant sinner? The disciples tried to prevent the children from coming, but Jesus said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not." The demoniac was deserted by everybody; Jesus welcomed him and gave him liberty. The crowd rebuked the blind man and ordered him to be silent; Jesus heard him and gave him sight. Society isolated lepers in a separate colony; Jesus approached and touched them. The people were ready to stone the adulteress; Jesus had compassion on her and forgave her. To the thief nailed beside Him, Jesus obtained a place for him in His kingdom.

Do you think, then, friend, that the Lord Jesus will reject you if you turn to Him by faith? Listen to His wonderful invitation: "**Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**" (Matthew 11:28). Come to the Lord Jesus today, turning from sin and trusting in him with all your heart. He will give you rest as he has promised.