



## Authentic Womanhood

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Woman touched by God, authentic reflection of Mary

Mujer inspirada por Dios, reflejo auténtico de María



**Introduction:** Our society is unraveling. We are living in a time where any and all thoughts are considered valid and correct. Even when they contradict each other. How did we get here? It begins at the beginning of man and woman, the fall from grace. Mankind placing themselves above all, even God. When God created us, what was His intent? Let's take a look at this and our desire to return to His wish and will to become authentic women carrying out God's will and divine plan in this world. To become those who help change and restore harmony between our families and God.

When God created Eve, The Lord God said, *It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.* (see Genesis 2:18) God then gave Adam many animals and birds but none proved to be the suitable partner. *The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken up from the man.* (see Genesis 2:22) We were created of the same bones having the same flesh. We, male and female, were created in the image and likeness of God.

**Love in Person:** Father Kentenich gives us some insight to help us understand the mind of God in his written recollection, "Days for Couples," in the book The Family at the Service of Life.

*Let us take a look into Paradise. Adam should be the reflection of the only begotten Son of God. The woman, Eve, should be the reflection of the Holy Spirit. 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.' God the Father is the bond of unity between this world and the next. Adam with his creative strength should be the reflection of the Son, Eve the reflection of the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit?*

According to Father Kentenich the Holy Spirit is:

*Love in person. What is Woman according to God's intention? Love incarnate, love in person. This was how Eve should have carried out her task. She was meant to love man, she was meant to awaken man's love and redirect, pass on, man's love and her own love to God's heart. What did Eve do? She destroyed the foundation*

*for her theological existence. Instead of using Adam's love for her and her love for Adam in order that both hearts could love God, she misused her influence through love and opposed God." And so we have the fall from grace.*

A very sad story with a dismal ending, but God was not finished with mankind. In His love and goodness He: *gave us the gift of two new 'versions' of masculinity and femininity: He gave us the gift of Christ and of Mary, who the Church proclaims as the 'New Adam' and the 'New Eve'.* These thoughts can be found in the book, Family is Sacred by Hernan Alessandri.

Hernan Alessandri continues in his writing:

*Our modern psychology would simply say: being a man or being a woman are two different means of being and they penetrate the most intimate and the deepest parts of our human thinking, feeling, and of how we react to people and to things...He (God) desires that man and woman share the same dignity, however, they have different attributes in their way of being. Honoring this makes all the difference."*

**Complement and complete:** Even in our secular world there is the book, Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus. A book that recognizes we are uniquely different and complement each other by our very existence of being created male or female. We were never created to be identical. We were created male and female to complement and complete each other.

Why is it that women desire to become men? It is important to recognize that we are not talking about women and equal rights as men: such as receiving the same pay for the same job. What we are talking about is recognizing our unique abilities and gifts from God that a male was not given. We want to reclaim our very purpose from the time of creation by becoming an authentic woman.

**Three qualities of a woman's love:** According to Father Kentenich in his talks Recollection Days for Couples:

We are to be *incarnate love, love in person. That means:*

- 1. Loving others abundantly,*
- 2. Awakening love and*
- 3. Passing on love, directing it back to God's heart.*

*Giving love, awakening love, passing on love – is a mother's constellation of three stars.*

We find all these qualities in our dear Blessed Mother. She reawakens our hearts and inspires us to reach for these three stars. How our world needs to be awakened to authentic love through women, like you and me, reclaiming our identity as established by God and for God by serving His divine purpose and not our selfish wishes.

Where do we find the example? The strength? The help? We can only find our true identity as an authentic woman when we let go and look to the Blessed Mother. In her we have our example, strength, and help. She leads us - to love, awaken love and pass all love back to God's heart. Let us remind ourselves of the Blessed Mother's great task given to us by Father Kentenich in 1964:

*In Schoenstatt the Blessed Mother shall educate men and women of all classes of society, who as her instruments are able to form the Church in our technological era according to the plan of the eternal God. She wants to educate apostles who have the great mission to imprint the image of Christ upon the revolutionary world of today and tomorrow and to place a new world at the feet of the eternal Father God.*

**Virtues of Mary:** We enter into the covenant of love with Mary, allowing and desiring her to form us. We study her life and find a young girl *mature beyond her years* giving her *Fiat* (yes) to God and opening herself to God's will. We see her *suffering* as she carries Christ on the long journey to Bethlehem. We see her *humility* as she gives birth to our Lord and Savior in a humble stable. We see her *obedience* when Joseph takes their family in flight to Egypt. We see more *suffering* as she looks for Jesus when He was found in the Temple. We see her *service* and *care* when she points out the lack of wine at the Wedding Feast. We see her *humility* once again when Jesus does not acknowledge her as she waits outside where He is teaching, rather she gives us hope as His followers. We see her *suffering* as she accompanies Jesus to the cross. We see her *patience* and *love* as she witnesses His death and holds Him in her arms. We see her *trust* as she awaits Jesus' Resurrection. We see her *motherhood* as she awaits, with the Apostles, the coming of the Holy Spirit. We once again see her *patience* and *trust* as she waits for her time to assume into heaven. We see her *royalty* as she is crowned Queen of the Universe. All these examples from her life are covered in complete and total love.

All these examples are a roadmap to becoming an authentic woman. We can look to her life point by point and try to embody each quality in our own lives. How do we do this? I am reminded of countless times in my life where Mary taught me how to live better, how to live for God and not myself. That is what an Authentic Woman looks like in God's eyes - pure love.

**Personal Witness:** All of us have experienced the trust it takes to carry a child. Our pregnancy and labor were taken out of our control and all we could do was trust. Later, when my children were young adults, trust played a very important role in my life. I have 4 daughters, all of them were teenagers at the same time. During those years, one in particular, chose to leave the faith she was taught and tried to live her life without God. She could not see the consequences but we as parents did. As her Mom, all I could do was trust, pray and love.

I started going to daily mass whenever possible and asked Jesus to bestow the graces I received during communion upon her. I was also inspired to reclaim my pregnancy. Using a calendar printed out from the time I carried her in my womb, I would approach the altar for communion and say this prayer.

*I offer this communion for my daughter who I carried in my womb on this day Dec. 10, 1990. Please bestow all the graces from this communion on her. Take away anything the evil one did to her, take away anything the world did to her and remove anything I did to her. Make her whiter than snow as Eve and Mary at their birth.*

I did this each time I was able to go to daily mass until the nine months were finished. Sunday was my day to receive graces for the week and all Sundays from the year I carried my child plus holy days were already covered. After completing this task, I gave the calendar to my daughter so she would know of my love and care for her. I continued doing this for each of my children and my youngest daughter wanted me to share this Mary experience with you today.

**What can we do?:** It is our great joy as Mothers to open ourselves up to God - for His will and education. Becoming an *Authentic Woman* is so much of where we come from - why God created ME - mother and wife. Not just to exist but to live to be the Joy and Heart of our family. We say our *Fiat*. Then we will be ready to walk as she did with humility, trust, and patience. If we look to her example, love will always win. We can restore our society by simply asking ourselves: *What would our Blessed Mother do?* and then do it.

**Conclusion:** This is the time to take back our identity that the evil one is trying to distort. We must look with faith, and know, as females, we are necessary and important for the renewal of our times. There is hope when we allow the Blessed Mother to work in our lives and educate us. Let us also remember, females have been given a great ability to love abundantly. We were created for service and to awaken love in others, especially our husbands and children. We were created to pass all love back to God's heart.

*So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:13

**Discussion questions:**

1. Think of who has inspired you to be an authentic woman of God in your life and describe what qualities you are drawn to in that person.
2. Which mystery of the rosary is your favorite? What is Mary doing during this mystery? How can you take this quality and make it your own?