

## Mary Mother of God – C - 2019 (Fr Mark Starr)

*Numbers 6:22-27*

*Psalm 67: 2-3, 5, 6, 8*

*Galatians 4:4-7*

*Luke 16:16-21*

On the eighth day of Christmas, we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, the mother of God. We read in Luke's Gospel, after the shepherds are told by an angel of the birth of the Christ, they go in haste to Bethlehem and find Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in a manger. They make known the message they had been given and we read that Mary "kept all these things and reflected on them in her heart" (Luke 2). We read from Luke's Gospel this past weekend, that after the child Jesus is found at the age of twelve in the Temple he responds to his parents "Did you not know I needed to be in my father's house?" And again, we read, "Mary kept these things in her heart" (Luke 2).

Thirty Years ago, Pope John Paul II gave us an encyclical called: "*Redemptoris Mater, Mother of the Redeemer.*" He writes: "Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. She puts herself 'in the middle,' that is to say, she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she 'has the right' to do so" (Redemptoris Mater 21).

Mary, by allowing her vessel to be used by God to bring forth the redeemer, Jesus Christ, is indeed the mother of God and as Jesus is head of the Church, she is mother of the Church. Today, we celebrate Mary, Mother of God, who even to the point of allowing her Son to be sacrificed on the cross stands as our mother, full of grace, full of love.

John Paul II also says: “But above all, in the Church of that time and of every time Mary was and is the one who is ‘blessed because she believed’; she was the first to believe. From the moment of the Annunciation and conception, from the moment of his birth in the stable at Bethlehem, Mary followed Jesus step by step in her maternal pilgrimage of faith” (RM 25). In her example of being the first to believe, she draws each of us to believe – to exercise our faith.

Contrary to what many of our brothers and sisters of other faiths and denominations say (out of misunderstanding of our faith), we do NOT worship Mary. The Second Vatican Council Document on the Church says: "Mary figured profoundly in the history of salvation.... Hence when she is being preached and venerated, she summons the faithful to her Son and his sacrifice, and to love for the Father" (Lumen Gentium 65).

“The Church knows and teaches with Saint Paul that there is only one mediator: ‘For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all’” (RM 38, 1 Tim.

2). "The maternal role of Mary towards people in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power" (Ibid.)

Mary guards the words of the shepherds, those of Simeon at the presentation (Luke 2) and again her Son when he was twelve and found in the Temple, in her heart (Ibid.). How easy it would have been to discard the words as not making sense or to allow someone to steal this precious gift. Today, we as Christians are so often under attack and the world is intent on trying to take away that which we are called to guard and cultivate. Guard the words of truth faithfully every day - do not allow the world to conform our image of Christ nor of ourselves.

Mary, as a widow, would later draw on these words upon which she had meditated and guarded. She gave her son to the world at the Wedding Feast at Cana. She travelled with her son and witnessed the attacks of the Temple chief priests and elders against her innocent son. And finally, she witnessed her son crucified in his innocence. At that moment, it was through these words that she had carefully guarded in her heart that she was able to present her son back to the Father as he hung on the cross for us.

We remember the last act of Jesus as he hung on the cross dying for our sins. He said to his beloved mother, "Behold your son," and to John, the one whom he loved, "Behold your mother" (John 19). At that moment then and now,

John represents the Church, who receives Mary as our mother. As we begin this New Year, may we stop and meditate and guard the words of the Lord in our hearts. May we open others to the great gift that Mary brings to us through her example, always directing us, the faithful, to her beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Español:

- El evangelio de san Lucas se dice: Y María conservaba todas estas cosas, meditándolas en su corazón.
- Esta descripción de la actividad interior de María aparece todavía en otra ocasión: con motivo del encuentro de Jesús en el templo (Lc 2,51). En el presentación.
- En los dos casos, San Lucas utiliza dos verbos distintos: conservar y meditar

- Conservar: El primero sugiere la acción de guardar celosamente un tesoro muy valioso en lugar seguro. En su corazón - en los pensamientos de María personal - revelación privado.
- Guardar celosamente en lo más íntimo de su persona es lo que hace María con todo lo que escucha y observa. Es el mío.
- También, nosotros tenemos la palabra "medita" todos los acontecimiento y gestos que se producen alrededor de Jesús.
- Más tarde los mismos gestos y actitudes de Jesús serán el objeto de su labor de meditación.
- Es la acción de quien quiere entrar y asimilar el misterio.
- Meditar es nuestra respuesta de conservar o guardar. Meditar se dice que nosotros entramos en la vida de Cristo por nuestras acciones.
- Este es nuestra responsabilidad. Nosotros escuchan las palabras de Dios - el evangelio y otras palabras y después meditamos por eso tenemos el poder para vivir en la voluntad de Dios.
- Esta noche, después de la misa, tenemos una hora santa para adoración del santísima. Les pido que Uds. usen esta oportunidad para meditar en las palabras de Dios. Le pidan a Jesús su poder para vivir todas sus vidas por su amor. Por los sacramentos tenemos gracia para vivir vidas limpias.

- Esta noche, pasen tiempo y den gracias a Dios por sus dones, sus vidas, esta parroquia y especialmente para la esperanza de vida eterna.