

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
THROUGH MARY, GOD BECAME MAN

*“As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart”
(Lk. 2: 19).*

I love to begin by wishing you all: A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021!

There is no doubt that the year 2020 was a difficult year for everybody in so many different ways. We have been subjected to some hitherto unimaginable restrictions and rules that have separated and kept us apart from families and loved ones. Our family reunion and life cycle ceremonies have been postponed or held without the usual excitement and participation. We have not learnt some new words that have become very prominent, forming daily lexicon with uncomfortable nuances. Many have lost their jobs, while others have had to work or school from home. Many marriages have been threatened, and some couples have had to call it quits because spending a longer time together has exposed their weaknesses, and they suddenly realised they do not belong together. Some of us have lost our loved ones. It has been a year like no other.

While we may wish the Year 2020 away with no love lost, let us not forget that it is one historic year that we have been blessed to be a part of. In the midst of these sorrows and pains so much have been achieved, even by us. We have discovered how close God is to us and how quickly our homes could become sacred spaces of special encounter and God’s dwelling. When we listen to the news feeds and the figures of infected and dead persons, we cannot but thank God for His Mighty Hands that cover us like the chicken covers her brood. Let us count our blessings and not our woes; our success, not our failures; our gains and not our losses. Let us look to the future with hope and determination. Let us be aware that tomorrow cannot be better without our cooperation with God. With Him on our side, it will definitely be a better year. Therefore, let us resolve to change and draw closer to God.

It is within this context of change, determination and closeness to God that we celebrate on this First Day of the year, the last day of the Octave of Christmas, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. It is a celebration of yet another mystery on our journey to salvation. Mary, the daughter of Anne and Joachim, of the house of David, she became the mother of God. The idea of a human being bearing God seems a contradiction in terms, but that is the mystery that we celebrate today – that God, by the power of the Holy made this possible. According to St. Luke’s account of the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel explained to Mary that “The Holy

Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the Child to be born will be holy and shall be called Son of God” (Lk. 1: 35). In the womb of Mary, God and mankind are inseparably woven with infinite love. Indeed, with God, all things are possible (Lk.1: 37).

It is an extraordinary manifestation of divine love that God decided to send His “born of a woman” (Lk. 2: 21) just like any and every one of us. Day by day, night by night, week by week, month by month, God was gradually taking the form of humanity in readiness to save man. God could have sent His Son in any other way or form, but He would not have been one of us. In order to be one of us and like us, He had to be “born of a woman.” The creature, Mary, had to carry her Creator in her womb for nine months so that God would become man taking Her flesh, chromosomes, blood and semblance. One may dare to say that if Jesus had any physical semblance it could only be that of His Mother, the only human person He had any human connection.

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is worth celebrating when we consider the roles Mary played as the Mother of the Baby Jesus, who was growing up like any of us: learning to sit, to crawl and to walk; who cried when thirsty, hungry and uncomfortable; at any of these instances, Mary paid caring motherly attention. Therefore, our Blessed Mother was like every other mother experiencing the toils and labours of typical motherhood. We do not often think of Jesus as a little boy because we are all too familiar with His older image that it eclipses His natural tenderness. The image of Jesus as a vulnerable, fragile little infant, like any of our little ones, should move us to admiration, respect and love for our Blessed Mother, Who sat and watched her Son grow with incomprehensible amazement.

As a mother, Mary lived a contemplative life. St Luke describes this perfectly in these words: “As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Lk. 2: 19). There were so many things she could not explain nor understand. In her silence, she was in union with God surging in her heart for grace to carry out the task entrusted to her from the moment of her “Yes” to the Angel. Naturally, women are people of the heart. They know so much, they hear a lot, they see more than the men but speak very little. Like Mary, most mothers treasure the wonders (and some secrets) of their children and husbands in their hearts. Like Mary, our mothers are the spiritual heads of our families: they carry them their families, offering them on the altar of sacrifice in thanksgiving, for forgiveness and for progress.

Dear friends, as we begin this New Year with our Blessed Mother, let us ask Her intercession in that in this year we may flourish with the Lord’s blessings to enable

us to do all good works in good ways just as She did; to respond to the message of the Gospel with eagerness as the shepherds did. Let us ask Her to receive for us the grace to ponder, to hesitate and wait for God's guidance in whatever we set out to do. Let the image Mary, The Mother of God compel us to love and respect all women and mothers; to love and care about the vulnerable and the weak in our society and world. Let us ask Her intercession for the healing of our plagued and infected world. O Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL