

JANUARY 1, 2021
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Luke 2: 16-21

“MARY, OUR MOTHER.”

“A senior priest went to his bishop with this complaint: ‘Now I have great difficulty in preaching. I cannot get the people’s attention.’ After stroking his chin His Excellency suggested: ‘Say something striking at the beginning of your homily.’ ‘Could you give me an example?’ begged the old padre. ‘Well,’ suggested the bishop, ‘you might start like this: ‘I am in love’: ‘I am in love with a married woman’; ‘Her name is Mary.’ Next Sunday the priest started his sermon thus: ‘The bishop is in love’; He is in love with a married woman.’ After an embarrassing pause the priest continued: ‘But I have forgotten her name.’”¹ My brothers and sisters, how can we, Catholics and Christians, forget Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, too. We are in love to her because she is the mother of all, and like a real mother, will always shield us. This is the mother that we are in love with and will never forget her because she loves, cares, and protects us so that we may be near with her Son Jesus.

Today we are celebrating the Solemnity of the Motherhood of Mary. “We honor Mary by actively participating in today’s Mass and in all the Marian feasts of the Church throughout the year. In these Masses and at other times, we give Mary *hyperdulia* (an honor greater than that given to the saints (*dulia*) and less than the adoration we offer to God), because of the gifts of grace God granted her and because of the way she responded to these gifts. We also honor her in all the forms of Marian prayers we say: The Rosary, the Angelus, the Regina Caeli, the Hail Holy Queen, the *Memorare*, and so on. These are prayers we should pray so often we have them memorized. We can honor Mary by cultivating an interior life like hers. Mary meditated on, that is, thought about and prayed over, the events of her life in relation to God’s plan of salvation. We are participants in God’s plan of salvation, too. We are God’s instruments and fellow workers in God’s

¹ Mgsr. Arthur Tonne, frtonyshomilies.com

kingdom. Everything that happens to us has a good meaning and it is up to us to try, with God's help, to discover and appreciate it."²

Like all mothers, Mary is our refuge in time of difficulties and problems in life. Most of the time, we go to our mother to appeal, ask and request for the things we want or need. We are more familiar, comfortable or at ease to our mother because she is caring, have a heart of a gold and patient with us. If we like that kind of mother, Mary is the best example of all mothers.

"The Feast of Mary, Mother of God is a very ancient feast, which used to be celebrated on October 11th. Today's feast answers the question, "Why do Catholics honor Mary?" Non-Christians sometimes believe that we Catholics worship Mary as a goddess who gave birth to our God. Non-Catholic Christians argue that there is no Biblical basis for honoring Mary and that Catholics worship her and make her equal to God. They fail to understand why and how we honor Mary and why we name Churches and institutions after her. They do not understand what we mean by calling her the Mother of God. The truth is that we Catholics do not worship Mary as we worship, adore, God. We honor her, respect her, love her, and seek her intercession, praying, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners...." We do not, ever, equate her with God nor replace God with her. Rather, we honor her, primarily because God honored her by choosing her to become the Mother of Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, when He took on our flesh and became Man."³

We must learn and imitate her as we begin the New Year. As in the gospel, we are all invited to contemplate, ponder over the messages God is giving us and act on it. We heard in our gospel that "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her

² frtonyshomilies.com

³ ibid

heart.”⁴ The same attitude that we must apply in our own selves as we start the New Year 2021.

Pope Francis said: “To celebrate Mary as Mother of God and our mother at the beginning of the new year means recalling a certainty that will accompany our days: we are a people with a Mother; we are not orphans. Mothers are the strongest antidote to our individualistic and egotistic tendencies, to our lack of openness and our indifference. A society without mothers would not only be a cold society, but a society that has lost its heart, lost the “feel of home”. A society without mothers would be a merciless society, one that has room only for calculation and speculation. Because mothers, even at the worst times, are capable of testifying to tenderness, unconditional self-sacrifice and the strength of hope. Mothers who literally give their lives so that none of their children will perish. Where there is a mother, there is unity, there is belonging, belonging as children.”⁵

My brothers and sisters, as we love and obey Jesus, we may look at the example of the love and sacrifices of Mary, the Mother of God and we give importance to Mary because even Jesus honored and loved Mary. So, let us ask our Blessed Mother Mary to intercede for us and help us to treasure the Good News as she did, and live and proclaim it in our lives every day this new year.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus, you gave us your Mother to be our Mother, too. We thank you for the gift of a mother, a mother that always love, protect, and care for us. Help us, Lord, to be caring and loving neighbors, brothers, and sisters for others. Blessed Mother Mary, protect all our mothers and fathers and may we care for them and serve them with all our lives as they give their lives for us. Amen.”

⁴ Luke 2: 19 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

⁵ www.popefrancishomilies.com