

8th Septempter 2018

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



Introduction

The Mother of the Redeemer has a precise place in the plan of salvation, for "when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal. 4:4-6)

They are words which celebrate together the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the gift of the Spirit, the role of the woman from whom the Redeemer was born, and our own divine filiation, in the mystery of the "fullness of time."

As we recite the Holy Rosary meditating on Mary's role in the mystery of Christ, let us turn to her who shines like a true "Morning Star" on our pilgrim journey.

The first mystery: MARY, FULL OF GRACE

Mary is definitively introduced into the mystery of Christ through this event: the Annunciation by the angel. This takes place at Nazareth, within the concrete circumstances of the history of Israel, the people which first received God's promises. The divine messenger says to the Virgin: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk. 1:28).

Mary is "full of grace," because it is precisely in her that the Incarnation of the Word, is accomplished and fulfilled. She who belongs to the "weak and poor of the Lord" bears in herself, like no other member of the human race, that "glory of grace" which the Father "has bestowed on us in his beloved Son," and this grace determines the extraordinary greatness and beauty of her whole being. Mary thus remains before God, and also before the whole of humanity, as the unchangeable and inviolable sign of God's election and a sign of sure hope.

Let us ask her intercession to be faithful to our baptismal grace.

The second mystery: MARY, THE BLESSED ONE

Immediately after the narration of the Annunciation, the Evangelist Luke guides us in the footsteps of the Virgin of Nazareth towards "a city of Judah" (Lk. 1:39). The reason for her visit is also to be found in the fact that at the Annunciation Gabriel had made special mention of Elizabeth, who in her old age had conceived a son by her husband Zechariah, through the power of God. Moved by charity, Mary goes to the house of her kinswoman.

When Mary enters, Elizabeth replies to her greeting and while every word of Elizabeth's greeting is filled with meaning, her final words would seem to have fundamental importance: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Lk. 1:45). The fullness of grace announced by the angel means the gift of God himself. Mary's faith, proclaimed by Elizabeth at the Visitation, indicates how the Virgin of Nazareth responded to this gift, that is through her 'obedience of faith' To believe means "to abandon oneself" to the truth of the word of the living God, knowing and humbly recognizing "how unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways".

Let us ask through her intercession for an increase of faith.

The third mystery: MARY, THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

It is significant that Mary, recognizing in the words of the divine messenger the will of the Most High and submitting to his power, says: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word". Mary consents to God's choice, in order to become through the power of the Holy Spirit the Mother of the Son of God. It can be said that a consent to motherhood is above all a result of her total selfgiving to God in virginity.

Mary accepted her election as Mother of the Son of God, guided by spousal love, the love which totally "consecrates" a human being to God. By virtue of this love, Mary wished to be always and in all things "given to God," living in virginity. The words "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord" express the fact that from the outset she accepted and understood her own motherhood as a total gift of self, a gift of her person to the service of the saving plans of the Most High. The words "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord" testify to Mary's openness of spirit.

Let us ask through her intercession for the grace of docility to the Spirit's action in our life.

The fourth mystery: MARY, THE MOTHER

The Gospel of Luke records the moment when "a woman in the crowd raised her voice" and said to Jesus: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" (Lk. 11:27). These words were an expression of praise of Mary as Jesus' mother according to the flesh. But to the blessing uttered by that woman upon her who was his mother according to the flesh, Jesus replies in a significant way: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk. 11:28).

The blessing proclaimed by Jesus is not in opposition, despite appearances, to the blessing uttered by the unknown woman, but rather coincides with that blessing in the person of this Virgin Mother, who called herself only "the handmaid of the Lord". Without any doubt, Mary is worthy of blessing by the very fact that she became the mother of Jesus according to the flesh, but also and especially because already at the Annunciation she accepted the word of God, because she believed it, because she was obedient to God, and because she "kept" the word and "pondered it in her heart" (cf. Lk. 1:38, 45; 2:19, 51) and by means of her whole life accomplished it.

Let us ask through her intercession the grace to hear the word, keep it in our heart and bring forth fruit in abundance.

The fifth mystery: MARY, THE PILGRIM

The Second Vatican Council speaks of the pilgrim Church, establishing an analogy with the Israel of the Old Covenant journeying through the desert. In this ecclesial journey or pilgrimage through space and time, and even more through the history of souls, that Mary is present, as the one who is "blessed because she believed," as the one who advanced on the pilgrimage of faith, sharing unlike any other creature in the mystery of Christ.

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. She followed him during the years of his hidden life at Nazareth; she followed him also during the time after he left home, when he began "to do and to teach" in the midst of Israel. Above all she followed him in the tragic experience of Golgotha. Now, while Mary was with the Apostles in the Upper Room in Jerusalem at the dawn of the Church, her faith, born from the words of the Annunciation, found confirmation. She was present among them as an exceptional witness to the mystery of

Christ. The Virgin Mother is constantly present on this journey of faith of the People of God towards the light.

Let us ask through her intercession the grace of perseverance in our pilgrimage to our heavenly home.

Let us pray

Hail Holy Queen.. etc.

Litany of our Lady

(according to the Vatican Council II – liberally translated from italian)

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Holy Mary *

Holy Mother of God

Holy virgin of virgins

Favoured daughter of the Father

Mother of Christ, king of ages

Glory of the Holy Spirit

Virgin daughter of Zion

Virgin poor and humble

Virgin meek and docile

Obedient servant in faith

Mother of the Lord

Collaborator of the Redeemer

Full of grace

Fountain of beauty

Treasure of virtue and wisdom

First fruit of the redemption

* pray for us

Perfect disciple of Christ
The purest image of the Church
Woman of the new covenant
Woman clothed with the sun
Woman crowned with stars
Our Lady of immense goodness
Our Lady of forgiveness
Our Lady of the families
Joy of the New Israel
Splendor of the Holy Church
Honour of the humankind
Advocate of grace
Servant of the divine kindness
Help of the people of God
Queen of love
Queen of mercy
Queen of peace
Queen of Angels
Queen of patriarchs
Queen of prophets
Queen of Apostles
Queen of martyrs
Queen of confessors of faith
Queen of virgins
Queen of all saints
Queen conceived without sin
Queen assumed into heaven
Queen of the Earth
Queen of the Heaven
Queen of the universe
Lamb of God who takes away the sin... etc.