

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God B2021

When someone expects an important event in his life like a new baby, a test for the driver license, or an interview for an employment, people often say to him, “Good luck”, “All the best”, etc. Behind these words, there is a deep desire that he may succeed in what he is involved in, or is about to undertake, and be happy. The fulfillment of these wishes, however, is conditioned by the performance someone can display, or his abilities to deal with the test, for instance.

From the spiritual point of view, we can say that the success of any undertaking depends on God, because after all it is God who crowns the work of our hands. The idea of God as the source of all blessings comes up at the beginning of every New Year in the readings that the Church presents us. Why is the Church doing so? The reason is to invite us to put all the happenings and the future of our life into God's hands and to ask God to bless us and keep us under his constant care over the whole year.

As we heard in the first reading, for the Israelites, the force of the blessing rested in the power and the will of God. That is why the blessing was done by the invocation of the name of Yahweh over the people, as the creator of everything that exists and the giver of every grace. By calling upon the name and the power of Yahweh, the people of Israel remembered God's mighty deeds from the past and hoped for a bright future.

But what would a human future be without Jesus? But what would Jesus be without Mary who said “yes” to God's plan to make her the mother of the savior of the world? As it can be seen, by dedicating the beginning of every year to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Church would like to invite us to discover anew the particular role Mary plays in the history of salvation, as well as in the life of Jesus. Mary is the mother of Jesus as man, but since Jesus is both God and man, Mary deserves the title of “Mother of God”, just as any woman deserves the tile of “mother of a medical doctor”, if her son is one.

The logic behind this feast is that, since the Blessed mother Mary played a big role in the life of Jesus, not only by bringing him into the world, but also by protecting and taking care of him, we too can put ourselves under her umbrella so that she protects us as she did her son.

All this fits God's plan, since being the mother of Jesus is not something Mary arranged for herself; but according to God's plan. As St Paul says, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom us so that we might receive adoption as sons. In Jesus, then, God has adopted us and made us his children and not slaves. It is the spirit of Jesus who speaks to our hearts and teaches us to call God “Abba”, Father.

By receiving Jesus Christ in our hearts, we receive the message of salvation. Luke in today's Gospel presents the shepherds, poor and despised, as the first ones to recognize Jesus as savior. By following the instructions of the angels, they found the infant Jesus lying in the manger and his parents, Joseph and Mary. They were happy to be the witnesses of the fulfillment of God's promises, and they told others what they had discovered and all that had been told to them about Jesus.

While we often look for extraordinary signs and miracles in order to support our faith, the shepherds teach us that God has to be found in the ordinary circumstances of life. True faith does not come out of miracles and prodigious signs, but from humble acceptance of the word of God that in Jesus Christ God is present and brings us his salvation. All those who, in the footsteps of the Shepherds, recognize in this infant the hand of God, will receive the same heritage and the same salvation.

We must note, however, how Mary reacted to all that the shepherds did and said about Jesus. Luke says that “Mary kept all these things, reflecting them in her heart”. As such Mary is an example of all praying people who take advantage of any event happening in their lives to be in continual touch with the Lord, offering him their joys and their sorrows, their hopes and their anxieties. Moreover, Mary sees the will of God in all that was happening to her. While we are easily upset by disappointments of life, Mary knows how to treasure and ponder the events happening to her by trying to discover in them the will of God.

This point is so very important at the beginning of this New Year we start today. As we heard in the first reading, we are bearers of God’s promise of blessing upon us. But how will that promise be fulfilled and to what extent will it be, and in which circumstance? We do not know at all. There is a real mystery that surrounds us and our future. God alone knows what lies before us and what can happen to us in the course of the New Year we start today.

To be the people of faith, at the example of Mary, is to put all our life into God’s hands, to be ready for whatever can happen to us, to take seriously our commitment in society and hope for God’s support in time of need. At the end, we can only ask the Lord to give us his peace. The name of Emmanuel that was given to Jesus when he was circumcised means “God is with us “.

But God is with us so that we might not be alone, so that our situation may change, so that we live in peace with God and with one another. May that peace of Jesus be in our hearts, in our families and our world! At the beginning of this New Year, let us look at Mary, the model of all mothers. May Christian mothers know that they have a special mission, that of turning their children into peacemakers. May God bless you abundantly in this New Year! Happy New Year!

Numbers 6: 22-27: 1-3; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2: 16-21



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