



GOD BLESSES US *Through Mary*

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Christmas marks the beginning of the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. This mystery will find its fulfillment in the celebration of Easter. The great wonder of the celebration of this mystery is that God deigned to accomplish it through the indispensable cooperation of The Woman, the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to the Son of God!

Church liturgy, from December 25 (Christmas day) to January 1 (Christmas Octave), progressively unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation. Mary gives birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, the city of King David, because Joseph is of the house of David. The angels announce the birth of the one who will be the Good Shepherd to the shepherds of Bethlehem who may have received the Good News about the how the Babe born in the manger will be the King of kings and will be known as "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (I.N.R.I.). This could explain

how "Mary kept all these in her heart" (angelic revelation passed through the shepherds to Mary).

On this eighth day, the circumcision or "naming" of the Son of Mary as "Jesus" which means "God saves" or "Savior" or "Redeemer," Church liturgy introduces us to the purpose of the Incarnation. This Son of Mary is destined to save the world. He will redeem the world from sin and death by becoming the sacrificial lamb. The lamb without blemish will be offered as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!

But let us not dwell yet on that mystery for now. In this Christmas season we rejoice in the good news that God has sent his Son, in the "fullness of time" as our Second Reading calls it, and relish the abundant blessings God has bestowed on humankind in giving us our SAVIOR and a MOTHER as well! By becoming the MOTHER OF GOD, Mary welcomed God into our human family! The Son of God who took on flesh, thanks to the Virgin Mother, has become our brother so that now we also can call God "Our Father," or as again the Second Reading tells us, we have become adopted sons and daughters of the "Abba." Mary,

the Mother of God, has made this extraordinary blessing possible. This wonderful honor granted to the lowly virgin of Nazareth is the revelation of God's desire that, henceforth, all blessings may come to pass through Mary!

For if the Father so deigned that his Son could not be the Redeemer without taking on flesh through a birth by the Virgin Mary, then it stands to reason that the Father also deigns that the Mother of the Son of God will be the vessel through which grace and blessings flow! Can it be that part of the revelation of the angels to Mary in the Gospel was this role of Mary in the Church? When "she kept all... in her heart," was she pondering how she would be a vessel of grace for all humanity? This will come to pass, in fact, when we enter the mystery of redemption in Calvary when she will stand beneath the cross of her Son!

For now, again, let me invite you all to turn to Mary. To honor her as did the shepherds of Bethlehem. To beg her maternal blessings for us all through this new year! Mary, after all, is not only the Mother of Jesus, but also our own Mother! One gains many blessings by invoking her intercession.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Hail, Holy Mother, who gave birth to the King who rules heaven and earth for ever.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—The year opens with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Just as mothers are always the first to touch our lives, so we begin our spiritual journey under the loving gaze of Mary, the Mother of God and our mother. Mary gathers us, her children towards Jesus Christ, under her care. Let us entrust to her our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows.

Today we also mark the 56th *World Day of Prayer for Peace*. May the Savior of the world, the Prince of peace, who brings God's peace to his people bless all of humanity with the gift of peace.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — Amen.

Gloria

All—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. **For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Nm 6:22–27) *(Sit)*

This beautiful prayer from the book of Numbers was used in the past when the priests blessed the people. On New Year's Day, we invoke God's name upon ourselves for the year ahead.

A reading from the Book of Numbers

THE LORD SAID to Moses: "Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them: The Lord bless

you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace! So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them."

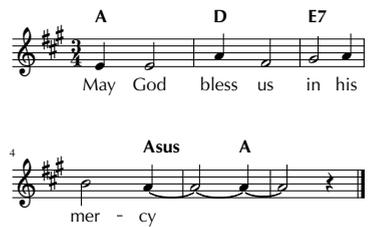
—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 67)

R—May God bless us in his mercy.

Sr. M. C. A. Parco, FSP



1. May God have pity on us and bless us;/ may he let his face shine upon us./ So may your way be known upon earth;/ among all nations, your salvation. **(R)**

2. May the nations be glad and exult/ because you rule the peoples in equity;/ the nations on the earth you guide. **(R)**

3. May the peoples praise you, O God;/ may all the peoples praise you!/ May God bless us, /and may all the ends of the earth fear him! **(R)**

Second Reading (Gal 4:4–7) *(Sit)*

When the fullness of time had come, the Son of God became man, born of a woman. Mary, from whom Jesus took his humanity, is the glory of our human race.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. As

proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then also an heir, through God.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Heb 1:1-2) (*Stand*)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 2:16-21)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

THE SHEPHERDS went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Sisters and brothers, through Mary, the Mother of God, communion and salvation was made possible for all of humanity. Let us ask the Father the grace to imitate her perfect faithfulness, obedience, and humility as we say:

R—Loving God, to Jesus through Mary, make us your adopted children.

C—Loving God, empower and embolden your Church towards

faithfulness, obedience, and humility, that we may bear your Son to and through the different communities we are in. We pray: **(R)**

C—Loving God, move all public servants to become "bearers of God," as they render selfless service to our country. We pray: **(R)**

C—Loving God, we lift to you our heart, mind, and will, our entire being, as we begin another year with each other. May we be true to our identity as your adopted children despite suffering and persecution. We pray: **(R)**

C—Loving God, let our departed loved ones enter your communion through the intercession of Mary, our loving Mother. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—Loving Father, direct, we beseech you, all our actions and decisions this year that by imitating and loving Mary, the Mother of God, we may also gloriously bear her Son into the world in word and in work. **All—Amen.**



Presentation of the Gifts (*Stand*)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—O God, who in your kindness begin all good things and bring them to fulfillment, grant to us, who find joy in the Solemnity of the holy Mother of God, that, just as we glory in the beginnings of your grace, so one day we

may rejoice in its completion.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, and praise, bless, and glorify your name on the Solemnity of the Motherhood of the Blessed ever-Virgin Mary.

For by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, she conceived your Only Begotten Son, and without losing the glory of virginity, brought forth into the world the eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty, Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you. Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim worship together with exultation. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in humble praise as we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Heb 13:8)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

We have received this heavenly Sacrament with joy, O Lord: grant, we pray, that it may lead us to eternal life, for we rejoice to proclaim the blessed ever-Virgin Mary Mother of your Son and Mother of the Church.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing. *(Pause)*

May God, the source and origin of all blessing, grant you grace, pour out his blessing in abundance, and keep you safe from harm throughout the year.

All—Amen.

P— May he give you integrity in the faith, endurance in hope, and perseverance in charity with holy patience to the end.

All—Amen.

P—May he order your days and your deeds in his peace, grant your prayers in this and in every place, and lead you happily to eternal life.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU!
MAY THE LORD LET HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU,
AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU!

A Gracious and Prosperous

NEW YEAR TO
ALL OF YOU!

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