

- Yikes!...another New Year already—another year gone. I like to kid people that... “it’s another year closer to death”--and thus a good reason to make GOOD new year’s resolutions—prayer, fasting, good works, and the like.
- And on this first day of the year, the Church blesses us this feast of Mary, the Mother of God...and the mother of us all...for Jesus said to all his disciples in every time in place—to us—represented by the person of St. John: “*Behold, thy mother.*”
- Today is set aside to especially honor the motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary--the woman prepared and chosen among ALL women to bear the Son of God...and, by extension, to honor the very institution of motherhood.
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- I was reading a column by a local pastor the other day who stated that Mary was no different from any other woman...almost as if God was walking down the street of Nazareth one day and just picked a girl out of the crowd to be the Mother of His only Son.
- But...to whom else has an angel come and greeted with awe: “*Hail...full of grace*”? And to whom else has one inspired by the Holy Spirit declared “*Blessed are you among women?*” To whom else has the Holy Spirit come as spouse to conceive a child in a virginal womb? And who else has God Himself obeyed, as Jesus obeyed Mary as His mother?
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- We bestow honors upon mothers of kings and queens and presidents.
- So how much more so should we honor Mary, the Mother of Jesus...the Mother of God...not the source of His divinity, of course—just as no mother is the source of her child’s soul—but the mother and source of Jesus’ material body.
- We are moved when we touch something of historical importance or something great or holy.

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- People collect relics from battlefields. We touch relics of saints and feel blessed. We go to holy places like Jerusalem or Bethlehem or Lourdes or the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- But imagine...God Himself dwelt within Mary for 9 months. She was the living tabernacle of the eternal covenant, and thus became the true Ark of the eternal covenant.
- And when He was born, she—like any mother—feeds, bathes, cares for her child, rocks him to sleep, holds his hands at his first steps...does all the things that a devoted mother does.
- And Jesus, like ANY son, is drawn to His mother—not only with the normal human love, but with the perfect and infinite love of God.
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- One of my favorite Bible verses when speaking of Jesus' relationship with His mother is that of King Solomon's veneration for his own mother Bathsheba:
- *Bathsheba went to King Solomon...And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right [the position of highest honor]. Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." (1Ki 2:19-20 RSV)*
- Now if a sinful Solomon, who is only a weak foreshadowing of Jesus, treats his own sinful mother with such honor and deference, how much more so must Jesus respect and cherish His mother.
- And, if Jesus Himself loves, respects and cherishes her...how much more should we do so?
- And, as mentioned before, we not only honor Mary's motherhood of Jesus today, but her motherhood over US as well...remembering the Gospel at the crucifixion: "*When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother,*

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‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’” (John 19:26-27)

- Jesus does not even withhold from us His own mother, but gives her to be the spiritual mother of ALL of his disciples—throughout all time...to guide us, to protect us, to love and cherish us...and to pray for us, just as ALL mothers do for their children.
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- As any good mother—Mary teaches us by both word and example.
- Her words in the Gospel are few. And what are they?
- At the Annunciation...her example. She submits herself totally and absolutely to the will of God...despite uncertainty,...despite danger: *“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy Word.”*
- And at the wedding at Cana, she gives us the only advice we ever need when she instructs the servants: *“Do whatever He tells you.”*
- The Gospel of Luke tells us that at the Visitation: *“When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”*
- Why, indeed? Who could merit such an honor?
- And yet...we are more blessed than Elizabeth...for Jesus has given Mary—His own mother—to be our mother as well...to love...to cherish...to pray for...to protect.
- And we, too, can be types of mothers to Christ. For in the Eucharist we receive the entirety of Jesus within us as Mary did—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—and we give “birth” to Christ by our actions--reflecting His life and grace and love to the world by what we say and do...trusting in His Word...trusting in His promises of eternal life.

- And as Elizabeth said to Mary: *“Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”*
(Luke 1:45 NAB)

Reading I

[Nm 6:22-27](#)

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.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8](#)

R. (2a) May God bless us in his mercy.

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. May God bless us in his mercy.

May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

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. May God bless us in his mercy.

Reading II

[Gal 4:4-7](#)

Brothers and sisters:

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law,

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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.

Gospel

[Lk 2:16-21](#)

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.