

Mary, Mother of God 2010

Luke 2:16-21

A new year is upon us,
and the Church invites us to celebrate “**Mary, Mother of God**”.
Why?
Have we not celebrated her enough with Christmas?
And what is the connection between Mary and newness of year?
Perhaps it is more than random and incidental...

The transition into a new year is always a *moment of hope*.
Is not Mary a *place of hope*?
Of course, she cannot be a place of hope in a way
that would overshadow *the One* who is hope: *God*, God become human.
But is she not, nonetheless, a real place of hope?
After all, she is *the one* of whom the Son is born (2nd reading: Galatians 4:4).
After all, she is the one who “**kept all these things in her heart**”,
that is, she is the one in whom the Church begins.
This gospel can tell us.

The shepherds follow the star, a light of hope, to Bethlehem,
to come see the Messiah.
And *Mary* is mentioned as the first one the shepherds notice.
How interesting: a certain self-effaced prominence of Mary.
And the eyes of the shepherds then go from Mary to Jesus.
The mother leads to the son.
A mother is always glad to disappear so that her son may shine.
This mother truly leads to the Son.
And Jesus knows this, Jesus *makes* this uniquely true.
Hence his gift, at the Cross, of her to John,
and, through John, to us: “**Behold your mother.**” (John 19:27)
This only makes sense in the deepest sense.

Mary was officially declared “Mother of God”
in 431 at the council of Ephesus.

The Council of Ephesus also declared the unity of the person of Jesus.

This may sound abstract or irrelevant, but, trust me, it is not.

Just fasten all belts for a moment!

The *person* of Jesus is the Word, the second Person of the Trinity, *God*.

And, by virtue of the unity of person of God become human,

in other words, because, in Jesus,

one cannot separate the humanity from God,

she from whom his flesh came is mother of his *person*.

Calling Mary “Mother of God” is the simple acknowledgment
of the unity of his Person, and herein lies the mystery.

Somehow, Mary is mother of God,

because she is the mother of the God-*man*, because she gave God flesh.

And the mother *of God* is given to *us*.

Why?

Is she necessary?

Well, not really, and yet....

Does not God know what he is doing?

Jesus, God, simply gives us *everything*—including the pearl in his heart.

Mary teaches and facilitates cooperation with grace, with the divine.

What a great resolution for the New Year: cooperation with God.

Mary, she who did not fully understand yet acquiesced in love,

stands at the threshold of this New Year,

as a gift for the greatest thing we can do: cooperate with God.

What a privilege.

God invites us to cooperate with/to participate in His labor of love

- in us
- in others
- in the world

Omnipotent, omniscient God deigns

to include limited creatures in what He does.

Why would He do this, knowing that these creatures

- will certainly slow things?
- sometimes damage things?

Because God is love.

We can have a similar experience in the raising of children.
We can *do for* the children,
who are then recipients of our so-called goodness. *or*
We can invite the children to *labor with* us
(risking a less perfect finished product), and have them learn and grow
and experience our love in new ways in the process.

Let us say our “yes”.
Let us invite this motherly heart to come close,
enabling our hearts to acquiesce in love.
This New Year can be one of healing and great joy.
All we must do is welcome the Word made flesh and all that He gives,
including Mary, his mother and our mother...