

Mary, Mother of God 2008

Luke 2:16-21

I am fascinated that the Church would invite us to look at Mary as we begin a new year. New Year's Day is the feast of Mary, Mother of God.

On the first day of the new calendar year, a day of Cosmic and symbolic transition,
a day that always brings with it daunting hope,
we gaze upon "the woman" insofar as she carried God in her womb.

Perhaps there is a connection between Mary and hope.

Perhaps we are to discover that we are carried in her heart as in a womb.

Why Mary?

Because God, Who is free to do whatever He pleases, so desired...

We see her particular role and place in this Gospel passage, the visit of the shepherds,
which reveals a certain self-effaced prominence of Mary.

She is mentioned as the first one the shepherds notice.

She is mentioned as not only sharing in the amazement of everyone *but*
as keeping everything in her heart in a special way.

Indeed, in Mary begins "Tradition",

that is, the keeping of Revelation in the heart so that it bear luminous fruits.

We see her particular role and place in John's gospel, at the Cross,

"Behold, your mother". (John 19:27)

If Jesus gives Mary to us, then the celebration of His birth includes the mother.

Mary was officially declared "Mother of God" in 431 at the Council of Ephesus,

an early insight in the life of the Church,

predicated upon the Church's insight into the reality of Jesus..

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

This may sound abstract. It is not, because Jesus is not abstract!

Jesus is second Person of the Trinity become human, having taken on human nature.

There is not a "God person" and a human person.

There is God enfleshed.

And, by virtue of the unity of Jesus' person,

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

Mary is "Mother of God".

This does not mean that the Word, that is to say, Christ's divinity originates in her.

It 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.

Our purpose is to *approach* the mystery:

- of the Word made flesh
- of this transfigured woman who is, by virtue of her transfiguration, *our* mother

Our purpose is to *cooperate* with these mysteries.

In Mary, we discover to approach and to cooperate with God.
Approaching and cooperating with God is always a *response* to God's initiative.
All that we do with respect to God is a response to love.
"It was not you who loved me, but I who loved you."
God comes to us because He is love, and loves us.
God invites us to cooperate with Him, because He is love, and loves us.

Love is the only explanation for God getting involved with us,
He who is perfectly complete unto Himself.

Omnipotent, omniscient God deigns to

- engage in relationship
- to include in what He does

limited creatures.

Why would God do this, knowing that these creatures, we (!)
will surely slow and sometimes damage things?

Such is the work of love.

When we love someone, we do not want them to be passive, but to work with us
and, in the process, learn and draw closer.

God includes Mary in what He does.

He asks Mary to lend her body to the miraculous conception and birth of God in the flesh.
Mary is the vehicle for the most perfect creation the cosmos have ever seen/will ever see:
a body for God.

It this is true then it is, in a sense,
the most incredible cooperation with God, by a mere creature, our world has ever known.
How interesting as we begin a new year.

There *is* a connection between Mary and hope!

In Mary we see how God makes use of the frailty of human flesh to bring about wonders.
How hope-full!

Note that Mary is more than just a vehicle.

She is an *active participant*.

And she continue to be an active participant in the work of redemption.

"Behold your mother" Jesus says to us!

If we call upon her, her motherly ways will prevail in us, and

- we will learn to say "yes" with less and less conditions
- we will increasingly become temples of the Holy Spirit.

Mary works in wonderful concert with the Holy Spirit.

With her and like her, let us trust and welcome and cooperate.

The Holy Spirit enables us to do so.

We are carried by the Holy Spirit,

who "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16).

If we lovingly acquiesce, the Word becomes flesh in us....