

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - The Baker Woman, with Jesus and Mary.
January 1, 2022.

On January 1, we Catholics always celebrate the **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. It is a day of obligation in Canada and is also a World day Peace.** How can Mary, a human being, be the mother of the Infinite One? This mystery is best understood when we focus on Jesus Christ, and to consider who this child born in Bethlehem was and is. In the Catholic faith, Mary is also praised as the **Mother of the Church**, the matrix of all discipleship. What this means is that her *fiat* is the ground and model of every disciple's response to God's desire for incarnation. All believers become "**mothers of Christ**," bearers of the incarnate Word.

Jesus has two natures, but he is only one person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, one with the Father and the Spirit. He is also born as human through incarnation and Mary is the mother of the human nature of Jesus, but there is only one Person of Jesus. The antiphon for the Benedictus in today's morning prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours contains this statements of our faith: **Though His two natures remain distinct; He is One.** That is why we say Mary is the Mother of God and that's is what we are celebrating today.

Children take after their parents. The same thing goes for our spiritual life. In this Sunday's Second Reading (Galatians 4:4-7), St Paul reminds us that through God's grace we have all become brothers and sisters of Christ and, therefore, children of God. This is what happened at baptism. At that moment we were born again, supernaturally; God infused his divine DNA into our souls, and each one of us becomes a mature, wise, and fruitful follower of Jesus Christ. **Today's Solemnity reminds us that if we have become Christ's spiritual brothers and sisters, we have also become spiritual children of Mary. She was his mother in the flesh, and she is our mother in grace.** And just as we learn from our natural mothers how to be good human beings, so we learn from Mary how to become mature Christians. She is the living school where we learn every virtue that leads to happiness and holiness.

In Today's Gospel she teaches us one of the most important virtues of all: wisdom. St Luke (2:16-21) tells us how Mary responded to the wonderful things that God was doing in and around her: "**Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.**" Just as Mary's womb was open to receiving God's living Word at the moment of Christ's Incarnation, so her heart was constantly open to receiving God's ongoing words and messages as he continued to speak through the events of her life. This capacity and habit of reflecting in our heart on God's action in our lives is both a sign and a source of wisdom which will help us develop into mature, courageous, and joyful followers of Christ.

On Christmas Day Bishop Paul Terrio of our Diocese told all parishioners that under the name, **Mary's Table**, the Diocese of St Paul wants to team up with the St. Paul Education Division, initially but later also with other Catholic School Divisions in the Diocese, to begin offering during the cold winter months of 2022, a warm meal every second Monday to any school child who arrives at school hungry. To this end, the Diocese will provide the funding with which school personnel will be able to get meals from Mary's Table to the most needy students. In order to have funds to provide Mary's Table to local schools, the parishioners are encouraged to contribute to it during the March special collection for our Diocesan Caritas. **Bishop Paul trusted that as Mary's children ourselves, we will all pitch in to help her to provide for these hungry children among us.**

There is a not commonly known Christmas hymn, **the Baker Woman**, by Hubert J. Richards who explains the mystery relationship of Jesus and Mary in the Holy Family in a very simple way, from conception to resurrection:

1. The baker woman in her humble lodge received a grain of wheat from God. For nine whole months the grain she stored. Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Make us the bread, Mary, Mary. Make us the bread, we need to be fed.
2. The baker woman took the road which led to Bethlehem, the house of bread. To knead the bread she laboured through the night, and brought it forth about midnight. Bake us the bread, Mary, Mary. Bake us the bread, we need to be fed.
3. She baked the bread for thirty years by the fire of her love and the salt of her tears, by the warmth of a heart so tender and bright, and the bread was golden brown and white. Bring us the bread, Mary, Mary. Bring us the bread, we need to be fed.
4. After thirty years the bread was done. It was taken to town by her only son; the soft white bread to be given free to the hungry people of Galilee. Give us the bread, Mary, Mary. Give us the bread, we need to be fed.
5. For thirty coins the bread was sold, and a thousand teeth so cold, so cold, tore it to pieces on Friday noon when the sun turned black and red the moon. Break us the bread, Mary, Mary, Break us the bread, we need to be fed.
6. And when she saw the bread so white, the living bread she had made at night, devoured as wolves might devour a sheep, the baker woman began to weep. Weep for the bread, Mary, Mary. Weep for the bread, we need to be fed.
7. But the baker woman's only son appeared to his friends when three days had run on the road which to Emmaus led, and they knew him in the breaking of bread. Lift up your head, Mary, Mary. Lift up your head, for now we've been fed.

How beautifully this captures and summarizes the Solemnity. Mary, Mother of God, baked the Bread of God within her, delivered this bread in Bethlehem, the city that means House of Bread, and watches as we are fed by the Bread. **Brothers and sisters, Mary's Table is our opportunity to share the Bread with the hungry children. She is the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God. She is the Mother of God. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.**