

CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF MARY

O Mary, you are the Dawn;
Through you all creation will see the Light of the World.



Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
Gate of Heaven, Star of the Sea,
Assist your people who have fallen yet strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature you bore your Creator,
Yet remained a Virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
Have pity on us poor sinners.

PRESENCE OF GOD

A holy God seeks your permission to be the Lord of your life. When the Holy Spirit draws you, you will desire to be born again in Jesus Christ and to become a new creation. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill your spirit. The Holy Spirit never forces and if you desire to be alone, the Holy Spirit will leave you alone.

PRAYER

May Mary of Advent help us become authentic expectant children, awaiting everything from Him, not discouraged because of our littleness indeed, boldly throwing ourselves in the adventure of friendship and collaboration with Jesus, like Pope Benedict XVI, at the end of the homily last year on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary: « Mary thus stands before us as a sign of comfort, encouragement and hope. She turns to us, saying: "Have the courage to dare with God! Try it! Do not be afraid of Him! Have the courage to risk with faith! Have the courage to risk with goodness! Have the courage to risk with a pure heart! Commit yourselves to God, then you will see that it is precisely by doing so that your life will become broad and light, not boring but filled with infinite surprises, for God's infinite goodness is never depleted!"

HYMN: LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

The shepherds heard the story proclaimed by angels bright,
How Christ, the Lord of glory was born on earth this night.
To Bethlehem they sped and in the manger found Him,
As angel heralds said.

This Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere;
True Man, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

O Savior, Child of Mary, who felt our human woe,
O Savior, King of glory, who dost our weakness know;
Bring us at length we pray, to the bright courts of Heaven,
And to the endless day!

PRAYER BEFORE READING SACRED SCRIPTURE

Holy Spirit of God, open our ears to hear the Holy Word of God;
Open our hearts to receive the Word and live it each day.

SACRED SCRIPTURE

GENESIS 3:9–15, 20

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the tree,
the LORD God called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?”
He answered, “I heard You in the garden;
but I was afraid, because I was naked,
so I hid myself.”

Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked?
You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!”
The man replied, “The woman whom You put here with me
she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it.”

The LORD God then asked the woman,
“Why did you do such a thing?”

The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it.”

Then the LORD God said to the serpent:

“Because you have done this, you shall be banned
from all the animals
and from all the wild creatures;
on your belly shall you crawl,
and dirt shall you eat
all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
He will strike at your head,
while you strike at His heel.”

The man called his wife Eve,
because she became the mother of all the living.

RESPONSE: JUDITH 13:18,19

Response: You are the highest honor of our race.
Blessed are you, daughter, by the Most High God,
above all the women on earth;
and blessed be the LORD God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Response: You are the highest honor of our race.
Your deed of hope will never be forgotten
by those who tell of the might of God.

Response: You are the highest honor of our race.

REVELATIONS: 11:19; 12:1-6,10

God's temple in heaven was opened,
and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple.
A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun,
with the moon under her feet,
and on her head a crown of twelve stars.
She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth.
Then another sign appeared in the sky;
it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns,
and on its heads were seven diadems.
Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky
and hurled them down to the earth.
Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth,
to devour her child when she gave birth.
She gave birth to a son, a male child,
destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod.
Her child was caught up to God and his throne.
The woman herself fled into the desert
where she had a place prepared by God.
Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
"Now have salvation and power come,
and the Kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Anointed."

REFLECTION

Mary is an outsider brought into the center of the story by the power of God, the unexpected "non-person" who brought the Messiah to life. In this context, the virginal conception of Jesus is an insight into the strange patterns of history: God working to bring about salvation through people and circumstances that secure and self-satisfied human beings tend to ignore or disparage. Narrative remembrance of this Mary rearranges one's vision of what is possible despite hardened historical "givens" and turns "outsiders" toward action on behalf of their own dignity.

- Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Reconstructing a Theology of Mary"

HYMN: IMMACULATE MARY

Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing,
You reign now in heaven with Jesus, our King.
(Refrain) Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.
In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim:
On earth, we your children invoke your fair name.
Your name is our power, your virtues our light,
Your love is our comfort, your pleading our might.
We pray for our mother, the Church upon earth,
And bless, dearest lady, the land of our birth.

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

O God, through Mary, Your Mother and ours, You revealed Your compassion;
Bless all people with the awareness of Your tender mercy.

O God, You chose the anawim ("little ones", "poor", "afflicted", "humble", "meek",
"the lost and the forgotten ones") of this world to confound the mighty;
Give us true humility.

- O God, be praised through Mary, Help of Christians;
Help us all to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.
- O God, be praised through Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted;
Teach us to be a healing presence in the lives of others.
- O God, be praised through Mary, our Immaculate Mother and Patroness;
As Americans, may she guide us to love justice and work for peace.
- O God, be praised through Mary, Mother of Good Counsel;
Help us to strive to do good and avoid evil.
- O God, be praised through Mary, Ark of the Covenant;
Let our lives bear witness to Your abiding presence in us.

Beloved, Mother of us all,
 To-day we remember
 That, of all earth's millions,
 You, Mary, in the womb,
 Were shining, whole,
 And Godward-turned.
 You only, O Morning Star,
 Lighted the clouds of sin and waiting.
 You only, Immaculate Ark,
 Glided above the depths of the primal curse;
 For you were to bear safely over those waters
 Emmanuel, your little Son, from whose baby hand
 Streams the rainbow up which we climb to God.
 You only, little white moon, are the crystal
 Reflection of our Sun.
 But for your whiteness, O Gate of Heaven,
 We had never entered, nor seen our God.
 But for your loveliness, O Mystic Rose,
 We had never breathed the Rose of Sharon.
 White Tower of David, Ivory Tower,
 Princess whose beauty lured Love's kiss when life began,
 Mother, who died a thousand deaths for us,
 We thank Him for you.
 To-day, when He smiles to see His image in you, clear,
 Remember us.

Sister. St. Francis, SSJ



Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc,
et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

Live Jesus in our hearts.
Forever!