

## Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jan 1st 2015

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

World Day of Prayer for Peace

Being a disciple of Jesus is a matter of the heart : "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."

Today on the octave of Christmas we celebrate Mary. We celebrate Mary because God chose her from all women of all time to be God's own mother -- Jesus is Son of God and the son of Mary! But we celebrate Mary not only because she conceived and bore Jesus but also because she is Jesus' most faithful disciple — and our model for following Jesus.

The Gospel invites us to contemplate Jesus' birth: shepherds responding to angels and rushing to Bethlehem and beholding Mary and Joseph and Jesus lying in a manger.

We contemplate the scene with Mary: "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."

Mary teaches us that being a disciple of Jesus means keeping Jesus in the center of our hearts and allowing Jesus' presence to guide all the thoughts, words and actions of our lives.

And from birth to death Mary contemplates Jesus. Christian art Mary portrays Mary as Madonna: she is the mother absorbed with the child at her breast. And she is also the Sorrowful Mother: the fearless follower of Jesus even amid persecution standing almost alone at the foot of the cross even though his disciples had abandoned him..

From birth to death Mary pondered Jesus!

God sent God's Spirit to Mary and she became God's mother. God sends the Spirit to us and we become God's children, temples of God and tabernacles of Christ: "As proof that you are sons, God

sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying out, 'Abba, Father.'”

Mary teaches us that being a disciple of Jesus is a matter of the heart: contemplating Jesus and allowing his presence to transform the thoughts, words and actions of our lives.

Sadly it seems many Christians are content to equate being Christian with fidelity to performance of prescribed religious duties, such as attending mass and saying prayers. Good as these actions are, they can remain superficial if they are performed merely to fulfill religious obligations and don't flow spontaneously from a heart transformed by the Spirit of Jesus.

On this feast of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary we ask a special favor of Mary our mother and intercessor: Grow your son Jesus in our hearts!

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