

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jun 4th 2016

Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In celebrating Mary's immaculate heart, we celebrate her single-heartedness. Sin divides our heart between self and God, making us no longer single-hearted, no longer immaculate of heart. But, as with any other time when we honor Mary, we run the risk of making her distant and inimitable, precisely as we mean to exalt her: congratulations, Mary, but we are not in the same league.

So today I want to bring up another dimension of Mary's heart, a dimension that helps us realize that she is very much in our league, a dimension that is hinted at the end of today's gospel reading, namely, her pondering heart: his mother kept all these things in her heart.

Mary faced a number of situations she did not understand. We are told explicitly this much at the Nativity and in the episode narrated in today's gospel reading. Implicitly we are told the same when she hears Simeon's prediction, when her Son appears to be telling her at the Cana wedding this is none of our business, when she hears Jesus say who is my mother?, and most of all at the foot of the cross. But Mary kept moving on without understanding, pondering in her heart.

Her steadfastness, her single-heartedness was not based on external evidence, but on trust. Her pondering in her heart without understanding had led her to not needing to understand –how could a mother understand that her innocent Son is being cruelly executed? Being sure and being assured are not the same thing. Being sure speaks of understanding, which rests on evidence. Being assured speaks of an inner stance, which rests on trust. Mary was assured, even when she could not be sure.

Mary was steeped in a trust born of her pondering heart, her immaculate undivided heart.

Luis Rodriguez, S.J.-Creighton University's Jesuit Community