



Mary, Mother of God

Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

Eight days after Christmas, the Church joyously celebrates Mary's divine motherhood. This feast falls on the first day of the new year and for several decades now it has been dedicated to peace. In this reflection, let us concentrate on Mary: the Gospel reading from Luke says that she "kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." "These things" run the gamut from her vocation to complete acceptance of God's unsettling plan for her, to the mystery of the presence that consequently dwells within her and to whom she will give birth while at the same time maintaining her virginal state. It runs from the grandeur of what was announced to her to the smallness and humility of how this sublime event was concretely realized and manifested. According to the Greek text, Mary "puts together" (sumballousa) all the pieces of this divine "puzzle" because she realizes that only by reflecting on them as a whole can she fully grasp their truth and beauty and, above all, make them fully her own (and ours!). Mary does not overlook anything. She "puts together" the angel and the heavenly choir with the stable in which her Son was born; his divinity with the feedbox in which she placed him; the shepherds' acknowledgment of his sovereignty with the nobility's rejection of his humble yet at the same time divine dominion. Thus Mary enters from the very start into the Paschal Mystery of the cross and resurrection, which alone will fully reveal to everyone—including her—the identity of the One to whom she has given birth. We too must continually imitate Mary in "putting together" all the pieces of this divine "puzzle" so as to join the shepherds in glorifying the Lord with our entire being for what has been given to us thanks to her and her motherhood: God himself!

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

*In the past,
God spoke to our
ancestors through
the prophets;
in these last days,
he has spoken to us
through the Son.*



People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. [...] Becoming a people is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter (EG 220).