

FROM OUR PAROCHIAL VICAR



Today we turn our attention to one of the most beautiful and mysterious titles of our Lady: "Mary, Mother of God." And it is the title with which most people are familiar. Even if they rarely darken the steps of a Church building, they are familiar with the title of Mary as the Mother of God. Ever since our youth, we have prayed the rosary and we repeat those words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." It's one of the most familiar prayers that we offer to God. And yet, unfortunately because of this, so frequently we don't often stop to consider what it means. What a profound mystery it points to! Mary, a creature who came into being at a definitive moment, gave birth to infinity! When she held the Christ child for the first time, she did not look up to heaven. She

looked down!

How incredible: "A teenage girl was pregnant with God!" And you know what? In an analogous way, we are all pregnant with God. Through baptism and the sacramental life, the seed of eternity has been planted in our hearts. We are, in an analogous sense, called to bring forth Christ; to be in a spiritual sense what Mary was quite literally: a Mother of God. And so the question is, "Do we nourish the seed of faith that has been conceived in our hearts through baptism? Do we protect this divine life within us? Is it growing within us or have we stifled it; aborted this life through serious sin?" If you have... don't be discouraged! Go to confession! Through an act of faith and through Mary's intercession, receive again the life of God!



You know, it's very interesting, many of the Fathers of the Church emphasized this point very beautifully when they spoke about how each individual Christian is called to imitate Mary in her motherhood. So I leave you with the question posed by St. Bernard of Clairveaux, the great spiritual master, "What does it matter if Christ was once born to Mary in Bethlehem but is not borne by faith in my [own] heart?"

Merry Christmas, Fr. Dort

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Giving Life to the World

John the Baptizer exhorts us to conversion. No one better than Mary can tell us what this conversion entails.

Conversion means turning away from yourself and turning to God instead. So, conversion is beginning to live as Mary did. She is so overwhelmed by the life growing in her body that she is not at all concerned about her own. Her center is not in herself, but in the life she is to give birth for the salvation of the world.



If you live along with Mary, turned away from yourself and turned toward God, then even you will give life to the world. You get to give birth to Christ. He has himself said: "*Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*" (Mt 12:50).

If Christmas were only a celebration of an unusual child born two thousand years ago, then we wouldn't need a long season of Advent to prepare for it. But Jesus is born within you, and preparation for this birth must be made.

"John of the Cross writes in a small poem: The Virgin with God's Word Carried in her womb Comes toward you If only you had room."

If you prepare a room for God, God will become real in you as he was in Mary.

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