

Fr. David's Weekly Newsletter



December 30, 2011

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

THE HOLY FAMILY

AN ICON OF THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

“The house of Nazareth”, the Pope explains, “is a school of prayer where we learn to listen, to meditate, to penetrate the deepest meaning of the manifestation of the Son of God, drawing our example from Mary, Joseph and Jesus”.

“Mary is the peerless model for the contemplation of Christ”, he said. She “lived with her eyes on Christ and treasured His every word. ... Luke the Evangelist makes Mary’s heart known to us, her faith, her hope, her obedience, her interior life and prayer, her free adherence to Christ. All of these came from the gift of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon her just as it descended upon the Apostles according to Christ’s promise. This image of Mary makes her a model for all believers”.

Mary’s capacity to live by the gaze of God is “contagious”, the Holy Father went on. “The first to experience this was St. Joseph. ... With Mary, and later with Jesus, he began a new rapport with God,

he began to accept Him into his life, to enter into His plan of salvation, to do His will”.

Although the Gospel has not preserved any of Joseph’s words, “his is a silent but faithful presence, constant and active. ... Joseph fulfilled his paternal role in all aspects”. In this context, the Pope explained how Joseph had educated Jesus to pray, taking Him to the synagogue on Saturdays and guiding domestic prayer in the morning and evening. “Thus, in the rhythm of the days spent in Nazareth, between Joseph’s humble dwelling and his workshop, Jesus learned to alternate pray and work, also offering up to God the fatigue by which they earned the bread the family needed”.

Benedict XVI then turned his attention to the pilgrimage of Mary, Joseph and Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem, as narrated in the Gospel of St. Luke. “The Jewish family, like the Christian family, prays in the intimacy of the home, but it also prays together in the community recognizing itself as part of the pilgrim People of God”, he said.



May God bless us in his mercy.

Jesus' words - "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house" - pronounced when Mary and Joseph found Him sitting among the teachers in the Temple, are a key to understanding Christian prayer. "From that moment, the life of the Holy Family became even richer in prayer, because the profound significance of the relationship with God the Father began to spread from the Heart of the boy (then adolescent, then young man) Jesus to the hearts of Mary and Joseph. The Family of Nazareth was the first model of the Church in which, in the presence of Jesus and thanks

to His mediation, a filial rapport with God came to transform even interpersonal relations".

"The Holy Family", Benedict XVI concluded, "is an icon of the domestic Church, which is called to pray together. The family is the first school of prayer where, from their infancy, children learn to perceive God thanks to the teaching and example of their parents. An authentically Christian education cannot neglect the experience of prayer. If we do not learn to pray in the family, it will be difficult to fill this gap later. I would, then, like to invite people to rediscover the beauty of praying together as a family, following the school of the Holy Family of Nazareth".



MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD & GOD

A woman is a man's mother either if she carried him in her womb or if she was the woman contributing half of his genetic matter or both. Mary was the mother of Jesus in both of these senses; because she not only carried Jesus in her womb but also supplied all of the genetic matter for his human body, since it was through her—not Joseph—that Jesus "was descended from David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3).

Since Mary is Jesus' mother, it must be concluded that she is also the Mother of God: If Mary is the mother of Jesus, and if Jesus is God, then Mary is the Mother of God. There is no way out of this logical syllogism, the valid form of which has been recognized by classical logicians since before the time of Christ.

Although Mary is the Mother of God, she is not his mother in the sense that she is older than God or the source of her Son's divinity, for she is neither. Rather, we say that she is the Mother of God in the sense that she carried in her womb a divine person — Jesus Christ, God "in the flesh" (2 John 7, cf. John 1:14) — and in the sense that she contributed the genetic matter to the human form God took in Jesus Christ.

The Nestorian claim that Mary did not give birth to the unified person of Jesus Christ attempts to separate Christ's human nature from his divine nature, creating two separate and distinct persons — one divine and one human — united in a loose affiliation. It is therefore a Christological heresy, which even the Reformers recognized. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin insisted on Mary's divine maternity. In fact, it even appears that Nestorius himself may not have believed the heresy named after him. Further, the "Nestorian" church has now signed a joint declaration on Christology with the Catholic Church and recognizes Mary's divine maternity, just as other Christians do.

Since denying that Mary is God's mother implies doubt about Jesus' divinity, it is clear why Christians (until recent times) have been unanimous in proclaiming Mary as Mother of God.

The Church Fathers, of course, agreed, and their writings give witness to their lively recognition of the sacred truth and great gift of divine maternity that was bestowed upon Mary, the humble handmaid of the Lord.

SAINTS AND ANGELS TRIVIA

1. Who is Jesus' grandmother?

- (a) St. Ann (b) St. Mary (c) St. Monica (d) St. Veronica

2. Who is St. Augustine's mother?

- (a) St. Ann (b) St. Monica (c) St. Agatha (d) St. Elizabeth

3. Legend has it that I carried Jesus across a raging river. Who am I?

- (a) St. Christopher (b) St. John the Baptist (c) St. Joseph (d) St. Peter

4. Which saint is often shown in paintings slaying a dragon?

- (a) St. James (b) St. Ambrose (c) St. George (d) St. Andrew

5. Who founded the Society of Jesus also known as the Jesuits?

- (a) St. Francis of Assisi (b) St. Ignatius of Loyola (c) St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d) St. Anthony of Padua

6. Who was burned at the stake?

- (a) St. Bernadette of Lourdes (b) St. Catherine of Sienna (c) St. Catherine of Alexandria (d) St. Joan of Arc

7. Who is Jesus' foster father?

- (a) St. John (b) St. Joseph (c) St. James (d) St. Jerome

8. Who is an archangel?

- (a) St. Charles (b) St. Peter (c) St. Michael (d) St. Paul

9. Who was a powerful bishop in Ireland?

- (a) St. Peter (b) St. Mark (c) St. Paul (d) St. Patrick

10. Who is recognized as the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church?

- (a) St. Mark (b) St. Peter (c) St. Matthew (d) St. Luke

11. Who is often pictured surrounded by animals?

- (a) St. Charles (b) St. Philip (c) St. Francis (d) St. Steven

12. Who is the patron saint of lost items?

- (a) St. Jude (b) St. Anthony (c) St. Ann (d) St. Lucy

13. Jesus asked this saint to look after his mother, Mary. Who is he?

- (a) St. John (b) St. Andrew (c) St. Peter (d) St. Mark

14. Who is the patron saint of hopeless cases?

- (a) St. Dominic (b) St. Benedict (c) St. Vincent (d) St. Jude

15. When Jesus was carrying His cross on the way to being crucified, who wiped His face with a veil, on which His image miraculously appeared?

- (a) St. Veronica (b) St. Rose (c) St. Mary Magdalen (d) St. Rita

DID YOU KNOW?

The Christmas season, sometimes called Christmastide, immediately follows the season of Advent. The traditional Twelve Days of Christmas begin with Christmas Eve on the evening of December 24 and continue until the feast of the Epiphany. The actual Christmas season continues until the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus, which is celebrated on the Sunday after 6 January. In secular culture, it seems as though Christmas starts right around Halloween, and ends immediately after Christmas; but in the Church's calendar, Christmas begins with Christmas Eve and continues for almost three more weeks! So, for the next several days - "Merry Christmas!"

Answers: 1. a; 2. b; 3. a; 4. c; 5. b; 6. d; 7. b; 8. c; 9. d; 10. b; 11. c; 12. b; 13. a; 14. d; 15. a



THE HOLY FAMILY

JESUS

MARY

JOSEPH

There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

FULFILLED
 PROPHETS
 NAZOREAN
 NAZARETH
 THROUGH
 MATTHEW
 SPOKEN
 CALLED
 THERE
 MIGHT
 WILL
 WHAT
 TOWN
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