

Homily: Solemnity of Mary: The Mother of God: New Year's Day 2017: Nm 6: 22-27;
Ps. 67; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

“The Gift of Mary’s Motherhood and our Interior Life”

We as a Church are still celebrating the Christmas mystery. The fact is the Son of God became a Son of man, so that the sons of men (us) could become sons of God. Isn't that an amazing reality? Obviously the Blessed Virgin Mary had an important role in all this, i.e., she gave the eternal Son of God His human nature, so we are called to honor and reflect upon her life and this mystery today.

1. Today we honor Mary’s motherhood, both as the Mother of the Eternal Son of God in time and now as Our Spiritual Mother as well - see the witness of Jesus on the Cross, to St. John: “*Behold your mother*”, and to Mary: “*Behold your son.*” Jesus has entrusted the whole human race to Mary’s spiritual care, and asks us to have a special place for her in our hearts. **Do we? She is the model disciple for us on how to love Jesus properly.** She teaches us how to take the faith concepts in our minds and bring them to life in our hearts, and to bear fruit in our daily life. The Fathers of the Church said Mary conceived Jesus in her heart before she conceived Him in her body. That is a fascinating thing to ponder - it points to the reality of her deep interior life: which is another name for our personal union or relationship with God. **In a mysterious way Jesus decided to come into this world through the person of Mary, so we are called to return to Him through her as He made known on the Cross.** Mary, consequently, has a special role to play in our spiritual lives. She is the mother of our interior life. *The more we turn to her in authentic devotion asking her to show us the face of her Son Jesus in our lives, the more the Holy Spirit molds us into the image of Jesus and draws our hearts into the eternal embrace of the Trinity.* Jesus became one of us, so that we could become adopted sons and daughters of His Heavenly Father. **Mary’s role is to help us enter into that mystery fully.** If we ever question why we can’t just deal with God directly, we should also ask the question why did God decide to come into our world through Mary, when He could have just appeared?!

2. How do we become adopted sons and daughters of God? Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive God's own life in our soul, or sanctifying grace. The Most Blessed Trinity dwells in our souls after baptism - do we realize that?! **If we do not subsequently fall into deliberate grave or mortal sin, the Trinity will dwell within our souls for our entire life here on earth.** And even if we fall into mortal sin, God forbid, if we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and make a good confession, we will be forgiven and the life of the Trinity will return to our souls. **Do we realize the God of the universe dwells within us?** If so, it makes a huge difference in our lives, e.g., in relation to how we treat our bodies and the bodies of others in relation to purity, in not overindulging in food or alcohol, and then on a deeper level it makes a huge difference in our spiritual outlook on life. As my late spiritual director, Fr. Silvan, used to tell me when I felt down: **WE ARE NEVER ALONE; THE TRINITY IS WITH US ALWAYS.** **If only we enter into the cell of our hearts to converse with the Divine guests!** We are called to cultivate a deep interior life like Mary. Let us ask her to take us by the hand into a life of greater love and familiarity and friendship with the Divine Guests in our souls. Then our Catholic Faith will no longer be an abstraction, but it will become the MOST TANGIBLE and PROFOUND reality of our lives - and the ups and downs of life no longer cause us to lose our peace or interior sense of hope and joy quite so often. We will have an eternal perspective on earthly life.
3. How can we be about this business of the cultivation of our interior life or personal union with God? **We should do it in company with Mary, unless we want to take a more difficult and arduous path to God, as St. Louis de Montefort, the great 18th century apostle of devotion to Mary, says in his classic book "True Devotion to Mary."** If you ever want to make the total consecration to Jesus through Mary – let me know. May Our Blessed Mother Mary watch over all of us in this coming year, so we may learn at **the school of her heart** to love the Lord God as she did with her whole being, and hopefully by God's grace we will grow in holiness in 2017. *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.* Have a Blessed New Year!