

## SOLEMNITY OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

*“Mary kept all these things,  
reflecting on them in her  
heart” (Gospel)*



Giovanni Battista Salvi's "Madonna and Child with Cherubs," c. 1650

### THE GOSPEL Luke 2:16-21

Behold the glory of the Lord,  
uprooted, homeless;  
poor shepherds,  
a manger,  
a star.

She  
pondered  
all these things,  
tried to make some  
sense of their meaning,  
mulled them over in her heart,  
preserving, remembering, treasuring.

There were no final answers, though.  
She searched for and found signs  
of the Spirit's movements.  
And that was  
enough  
for her.

Oh God, make it enough for us.



**THE FIRST READING Numbers 6:22-27**

*The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!*

God says to us,

“I will bless you & keep you! I will look upon you kindly and let the splendor  
of my face shine upon you.



And grant  
you peace and grace

and wholeness!”

We invoke your name, O God.  
Look on all of us kindly.  
Please bless us,  
everyone.

**THE SECOND READING Galatians 4:4-7**



*God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.*

The same Spirit  
sent to Mary  
was also  
sent to  
us.

It lives in our hearts and  
lets us cry out,

“You,  
our Father,

we are your children.” *(Annie Osdieck)*

**Reflection: Of Motherhood and Mary**

Our culture tends to romanticize motherhood. This reaches its peak around holidays like Mother’s Day and Christmas. We are surrounded by our own childhood memories and by the airbrushed perfection of images in the media.

The image of the Blessed Virgin Mary prevalent throughout much of the Church is often similarly romanticized, creating similar unrealistic expectations. The art of the ages typically depicts Mary as a beautifully and richly dressed woman, perfectly neat and tidy. She is usually portrayed reading, praying, tending lovingly to the child Jesus—or in anguish at his cross or as heaven’s glorious queen.



But that image is not always the Mary we meet in Scripture or the woman we celebrate as the Mother of God. Mary was not a privileged and pampered woman of leisure. Matthew’s Gospel tells us that she was a refugee from Herod’s violence. Luke’s Gospel tells us that she and Joseph were poor, able to offer only two birds as sacrifice when they presented Jesus at the Temple.

Her son died with no possessions to his name and was buried in a borrowed tomb. Mary spent her days working hard, struggling to meet the needs of her family with the limited resources available. She likely spent her days cooking and cleaning, drawing water, baking bread, and caring for the livestock. Her clothing and her hands showed the dirt and damage that comes from a life of hard physical labor. This less romantic image of Mary, the Mother of God, is both a comfort and a challenge to us today. She reminds us that God does not expect us to be unrealistic plaster saints. We come to God as we are and, by God’s grace, are transformed into what he has called us to be.

But Mary challenges us as well. She is Jesus’ first and most perfect disciple. She followed Jesus in his ministry, even to the cross and tomb. After his resurrection, she joined his other disciples in prayer, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We are called to follow Mary’s example in our lives as faithful disciples of her Son. We do this by taking the time to ponder God’s Word, reflecting on it in our hearts and making it real in our lives. We reach out in welcome to those in need and those seeking Jesus, offering hospitality and helping them to encounter Jesus and grow in relationship with him.

May Mary, Jesus’ mother and ours, show us the way to her Son.

*(Mary Elizabeth Sperry: ‘Give us this Day’).*

