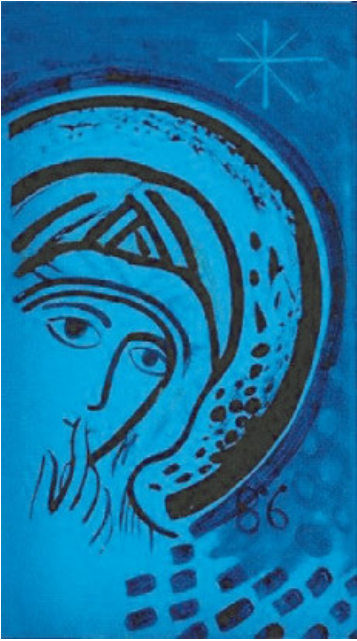


## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Mary is Mother of Christ, who is both man and God. Whereas we, human beings, have only one nature - a human nature, Jesus Christ, who is Son of God and Son of Mary, has two natures, he is fully human and fully divine.

Mary is therefore Theotokos, Mother of God. Today, the Octave of Christmas, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

God, who created all things, enters creation as one of us through the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Gospel today tells us that she 'kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.'

As we enter the New Year, 2023, we do so accompanied by the maternal presence of the Virgin Mary.  
She is Mother of Christ.  
She is Mother of God.  
She is also our Mother.

She is daughter of God, and yet she is his Mother. She is Mother of the Only begotten Son, and yet she is our Mother also. We are therefore co-heirs with Christ.

Christ becomes one with us in our humanity. He received his human nature through the Virgin Mary, the same human nature each of us has.

Mary, having given birth to Christ, did not know what lay ahead. She was encompassed in a mystery which surpassed her. We also do not know what 2023 holds in store for us. What we do know is that Mary is a constant presence in our life.

No matter what 2023 brings, we can, together with Mary, 'keep all these things in our heart, reflecting on them.' For some of us there will be great joys in 2023 - the birth of a child or grandchild, a betrothal or a wedding, a graduation, or a new house. For others there will be great sorrows - a sickness or death, a family crisis or calamity. Mary will be with us in all the events we experience, the joys and sorrows.

Like her, we can reflect on all things in our heart. Mary's heart was not the source of emotive, sentimental feelings. Her heart was the place where she was silent, and allowed God to speak to her, to reveal all things to her. This was true at the joy of the birth in Bethlehem, and also at the foot of the Cross on Calvary.

In the liturgy today we invoke her, Mother of God, and we make room in our heart, in our core, for her maternal presence. The year 2023 will be lived by each of us in accordance with the presence or absence of the Virgin Mary in our heart. In our joys and sorrows, reflecting on them, we can, with Mary, experience the love of God made present for us in Christ.