

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On January 1st every year, the Church celebrates a very special feast. It is called the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. In the Gospel reading for this Solemnity, we are told that the shepherds who had been visited by an angel and given a message the night Christ was born, went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and made known to them the message they had received.

What was that message? The angel had told them, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Therefore, He is not just the Messiah, He is the divine Messiah, He is the divine Son of God, He is the Savior of the world. After the shepherds delivered the message, the Gospel tells us that, “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”

First, the Gospel says that Mary ‘kept’ these things. The Greek word used in the original text literally translates as ‘treasure up.’ Mary is taking the words of the shepherds, and she is storing them up inside of her interiorly, in her heart and in her mind. Second, the Gospel says that she was reflecting on them in her heart. The Greek word used in the original text literally translates as ‘throw together’ or ‘piece together.’ It gives the implication of Mary tossing these things around, evaluating them, deliberating on them, and piecing together the various parts of the mystery that is being revealed to her, of who her son really is, of who this little baby in the manger really is.

We can ask ourselves why the Church gives us this gospel reading on the feast of Mary, God's mother? Well, on the Feast of Mary, Mother of God, we get a window into Mary's soul, a window into Mary's heart, and a window into her mind. She is pondering, reflecting, and tossing about this great mystery of the birth of her son, the birth of the Christ child, the birth of the Savior. During this season of Christmas, let us ask Mary to help us contemplate this great mystery of the Incarnation and all that God wishes to do in our lives through the gift of His Son, born for us.

The Church also gives us this gospel reading because when Mary said to the Angel Gabriel, ‘May it be done to me according to your word,’ she accepted God's word and God's will. She had the power to say no instead of yes. She had free will, like you and I do. She was immaculate and sinless, but she was not a robot. If she had not freely consented to be the Mother of God incarnate, God would not have come through her to save humanity.

The name ‘Jesus,’ or ‘God saves,’ is what she consented to. The Gospel says, ‘When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.’ That name is the whole meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Mary's words, ‘May it be done to me according to your word,’ did what they said. They opened her will and her womb to Jesus, who is God's salvation for all of us. She is the place of our salvation, for in her Christ appears in our world.

Peace,