

PENTECOST: SHARING NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Mary, Mother of Our Lord
August 15, 2010

Isaiah 61:7-11
Psalm 34:1-9
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 1:46-55

The Almighty God Has Done Great Things

The honor paid to Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord, God, and Savior goes back to the earliest days of the Church. Mary prophesied, “From now on all people will call me happy” (Luke 1:48, *GNT*). Confessing her as “Mother of God,” (the tradition of some branches of Christianity since it was formally upheld by the Councils of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451), also confesses that the One whom she bore was and is indeed, true God from true God.

We know little of Mary's life except as it intersects with the life of her Son – Jesus Christ. The only recorded saying of hers to “ordinary” hearers is her instruction to the servants at the wedding feast at Cana, “Do whatever he [Jesus] tells you” (John 2:5, *GNT*). Perhaps this is her message to the world. To this day, she reminds us to listen to Jesus and do as he says.

Mary did not seek the regard of others on her own behalf. If our honor for the Blessed Virgin does not turn our attention from her to the One to whom she gave birth, to the Word made flesh, then we may be certain that it is not the blessing that she seeks. A right regard for Mary always directs us to him – the source of all blessings. Mary echoes the prayer of the psalmist in her life, “Find out for yourself how good the LORD is. Happy are those who find safety with him” (Psalm 34:8, *GNT*). God is so good that, in spite of our shortcomings, God continues to bless us.

In different Churches, this date is remembered in various ways. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Assumption of Mary and claims that she was taken, body and soul, into heaven. The Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* (God-bearer or the one who gave birth to God). According to Orthodox tradition, Mary died like all people die, “falling asleep,” so to speak, as the name of the feast indicates. For Orthodox believers, this feast is preceded by 14 days of strict fasting.

Thank God for God’s work in Mary, mother of our Lord. Thank God for Mary who shows us that we humans can bear the light of God to the whole world.

This Reflection for the Feast of Mary, Mother of our Lord, was prepared by Tenny Thomas, a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He also serves as a consultant for the American Bible Society in the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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This day we remember to pray: Almighty God, in choosing the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son, you made known your gracious regard for the poor, the lowly, and the despised. Grant us grace to receive your word in humility, and so to be made one with your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Activity Corner: “A Song of Praise”

Supplies needed: Bible; writing paper; pens or pencils.

Read Psalm 34:1-10 and Luke 1:46-55. In what ways are these two passages similar? What do they express about God and God’s faithfulness? Encourage everyone in your household to compose their own songs of praise in response to ways in which God’s faithfulness has been evidenced in their lives. Conclude by inviting everyone to participate in a responsive reading of Psalm 34:1-10 and Luke 1:46-55, alternating between the two passages as follows:

Psalm 34:1; Luke 1:46-47

Psalm 34:2; Luke 1:48

Psalm 34:3; Luke 1:49

Psalm 34:4; Luke 1:50

Psalm 34:5; Luke 1:51

Psalm 34:6; Luke 1:52

Psalm 34:7; Luke 1:53

Psalm 34:8; Luke 1:54

Psalm 34:9; Luke 1:55

Psalm 34:10 (to be read by everyone in unison)