



Thoughts on the Journey...

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The Incarnation is our belief that the Son of God, took on a human body and human nature and became both man and God. The Word became flesh so that we may know God's love. Jesus became our model of holiness and came to save us by reconciling us with God. His coming was to make us partakers of the divine nature. Think about the amazing gift that the Incarnation was to mankind - and then think about the profound nature of the Incarnation working through us today.

In Luke's gospel, Mary is pregnant and decides to go to the town of Judah to see her cousin Elizabeth. Both she and her cousin were pregnant: Mary with Jesus and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. When they greeted one another the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth expressed her joy in knowing who Mary was carrying in her womb and she said,

“Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

In Pope Francis' book, *The Church of Mercy*, he writes of Mary's example to us:

“Three words sum up Mary's attitude: listening, decision, and action... Mary knew how to listen to God... listening, which consists of attention, acceptance, and availability to God...”

This is also true of our life: listening to God who speaks to us, and listening also to daily reality, paying attention to people, to events, because the Lord is at the door of our life and knocks in many ways; he puts signs in our path, and he gives us the ability to see them.”

When we do not listen to him, when we do not follow his will, we do concrete things that demonstrate our lack of trust in him - for that is what sin is - and a kind of knot is created deep within us. These

knots take away our peace and serenity. They are dangerous, since many knots can form a tangle that gets more and more painful and difficult to undo.

But we know one thing: nothing is impossible for God's mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by his grace. And Mary, whose “yes” opened the door for God to undo the knot of ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul by his fatherly mercy...

Mary's faith gave human flesh to Jesus...

But what took place most singularly in the Virgin Mary also takes within us, spiritually, when we receive the word of God with a good and sincere heart and put it into practice. It is as if God takes flesh within us; he comes to dwell in us, for he dwells in all who love him and keep his word. It is not easy to understand this, but really, it is easy to feel it in our hearts.

Do we think that Jesus' incarnation is simply a past event that has nothing to do with us personally? Believing in Jesus means giving him our flesh with the humility and courage of Mary, so that he can continue to dwell in our midst. It means giving him our hands, to caress the little ones and the poor; our feet to go forth and meet our brothers and sisters; our arms to hold up the weak and to work in the Lord's vineyard; our minds, to think and act in the light of the Gospel; and especially to offer our hearts to love and to make choices in accordance with God's will. All this happens thanks to the working of the Holy Spirit. And in this way we become instruments in God's hands, so that Jesus can act in the world through us.”

Pope Francis captures beautifully the depth of Mary's participation in the Incarnation of our Lord. At the same time, the Holy Father reminds us of our responsibility to carry on the Incarnation through our obedience to God and living the Gospel - to renew our commitment to our baptismal call to put flesh on God. As we approach this season of joyous giving, perhaps the best gift we can give Our Lord and Savior, is to personally deliver Him to the world around us by how we live...just as his holy obedient Mother .