



Homily for
SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
THE MOTHER OF GOD
31 December/01 January, 2017

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows...

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God 2017
Holy Spirit (HG)

Num 6:2-27
Heb 1:1-2
Lk 2:16-21

I. I remember my mother telling me about the first time I walked.

Apparently we were visiting some relatives...the family was gathered in the living room and visiting...and at a certain point I just walked across the living room from one person to another. It was something my mother vividly remembered in detail.

Isn't that what mothers do?

Remember?

Those of you who are mothers can probably relate. My perception is that mothers memorize every detail of their baby's face, they know when their child started teething, childhood diseases, when they walked, their first word. Mothers have an intuitive sense when their child is in need of something.

So if you want to know when you took your first step – or lost a tooth – or did something silly – or said your first word, just ask your mom! She probably knows.

If mothers are so intimately connected with their child, wouldn't this also be true of Mary? Did she treasure and remember every detail about the baby Jesus and his childhood years?

II. St. Luke tells us “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” The Greek words Luke uses convey the sense of a deep and long process of mulling things

over. It's more than just stopping to think about something interesting for a few minutes and then moving on with life. It's more like Mary held all of these pieces of a mystery together. It was a long-term kind of process – much as a mother might do – which really didn't easily lead to a lot of conclusions.

And consider all that Mary had to think about.

- certainly the message of the angel she would be the mother of the savior
- the journey to Bethlehem and the distressing details of finding a place and giving birth in a strange city
- the patience and care and support of Joseph
- the visit of shepherds who had their own stories of angels telling them about the birth of this new born babe

Mary had to balance all of the strange things that were happening in her life with the teachings of her religious heritage. Mary certainly questioned her experience and pondered how best to respond.

She had to live with lots of questions – and few answers.

She would have had to hang on to hope – and learn to be content with little certainty about life or the future.

And at the same time Mary was keeping house: carrying water, baking, preparing meals, cleaning, feeding and watching a baby and changing diapers!

In other words, Mary is modeling for us being a contemplative in action.

III. Given the complexities of life today – 2,000 years later – Mary's example can be an attitude, an approach, we take into the new year.

We're living at a time filled with all kinds of questions about the status of life and the future. It seems violence among us is only growing and can happen anywhere and at any time. There seems to be no resolution to problems of terrorism on the world stage. While we do seem to be economically stable, we still have many different issues to resolve in our country. We worry about our children, their future and our own security and future.

Like Mary, we probably have a lot more questions than answers. Like Mary, there seems to be little certainty about how our future will unfold. Mary's

example of “mulling things over” may well be an approach for us to use entering into this new year. Like Mary, we can reflect upon our questions and concerns in our mind, in our heart and in our prayer.

We need to learn to live with lots of questions and realize questions will take care of themselves in due time or insights into answers will eventually come to us. In the face of profound uncertainty about the future, hope is a banner we need to hold high. It is hope that gives us confidence, brings peace to our heart and enables to move forward in life with energy and vision.

IV. As Mary studied her child, Jesus, and intuitively knew his needs, so we can be assured she also deeply cares for us and remains close to us. And as she pondered the questions and mysteries of her life, her response teaches us the importance of living as a contemplative in action. (Fr. Dwayne Thoman)