

INTRODUCTION

The call of God is meant for everyone. Mary's experience has become a model of our Christian faith for she has collaborated with the divine plan of God by saying yes to Him without hesitation to make the word become flesh through her. This is the invitation of our prayer last week that we shall continue to make the word become living and active in us by opening our hearts to all types of people without hesitation, day by day.

As we continue to contemplate on the life of Mary, she became great through her deeds of generosity and service. She is called blessed by all generation because she said "yes" to God's invitation and continued saying yes to the cries for help from so many men and women. So Mary inspires us to soar higher of our love so that it will not only be Mary who is called blessed but also all of us who have said yes to Him.

Mary's obedience and faithfulness goes a long way to make us all be blessed and saved.

of your womb. ⁴³ Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? ⁴⁴ Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵ Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

(Luke 1:38-45)

Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of realities that are unseen.

(Hebrews 11:1)

Blessedness is not a "title" to win but an attitude that lives out obedience, simplicity, service and generosity. After Mary listened to God, she walked her pilgrimage of faith being a lowly disciple eager to learn and to love in the service of others. We are called to be Disciples of Christ after the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Do you want to be called blessed like Mary? Are you willing to participate in the divine plan of God? How far have you been in working out His plan?

betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ Now it happened that, while they were there, the time came for her to have her child, ⁷ and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space. **(Luke 2:1-7)**

²⁸ We are well aware that God works with those who love him, those who have been called in accordance with his purpose, and turns everything to their good. **(Romans 8:28)**

Let us contemplate on Jesus in the manger who allows Himself to be born in a lowly place in spite of His Greatness. Christ cannot be born again but He can be born in the manger of our hearts by making ourselves be available for others with pure intentions and humility. Are you willing to be available for Christ? Is your heart ready to become a manger for Jesus in this new millennium?

the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: ¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours. ¹⁵ Now it happened that when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, ¹⁸ and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

(Luke 2:8-19)

¹⁹ Do not stifle the Spirit ²⁰ or despise the gift of prophecy with contempt; ²¹ test everything and hold on to what is good ²² and shun every form of evil.

(1 Thessalonians 5:19-22)

Mary shows her blessedness through obedience and humility. As the mother of God, she didn't show indifference to the shepherds but made herself available and listened to them wholeheartedly. However, the word blessed is definitely addressed to those people who collaborated with the project of God for His salvific mission. How about you, are you willing to be counted as blessed?

WEDNESDAY

Mary listens to the shepherds and treasures their words as prophecy

⁸ In the countryside close by there were shepherds out in the fields keeping guard over their sheep during the watches of the night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' ¹³ And all at once with

MONDAY

Mary believes in the promise that God makes to her

³⁸ Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her. ³⁹ Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. ⁴⁰ She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit

TUESDAY

Mary teaches us to contemplate Christ in the manger of any circumstance or person

Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world. ² This census -- the first -- took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, ³ and everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, ⁵ in order to be registered together with Mary, his

THURSDAY

Mary sees the transcendence of her Yes to bring the life of Jesus to the world

¹⁰ the kings of Tarshish and the islands will pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba

and Saba will offer gifts; ¹¹ all kings will do him homage, all nations become his servants. *(Psalm 72:10-11)*

⁹ Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ The sight of the star filled them with delight, ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

(Matthew 2:9-11)

⁶ He said, 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth.' *(Isaiah 49:6)*

A real gift giving is not occasional or seasonal; it is practiced anywhere and anytime without counting the cost. We can't give material things directly to Jesus like the magi did, but we can give our gifts to others as God's image. Sometimes, nothingness hinders us to give and share. Material things are not as much important as the gift of ourselves in the service of others. Self-giving is at the same time making our hearts little manglers for the baby Jesus in our modern times, that the baby Jesus is no longer in the same manger but in every man's heart, making Him alive and live among us. Do you consider yourself a gift for others? In what situation did you become a gift to them? What have you realized after you have become a gift?

FRIDAY

Mary invites us to give our Yes to God in her same trust and complete confidence in God.

⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' *(John 2:5)*

¹⁰ Look at the generations of old and see: whoever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame? Or whoever, steadfastly fearing him, was forsaken? Or whoever called to him and was ignored?

(Sirach 2:10)

⁴ Such is the confidence we have through Christ in facing God; ⁵ it is not that we are so competent that we can claim any credit for ourselves; all our competence comes from God. ⁶ He has given us the competence to be ministers of a new covenant, a covenant which is not of written letters, but of the Spirit; for the written letters kill, but the Spirit gives life. *(2 Corinthians 3:4-6)*

Mary has become our model of faith. She didn't know what would bring to her after she pronounced her "yes" to God. All she got in her heart was only her complete confidence and trust in god. She put herself completely at the service of God in the fulfilment of the mission and she truly contributed in bringing about our redemption. To whom can you draw out strength when your Christian faith gets rough? How was Mary able to survive her mission trip until the very end?

SATURDAY

Mary teaches us the real joy of a Christian who rejoices in what God does and who God is and does what He wills.

⁴⁶ And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; ⁴⁸ because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, ⁵⁰ and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. *(Luke 1:46-50)*

²⁷ It happened that as he was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, 'Blessed the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you!' ²⁸ But he replied, 'More blessed still are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'

(Luke 11:27-28)

It is wonderful to utter words of praise and thanksgiving to our Mother Mary for giving us Jesus, her Son as our Brother and Savior. For her constant prayer for us to continue what she had started as God's collaborator of divine plan. For her constant reminder not to give up our faith but encouraged us to continue by looking closely at her life experiences until the end. And most of all, for being our Mother who never leaves us unaided. How do you give honor to our blessed mother every day? Have you ever thanked her for her constant intercession for us? How do you integrate your sufferings with hers? Do you consider her as your mother?

SUNDAY READINGS

4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"From now onwards all generations will call me blessed" *Luke 1:48*

December 22-28, 2014

Theme for the month:

Our Missionary intentionality: incarnating the Word in us

Objective for the month:

To say "Yes" as Mary did to the project of God. A project for us and for generations. To help the family enter in the transcendence of the project of God for us.



Objective of the week:

To learn to contemplate Christ like Mary in order to see the blessedness of her life for many generations to come, because of her "Yes" to the project of God.