

St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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*We saw his star in the East
and have come to worship Him*

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



It would seem preposterous to think that one who was created could be given a title, not of honour only but of fact that might suggest that she pre-existed her Son. How is it possible that Mary, who was born some 2,000 years ago

and who had a baby who was the Son of God, could be THE MOTHER OF GOD? The title, *Mother of Jesus*, might seem more acceptable because she existed before Him and gave birth to Him, however, it is the “God” part of Mary’s title that has been so controversial. For many, it would seem far more plausible that Jesus is in fact the Son of God simply because His Father existed in peoples’ minds before He sent His Son to the earth as Saviour. Yet, Jesus is not subordinate to His Father for the Gospel of John (Christmas day’s reading) reminds us in the Prologue:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him and without Him not one thing came into being.” (John 1:1-3)

The truth is that Mary’s title, Mother of God, comes not from her but from her Son, Jesus. Though He never called her this, it is a title from the Church which lays claim to who Mary truly is, God’s Mother. If Jesus is God and Mary gave birth to Him, then she rightly is called the *Mother of God*.

I’ve often wondered, not so much what Mary said, but what she thought as she looked upon her baby boy and wondered how all that had been revealed, and especially all that had not, would turn out. In the scriptures Mary doesn’t really say much at all save to Elizabeth when upon Mary’s arrival at her house Mary responded to Elizabeth’s recognition of her as the ‘Mother of My Saviour’, and first to the Angel Gabriel and that time when Jesus was lost and they found Him in the temple, and, of course, at the Wedding Feast at Cana in Galilee when Jesus worked His first miracle which would force Him to go public in His ministry and His life and His journey to the Cross. Mary’s last words in the Gospels were at this marriage celebration when she said to Jesus’ disciples (and to us), “Do whatever He tells you”. So this is what Mary said, but clearly this is not the limit of her speech. She would have spoken as all of us do in everyday talk about the weather, about the news of someone’s new baby, the betrothal of one of her friends and on and on it would go. But what about what she didn’t say but most certainly thought?

After she had given birth with only Joseph at her side and the still quiet of the night, there would only be the sound of the breathing of the animals around them and their lowing voices. I picture Mary looking at her newborn child mindful of what the Angel Gabriel had told her just nine months previous when he said to Mary:

*“Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.
Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favour with God.
And now, you will conceive in your womb
and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the
Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to
him the throne of his ancestor David.
He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

(Luke 1:28-33)

I also think that Mary would have wondered when she saw how God’s strange plan for her and Joseph found them suddenly alone and forgotten in a barn with animals having a baby... *“He will be called the Son of the Most High”*. I might imagine that Mary would feel that God wasn’t filling in the blanks of the revelation He gave to Mary in an apparition and to Joseph in a dream about Jesus. Yet they are continually alone in their many situations only to be surprised by events in the next moment. The lonely manger scene is then changed and filled with those whom God has invited to see the Newborn King! Magi, with strange useless gifts for a baby who represent nobility and wisdom and poor, shabby shepherds, who are hardened and worn by their lot in life caring day and night for sheep. These strange mix of figures amble into to this rural barn to see a man, woman and a newborn baby they have been told is the Messiah. (I wonder what Mary and Joseph did with the gold?)

A few days later Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the temple to present Jesus to the Lord. Yet again there is a surprise when Simeon holds the child with the acknowledgement that he has now just seen the Messiah, as God had earlier promised him. And this confirmation was quickly followed by the news that “This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel...” and to Mary specifically, “a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

Yes, Mary and Joseph had much too think about, to ponder what all these signs and prophecies would mean to them and to their child.

The last line of Mary Dixon Thayer’s 1926 poem *Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue* beautifully captures this mystery of Mary being God’s Mother:

*“Lovely Lady dressed in blue, teach me how to pray!
God was just your little Boy, and you know the Way.”*
Blessed Christmas everyone! (Fr. Charles)

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK



Tuesday, January 7th

8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, January 8th

7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 9th

8:30 a.m. † Luiza Camarata

Friday, January 10th

8:30 a.m. † Waclaw Sabala

Saturday, January 11th

4:30 p.m. † Michael Power

Sunday, January 12th

9:00 a.m. † Tomasina Parente

11:00 a.m. † Kathleen Power

Sanctuary Lamp is offered for Walter & Helen Bogus

PRE-AUTHORIZED GIVING

This time of year when we enter into a new year on is a good time for the members of our parish who use Pre Authorized Giving (PAG) to consider annually what they are able to contribute to the Lord through the Church in our parish. While every day of our lives is offered opportunity to show our gratitude to the Lord for our faith and blessings, now is a blessed time to express our commitment to the Lord in the support of His Church. If you wish to change your amount of giving through PAG, simply email the office at office@stleothegreat.ca with your new increased amount.



St. Leo Knights of Columbus will serve Breakfast in the Church hall on January 12th. following the 9:00 and 11:00 A.M. Masses. Everyone is invited to enjoy a **full**

Breakfast of eggs, sausages, baked beans, pancakes, biscuits, coffee, tea and juice. Adults - \$6.00, Children ages 4 - 10 - \$4.00, and Children under 4 - free.

Please join us.

GIFT OF SECURITIES

You can now support the Church using securities (stocks, mutual funds, bonds.). You will not have to pay any capital gains on your gift and you will get a tax receipt for the full amount. Also, you can divide up your gift to as many Archdiocesan charities as you wish (e.g. Parish Offertory or building fund, ShareLife, The Shepherds' Trust etc.). For more information please contact the Parish Office or the Development Office of the Archdiocese at 416-934-3411 or at development@archtoronto.org

FAMILY of FAITH DONATIONS

Tax receipts for Family of Faith donations will be issued by the office of Family of Faith.

VOCATION SEEDS

“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid Him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.” God asks us to give our lives. What treasures have been given to you to share with others in Christ’s name? If God is calling you to be a priest, deacon, brother or sister, **contact Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocation Director, Archdiocese of Toronto 416-968-0997 email vocations@archtoronto.org www.vocationstoronto.ca**

Register for Grade 1 French Immersion

You are invited to enrol your child in a French Immersion program at schools across the Durham Catholic District School Board. Online registration take place from **December 9, 2019 to January 17, 2020**. Students entering Grade 1 in September 2020 are eligible to register. Visit dcdsb.ca and click on the French Immersion banner to register. Opening Doors to Opportunities!

Kindergarten Registration

You are invited to register your child for Kindergarten at a Durham Catholic schools across the region. Your child must be turning 4 years of age by December 31, 2020 in order to enrol. Online registration begins **January 13-17, 2020**. Visit dcdsb.ca to register. For questions, email admissions@dcdsb.ca.



The Cornerstone Community greatly appreciates the generous donations of so many St. Leo the Great parishioners that supported the needs of many homeless persons during the Christmas season. Thank you.

Catholic Family Services

Heart to Heart Gala

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday, February 29, 2020 Ajax Convention Centre. Annual Heart to Heart Gala for Catholic Family Services of Durham. Tickets are just \$100 each, and are available for purchase now! Contact Tania McClean (905) 725-3513 x 121 www.cfsdurham.com for more information. Proceeds support Catholic Family Services of Durham.

Marriage Preparation Courses in Durham 2020

St. Joseph The Worker, Oshawa Monday evenings for 7 weeks beginning February 24th . Call 905-432-2300 to register.

St. Bernadette Parish, Ajax 2 Friday evenings March 14, March 20 and 2 Saturdays March 15, 21. Call 905-683-1533 to register.




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