

SUNDAY PLUS

Mother Mary

Mothering Jesus

By Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

In being the mother of Jesus, Mary does the same as any mother – nurturing within her womb the great process of a little one taking shape. Another human being is formed in the mother's body, but the mother can never keep the child

within her. Motherhood means not only *having* a baby but *letting go* of the baby. Birth is not possessive: it is letting another life take its rightful place in the world. Birth is the act of painful separation – when the mother must let her child go for the first time.

And as every mother knows, giving birth is only the first of many times when mothers have to let go. Parents cannot “have” their children

all the time, for the time comes when they must not only foster their presence but foster their leaving; trust them to make their own lives in their own way.

That is something which Mary must do – not only to nurture Jesus in his growing, but eventually to let him go his way to make his appointed future. Jesus is Mary's son. He is her own, but not her own. He belongs to her, but also to many. Mary has to do what the Father did – let go of his beloved Son. And that is what Mary does: she does not anxiously clutch Jesus to herself but gives him to us. She asks us to do what she does: share Jesus with everyone and give him as life to others.



Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Mary looks at us with maternal tenderness just as she used to look at her Son Jesus... and they tell me that Our Lady said: “Won't you let me hold this Son of mine in my arms for a bit?” This is what Our Lady does with us: she wants to hold us in her arms to protect us as she protected and loved her Son.

Pope Francis

Uniquely mother

By Natasha Pritchard

I recently took my godchildren for a day out on the ferry, and I remember thinking that if they fell into the water, I wouldn't hesitate to go in after them. I hardly gave a second thought to the fact that I cannot swim.


Being a godmother only gives me a tiny fraction of the depth of feeling that mothers feel, yet I still feel that motherly love, pride and protective instinct very

deeply. I can hardly begin to imagine how Mary must have felt in that stable.

If you are a mother, or a spiritual mother, life may be hectic. We are so busy “doing” that we often forget to follow Mary's example, simply taking time to ponder and treasure our unique role.

Yet as deeply as we love our children, God loves us even more. He has made us his heirs – each of us is the most beloved child who will inherit everything in His possession. What a wonderful thought!

Natasha Pritchard has worked in Catholic hospital chaplaincy, youth ministry and is now Area Support Chaplain at Methodist Homes.

Mother Mary, you cared for Jesus and Joseph. During this new year, please care for all of us with that same all-embracing love. Please give a hug to everyone who needs an extra bit of love just now.  Amen.

Feast of the week
Friday 6 January



The Epiphany of the Lord

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter...
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly...

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and
death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

T.S. Eliot

Today:
Numbers 6:22-27
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Monday:
1 John 2:22-28
John 1:19-28

Tuesday:
1 John 2:29 – 3:6
John 1:29-34

Wednesday:
1 John 3:7-10
John 1:35-42

Thursday:
1 John 3:11-21
John 1:43-51

Friday:
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12
(S): 1 John 5:5-13 Mark 1:7-11

Saturday:
1 John 3:22 – 4:6
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25
(S): 1 John 5:14-21
John 2:1-11

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17
(S): Isaiah 60:1-6 Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12