

Mary – The Mother of God

Gathering song: You Are Near

Opening Prayer:

I see you Jesus
No longer just in my prayer,
No longer just in my bible,
but in the breaking of the bread of everyday life.

I see you Jesus
When you help me get done what's got to get done:
when my homework, my finals, my everyday living.

Where do I see you?
More and more in the people around me:
My friends, the people at the dinner table, my mom
and dad, my sister and the guy on the bus home.

You have become flesh in them;
You are not just the spirit in the sky any longer,
But you are right here in them to love me,
For me to love.....

Thanks, for entering everyday life.
I'm glad I don't have to go to the desert and find you.
All I have to do is listen right here and now
And I'll find you coming through, gentle, subtly
Touching my heart with your love and wisdom.....
Amen.

Reading: John 2:1-11

Introduction:

A sports writer interviewing the football coach at Notre Dame University asked, "Coach, is it true that you say a prayer with your football team before every game?" "Yes, it is," replied the coach. "Now, Coach," rejoined the writer, "you don't think almighty God cares whether the Notre Dame football team wins or loses, do you?" "No,," the coach said. "Almighty God doesn't care whether Notre Dame wins or loses.....But his Mother does!"

That's a funny remark, but it might be misleading. It might imply that Mary "fills in" where God is unwilling to act or that she must convince God in situations where God

is reluctant to help. But God does not need a substitute and does not have to be convinced. God knows and wants what is best for us in every circumstance. The real problem is that we may be prevented from receiving what God wants because we do not recognize God's will or because our sins and those of others hinder us. Mary helps us in that she opens us to God's will and makes us more receptive to God's grace.

Mary is introduced to John's readers at a wedding feast at Cana in Galilee(2:1-11). Mary calls Jesus' attention to the fact that the hosts have run out of wine. Jesus apparently refuses to intervene, but then changes six large containers of water into fine wine. This passage presents Mary as one who believes in Jesus and who intercedes for others. Jesus initially seems to dismiss his Mother's implicit request: "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come", (John2:4) then acquiesces.

In so doing, Jesus sets out on the course leading to our Redemption. In the Gospel of John, Jesus' hour is his death and resurrection. Cana is "the first of his signs" which will conduct him to Calvary. Jesus' hour is also the time for him to be "glorified"(John 12:33), and at Cana Jesus first "revealed his glory."

Mary makes a final appearance in John's Gospel at the crucifixion of Jesus(19:25-27). The other evangelists do not include Mary among those women who witnessed Christ's death, but John places her near the cross. With her is the disciple whom Jesus loved, and Jesus entrusts them to each other. On the surface, this account may appear to be an instance of a dying son looking after his mother. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home(John 19:25-27). At this moment, Jesus assigns Mary a special relationship to those he had redeemed. The first woman was called Eve because she was "mother of all living". Mary now becomes the new Eve because she is the Mother of all believers. If we are Christ's beloved disciples, Mary is our Mother, and Jesus wants us to take her into our own home.

Questions for Reflection and sharing:

1. Has your devotion to Mary increased your love for Jesus?
2. Who are some of the famous people (rock stars and athletic stars and actors and actresses) who are "idolized" today? In what sense are these people heroes and heroines? In what sense is Mary a heroine, and how can remembering and honoring her make us better human beings and more faithful followers of Christ?
3. Have you ever felt that your life seemed routine and unimportant? Have you considered how much time Mary, Joseph, and Jesus spent in ordinary family life and routine tasks?

4. Does reflecting on the life of the Holy Family in Nazareth help you see your own life in a different way?

Prayer Time: Play soft music in background. Facilitator helps everyone into the presence of God . Ask those who feel moved to say prayer out loud. Facilitator ends by saying a short concluding prayer. (The facilitator can also help everyone do the Examen of Consciousness in place of prayer time.)

Closing Prayer: Our Father and (3)Hail Mary

Pray the Our Father slowly and reverently. Then pray the Hail Mary. Ask Mary to help you love God as she does.

Hail Mary(3 times)

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

To conclude: sing Prayer of St. Francis