

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Being in very Nature God, He humbled Himself. He who was made for a little while lower than the angels made Himself for a little while lower than Mary and Joseph. He was subject to them.

The fall of all mankind came through the disobedience of the first woman. The Holy One Who reconciles men to the God who made them came through a woman - the Virgin Mary. She is rightly called Mother of God. She is rightly called blessed among women.

So in that virgin daughter of Judah we see the grace of God manifest, perhaps more than in any other person in Scripture. Among the greatest mysteries of the faith is the Truth that by the preaching of the archangel the promised Seed of the woman was planted in Her womb. God sent His Son through Mary. Jesus took on her flesh. She bore God. Mary was indeed full of grace, for her womb was filled with God Himself.

As He grew inside of her, Mary's flesh was intertwined with God's Flesh. Her blood coursed through His nascent veins. She nourished and protected in her womb the One that the heavens can not contain. By His breath God animated the first man, but now she inhales, and from deep in her womb He draws life from her breath.

But Mary was also a sinful woman, sinful like you and me and all men, a woman redeemed by God's grace through faith in

Jesus Christ. Mary also fell short. She left Jerusalem thinking the Child was with them. He wasn't. And when she returned and scolded Him, she was obediently rebuked by her Son: "Why did you seek Me? Had you not known that it is necessary for Me to be among My Father's things?"

With these Words the Son corrects His mother. Joseph is not His Father, as she says. God is His Father. And quite apart from what Mary expected of her Son, His House was not in Nazareth. His work was among the Holy Things. His work was His Father's business.

The Temple was His House. There His Word was read. There all the sacrifices were made to point forward to Him, the One True Sacrifice, the True Lamb of God. Blessed among women, yes. Submissive in faith, yes. Still Mary's will was different than God's will.

And so it is with all sinful men. And so it is with you. Like Mary after the feast, you too have gone your own way. You have desired that God do what you think is necessary, as Mary did at the wedding in Cana. You have expected God miraculously to fill what you think needs to be full – the pantry, the checking account, the house and the garage.

You too have headed merrily off on your way believing that God should follow you. And when God hasn't acted in accord with our will, you have been confused and doubted. And you too have been quick to say with Mary "Why have you done this to us?"

Repent. God's ways are not your ways, nor His thoughts your thoughts. His judgments are unsearchable. His ways are past finding out. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Repent, lest in your sin God say to you what Mary's Son said to her: "What have I to do with you?" Repent, for sin leads to death. Pray that by His grace God's will, not yours, be done.

Mary and Joseph did not need to seek Jesus. He was where it was right for Him to be. When God took on Flesh, One greater than the Temple was there. He who made the Holiest Place holy became Man. He was found no longer between the cherubim upon the Mercy Seat, but between ox and donkey in the manger, and in the arms of His mother.

He was found no longer in pillar of fire and column of smoke protecting His people, but crucified on the cross for their sins. Your sins were crucified with Him. And when before His mother's eyes He died and was buried, your sins were buried with Him. They are forgiven by His shed Blood. The death that pierced Mary's soul cures her soul and yours.

For a little while they did not see Him. But then they saw Him again. He rose from the dead, that all those who believe in Him might live. And Mary knew the joy of His resurrection, as she remained with the Church, surrounded by her Son's things: forgiveness, salvation, life, joy, comfort and peace. Mary saw the fulfillment of the Promise that prophets and kings longed to see. And the faith that God gave Mary He gives you – freely, in love, by grace.

The Christ baptized in the Jordan washes you in the font, giving you new life by the same Spirit that worked His incarnation in the Virgin, the same Spirit that descended upon Him, the seven-fold Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There, in the font, your sins are removed by Christ's death, and you are raised with Christ to life. And the Christ that was among His Father's things in the Temple is in the midst of this house today. He is here in Word preached and read. He is here as His Body and Blood are given you to eat and drink.

And the faith and salvation that God gave blessed Mary are given also to you – faith in God's Son, faith in the Word made Flesh, faith to follow Him, faith to do His will, faith that in the resurrection of all flesh you too will rise to live forever with the Lamb before His throne. And until that day, dear Christian, God grant that your faith will keep these things in your heart.

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