

## **Reflection – December 31, 2015 & January 1, 2016 – Mary Mother of God, Year C**

This is a popular time in our culture to reflect on what has happened in the past year and to try and anticipate what is ahead. I cannot help but think, if I try to put myself in Mary's sandals in this moment, that she was probably doing the same thing when she “pondered them in her heart.” In the past year she: became engaged; had a visit from the angel Gabriel; became pregnant; got married; travelled to Bethlehem from Nazareth at the end of her pregnancy; and, had a baby, not surrounded by the women of her family, but almost alone in a barn. Do you think that she could foresee, after the visits from shepherds and Kings, that she and her family would suddenly become refugees fleeing to Egypt to avoid a massacre? This is not an anticipated outcome of “blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

At that moment, I might look at the baby Jesus and ask, “What did I get myself into? This is not what I signed up for.”

For generations we have had the reassurance that was given to the Israelites that God's name is upon us and that we are blessed and further, through Galatians that we are not slaves but children and heirs of God's blessings through Jesus. However, this unfortunately provides no guarantees of safety or a pass from the trials and tribulations of life.

Mary, like us, suffered even though she was the Mother of God. Of all people you would have thought that she would have earned a pass. God bless her, she even had to watch her son die by crucifixion after having just been the toast of the town with a parade of palms. She had no respite from an extraordinary life and responsibility; and therefore, neither do we.

We honour Mary because she is an empathetic soul; she is the embodiment of an ordinary person who is called to do great things and gave completely of herself although she could not foresee the outcomes. We cannot foresee what our future will be, and we, like Mary, can only be called and respond. I admit though, it is hard to give up the supposed control that I have over my life and surrender completely to God. It is a work in progress, perpetual progress.

We are Loved and in the name of that Love, like the servants at the wedding at Cana, we are asked in the wisdom of Mary's words to “Do whatever he tells you.” Let us hope that we continue to hear and are the inheritors of the action of her blessing.