

June 8, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

MEMORIAL OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Today's Gospel Acclamation

Blessed is the Virgin Mary who kept the word of God and pondered it in her heart.

LUKE 2:19

Reflection

Yesterday was the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and today is the memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It is appropriate that one follows the other as each lived a life completely devoted to God in a gracious and valiantly loving manner. Reflecting on the inner disposition of their hearts provides a glimpse into how to live a Life in God through self-emptying love and fidelity to grace.

“The Immaculate Heart of Mary is a Catholic devotion that honors the Virgin Mary's love and purity for God. It symbolizes her faith, mercy, trust, and welcoming of Christ, as well as her total purity. The devotion also refers to Mary's interior life, including her joys, sorrows, virtues, and hidden perfections.” (Newman Ministry)

Mary has been a central figure in Christianity, and in the Catholic faith, from the beginning. It was her “yes” to God which made the Incarnation possible. Through her, Jesus entered our world. She is the first Christian, the first follower of Jesus, the exemplar of faith for us. Mary’s singlehearted love points the way to her son. She was present and stood in solidarity with Jesus as he suffered unspeakable cruelty. Despite suffering the agony as his mother, she remained, pondering all in her heart -- such was the immensity of her selfless love and devotion. From the cross, Jesus gave her to us as our spiritual mother.

Since the early Church, artists have tried to express their love of and respect for Mary. Through art, Mary has been remembered in countless ways. Each sculpture, icon, painting, drawing, poem, piece of prose, litany, song, and dance has attempted to give shape to Mary. She often is seen through the lens of culture and is often depicted as people see themselves.

Reflect upon her inner experience through how she is portrayed in scripture. Step aside from the stereotype of Mary as perfection, for the stories reveal a very human person who experienced the fullest reality of life in suffering and challenges, as well as the wonder of love, beauty, relationships of family life, of joy and peace, of disappointment and the heart-felt tragedy of the cross. I seek to remove the distorted lens of Mary being other than human and awaken to the very human emotions and experiences of a life well lived as a woman of faith encountering the fullness of life’s wild ride. Only then does the heart of Mary offer a place of solace and understanding of our own experiences. Like Mary, we ponder all life brings and discover God with us.



"S.S. Heart Mary (1890), vintage" by Library of Congress is marked with CCo 1.0.
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For Pondering

- What has Mary meant to you in your life? How has that meaning changed?
- What is your favorite title or image of Mary?
- How is your lived experience revealed in her lived experience?

For Prayer

Litany of Mary, Author unknown

We honor you, Mary, for your fidelity to grace through all your heart experienced as the Mother of Jesus. Hear us, Mary, and pray for us.

Mary, O holy receptive one
Mary, where the seed was planted in the womb in darkness, light hidden
Mary, seeker to complete God's plan
Mary, bent in prayer when the Angel requested
Mary, hastening to Elizabeth's side
Mary, proclaiming to all Nazareth's hills that the Lord had raised you up
Mary, filled with secret wonder at the nativity
Mary, deep ocean of responsiveness to grace
Mary, silent well, full, and deep pondering all life's experiences
Mary, home of the Holy Spirit
Mary, inspiration for innumerable composers
Mary, model for the most sensitive artists
Mary, attuned to reality and full of intuition
Mary, intercessor for all your children throughout the ages
Mary, solace and understanding when we start to tear to pieces
Mary, whose fidelity has never been broken
Mary, who held your Son in the beginning and end of his life
Mary, blessed are you among all women
Mary, mother of Jesus and of us all, Mary, hear us, pray for us.

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