

Rev. Derek Fairman

Mary, Mother of God (Repository of God's Word)

In the Gospel passage, we hear that the Mother of God kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. All that happened in the Lord's birth would remain with her many years. Later, when she found the Lord Jesus in the Temple, and as they went back home to Nazareth, St. Luke wrote that she would reflect upon these things and ponder them in her heart. The Virgin Mary clearly reflected and meditated upon what these events meant, and how they affected her.

In the Song of Songs, the Bride's heart is united to the Groom. One way to see this is that the city of Jerusalem was a kind of heart where the Lord would meet His people. The city was a place where the people would come, and God would meet them. There was a way in which this place was where God's saving plan would play out in a particular way. Yes, God was working in all times and places, but Jerusalem was a place that was special, where all kinds of things and people would come together.

In the Temple, there was the innermost room called the Holy of Holies. It was the holiest part of the Temple complex, and there, hidden in the depths of the Temple and the whole nation, was the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark contained the stone tablets upon which were written the Ten Commandments. The Word of God dwelt in the Ark of the Covenant, kept in this hidden, inner room, that was in the depths of the whole nation. If Jerusalem was the heart of the nation, where things and people would come together, then the Ark of the Covenant was the center of that heart, the innermost depths of that heart.

The city of Jerusalem kept alive all the traditions and all the ways that God had revealed Himself. The city of Jerusalem was where God was continuing to work. God's Word to His people was alive, and found a kind of home, among His people. There was a way in which the people kept alive all that the Lord had done for them, in their oral traditions, which were eventually written down in what we know as the Old Testament.

In the heart of the Virgin Mother of God, the same thing was happening. In her heart, all that God was doing for His people found a home in her heart and mind. In her heart, there was a repository for the Word of God, her Son, even after His birth. She was and is the New Ark, which contained the Word of God. She kept all those things which her Son brought about, in her heart, so that those who came to believe in Him could benefit from her wisdom. The Lord once

told His disciples that every scribe instructed in the Kingdom of God is like the head of a household who brings the new and the old from the storeroom (Matthew 13:52).

Even before that, the Virgin Mary had read the Word of God and kept it in her mind. The Virgin Mary received the fullness of sanctifying grace in the Immaculate Conception. The Virgin Mary possessed a faith which came from God. In all these ways, she possessed the Word of God in her mind, heart, and soul. She absorbed into herself all these things, and the Word of God was deeply within her soul, even before He came down from Heaven.

The ancient Israelites saw what God had done, but not all responded in faith. There were some who responded in faith, the holy remnant. There were those who remained faithful to the Lord throughout their lives, and they took God's commands quite seriously. They had received the Word of God, but then they responded to that Word. In the Temple in Jerusalem, there were those appointed to sing to the Lord and offer hymns of praise to Him. This was one way in which the people responded to the Lord's goodness, by praising Him.

The Virgin Mary responded to all that the Lord had done for her in perfect faith. She responded to what the Lord had done, and she composed her own hymn, the Magnificat. The Magnificat is not just her own personal hymn, but a hymn inspired by the Holy Spirit to be the hymn of the faithful people. The true Israel, the Virgin Daughter Zion, sang to the Lord, fulfilling all the ways in which the faithful people responded to what the Lord had done for them.

What about us? How is the Lord calling us to respond in faith to Him? We think about the ways that the Lord has brought us peace. We think about the ways that the Lord has given us the Word of God to be in our minds, in our hearts, and in our souls. If we have allowed the seed of faith which the Lord has planted in our hearts to grow, if we have followed the Lord's commands, and tried to understand Him, and if we appreciate the grace that is within our souls, then we have allowed the Word of God to become a part of who we are.

We too can praise the Lord. We do so by our participation at Mass. We respond to the various invitations, such as "The Lord be with you," and so on. We also sing, to join our praises to the Lord's own Sacrifice, to make a sacrifice of praise. We also live as the Lord Jesus has commanded us, so that our praises are not contradicted by the way we live.

As we approach the altar, we ask the Lord to help us imitate Mary. We have received the Catholic faith and so many good things. We want to respond to all these good things by praising God for all that He does, and so imitate the Virgin Mother.