



Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God



*Saint Philip
the Apostle Parish
Clifton, New Jersey*

My Dear Parishioners,

It might come as a surprise to you that in this short and tranquil gospel, which is proclaimed on New Year's Day, Mary shows us how to deal with tragedy in our lives. The relevant passage is only one sentence, but it is a sentence in which every word counts. It reads, "And Mary treasured all of these things, reflecting upon them in her heart."

Now what are the things that Mary treasured? They are the events that surround the birth of Christ. But what is peculiar about this line is it says that Mary treasured **all** these things. This is perplexing. If the line said that Mary treasured some of these things, it would be easy to understand. Some of the things surrounding the birth of Christ were wonderful indeed. It would make sense to treasure the angels' song, the visit of the shepherds, the healthy baby boy that Mary brought into this world.

But the text does not say that Mary treasured some of these things, but that she **treasured all** of these things. This is confusing because some of the things surrounding the birth of Christ were quite **horrible**. Remember that Joseph was ready to divorce Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. In time the two of them moved beyond that hurtful judgment, but it certainly left scars on the relationship. Exactly what part of that near disaster do we imagine Mary was treasuring? We cannot forget the forced and difficult journey to Bethlehem in the last few days of a pregnancy and the profound disappointment that Mary must have felt as she had to place her beautiful baby boy in a filthy manger. What was there about these **hardships** that Mary was holding close to her heart? Nor was it good news that wicked King Herod was trying to **kill the child**. His plans would eventually force the Holy Family to flee to Egypt. Was this something Mary **would want** to remember?

What part of this evil and violence was Mary treasuring? It is helpful to know that the Greek word here that we translate as "treasure" actually means "to hold onto" or, by extension, "to accept." If we understand the word in this way, the text is telling us that Mary is accepting all of these tragic aspects of Jesus' birth. Why is she accepting them? Because she understands that not to accept them would leave her life dominated by anger, denial, and depression. Mary did not choose to live that way. She did not choose to live in anger with Joseph over his failure to trust her, with depression over the impoverished and pathetic circumstances in which she needed to give birth, or denial that King Herod was truly trying to kill her son.

Mary **accepted all of these tragic aspects** of Jesus' birth. She held them. She treasured them, because they were the way the birth came about. By her example, she tells us that when we need to deal with tragic aspects of our life, we must accept them as well. "Yes, I have cancer." "Yes, I am divorced." "Yes, I have been hurt

deeply by someone I trusted." Such acts of acceptance do not mean that the tragic aspects of our lives are somehow good and beautiful. Our tragedies remain tragedies. But they must be claimed as our tragedies, because it is only by accepting them that we can move forward and continue to live.

But Mary **does more than show** us the importance of accepting our tragedies. The second part of the text reads: "reflecting upon them in her heart." Again, the Greek is helpful. The word here translated as "reflecting" is a wonderful Greek word which literally means "to throw together." So, the scripture is telling us that Mary first accepts the tragedies she has experienced and then "throws them together" with the rest of her life.

Mary shows us then a pattern of "**accepting**" and "**throwing together**." And what is important in this pattern is when our tragedies are thrown together with the rest of our lives, it allows the good things to win. "Yes, I am divorced, but I have friends who have stood by me throughout the entire process." "Yes, I have been deeply hurt, but I have never been more creative in my job." "Yes, I do have cancer, but now I see more clearly the beauty of life and am so much freer to express my love to others."

Bad things happen to us all. When they do, the only way we can move forward, the only way that we can continue to live, is to accept those tragic things as a part of our story. And once we accept them, we can throw them together with all the good things that are still ours. This is how Mary dealt with the birth of Jesus. This is how we can, with God's grace, deal with the tragedies of our lives so that we can continue as healthy and joyful people.

Peace,

Fr. Monteleone



The entire Parish Staff would like to wish you and yours a blessed New Year. May God bless you!



PLEASE NOTE

The Parish Office will be closed on Monday, January 2nd

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Mrs. McKeever's seventh grade Kaleidoscope Literature class would like to thank former student and author Tony Kolenc for visiting us virtually last week. Mr. Kolenc explained the Hero's Journey and related it to both The Odyssey and his own writing. We are truly grateful for his dedication to our school and look forward to a visit sometime in 2023.



SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

PRIME-TIMERS

The next meeting of the Prime-Timers will be on **Friday, January 6th at 1 PM** in Marian Hall. Our guest speaker will be Anna Pansini D'Alto, parishioner, educator, and author of the book, "*Strength to Endure- A Memoir.*"

ROSARY SOCIETY

Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year! **Save the date: Saturday, January 21st**, Rosarians will meet for 9 AM Mass (weather permitting).

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

The Little Sisters of Poor are committed to serving the elderly poor and meeting their needs at Saint Joseph's Home for the Elderly in Totowa New Jersey. Challenged during these past years they ask for any support that can be given which will be immensely appreciated. They will be at our Parish the weekend of **January 14 - 15, 2023.**

DIOCESAN OPPORTUNITIES

Natural Family Planning - The Marquette Method
January 9th from 7:30 PM - 9 PM on Zoom

The Marquette Method will be presented by Amanda Khanjian. Come learn the most effective, natural, healthy, and inexpensive system integrating excellent women's health and true family planning for couples trying to achieve pregnancy, couples having infertility concerns, or couples planning to postpone pregnancy, all within God's natural design.

Register by visiting <https://insidethewalls.org/take-a-class>.

GOD BLESS THE NEWLY BAPTIZED



Henry Hugo

KIDS KORNER



Gospel Today
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God | Luke 2:16-21

The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see Jesus and immediately understood all that they had been told about him. They praised God for what they had seen, and Jesus was given the name that the angel had chosen for him.

Year A



BIBLE WORD SEARCH

Find all the words... left, right, up, down or diagonally.

B	A	B	Y	G	E	J	O	S	E	P	H	B
M	D	D	E	L	S	O	L	P	J	S	M	A
O	E	M	D	O	O	T	S	R	E	D	N	U
T	R	A	U	R	L	H	A	E	S	R	P	R
H	U	R	R	I	E	D	N	A	U	E	B	E
E	S	Y	L	F	M	G	O	D	S	H	E	G
R	A	S	E	Y	N	U	R	E	N	P	T	D
C	E	R	G	I	I	D	T	R	A	E	H	L
P	R	E	N	N	T	N	H	L	M	H	L	I
O	T	G	A	G	Y	A	G	R	E	S	E	H
P	O	N	D	E	R	E	D	D	I	E	H	C
H	E	A	R	D	O	P	R	A	I	S	E	D
Y	H	M	T	W	O	R	D	E	Z	A	M	A

Solemnity
Mary
Holy
Mother
God
Joseph
Baby
Lying
Manger
Hurried
Shepherds
Bethlehem
Understood
Glorifying
Praised
Heard
Seen
Spread
Word
Child
Amazed
Treasured
Pondered
Heart
Angel
Name
Jesus

WE PRAY FOR...

May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace...
Adelaide Lodico

A Time to be Healed...

Susan Stierlen, Jill Festa, Sylvia Shami, Edward Kovacs, Dominick Cappello, Todd Daigneault, Cheri Albanesius, James Jablonowski, Elmer Rodriguez, Michael Barbetta, John Hughes, Bernadette Menzaco, Janet Jelenski, Adelaido Cuasay Peter Weber, Msgr. Herbert Tillyer, Lorraine De Bellis



PARISH GIVING

COLLECTION INFORMATION
NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PRINTING

Upcoming Second Collections:
January 8 - Project Faith
January 15 - The Beacon

MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2023

- 8:00** All the People of the Parish
10:00 Leo Tracy
In Thanksgiving for the 38th Wedding
Anniversary of George and Emelyn Masbang
12:00 Giuseppe Esposito
Eleanor Boyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2023

- 9:00** Steven Andretta

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

- 9:00** Rogelio Dela Cruz

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2023

- 9:00** Ronald Mack

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023

- 9:00** Corazon Nunag

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2023

- 9:00** Donna Fede

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2023

- 9:00** Felicia and Pietro Mannarino
Luciano and Teofilla Rosales
5:30 Deceased members of the McNamara Family
Joseph Dewland
Frances Dodd

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2023

- 8:00** Rose Spatola
Leandro Salme
10:00 Gertrude Kovach
Robert Parillo - 13th Anniversary
Matthew Pennacchia
Anne and Anthony Lipari
12:00 All the People of the Parish
Salvatore Vigilante



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