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## Mary, Mother of God - 1 January 2025

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# 1 January 2025

## Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

### Introduction

On the octave day of Christmas, we acknowledge and celebrate the singular role of Mary as the Mother of God, a role essential to human salvation. We celebrate the fruit of Mary's 'Yes' at the Annunciation as our celebration of the day of the Lord's Nativity comes to a close, and a new calendar year begins.

Today is also acknowledged as the World Day of Peace, and this can be reflected in the petitions of the Universal Prayer.

### Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came and we are redeemed. Lord, have mercy.

You came so that we can become your heirs. Christ, have mercy.

You came to fill us with your joy and peace. Lord, have mercy.

### Collect

*O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary  
bestowed on the human race  
the grace of eternal salvation,  
grant, we pray,  
that we may experience the intercession of her,  
through whom we were found worthy  
to receive the author of life,  
our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.*

Our prayer highlights the role of Mary in the divine plan of salvation, and in this continues the liturgical sense of the Christmas season and the theology of the incarnation it embodies. As well, the collect brings out the way in which God's plans do not reflect human wisdom. After all, it is the virgin who is fruitful, and later in the petition we hear that the humble bearer of a life is carrying the author of all life. God has truly entered human history and become vulnerable to the conditions of human and material life. As the new year begins the faithful petition that they may feel under Mary's intercession, a sentiment that resonates with the care of this mother for her newborn infant. And so, the year is commenced in prayer with the mystery of

redemption, the unfathomable ways of God, the agency of the young woman, and a sense of the ongoing care of the mother.

*Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.*

## **First Reading**

### **Numbers 6:22–27**

Moses receives from the Lord the words to be prayed over the people of God; words that still echo within the Christian Church today.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

### **Psalm 66(67):2–3, 5–6, 8**

*May God bless us in his mercy.*

The Psalmist gives thanks for God's blessing on God's people, for which the people are called to render praise to God in a constant refrain.

## **Second Reading**

### **Galatians 4:4–7**

St Paul reminds the Church in Galatia—and us—that because God has sent his Son to live in human flesh, we have received adoption as children of God and become co-heirs with Christ. In that spirit, we cry out 'Abba! Father!' along with Jesus.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **Luke 2:16–21**

Having listened to the angelic choir announce his birth, the shepherds hasten to encounter the promised salvation of the Lord, telling Mary and Joseph all that they had heard. Mary treasured all these things in her heart, while she and Joseph prepare to give the child his name, Jesus.

## **Reflection**

As we gather at the beginning of a new calendar year, we celebrate Mary's unique role in God's plan of salvation.

Our Gospel reveals Mary in the humble scene we first encounter on the day of the Nativity. Surrounded by animals and a manger, Mary welcomes the shepherds who, having heard the Good News from the angelic choir, have come to see for themselves what they have been told: God has fulfilled God's promise.

We are told that Mary 'treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart', a journey that began not with the birth of her child but months before when Mary's 'yes' at the Annunciation and set God's eternal plan into motion.

It is a wonderfully powerful image. Mary quietly contemplates the mystery of her child, through which we gain a glimpse of her deep faith and trust in God. Mary has received the Word of God not only in her womb but also in her heart and has thus become the first disciple of Christ.

In celebrating Mary's title of 'Mother of God', which comes from the Greek *Theotokos*, literally 'God-bearer', we recognise not only Mary's singular role but also make a statement of faith about the identity of Jesus. In affirming Mary's title, we are making a declaration about the mystery of the Incarnation: that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, has entered into our human history, has taken on human flesh, and has become one of us.

Through Mary, God has entered the world in a concrete, human way in the person of Jesus, fully God and fully human.

And, as St Paul reminds the Church of Galatia, it is through this event, this Incarnation, that we have become children of God by adoption, and thus co-heirs with Christ to the kingdom that Christ came to proclaim.

The mystery of the Incarnation, the day of which comes to a close today, is at the heart of our Christian faith. And it is so because Mary first said 'yes'.

Despite all the uncertainties and sufferings it might bring, Mary accepted her role in God's plan with total humility and trust. Thus, it provides a model of true discipleship: faith in action, trust in God's will, and a life of humble service.

Mary's example teaches us to listen to God, to treasure God's words, and to follow God's will. Mary shows us that faith is not simply about knowledge of doctrine but about trusting God with our lives, of 'treasuring all these things' and pondering them in our hearts.

On this first day of the new year, we can look to Mary as a guide and intercessor. We enter 2025 with hope, but also perhaps with uncertainties, fears, or burdens. We do not know what this year will bring, but we can, like Mary, treasure and ponder in our hearts the mystery of God's love for us made manifest in Christ Jesus, whose mother shows us how we can 'yes' to all that God asks of us.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

Like Mary our mother who always put her hope in God, we now present our needs to God with humble confidence.

## Petitions

We pray for Francis our Pope, our Bishops, the clergy and other leaders of the Church. With Mary, the Mother of the Church, may they find inspiration in her discipleship and willingness to be guided by the Spirit.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit to govern with integrity and justice and to support all those who are suffering from the effects of violent conflict. On this World Day of Peace, we pray that their efforts will be just and right.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all parents, that following the example of Mary and Joseph, they may lovingly raise their children to know and love God.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for couples experiencing infertility or the loss of a child, that God will give them comfort, strength and hope in their time of grief.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the needs of the community gathered here today, that strengthened by God's grace and the intercession of Mary, we will continually conform our lives to God's will and work towards peace in every aspect of our lives.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those suffering ill health in mind, body and spirit. May they be restored through the care of those who love them.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

We offer these needs to our loving God with complete confidence that they will be answered. We make these prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Year C (1 January 2025)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Angels we have heard on high		140	622	255	286
Canticle of Mary			606		
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come			654	382	376
Good Christians all, rejoice			697	261	
Hail Mary: gentle woman					544
Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star			702		
Hark! The herald angels sing	171		704	262	294
Holy Virgin, by God's decree			714	410	
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you			723	416	549
Joy to you, O Virgin Mary			729		
May God bless and keep you	177				441
Mary, crowned with living light			742		
My soul rejoices				212	250
O holy Mary	141			413	
O Mary of Graces and Mother of God			769		
O purest of creatures			775		
Salve, Regina			801	406	
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly			808		
The Angel Gabriel from heaven came			815	247	
Tell out my soul				213	550
There is nothing told				418	548
What child is this? (Verses 1-2)	165			275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Among all	8		
Hail Mary: gentle woman			336

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 66: *May God bless us in his mercy.*

	CWB	PM 3	LPSF
Psalm 66	195	42	pg. 18

## Music selections by Michael Mangan

There is a child (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7* [Gathering]

Song of Blessing (SHOF) *based on Numbers 6:22-27* [Gifts]

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

My Spirit Sings (FWS/SYJ/CWB II) *Magnificat* [Gathering, Recessional]