



*Stewardship of The Gift of God
at St. John the Evangelist Parish*

Week 12: Mary shows us the “yes” to Christ in the Eucharist

Dear Parishioners,

How do we personally say “yes” to Christ in the Eucharist today? Look around you. Perhaps there is someone in your family or here in the parish who has personally allowed the Presence of Christ to live in them in such a way that many people recognize there is something more attractive and beautiful about the way they approach their daily concerns. Ponder the lives of Blessed Teresa and Pope John Paul II. These are people who gave a true “yes”—like Mary—to the living God in their lives. In their faces, we saw his Face. Pope John Paul II taught:

“...there is a profound analogy between the *Fiat* which Mary said in reply to the angel, and the *Amen* which every believer says when receiving the body of the Lord. Mary was asked to believe that the One whom she conceived ‘through the Holy Spirit’ was ‘the Son of God’ (Lk 1:30-35). In continuity with the Virgin’s faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine.”

--Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 55

Mary of Nazareth entrusted her life and destiny to a God who wanted to be encountered in a way human beings would recognize—in the flesh. Those who have welcomed the Eucharist in this most “Marian way” are truly living *stewardship as a way of life*.

Msgr. Barry Knestout
& the Stewardship Committee

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“Let us ask Our Lady to give us her heart...that we may be able to receive Jesus in the bread of life, love him as she loved him and serve him in the distressful disguise of the poorest of the poor.”
– Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

St. John's Parish Formation in the Eucharist

Week 12: Mary shows us the "yes" to Christ in the Eucharist

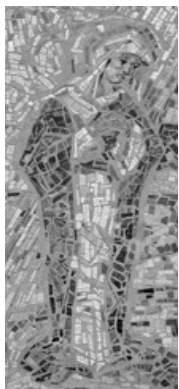


Magnifying God, not herself

Outstanding among the saints is Mary, Mother of the Lord and mirror of all holiness. In the Gospel of Luke we find her engaged in a service of charity to her cousin Elizabeth, with whom she remained for "about three months" (Lk 1:56) so as to assist her in the final phase of her pregnancy. "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*", she says on the occasion of that visit, "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Lk 1:46). In these words she expresses her whole program of life: not setting herself at the center, but leaving space for God, who is encountered both in prayer and in service of neighbor—only then does goodness enter the world. Mary's greatness consists in the fact that she wants to magnify God, not herself. She is lowly: her only desire is to be the handmaid of the Lord (cf. Lk 1:38, 48). She knows that she will only contribute to the salvation of the world if, rather than carrying out her own projects, she places herself completely at the disposal of God's initiatives.

The Word of God becomes her word

Mary is a woman of hope: only because she believes in God's promises and awaits the salvation of Israel, can the angel visit her and call her to the decisive service of these promises. Mary is a woman of faith: "Blessed are you who believed", Elizabeth says to her (cf. Lk 1:45). The *Magnificat*—a portrait, so to speak, of her soul—is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the Word of God. Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the Word of God, with ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the Word of God; the Word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the Word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God. Since Mary is completely imbued with the Word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate. Finally, Mary is a woman who loves. How could it be otherwise? As a



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The Most Intimate Union with God

The lives of the saints are not limited to their earthly biographies but also include their being and working in God after death. In the saints one thing becomes clear: those who draw near to God do not withdraw from men, but rather become truly close to them. In no one do we see this more clearly than in Mary. The words addressed by the crucified Lord to his disciple—to John and through him to all disciples of Jesus: "Behold, your mother!" (Jn 19:27)—are fulfilled anew in every generation. Mary has truly become the Mother of all believers. Men and women of every time and place have recourse to her motherly kindness and her virginal purity and grace, in all their needs and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their moments of loneliness and their common endeavours. They constantly experience the gift of her goodness and the unfailing love which she pours out from the depths of her heart. The testimonials of gratitude, offered to her from every continent and culture, are a recognition of that pure love which is not self-seeking but simply benevolent. At the same time, the devotion of the faithful shows an infallible intuition of how such love is possible: it becomes so as a result of the most intimate union with God, through which the soul is totally pervaded by him—a condition which enables those who have drunk from the fountain of God's love to become in their turn a fountain from which "flow rivers of living water" (Jn 7:38). Mary, Virgin and Mother, shows us what love is and whence it draws its origin and its constantly renewed power. To her we entrust the Church and her mission in the service of love:



**Holy Mary, Mother of God,
you have given the world its
true light,
Jesus, your Son – the Son of
God.
You abandoned yourself
completely
to God's call
and thus became a wellspring
of the goodness which flows
forth from him.**

**Show us Jesus. Lead us to him.
Teach us to know and love him,
so that we too can become
capable of true love
and be fountains of living water
in the midst of a thirsting world.**

**--Pope Benedict XVI,
Deus caritas est, 41-42**