

Reflection for Wednesday, 1 January 2020

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

One could easily be moved to reflect on the nature and history of this particular feast of Mary, but what struck me was the overriding sense of blessing that comes from the readings chosen for the feast this year.

Right from the time of Moses and Aaron, Yahweh declares his threefold blessing on the people of Israel. A promise of ongoing blessing and graciousness – which is amazing considering our chequered history of faithfulness (in our own times as much as in the time of Moses and Aaron!) If you go back and read the blessing again it is overpoweringly gracious and generous. It is about the incredible love of God for us unconditionally. The love of God is offered and ours is the opportunity to respond to it.

The words of the Psalm are a recognition of this blessing and graciousness: God has blessed us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him.

Then the Gospel brings the particular focus of blessing that we celebrate today. Not only is Mary blessed with being the mother of Jesus the Christ, but she is also a blessing for us. She is the ideal model of how we can respond. The shepherds repeat the message that the angels told them (*Do not be afraid. Look I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord*). Mary “treasures all these things and ponders them in her heart”. Another step in her living out her earlier profession of faith: *Let it be done unto me according to your word*.

It is natural for us to think of blessing in human terms, perhaps material terms – prosperity, possessions, human comfort. Mary is the one who is closer to Jesus than any other human being. She grows to understand what being mother of the Christ means – and it is not an easy or comfortable reality, but she is faithful – even to the foot of the cross, because she knows she is not alone, she is blessed deeply with the knowledge of God-with-her and within her. It is a gift of unshakeable resilience and peacefulness. The blessing of Mary, Mother of God, for us, is that she models a way of being faithful. She knows what it is like to be close to Jesus.

I know I am guilty, sometimes, of thinking I have a somewhat sophisticated understanding and approach to my faith, but I also know that when I am faced with the crises in my life, be they petty or serious, I find myself turning to Mary for intercession very quickly. Maybe an outcome of my particular Catholic upbringing. Maybe because I find it so easy to relate to Mary as Mother.

What a blessing!

Mark Sayer, Parishioner



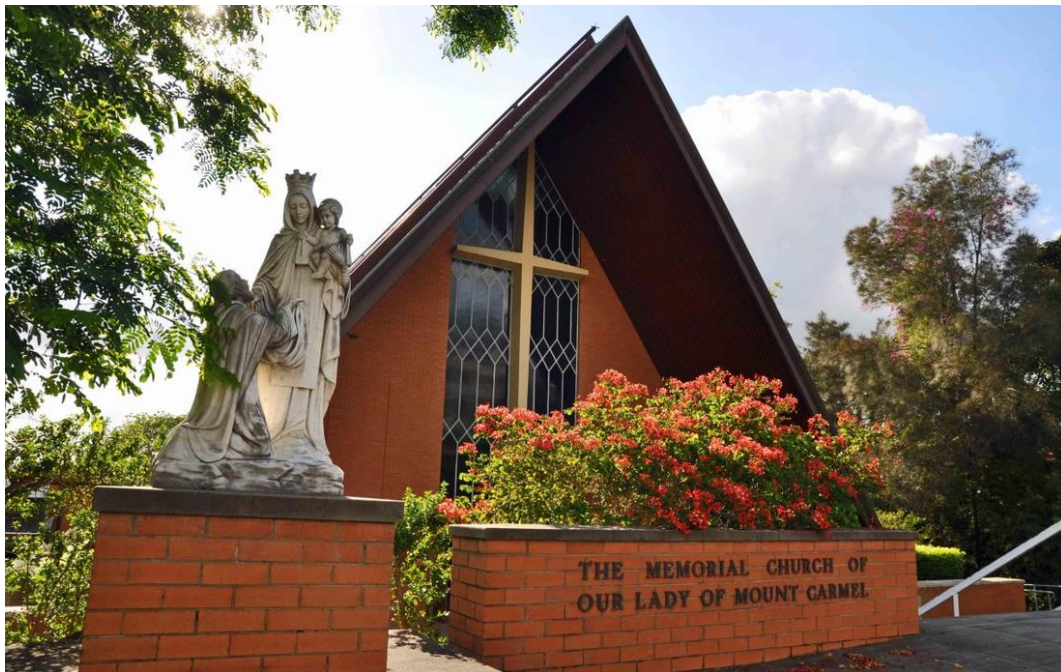
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