

December 31, 2016 - January 1, 2017
Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God
Numbers 6: 22-27 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:16-21

Content with taking a back seat to their children's needs and accomplishments, "Don't worry about me....you go ahead...." is the standard response when most moms are asked if they mind if their kid or family makes this or that plans. Rare is the day when the stars align and full focus can be shone upon the sacrifices, dedication and fierce determination exhibited by the women who both usher us into life and nurture us as we continually 'cut the cord' with each new accomplishment or achievement. Availing of the aligned stars and calendar for 2016-2017, rather than our usual focus upon the ENTIRE Holy Family on this first weekend after Christmas, this year we have the happy opportunity to give singular attention to Mary, under the title of Mother of God. Having contributed half of the DNA through which Jesus was conceived within her womb, and through the lens of faith by which we can appreciate who Jesus IS, it is an easy statement with which to honor Mary AS the Mother of God. Fully human, conceived and born from human parents (Sts. Joachim and Anne) Mary is the surrogate for all humanity as our participation in bringing about our final redemption through the son born of her womb, Jesus. In saying yes to the divine request delivered by the Angel Gabriel, Mary's life becomes our voice of supplication, asking God to save us from the messes we make of our lives. While not heavy with lots of details, the Gospel portrayals of Mary reflect her as a constant presence in the life of her son. Open to the continuing mystery surrounding her child, we are told that Mary 'kept all these things in her heart', perhaps trusting that eventually everything would come together and make clearer sense. We hear that Mary and Joseph 'misplaced' Jesus when he was 12-years old, leaving him behind during a Passover visit to Jerusalem. Is there a parent among us who cannot appreciate the human-ness of this story? REALLY? They rode off and left the SON OF GOD back in Jerusalem?!?! What kind of parents were they?!?! Well, as this story shows, normal ones. Brief snippets show Mary stopping by one of Jesus' ministry-moments, there is the wedding feast of Cana where Mary nudges her son to help out with the depleted refreshments and finally we read of her accompanying Jesus during the hours leading to his crucifixion. A constant companion but never seeking attention for herself; open to the mystery that began to unfold with Gabriel's request and one of the choicest gifts given to us by Jesus, 'Woman, behold your son - behold your mother.' What was Jesus' is now ours, Mary, his mom...and OUR mother too!

As we rouse ourselves from holiday stupors, thank you for sharing this post-Christmas weekend with our Santa Clara community. Welcome to the NEW YEAR of 2017, may it be a rich source of new possibilities and grace for each of us! The Bulletin has mention of upcoming events, please accept one on your way home. The upcoming weeks are rich in assorted opportunities: Fr. Tim Freyer's Ordination as the newest Auxiliary Bishop of Orange on Tuesday, January 17th at 2pm at St. Columbans; the slow reveal of our **2017 Pastoral Services Appeal - 'Every Family Has A Story...This Is Ours'** and finally the gradual build-up to the St. Francis of Assisi School Open House. Get ready, 2017 promises to be just as interesting as was 2016. As you start to reclaim your home by packing away your decorations, please know that you are loved. FKB