

Homily on the Solemnity Mary, Mother of the Lord
St. John Paul II Parish, Cedar Springs, Michigan
Mary Queen of Apostles Parish, Sand Lake, Michigan
Father Lam T. Le, Pastor
January 1, 2019

**“Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.”
(Lk 2:19)**

In the Fall of 1995 when I was accepted as a seminarian, in formation so that in due time to be ordained to serve the Church as a priest, I was told that the two beginning years would be at our diocesan formation center called Christopher House. The House is what used to be the convent at St. Stephen Church in Grand Rapids; and the students would take some classes at Aquinas College during that time. On the first day, I noticed a stained-glass depicting two hands holding the Paschal Candle, symbolizing Christ. Later I was told the name of the house is Christopher—Christ's bearer. For this reason, each student is called to deepen their relationship with the Lord during their time at the House and introduce Christ to the world. What a beautiful message and image! It is something that I have always taken to heart.

On this first day of the year and the octave day in the solemnity of Christmas, the Church presents to us Mary whose life captures the very message of that stained-glass of Christ's bearer:

The title of today's celebration, Mary, Mother of God, in Greek is **Theotokos/God-Bearer**. Some historical notes might be helpful here: On June 22, 431, the Council of Ephesus convened to put to rest the major heresy perpetuated by Nestorius. The Council declared, "If anyone does not confess that the Emmanuel is truly God and therefore that the holy Virgin is the Mother of God (since she begot according to the flesh the Word of God made flesh), *anathema sit*." Therefore, the Council firmly proclaimed that Jesus is one person, with two natures--human and divine.

We return to the meaning of the title **Theotokos/God-Bearer**. Mary, accepting the invitation from the angel of the Lord, became the dwelling place for the Son of the Father and then gave birth to the world a Savior, As we listened to the infancy narrative on this first day of the year: "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19). Mary continues to take the mystery of God into her soul and then presents that mystery of love to the world.

What Mary has done we the baptized are called to do as well. In the water of baptism, we all put on Christ, the Light of the World. Let that Light enter into our hearts to scatter the darkness of our sin and let us bring that Light to all of our brothers and sisters. Our very essence is the bearer of Light. For this reason, we too are called God-bears for God is Light!

This first day of the year is also that day that we pray for world peace. May Mary, the Mother of God intercede to her Son, the Prince of Peace so that humanity may experience the true peace that only God can give. Amen.

Scriptural Readings:

Reading 1 NM 6:22-27; Responsorial Psalm PS 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Reading 2 GAL 4:4-7; Alleluia HEB 1:1-2 ;
Gospel LK 2:16-21
