



The Holy See

HOLY MASS ON THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

58th WORLD DAY OF PEACE

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Saint Peter's Basilica

Wednesday, 1st January 2025

[Multimedia]

At the beginning of this new year which the Lord has granted us, we do well to lift our eyes and hearts to Mary. For, like a Mother, she points us to her Son. She brings us back to Jesus; she speaks to us of Jesus; she leads us to Jesus. The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, immerses us once more in the mystery of Christmas. In Mary's womb, God became one of us, and we, who have opened the Holy Door to inaugurate the [Jubilee](#), are reminded today that "Mary is the door through which Christ entered this world" (Saint Ambrose, *Ep.* 42, 4: PL, VII).

The Apostle Paul sums up this mystery by telling us that "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman" (*Gal* 4:4). Those words – "born of a woman" – echo in our hearts today; they remind us that Jesus, our Saviour, *became flesh and is revealed in the frailty of the flesh*.

Born of a woman. Those words bring us back to Christmas, for the Word *became flesh*. The Apostle Paul, in saying that Christ was born of a woman, almost senses the need to remind us that God became truly man through a human womb. There is a temptation, which many people today find attractive, but can also mislead many Christians, to imagine or invent a God "in the abstract", associated with some vague religious feeling or fleeting emotion. No. God is tangible, he is human, he was born of a woman; he has a face and a name, and calls us to have a relationship with him. Christ Jesus, our Saviour, born of woman, has flesh and blood. Coming from the bosom of the Father, he takes flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. From the highest heaven, he comes down to earth. Son of God, he becomes the Son of man. The image of the Almighty God, Christ

came among us in weakness; though he was without blemish, “for our sake, God made him to be sin” (2 Cor 5:21). He was born of woman; he is one of us. For this reason, he is able to save us.

Born of a woman. Those words also speak to us of the humanity of Christ, to tell us that he *is revealed in the frailty of flesh*. Born of woman, he comes to us as a tiny infant. That is why the shepherds who went to see what the Angel had proclaimed find not extraordinary signs or great displays, but “Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger” (Lk 2:16). They found a tiny, helpless child in need of his mother’s care, clothing and milk, caresses and love. Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort tells us that divine Wisdom “while certainly able to, did not want to give himself directly to men, but chose to do so through the Blessed Virgin. Nor did he want to come into the world as a full-grown man, with no need of others, but as a small child, in need of a Mother’s care and nourishment” (*Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, 139). In the life of Jesus, we see that this is how God chooses to act: through littleness and hiddenness. Jesus never yielded to the temptation of performing great signs and imposing himself on others, as the devil had suggested. Instead, he revealed God’s love in the beauty of his humanity, dwelling in our midst, sharing our daily life, our efforts and our dreams, being merciful to those suffering in body and spirit, giving sight to the blind and strength to the disheartened. The three attitudes of God are mercy, closeness and compassion. God comes near to us and is merciful and compassionate. Let us not forget this. By the frailty of his humanity and his concern for the weak and vulnerable, Jesus shows us the face of God.

Sisters and brothers, it is indeed good for us to reflect on how Mary, the young woman of Nazareth, constantly brings us back to the mystery of Jesus, her Son. She reminds us that Jesus came in the flesh, and that we encounter him above all in our daily life, in our own frail humanity and that of all those whom we encounter each day. In praying to Our Lady as the Mother of God, we proclaim that Christ was begotten of the Father, yet also truly born of a woman. We proclaim that he is the Lord of time, yet dwells in our time, indeed this new year, with his loving presence. We proclaim that he is the Saviour of the world, yet we are able to encounter him and are called to seek him in the face of every human being. If he, who is the Son, became so small as to be held in a mother’s arms, cared for and nursed, this means that today too he comes among us in all those who need similar care: in every sister and brother we meet, in everyone who needs our attention and tender care.

Let us entrust this new year to Mary, Mother of God. May we learn, like her, to discover God’s greatness in the little things of life. May we learn to care for every child born of a woman, above all by protecting, like Mary, the precious gift of life: life in the womb, the lives of children, the lives of the suffering, the poor, the elderly, the lonely and the dying. Today, on this World Day of Peace, all of us are invited to take up the summons that flows from the maternal heart of Mary: to cherish life, to care for wounded lives – there are so many wounded lives –, to restore dignity to the lives of everyone “born of woman”, for this is the basis for building a culture of peace. For this reason, “I ask for a firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death,

so that each person may cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope to the future” (*Message for the LVIII World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2025).

Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, awaits us there, at the crib. She points out to us, as she did to the shepherds, the presence of the God who always surprises us, who does not come in the majesty of the heavens, but in the littleness of a manger. Let us entrust to her this new Jubilee Year. Let us entrust to her our questions, our worries, our sufferings, our joys and all the concerns that we bear in our hearts. She is our mom, our mother! Let us entrust to her the whole world, so that hope may be reborn and peace may finally spring up for all the peoples of the earth.

History tells us that in Ephesus, when the bishops entered the church, the faithful who were present, with clubs in their hands, cried out: “Mother of God!”. Surely the clubs were a promise of what would happen if the bishops did not declare the dogma of the “Mother of God”. Today we do not have clubs, but we have the hearts and voices of children. Therefore, all together, let us acclaim the Holy Mother of God. Let us say all together, emphatically: “Holy Mother of God!”, three times. Together: “Holy Mother of God! Holy Mother of God! Holy Mother of God”!