

The Motherly Spirit

Eberhard Arnold

FROM THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL we know how Mary, with a childlike faith, received the Word, and in this way the incarnation of the eternal spirit came about. In the time of the early Christians, too, we hear about this faith. May we grasp this mystery with the faith of the heart. For the mind alone can never penetrate these things. It is not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing. We have to stand before God's secret with reverent awe and experience in our own lives this miracle of the incarnation.

Let Mary, the mother of Jesus, teach us to become more childlike. For Mary is the image of the heavenly life-giving mother, the church. Again and again we have to receive in our hearts this heavenly virgin – the motherly, womanly spirit of the church community, the upper Jerusalem, the power of the church as it is living now. It is not that we simply become the heavenly church, but that we receive it in its perfection. The more we receive the life-giving strength of the bride of Christ, the more we shall radiate in our lives – however weak we are – the wonderful unity that came from the birth of Jesus.

Mary was sealed with the Holy Spirit as soon as she believed. In this way the Word took on human nature from her. Through Mary's simple faith she received the spirit and thus conceived Christ, and he was born of her. Those who want to be reborn must, like Mary, first hear the Word and then believe it. And then, in the humility of Jesus and of Mary, we must learn to occupy the most modest human place in loving, devoted long-suffering and in the freedom of joy.

He who would be born of God must be mindful of how Christ's birth took place. All birth from God happens as it did with Christ. When the Word is heard and when it is received, then faith is sealed with the Holy Spirit. This spirit renews every person and makes us alive in God's justice. We become a new creature, a new creation.

An excerpt from *When the Time was Fulfilled* by Eberhard Arnold

“Song in Late Summer”

Soft and blue are thy robes, my Mother,
Azure and clear as an angel's eyes -
Let me hide in them, oh, my Mother -
Radiant Queen of the summer skies!

Softly piled on the far horizon
Smoky white clouds drifting here and there;
These the border on your blue mantle -
Mother most holy.....Virgin most fair!

Deep and blue and wide is the ocean -
Deep as the call of its peace to me;
Jeweled and shining.....Thy veil, my Mother?
Thy silvered veil, oh Star of the sea?

- Edith M. Stoney (early 20th century)



St Mary's
Parish

Serving
the
Community

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Family

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The grace of God has appeared

In his homily during the Christmas Vigil Mass in 2019, Pope Francis focused on the theme of God's grace: "bringing salvation to all" and shining "on our world this night".

The Pope described this grace as "divine love, the love that changes lives, renews history, liberates from evil, fills hearts with peace and joy". This love is revealed to us as Jesus, he explained: "In Jesus, the Most High made Himself tiny, so that we might love Him". In a world where "everything seems to be about giving in order to get, God comes down freely. His love is non-negotiable", said the Pope.

The gift of grace at Christmas

"Christmas reminds us that God continues to love us all, even the worst of us", continued Pope Francis, because we are precious in His eyes. His love is unconditional; it does not depend on us. "How often do we think that God is good if we are good and punishes us if we are bad", said the Pope. "Yet that is not how He is... His love does not change. It is not fickle; it is faithful. It is patient".

"Grace is a synonym of beauty", continued Pope Francis, and in the beauty of God's love, "we also discover our own beauty, for we are beloved of God". In His eyes we are beautiful, "not for what we do but for what we are".

Accepting the gift of grace

Pope Francis continued his reflections inviting us to "contemplate the Child and let ourselves be caught up in His tender love". At Christmas, the question is: "Do I allow myself to be loved by God? Do I abandon myself to His love that comes to save me?"

Accepting this gift of grace means "being ready to give thanks in return", continued Pope Francis. "Today is the right day to draw near to the tabernacle, the crèche, the manger, and to say thank you. Let us receive the gift that is Jesus, in order then to become gift like Jesus. To become gift is to give meaning to life. And it is the best way to change the world".

The gift of our lives

Jesus did not change history with a flood of words, continued the Pope, "but by the gift of His life. He did not wait until we were good before He loved us". In the same way, we should not wait "for our neighbours to be good before we do good to them, for the Church to be perfect before we love her, for others to respect us before we serve them". "Let us begin with ourselves", said the Pope. "This is what it means freely to accept the gift of grace".

The greatest gift of all time

Pope Francis noted that "at the birth of Jesus, the shepherds hurried to the stable with different gifts", but there was one who was very poor and had nothing to give. Seeing that shepherd, embarrassed and with empty hands, Mary put the baby Jesus in his arms, continued the Pope.

In Memoriam

Weekend of 19/20 December

6pm Vigil: Mullery Family

11am: Deceased member of the Department of Health,
Annual Mass

5pm: May Murphy

Christmas Mass Arrangements

Christmas Eve 2020

French Speaking Community Mass 4:00pm

Vigil Mass commences 6:00 p.m.

First Mass commences 9:00 p.m.

Croatian Community Mass 11:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY 2020

Morning Masses 9:15 a.m.

(Family Mass), 11:15 a.m.

Croatian Community Mass 1:00pm T

here is no evening Mass on Christmas Day

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY 2020

Morning Masses at 10:00 a.m. and 12:40pm

Vigil Mass at 6:00 p.m.

Holy Family Sunday 27th December

Mass at 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

PROTOCOLS IN PLACE

Numbers and attendance at Mass: 100 people at any one mass. However, to accommodate as many people as possible during the **Christmas Octave**, up to New Year's Day, there will be **TWO MASSES each day 10.00 & 12.40**, in addition to the Vigil and Feast Day Masses on Dec 24 and 25th and Sunday Masses on Dec 26/27th).

Tickets: Admission to Mass on the four days over Christmas itself (Dec 24- 27) must be regulated and necessarily restricted by a system of advance ticketing. Tickets will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis, from **Monday 14 December** by booking through Parish Office. There will be a maximum of **five tickets per household**. Please do not seek to attend the church on those Christmas days, Dec 24-27, without a ticket, since it will not be possible to admit you. Also, please do not make a booking unless you fully intend to come as you may be depriving another person of a place. Please be flexible if your first choice is not available

The PPC ask that and trust that parishioners will co-operate with the ushers on duty over Christmas and support their efforts with understanding and in a spirit of solidarity and community during this special season of peace and goodwill. At all other Masses over the holiday season the standard HSE Guidelines, notably the wearing of masks, will apply but without ticketing.

Information required for ticketing: Name, phone number, email address (if available). You will get your Tickets by email or by collecting printed tickets at the Parish Office.

Contact details: (Tel: 01-660 0075 or by email at parishoffice@stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie).

Contacts: Fr Fachtna McCarthy, Administrator, Fr Patrick Claffey C.C. Fr Josip Levaković C.C. Tel 01-6600075

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Child Protection: <http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie/ministries/child-protection/> also www.csp.dublindiocese.ie

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