

Homily
Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
June 17, 2023

How fitting that the Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary should follow the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mary, the first Christian, the perfect Christian, follows her Son, Jesus, in every way. She followed Him in His ministry; she followed Him through His Passion; she followed Him to His cross; she followed Him to His tomb. And every step of the way, she ‘kept all these things in her heart.’

Isn’t all this perfect: God’s plan from the start? God knew Mary from before her Immaculate Conception. He knew her Fiat before she said the words. And He knows us, down to every hair on our heads. He knows we need to follow Jesus, and what better way than to follow the first and perfect Christian, who ‘kept all these things in her heart.’

When we follow Mary, our Mother, she leads us to follow Jesus. And when we follow Jesus, He leads us to the Father. There is perfection in the symmetry of God’s plan.

Mary and Joseph, as they were returning from the Passover Festival, realized that Jesus wasn’t with them. They panicked, as any parent can relate to if their child is lost in a crowd. When they found Him, they expressed their anxiety. And Jesus gave the perfect answer, the answer that we all seem to forget when we experience anxiety: “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

I sometimes stress about my job, the reports that need to be completed, the conversations I have with my team, the conflicts that inevitably arise about how to proceed. I sometimes stress about my responsibilities at home, the bills, the repairs, the chores. I sometimes stress about my ministry as a deacon, especially when I consider my work/home/ministry balance.

And then I remember that, in order to obtain peace, I must first seek Him Who has all the answers. I must open my heart to the Will of God. I must pray for guidance and strength and wisdom to the One Who knows me best. Just as Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple, in His Father’s house, we find Jesus in His temple: we find Jesus in the tabernacle; we find Jesus on the altar at the words of consecration; we find Jesus in the communion line; we find Jesus inside us and in each other; we find Jesus in our mission to ‘Go and tell the Good News.’

Today, we can find peace in following Mary who leads us to her Son and we keep all these things in our hearts.