

Homily  
Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
September 8, 2023

My stepmother shared her experience at the dinner table when she was growing up, because my sister and I were being whinny about our food touching on our plates. She said that she and her sister also whined about their food touching. Her mother had had enough; she calmly got up from her seat, walked over to each of their plates and proceeded to scrabble their food into one big pile of goulash. "It all goes to the same place," she told them. To this day, I enjoy the mixing of my various dishes on my plate. My wife, on the other hand, would prefer we have those compartment plates that that keep each serving in its own place.

Mom's are great! They are the most kind, nurturing, compassionate people on the planet. Yet, because of our fallen human nature, mom's are not perfect. Just like us guys, but maybe to a lesser extent, they make mistakes, loose their temper, sometimes forget things. But that is the human condition.

Mary was perfect. She was chosen, she was preserved from original sin, and most importantly, she said, "Yes." From the moment she was born and before, she was filled with grace. God grants His grace on all of us according to our abilities. God blesses us with what we need to live fruitful, abundant lives. Then we muck it up. Mary didn't. Tradition tells us that Mary was dedicated to God and was raised in the temple. From the moment of her dedication, she never looked back, always looking towards God.

Mary is the only creature, the only human, to have a three-fold relationship with God. God the Father is her Father. From Luke, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." The Holy Spirit is her spouse, as we heard in today's Gospel. And Jesus is her Son. From the moment of her birth and before, God ordained it, Jesus choose her and the Holy Spirit poured out His grace on her.

What does this have to do with us today? First, through our brotherhood with Jesus, Mary is our spiritual mother. Second, Mary received many blessings and graces, but she most importantly said, "Yes." From the moment of her birth and throughout her life on earth, she offered herself freely and completely to the Will of God. Finally, her relationship with us gives us an edge by her intercession for us as the Mother of God.

The most challenging thing in my life is saying yes to God, not because I don't want to, but because I'm a selfish, stubborn, impatient, proud, **child of God**. God the Father loves me and only wants what is best for me. Jesus died and restored life so that I might live and live abundantly. The Holy Spirit pours out His blessings and graces on me so that I can be the best that God wants me to be. And so it is with all of us. Mary embraced all these perfectly. We just need to follow her lead – her lead that takes us directly to her Son.