

Homily
Friday of the 3rd Week of Advent
December 22, 2023

Who's ready for Christmas?

When I hear this question, I immediately think about all the people I need to get gifts for, about the preparations for family coming over, about my role in the upcoming Christmas Masses, you know, all the details.

Then I have to ask myself the tough question, "Am I ready to receive the Word-Made-Flesh; the God of the Universe; the True Gift of Christmas?" Mary was ready; she didn't hesitate; she said, "Yes," to cooperating with God's plan for our salvation.

What do we know about Mary? She was born without the stain of original sin. She was dedicated to God by her parents. She was devout in her faith. She said, "Yes," to God's invitation. She was young when she had Jesus.

We can also glean a lot from her Magnificat. Today's Gospel recalls Mary's words after her cousin, as we heard yesterday, praises Mary as blessed, because of the blessing she carries and the blessing of her, "Yes."

Mary doesn't blush at Elizabeth's kind words of admiration. Mary, "...proclaims the greatness of the Lord." She describes what God has done for her and for all humanity, especially remembering His promise of mercy. This is Salvation History summed up in Mary's words of praise for our God who didn't forget us.

And, she then goes on to be the first and greatest Christian. She didn't just say, "Yes," to Gabriel; she continued to say, "Yes," at every moment of every day. She recognized God's greatness and mercy and decided to say, "Yes." She could have said, "No," but she didn't. In her free will, she said, "Yes," over and over again through all the pain and sorrow, through the ministry of her Son, through His death and resurrection until her life on this earth ended when she was assumed into heaven. And she continues to this day saying, "Yes," to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Her faith was made clear to all of us who will listen. How is your faith? I still struggle with mine. I know in my heart that God loves me and wants only what is best for me. Yet, I struggle to say, "Yes," like Mary did and does. And that's why He sent His only Son.

Are you ready for Christmas? Have you taken advantage of this Season of Advent to truly prepare for His coming? I know I've tried and I hope that I am. But I know I still need His love and mercy. That is why I still need the gifts of His Sacraments. That is why I still need the intercession of all the angels and saints, especially Mary.

God is ready. I pray we all take these last few remaining hours in this wonderful season of preparation, remembering all He has done for us. May we follow Mary's example, open our hearts and empty ourselves to make room for Him Who became one of us out of love for us.