

Pondering Do we ponder about Mary God or Ourselves

c-b-Jan 1st Mary the Mother of God

I like a good riddle. One of my favorite riddles is

“I have two coins in my pocket, together they total 30 cents. One of them is not a nickel,
what are they.

Listen again, I have two coins in my pocket together they total 30 cents.

One of them is not a nickel, what are they?

If you think about it, at first you may think that is impossible.

But put all the pieces together.

I have two coins in my pocket together they total 30 cents.

One of them is not a nickel, what are they.

The coin that is not a nickel is a quarter and the other one is a nickel.

Sometimes things are not always as they seem

In the gospel today we discover that Mary heard all kinds of things about her child,
she treasured them, and pondered them in her heart.

I think when Mary was pondering all the things that were being said about her child,
she was trying to make sense of it all.

Just like we try to make sense of a riddle.

We know there has to be an answer,
and the answer will make sense when we know it,
but until then, we are completely lost.

Mary would have known some of the pieces regarding her son,
but she would not have known all of them.

Some would not be revealed to her until after Jesus died on the cross.

When he rose again, all that had taken place throughout his life would have made sense.

The puzzle would then be complete.

In a sense the riddle solved.

Now I have been asked some riddles that have taken a few hours to solve,
and I know one riddle that it took me a couple of years to solve.

But in trying to solve the riddle we never lose sight of our goal.

Mary, in being the mother of Jesus, would not have known what the future would bring.

She knew that this was no ordinary child.

No ordinary child has an angel telling you that you are going to have a virgin birth.

No ordinary child has wise men traveling half a world distance, bearing gifts.

No ordinary mother finds her child after 3 days and all he says is,

“I have been about my father’s business.

No ordinary child has the power to change water into wine and give sight to the blind.

Mary may not have made sense of all this,

which is why she pondered all these things in her heart.

I looked up PONDER in my Biblical dictionary, and it gave an interesting definition.

PONDER in the biblical sense means: To throw together.

To put one thing with another, considering circumstances.

It also says see CONFER, so I looked up confer in the same dictionary.

CONFIR means: To lay a matter before others so as to obtain counsel or instruction.
So when Mary pondered all the things that were happening around her,
she was trying to put all the things together in a way that made sense.

But like most mothers, the things that involve her child don't always make sense.
I've met enough mothers to know that at the end of the day are pulling their hair out
because they don't understand why their children are doing what they are.

Often I hear the comment, "But I didn't teach them that.

The difference between Mary and every other mother
is that that Mary never treated her son with anything but love.

I have heard enough confessions to know that all mother's

at some point lose control and treat their child in a less than perfect way.

Mary because she carried within her the grace of God, always treated Jesus in a perfect way.

And in doing so, Jesus, through Mary,
would have learned the perfect way of treating other people.

Perhaps this is why Mary is never honored in her own light.

She is always seen in context of her son.

And today we celebrate that relationship, we celebrate Mary,
but we celebrate Mary as the Mother of God.

That is itself a piece of the puzzle that Mary may have had to struggle with, just as we do.

Mary would have known that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and she would have known that he was the Son of the Most high God,

but how could he son be both Human and Divine,

how could Jesus be God's eternal Son, at her son the same time.

But that is the very thing we celebrated last week, the incarnation.

God becoming man. Seemingly impossible.

Being both all powerful and limited at the same time.

Being all knowing, and still not knowing a storm was brewing.

The two opposite ends of the spectrum meeting in one person.

And yet we know, admittedly, through 2000 years of pondering the pieces--that it is true.

This weekend we are celebrating Mary, the Mother of God,
and there is wisdom in putting this day on January 1st.

As we look back on 2017, the pieces of the year are beginning to fall into place.

Almost everything that took place has a meaning,

and we have resolved to put those things that do not make sense into God's hands.

But 2018, (pause) that is still full of mystery . . . although there have been some plans:

Weddings, vacations, Graduation, most of the year is still an unwritten slate.

We can learn from Mary.

We can learn that we may not be able to understand all that is taking place,

and that is okay, as long as we do not sight of why we are doing things.

Mary never strove to bring glory to herself, look at me, I am the mother of the Messiah.

She was always bringing glory to her son.

In the same way, we may not always understand why things are happening,

but everything we do can bring glory to God.

We may not always understand why things happen, or how things could be possible,
but there will come a time when it will all make sense.

Paul mentions that “When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son.”

In other words when everything was ready Jesus was born.

The incarnation took place to give glory to God,
and to give us the opportunity to cease being slaves to the physical world,
and become children of God,
and if we are children of God, then we are heirs.

And heirs inherit what is left to them.

Jesus left us as heirs of the kingdom of God.

We may not understand it,
we may not think that we are worthy of it,
we may not fully understand it,

But that does not make it any less true.

When our fullness of time comes, we will inherit eternal life.

Perhaps that is why we have been given life, so we have many years to ponder it.

May friends 2017 is gone,

but I would encourage you to use 2018 to ponder how Jesus has been active in your life.

And when you do discover this mystery, share it with those around you.