

Homily for the Feast of  
Mary the Mother of God  
Jan. 1, 2008

In the year 432, the council of Ephesus declared that it is central to the faith of every Christian to believe that Mary is the Theotokos, the God Bearer. When we say that Mary gave birth to Jesus, we are also making the statement that Mary is the Mother of God.

The Gospel reports that when the shepherds saw, they understood what was told them concerning the child. What was told them sounds like a lie. It is perhaps the root difficulty with all people who struggle to believe that God would take the form and flesh of a human being. It is almost impossible for many today to believe that God could be a brother to us.

It is difficult for many learned and cultured minds to understand what the simple shepherds understood when they gazed upon the enfleshment of God cradled in his Mothers arms.

For many Christ is not real. He is a pious fiction. Many simply do not believe, and many others who want to believe can't accept that they have an immortal soul.

The truth that this feast day sets before us is that God entered the drama of our every day life.

When we say that Mary is the Mother of God, we are not saying that Mary is another God. We are not saying that she is high above us and that she is unapproachable. Rather, we are saying that she, being one of us, our sister, holds out a remarkable and almost too astonishing truth about God. He is not far from us. He wants to be with us. He shares our human history.

If we can just grasp the significance of that event, we would never be able to look upon another person with hatred or scorn again. Every Man and woman is our brother and sister, and every man and woman is Brother and sister to God.

At first this might sound like God's divinity is being down played. That is the trend among many Christians today, Jesus was just a regular guy. He is a buddy or a chum, but this is missing a most powerful truth. Because the real significance of Jesus taking on Human flesh is to reveal to us, that we have been exalted and have been doused with divine dignity. Our true selves are revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the model and the blueprint for humanity.

St. Paul tells us in the second reading that Christ was born of a woman under the law to deliver those who were subjected to it so that we might receive our status as adopted Sons and daughters. You are no longer a slave, but a child of God. And the fact that you are a child makes you an heir by God's design.

I find it a common occurrence for people to talk about their sins with a sense of pride. Perhaps they are trying to communicate that they are "**real**" human beings. You've heard the quote that to err is human? Some people revel in their errors. Some of these people take pride in describing how far from religion they are, but the sad truth is that they are far from human as well. It is an odd phenomena that there are many people who delight in describing how far from God they are and imagine that they are far from the reach of God's grace and forgiveness.

It is almost amusing to hear people talk like this, because if they would only pause and glance inward, allow themselves to be quiet for a little while, they would realize that the reason they can't see God out there, is because he is already in here. He is within them, perhaps abashed at their foolishness, but loving them none-the-less.

God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. It is a difficult thing to believe that Christ is our brother. Yet, St. Paul affirms that it is the spirit of Jesus which unites us to the Father. It is Jesus' life which points out the way through life and tells us what we are really here for.

This feast day wants to tell us that we are a holy people, our humanity is sacred because God has joined us to himself in the humanity of Jesus. We are a holy people at the very core of our being, that is the starting point, and the life of religion and the Church is given to us to get us back to that point. We are a holy people whether we want to admit it or not because it is not dependant on anything we do, it is because God's will makes us his Children, and it is his pleasure to call us his children.

The way we live, the choices we make can either make that truth more clear or cloud the vision of our dignity as God's children. The person who does not believe in God, or who hates religion, or believes that they are outside of God's grace and beyond the reach of his forgiveness, they are wrong. They can't recognize the truth, that is all.

What a different place this parish would be, what a different place Everett would be if we truly believed that Jesus is our brother. What a difference in our lives if we simply made the choice to see the divine inheritance in our

neighbors. It is a simple thing. It is not beyond our capabilities. But it is also outrageous, because such a simple truth bears so much power.

We must choose to see God as our Father and Christ as our Brother. God was born into flesh and blood through our sister Mary. He has shared his divine inheritance with us. He is the light by which we must choose to see every aspect of our world. When we can make that Choice, we begin to see a new world and begin to understand that just as Mary was the Theotokos, the God bearer, we too are bearers of the love and forgiveness of God to this tired old world.