

1. January 2019

**Eighth Christmas Meditation and New Year
“Mary, the Mother of God”**

Lk 2, 16- 28

So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told. When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception. And when the day came for them to be purified in keeping with the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord- observing what is written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord- and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is prescribed in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to the restoration of Israel and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God.

With this meditation I conclude the Christmas meditations. I will go over to the usual interpretations of Scripture and hope for the grace of God, also in this year that is now beginning, to be able to interpret Scripture daily, sometimes supplemented by lectures or special reflections. Most of the time the songs of the choir Harpa Dei will accompany me, although not with the intensity of the Christmas meditations.

The last day of the Christmas octave is also the first day of the calendar year 2020 and is celebrated as the Solemnity of Our Lady. Thus the Church looks to the birth of her Saviour and to the woman who was ready to fulfil God's holy will completely in faith and loving obedience, and who kept in her heart and reflected on everything she had heard about her New-born Son. She had just heard the report of the shepherds who reproduced the words of the angel who appeared to them:

"Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And all at once with the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours." (Lk 2,10-14).

Certainly Mary needed time to become more and more aware of the importance of who had been entrusted to her, and how everything came into the service of her Son, and how everything could be understood from Him.

So she chose the right path: to keep the reality of what is happening in her heart, to move it and reflect on it! In this way the reality of God can sink ever deeper and spread its light.

We too can be deeply marked by the event of the birth of Christ, especially by the redeeming joy, because the joy of heaven is connected with the news of the birth of the Son of God. Again and again we are invited to listen to the texts of the Sacred Scripture and to let them penetrate us. The songs can also help to let the message of heaven penetrate into our unconscious. Thus we confess not only with our mouth, but also with our heart and the depths of our soul: Christ the Lord has come, the Saviour of the world!

Precisely at a time when the message of faith, when the reports of the Bible are questioned, we respond with our faith and by deepening the biblical message. Thus our heart and our thinking are not determined by the spirit of this world, but are illuminated by the Holy Spirit!

In Mary's spiritual school, which we should now consciously accept in the year that has begun, we are invited to deepen our faith that it gives us its light in all situations. Everything that will come this year has been planned by the Lord for our salvation. This is sure in the light of faith also if it is not directly accessible to our minds.

Faith gives us the certainty that God holds the year 2020 in His hands, whatever may come! Let us entrust this year to God and we can already praise and glorify the Lord for all what will come!

