

1. January

**Eighth day of the Christmas Octave**  
**“Mary's faith”**

*“And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb” (Lk 2:16-21).*

The last day of the Christmas octave is also the first day of the year on which the Solemnity of the Mother of God is celebrated. Thus the Church continues to contemplate the birth of her Saviour, while at the same time she contemplates that woman who was ready to fulfil God's holy will in faith and loving obedience. She treasured and cherished in her heart all that was said about her newborn Son. In the Gospel passage we have read, Mary listens to the shepherds' account of what the angels had told them about the Child:

*And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”*

It certainly took Mary some time to understand the full extent of what had been entrusted to her and the universality of her Son's mission. But she chose the right path, pondering and meditating in her heart on all that was happening. In this way the reality of God penetrated more and more into her being and His light was able to expand.

We too can be deeply marked by the event of the birth of Christ, by the joy that comes with the Good News, because the news of the birth of Jesus is accompanied by the joy of all heaven! We too are called to listen to the texts of Sacred Scripture over and over

again and to absorb them. Songs can help the heavenly message to penetrate our whole being, even our subconscious. Then we will profess our faith not only with our lips, but also with our hearts and with the depths of our souls: Christ Jesus has come! He is the Saviour of the world!

Particularly in this age which relativises the message of faith and often casts doubt on the accounts of the Holy Scriptures, we must respond to unbelief with a living faith and a deepening of the biblical message. In this way our hearts and minds will not be determined by the spirit of the world, but enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

If we consciously enter the "school of Mary", she will teach us to penetrate the depths of our being so that faith will illuminate all the circumstances of our life. Everything that awaits us this year has been planned by God for our salvation. We can understand it in the light of faith, even if our reason does not understand it.

Faith gives us the certainty that God has in His hands the whole of this year that is beginning, with all that it brings. Let us place it in the hands of the one who has given herself completely to God, and let us praise God for all that He has prepared for us.