



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 1: The Essence of Franciscan Spirituality

Chapter 8. Mary our Mother, Mother of all Franciscans

...the human nature of Christ was God's eternal masterpiece. Next in his beautiful plan was Mary. She would receive fullness of grace through Christ. Christ was the new Adam...just as the first Adam had an Eve at his side, so the New Adam, Christ, has at his side a new Eve, Mary. She could not save us, but Christ allowed her to cooperate in his saving work...Mary gladly said 'yes' to Christ's coming - therefore to the coming of the Mystical Body. She is the mother of all who would have life in Christ...Mary as mother is the most understandable image of what God's love is for us...this love can only be a reflection of the infinite love of the Father for his children...The Constitutions (Art. 16) fix this love in Secular Franciscan life by stating: Mary, Mother of Jesus is the model of listening to the Word and of faithfulness to vocation; we, like Francis, see all gospel virtues realised in her...The Secular Franciscans and their fraternities should seek to live the experience of Francis who made the Virgin the guide of his activity.

Foley, Weigel, Normile *To Live as Francis Lived: a guide for Secular Franciscans Reflection 11* (p 41)

The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently. Rule 9



Mary is Mother of the Church because, on account of the Eternal Father's ineffable choice and due to the Spirit of Love's special action, she gave human life to the Son of God...and from whom the whole of the People of God receives grace and dignity of election. Her Son explicitly extended his Mother's maternity in a way that could easily be understood by every soul and heart by designating...his beloved disciple as her son.

John Paul II *Redemptor Hominis 22*



? 1 How do we relate Mary's willing submission to God's will to our own Franciscan calling?

? 2 What would you say are the similarities between St Francis and Mary?

? 3 What, in your opinion, was the hardest thing Mary had to face; and what has it been for you?

Holy Mary, Mother of God, you trusted God with your whole life when you said, 'Let it be with me according to your word.' Show us how to give birth to Jesus in a world so in need of his love and forgiveness. Amen



Scripture—

Lk 1. 26-38, 46-55

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible for God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her...

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants for ever.'