

### **12.31.22: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, sometimes affectionately called our German shepherd, has finally gone to his eternal rest. Pope Benedict passed away 9:34am Rome time on January 31st, the morning of New Years Eve, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

Before he was elevated to the papacy in 2005, he was the prefect for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican and known for promoting faith and reason in a day where reason and logic seem to exclude faith. The Church has always held that the two go together.

Seeking truth in the sciences with logic go hand in hand with faith to unveil the mysteries of the universe. Scientific research without a basic belief in an uncreated intelligent being is like saying books write themselves. Benedict said that Jesus Christ is not just a book, He is our brother and Lord. Benedict made reference to his predecessors Pope John Paul II encyclical, Fides et Ratio. Faith and reason.

It's a great read for those who want to learn more about a broader perspective of both faith and rational thought, not faith or reason. But faith and reason, fides et ratio. Benedict once said that those who have hope live differently. Well differently from what? Most of us kinda know what we want to be different in us. We want to be better, to be free from our weaknesses and we want to make better choices, and prefer interior peace over the tyranny and chaos of small mindedness and insecurities.

Eleanor Roosevelt is credited for saying, "Small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, great minds discuss ideas." So how do we go from a small mind to a great mind, to great ideas? How can I become different from where I am to where I want to be so I can make a difference?

Changing is not easy. To stop an old way of thinking, requires new thinking. To stop an old habit requires us to start a new one. We may be comfortable where we are but like Benedict said, "The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort, you were made for greatness!"

We have a very active prison ministry here at Christ the King and a number of us delivered cookies and shampoo to the county jail inmates just before Christmas. For 15 years now, Deacon Jim has been very active in prison ministry around the state as well as Sally Riesenbergh who's been involved for over 11 years.

On Christmas Day Sally shared with me that she has been using the concept of dreaming with her incarcerated friends. For our visitors with us today we've been entertaining dreams and ideas here at CK for the previous months so we can put some goals in place for the future. If we don't dream about what Could be, then it never will be. This morning Sally spoke with an inmate at Mable Bassett prison. The woman said that she is so pumped of dreaming and is making plans on how to encourage the other women around her to do the same. She said, "no one taught us we have the right to dream." Too many people that are incarcerated have never been taught that they have the right to dream.

We can also find ourselves locked away in our old thoughts and old ways of thinking, because we've never been taught or given permission to think or believe that there can be more for us. So we remain comfortable in our interior cell of static thinking and mediocrity. But change doesn't have to feel intimidating.

In today's Gospel it says that Mary reflected on all these things in her heart. This interior peace can only come from her accepting her role not only as the mother of Jesus but also as a spiritual mother. God is constantly calling us out of our current comfort zone and into the next step of our greatness, our next dream. For us to realize what He is calling us to we have to do two things: Reflect deeply about the circumstances we are in currently and wonder, where is God calling me to next. What can I do this week to help fulfill my role as a spiritual mother or father? Your ultimate greatness will come from your role as a spiritual mother or a spiritual father.

Mary was probably a young teenage woman when she had Jesus. But she stepped into her role as spiritual mother, especially when she said yes to archangel Gabriel. She had a lot to reflect on in her heart. Self-reflection brings peace and prompts a calling. Catherine of Siena calls this type of interior reflection the cell of self knowledge. The self awareness of what Mary knew logically in her head combined with the scary uncertainty of trusting in her faith with her heart. That takes spiritual maturity. It requires faith and reason.

So, on this celebration of Mary Mother of God, what is God calling me to next? How can I be a spiritual mother or father to this call?