



# MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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## MARY'S GIFT

*By Sister M. Beverly, HSM*

Mary received many gifts from God. Her human life was her first gift. She began life, at the moment of conception, without original sin, a unique gift. With the great graces of holiness, which God granted her and with which she whole-heartedly cooperated, she never committed any personal sin, ever. She is the only human person, who can have this assertion made about her.



All these gifts prepared her to receive her greatest gift: to be the Mother of God, the Mother of the Jewish Messiah, the Word of God from eternity, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Only Begotten Son of God, come as Savior with a human nature, born into human history. Since Jesus did not have a human father, all his humanity was taken from his mother. The real human body of Jesus is very much the focus of our meditations during the Advent and Christmas season. The Incarnation (literally meaning "receiving a body") is the foundation of our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist during this third and last year of our National Eucharistic Revival.

What was Mary's greatest gift? Jesus. What is the gift which most occupied her mind and heart and meditations? Jesus. What gift does she most want to give us? Jesus.

I have been reading, studying, taking notes and teaching from Pope Saint John Paul II's last encyclical: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, The Church drawn from

the Eucharist. This papal letter is very beautiful, powerful and moving, since it was written so much from our new saint's heart and faith. The letter has an Introduction, six Chapters and a Conclusion. I chose Chapter 6, "At the School of Mary, Woman of the Eucharist" for the Salt & Light Boise radio broadcasts I am doing in December. So the expression "At the School of Mary" has been very much on my mind. What was the school of Mary? How is she a teacher? Allow me to offer you a few snippets of my meditations to help you make your own prayer to our Mother, so as to place yourself as a student in her school.

As a Jewish woman, the manna in the wilderness that her people ate daily for 40 years (Ex. 16), would have been etched into her spirituality. God provides food. We will not starve. We can trust him. When she gave birth (Lk. 2:1-6) to her Son in Bethlehem (House of Bread), did she begin meditating on Jesus as the "Living Bread" (Jn. 6:51ff), the promised "Manna of the Messiah"? She laid him in a manger (literally "to eat" in French). The meditation extends. When in her humanity and humility, she nursed her newborn, did she think, "I am feeding God himself"?

When Mary cradled Jesus in her arms, she must have been in an ecstasy of tender love and overwhelming awe, realizing, "This is the face of God." How she must have been moved with emotion when she taught the Word of God, to say in his baby human voice to God the Father, "Abba"! Later as a adult, Jesus would say, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father...'"

I am sure Mary often focused her beautiful, shining eyes on her baby, smiling at him, teaching him how to communicate love with his facial expressions, the beginning of human socialization. How awesome would it have been for her to say, "Jesus, you are old enough now. Let me show you how to fasten your sandals.?" She watched the Creator of the heavens and the earth learn how to use his baby fingers in a new task, the first of many such small tasks in any

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human life.

From this, I conclude that Mary shows us how to live the virtue of humility at its mystical depths. She could have thought: "The Son of God does not need me." But he did. I once heard our Bishop Peter Christensen, Bishop of Boise, say in a homily at a Christmas Mass, "Mary's love could make a stable a suitable palace for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!" Mary teaches us to make our hearts his home.

Accepting reality as the will of God for her, she was completely a mother for her Son, doing what all good mothers do. She taught him what he needed to know about their Jewish religion. What would it have been like to hear little Jesus say accurately from memory for the first time the Ten Commandments? The Lord God Almighty, who inscribed the two tablets for Moses on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:12), was saying these revealed words as a human child. The One, who was later to say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," (Jn. 14:6) would have learned to walk holding his mother's hand. Can we hold her hand too?

Since Mary received us as a family and a legacy from her Son upon the Cross, in the person of John, the beloved disciple, let us humbly accept the gift God has given us in our Mother. If she was good enough for Jesus, she is good enough for us. As Pope Saint John Paul II wrote so strongly, "Let us place ourselves at the School of Mary." She will teach us to be humble, to pray, and to do God's will. She will share her spirituality of praise and thanksgiving to



God, which she sang in her canticle, the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55), so that we too, her sons and daughters can continually offer our own praise and thanksgiving to God. May we say, in true humility with our Mother and teacher, "He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is His Name." (Lk. 1:49)

*By Sister M. Beverly, HSM*

**SALT & LIGHT RADIO RECORDING:** On Monday, November 20, I finished recording my third class for S&L Radio of Boise. The teaching is on the last chapter of Pope Saint John Paul II's last encyclical: Ecclesia de Eucharistia, The Church drawn from the Eucharist. The title of the Chapter 6 is "At the School of Mary, Woman of the Eucharist". I look on this papal letter as our new saint's last will and testament. He died two years after this encyclical was published. It is so moving because it is so deeply from his great mind and warm heart. He had obviously been studying Mary for his whole life time and this written work is the result of his mystical prayer. The three segments of this class are being broadcast on December 8, 15 and 22, Fridays at 7:45 AM, the last part of the "Morning Light Show". If you are not in your car at that time on those days, you can access the podcasts on the S&L Boise Radio website where they are listed according to the dates they were aired. These segments are ideal for meditation during Advent and Christmas. Enjoy!

**ENTRANCE TO HERMITAGE LANE:** Thanks to the work of John Balderson & his crew on Nov. 22, the cattle guard nearest Highway 95 has been rebuilt. It is higher and placed according to the slope of the hill. The area around the guard has been re-shaped to provide better drainage and less damage to the road. More gravel has been added at the entrance to our lane. The metal fence panels have been used to improve function and appearance of the area. Now the drive over the cattle guard is smooth, safe and easy!



**CHRISTMAS CORRESPONDENCE:** By now you should have received my annual mailing, which is a post card greeting, giving the main news of 2023. If you did not receive this and wish to do so, please send me your U.S. mailing address and I will send the card to you. Often Christmas cards to me contain donations. Be assured that I will write you a personal note to thank you and let you know that it has been gratefully received. I try to do this in a timely way, so you do not need to worry about your check getting lost in the mail, which can happen. I



pray daily for you with love my family, friends, neighbors and benefactors. Thank you for your love, prayers and encouragement. The photo of the wreath on the chapel door is a visual reminder that Jesus is here. He blesses you as we say Happy Birthday to him!

The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!