

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God – January 1, 2020 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Cathedral of St. Paul, Birmingham – 5:30pm Vigil, 8:30 & 11am Solemnity Masses – 425 words

St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, from which we heard the second reading, would have been written before the four gospels. As such, the mention that he makes of the Blessed Virgin Mary – telling us that Jesus was “born of a woman, born under the law...” – is the earliest telling of her in the New Testament. He confirms Christ's human lineage – that he really was a man like us, born of a human mother like we are. But then he says something rather astonishing: “God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’...”. If we have the Spirit of God's Son, who was born of a woman, such that we can call his Father ours, then that means that we can claim his mother also. We are her children as well.

This is the Solemnity that we celebrate today – the Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Before the Church defined the dogma of her motherhood, there were those who claimed that she was mother only of Christ's humanity – as if a mother could give birth to only a part of who someone is. No, she is mother of the whole Christ. And because we are made part of him by baptism, she is our mother also. The gospel tells us that, as she accompanied her Son through life, she reflected on the things that were happening “in her heart” – she pondered, carefully weighing them and their meaning. She has lovingly pondered our lives as well, as she accepts a mother's responsibility for us, also. We leave one year and enter another, always “in her heart”.

This, indeed, is one of the ways that God pities us and blesses us, to use the words of the responsorial psalm: he gives us not only his law and his grace, but also the care and prayers of his good mother and ours, to help us through this life to the next. She accompanies us now on our journey and will be there waiting to greet us when we arrive at our blessed destination. As we give thanks for the calendar year that now concludes, we look to what lies ahead. And we ask that, just as she has gone with us till now, so she may continue to lead and guide us to her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. She has already pondered over our lives: she knows far better than we just what we need. She is our mother, too! And for that, we give thanks and praise to God our Father.