

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Tonight I ask you to take a journey with me. It is a journey in which you will need your imagination. I would like to travel back in time, to a time before time, in a place beyond space. When we arrive we meet God, the all-high, the almighty, the all-powerful God before He ever created. But God is not alone. God can never be alone because according to St. John in the 8th verse of chapter four of his First Letter, “God is love”. If God is love He can never be alone because Love needs an object and the object of God’s love is His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. And their love for each other is so awesome that it powerfully generates its own Spirit. So, when we meet God in that time before time, in a place beyond space, we find God loving Christ as a Father loving His Son bound together by a Spirit of Love.

St. John apparently visited this timeless, spaceless dimension before us. He describes what He saw with a different imagery in the opening of his Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

In other words, in John’s vision, God spoke and the Word that God spoke was Christ and the breath with which God spoke that single word was the Spirit that bound the Word to the God who spoke it.

So, upon our visitation to that timeless, spaceless dimension we can see God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father wanting to delight his Son decides to create the world and all that is in it. He creates the sun, the moon, and the stars; he creates the dome of the sky in which birds fly with abandon and the depths of the sea in which fish and sea creatures cavort; he creates land masses on which trees and plants and flowers abound; and he creates animals, large and small—all to delight His Son.

But none of this creation, as magnificent as it is, is capable of loving back in a way in which He and the Son love one another. So, God determines to create humanity, “in his own image and likeness he created them, male and female he created them”. Finally, God, the Father, Son, and Spirit dance with delight and see all of their creation as “very good”.

But, there’s a problem. In creating humans “in his own image and likeness”, God had to create them to be as free to love as He, His Son, and their Spirit are free to love. This, of course, means they are free not to love Him too. And, unfortunately, all too soon, his first humans show that they have a stubborn streak and rather than acknowledging and loving God as their Creator, they seek to become equal to or better than Him.

So, the Father, Son, and their Spirit ponder this problem together. They look down through the annals of time and recognize that these humans they created to love and be loved by will need guidance. Thankfully, the humans realize this too.

So, they ask for leaders and God sends them Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. When once again they strayed, the people asked for Judges to guide them. And God saw that he would send them Judges, and then Kings, and Prophets too. None of these would be able to turn the peoples' hearts to love God with the same love with which he loved them.

Watching all this human history unfold before their eyes in a time before time and a place beyond space, God the Father was for a moment deeply sad, even hurt. Jesus, seeing the pain in his Father says simply, "Send me. I will show them how much we love them and then they will turn back to us with all of their hearts." The Spirit of their love went into a frenzy and together the Father, the Son, and the Spirit danced joyfully, knowing that their love would be realized.

It was then, I believe, that God the Father, determined in the secret recesses of his heart, to provide for his Son the most beautiful gift he could give him. And it was there, in the secret recesses of his heart that God created the only absolutely perfect human being, incapable of turning away from him who would love his Son in his pilgrimage to his rebellious children. She would love him with the greatest, the most beautiful, the most selfless love humanity would be capable of. She would be His Mother.

But, she too, made in his image and likeness, was free too. He would have to ask her. Tonight we hear how that came to be: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary."

Mary was troubled by the greeting, pondered the request, questioned how it was possible, but, in the end, this most perfect, most beautiful, most selfless human being God created out of love for His Son responded, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word."

Of course, that is not the end of the story. Jesus received not only his humanity from Mary, but she taught he compassion, integrity, even how to pray, but above all loved him with such a beautiful Motherly love that he came to see that his mission was Love. And when that Love became sacrificial, where he offered Himself body and soul, flesh and divinity on the Cross on Calvary, in one of his last acts of love, St. John tells us, "When Jesus saw his mother and disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.'"

With these words, Jesus shares with us the most beautiful gift that God created within the secret recesses of his own heart for His Son, Mary, his Mother, and now ours.

Let us pray.

Hail Mary, full of grace...