

HOMILY FOR CHILDREN ON THE BIRTHDAY OF MARY

Look what I brought with me. It is a picture of the Virgin Mary being visited by the angel Gabriel. This is when Mary found out she was going to be a mother. Being a mother is something very special. It is an awesome responsibility. Every child is a gift from God and the bringing up of children is one of the most important things a parent has to do. Today is a day when we thank God and our mothers and fathers for the gift of life and how they bring us up to be respectful and caring people. That's why we celebrate birthdays.

The love and caring of a mother starts before we are even born. With Mary it started with a humble yes to what God wanted of her. When she learnt of her role in bringing Jesus into the world, she replied to the angel, "I'm prepared to do whatever God wants, let it be done unto me according to His word". Frightened as she must have been at seeing the heavenly visitor, she was prepared to do what the angel asked. When her cousin Elizabeth was expecting John the Baptist, Mary visited her to show her care and concern for others in a similar position as herself. After the birth of Jesus she brought him to the Temple for a special blessing similar to when your Mum and Dad brought you to the church to be baptised as a baby.

Mary protected the baby Jesus from harm by escaping to Egypt after an angel warned Joseph that King Herod was intent on doing away with her baby. Mothers will naturally be concerned for our safety when we are in danger.

Mary took Jesus to the Jewish feast of Passover when he was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-50). It was important for her to take Jesus to the temple, just as your mother today brings you to church. She attended the wedding in Cana and encouraged her son to perform his first miracle. Good Mothers will always

encourage their children to be on the look-out for others in need.

Mary followed Jesus to the cross and watched in horror as they crucified Him - the Lord of Life. She loved her son and must have cried as Jesus entrusted her care to St John from the cross (John 19:25-27). Jesus had no siblings because from the cross Jesus asked the apostle John to look after his mother in his own home. That wouldn't have happened if Jesus had siblings.

Mary is not just the mother of Jesus but our mother as well. A mother is devoted and sticks by her children through good times and bad times. What a wonderful example we have of motherhood when we consider the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Be sure to thank God for your mother today and tell her how much you love her. On our heavenly Mother's birthday which is today, we thank our mothers and fathers for giving us the gift of life and always being there for us.