

Homily 2nd Sunday Advent: Jesus living in Mary/Union of their 2 Hearts

By Fr. Dwight P. Campbell, S.T.D.

“*People of Sion, behold the Lord shall come to save the nations: and the Lord shall make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your hearts.*” These words from our Introit today, the Second Sunday of Advent, are directed to all the peoples of all nations on earth; but they apply in a special way to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Of all the people on earth whom Our Lord came to save, it was Mary whose Heart was most filled with joy when God became man, for this Miracle of miracles took place within her immaculate womb: It was then, at the Incarnation, that Jesus began living in Mary - a fitting topic to consider in these weeks as we prepare for the glorious Birth of Our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus living in Mary; the Son of God, infinite in power and majesty, whom the whole universe cannot contain, is enclosed within the womb of the Virgin Mother, where he lives for the first nine months of His life on earth. What humility! What condescension! The All-Powerful Son of God the Father, Who had shared in the glory of the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity, “empties” Himself, as it were, of His infinite glory and majesty in the mystery of the Incarnation when He takes a human nature and allows Himself to be enclosed in His Mother’s womb for nine months.

Our Lord could have come to the earth as a full-grown man. But He did not. Rather, He chose, in His infinite and incomprehensible humility, to begin His earthly life in a manner like us: by becoming a little baby and living in His Mother’s womb, unable to talk or interact with others. Yet, we know that Jesus gave more glory to God His Father by living within His Mother for nine months, than if He had been preaching and performing miracles for all to see.

Why was it part of God’s plan that Jesus should come to us through Mary, by living within her for the first nine months of His human life? What purpose did God have in doing things this way? No doubt, Jesus wanted to teach us to imitate Him by His example. As any other child living in its mother’s womb, Jesus was *totally dependent* on His Mother, for His human life and nourishment. What a wonder this is - that the Creator should be totally dependent upon a creature of His own making!

By living in Mary as a Babe in her womb, Jesus teaches us to have that same dependence on Mary for everything, and to entrust ourselves - our lives, our desires, our needs - totally to her. For she is truly our spiritual Mother in the order of grace, who not only foresees our needs, but protects us from harm as well. The oldest known prayer to Mary in the Church, the *Sub tuum praesidium*, dating from the late 200’s if not earlier, reflects this notion:

“*We fly to thy patronage or holy Mother of God, despise not our prayers in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious & Blessed Virgin!*”

In addition to giving us His example to imitate, Our Lord Jesus Christ had another reason for living within Mary for nine months: to establish a deep and abiding bond of love between Himself and His Mother. And this ineffable bond of love can, I believe, be best understood as a loving union of their two Hearts.

As Pope St. John Paul II teaches, at the moment of the Incarnation, when the Eternal Word was made flesh, when Son of God became man, the Heart of Jesus began to beat beneath the Heart of His Mother, Mary; and at this time a profound and abiding union of love between their two Hearts was established – a union which began to grow and deepen over time, and which now perdures in Heaven.

With this teaching, Pope John Paul was merely echoing what the great saints and spiritual writers had been saying for many centuries. For example, in the early 1600's, Pierre Cardinal Bérulle, the founder of what is known as the “French School” of spirituality – in which many great saints and spiritual writers, like St. Louis de Montfort, were formed.

Cardinal Bérulle says that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary “live in one another,” and maintains that when Jesus was a babe in His Mother's womb, there existed a mystical movement or inclination of Mary's Heart toward the Heart of Jesus, and of His Heart toward the Heart of Mary. Bérulle insists that these two Hearts mutually ravished on another; that the Hearts of Son and Mother experienced a “continual attraction” and maintained a “perpetual glance” toward each other, caused by the love which Jesus impressed on Mary's Heart, and which the Virgin Mother's Heart returned to Jesus.

This mutual bond of love not only united their two Hearts, making them almost one Heart; it also bore fruit: a deep, abiding joy. We cannot fathom the immense joy that must have overflowed in Mary's Heart, knowing that the Eternal Word took flesh in her womb and was living within her. Her Heart was literally bursting with joy as she awaited her Son's birth – a beautiful thought to contemplate during this holy season of Advent, as we await His Birth.

Contemplating this great mystery of “Jesus living in Mary” and the union of love between their two Hearts should also move us to imitate the Virgin Mother. We can imitate Mary, and share in her joy by meditating on the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary: the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Birth of Our Lord; and then the Christ Child's presentation in the Temple and the Finding of the Child Jesus after He was lost for three days.

In 1685, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom Jesus revealed His Sacred Heart, was novice-mistress in the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial, in France. During Advent of that year she put out a “challenge” for her novices, saying: *“Our challenge for Advent will be for us to unite in spirit and in heart with the most holy Virgin, . . . in order to render homage to the Incarnate Word, this God made child in the womb, adoring him and loving him in silence with her.”*

During this Advent season let us make this challenge our own by uniting our hearts with the Heart of Mary, asking her to help us to imitate her in loving and adoring her newborn Son, and also to share her joy with us as we celebrate His glorious Birth, so that like her, we may bring that joy to others; be heralds of that true, authentic joy which finds both its source and terminus in the Eternal Word made flesh, Christ Jesus, Our Lord.