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Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS CHRIST: OUR MODEL OF PRO-LIFE

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Christmas marks the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Savior of the World. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn, 3: 16). The period of Advent and the entire Christmas season presents us with a double invitation. **One is to reflect on the meaning of Christ's birth and the other is the responsibility it posits on us as God's children. Many a time, our reflection centers only on the son born to us without much thought about the mother of the child. Nevertheless, the Church in her wisdom knows that Mary significantly stands out in the story of Christmas.** In lieu of this, she dedicated the Fourth Sunday of Advent to this purpose. In year A, the Gospel is taken from Matthew 1: 18-24, year B is culled from Luke, 1: 26-28 and year C is read from Luke, 1: 39-45. Reading these periscopes, few thoughts stand out. Firstly, is the Motherhood of our Blessed Virgin Mary, secondly is the clear understanding of her Motherhood as a divine mandate and thirdly is her total surrender to the will of God as to when she said: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk. 1: 38).



Mary was aware of the difficulty of explaining the source of her pregnancy without knowledge of a man and yet she surrendered to God's word. She understood her divine mission to bring the Son of God into the world. She was aware that the child is not only hers but that of God and that she is a custodian of this precious gift of God. She knew from the moment of conception that she was carrying the Son of God in her womb. **She was absolutely docile to the will of God and did not involve herself in anything that will endanger the life of the baby. The fear of being rejected by Joseph, the public spectacle and the consequent social stigma and even death by stoning did not deter her from observing God's will.** The child was kept from all harm at the risk of her own. She had the unmitigated faith that the child was a precious gift from God, destined to save the whole of creation. When the life of the baby Jesus was threatened, she preferred to take a long journey to Egypt to keep Jesus safe and risk her life. Through the thick and thin of His life, Our Mother Mary was there for Jesus resigning to the will of God and never to her own. Even when she was in doubt about the surrounding events of Christ's conception, birth and mission, she sought the will of God for the child. Here are some examples: presentation in the temple, flight to Egypt, when the child was lost in the temple at the age of twelve, during the passion and death of our Lord. She resolutely decided to keep to God's will than seeking her own convenience. Mary chose life and the life she chose is the

author of life Himself through whom all things came to be. Hence, "...all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn.1: 3b).

In just the same way, all parents, in the spirit of Mary, are custodians of God's precious gift. Our children are not our own but God's. Hannah understood that so well when she said of her son, Samuel thus, "I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted me what I asked of him. So now, I give Him to the Lord. For His whole life, He will be given to the Lord" (1Sam 1: 27 – 28a). In the spirit of Hannah and Mary, once every parent understands that their children belong to God, then things will work out better.

On a more serious note, people often talk about freedom in a loose way. We have the freedom to choose but we have no right to choose evil against good. In Genesis chapter three Adam and Eve had the freedom to choose but can only choose rightly which means choosing according to the will of God for them. We know the calamity they incurred for choosing wrongly. **We are called always to choose life and that means respecting the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death.** At any stage in human development, abortion is against life and therefore against God's will for his children. **People argue, sometimes that they have the freedom to do whatever they want with their body. As much as this may seem to be true, let us remember that as Christians we are not our own but we belong to God, body, mind and soul.** "For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2Cor: 5: 14-15) On the other hand, people argue that they are free to do whatever they like. **Again, I am really free provided I do not infringe on another's right; the saying that my freedom stops where another's freedom begins. The freedom of the mother should not subvert the freedom of the baby in the womb.** The mother's freedom to choose must and should by the right respect the freedom of the baby in the womb and vice versa and so on and so forth.

Life is Sacred and it is God's gift which belongs to Him alone. We are free to choose but we are allowed to choose rightly or else we cause disruption in the harmony of life. **Mary our model of pro-life has taught us through her life to always choose not according to our selfish comfort but according to divine will of God for ourselves and for our children both in the womb and outside the womb.** We all belong to God and so have no right to make any choice that will in any way endanger the life or well-being of ourselves or another human person. **As we reflect on the gift of the Messiah this Christmas season, let us also reflect on the responsibility to which we are all called to, not only to receive the gift of life but to respect, protect and nurture that life both physical life and the spiritual life of grace.**