

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

4th Sunday of Advent | For Sunday, December 20, 2020

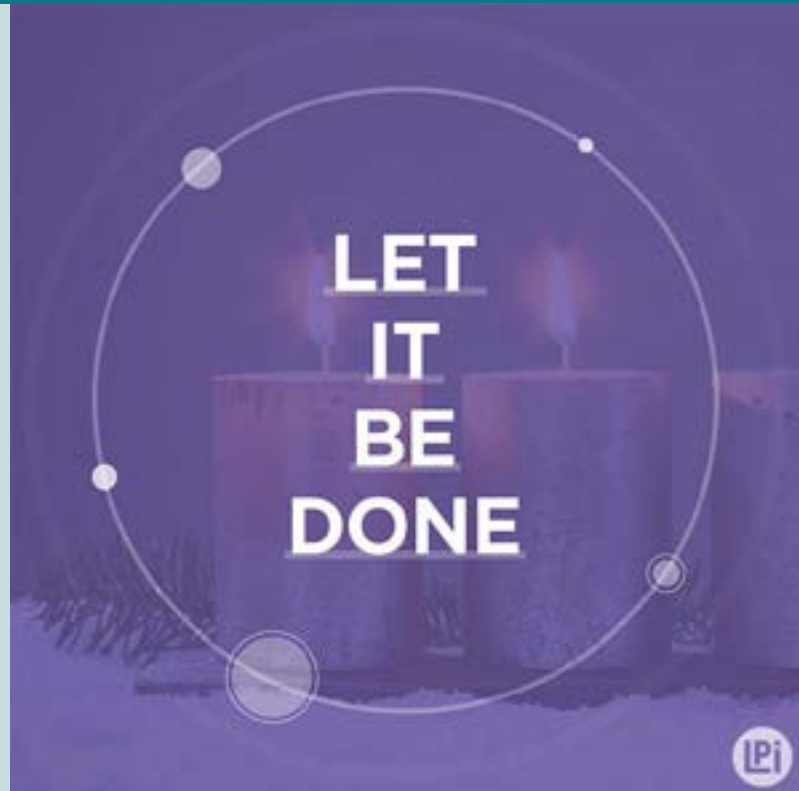
The Greatest Mystery of All

Written by Br. John Marmion Villa

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38



“FIAT” — meaning, “Let it be done.”

We are so familiar with the meaning of “fiat” that it can easily fall off our tongue. But what makes Mary’s fiat different than ours? Hers was complete, total, whole, pure, surrendered without reserve; ours is partial, circumstantial, tainted, and given with conditions. Even in the face of an impossible or perplexing situation (while indeed married, she yet had to live with her husband under the same roof) of wanting to keep her virginal status in the married state, she innocently humbled her questions to the power of Divine Providence, who not only honored her desire, but miraculously surpassed it. The unknowable God proved the impossible as the chosen path to reveal His plan of redemption.

This is very difficult for us to understand. Our modern scientific age has removed all possibility of the mystical and miraculous for the predictable and measurable. We are troubled by people and circumstances that we cannot control. We balk at Christianity’s paradoxical claims of faith ... “unless a grain of wheat dies” (John 12:24) ... “man cannot find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (*Gaudium et Spes, 24*).

We would rather take our cue from Frank Sinatra’s song, “My Way.” Mary’s fiat shows us that “something more than deterministic genetics, effort of will, and the maturation of reason is required in response to God’s initiative, in order to reach our full human potential.” There was no duplicity in her yes to the invitation offered her by the angel.

In a similar, but altogether different, fashion, we are presented with a myriad of opportunities to give a small yes to God's invitations ... to attend peaceably to the irritable spouse coming home from work, to calm the quarrelsome child, to the rise above the disappointment of chores not being done, to mediation with confrontational coworkers, to respond to impulses towards more time for prayer and a healthier lifestyle, to the creative discipline for quality time with the family.

Certainly, the weight of God's salvific plan does not rest on our responses; however, in much smaller ways over the course of our entire lives, we are invited into a deeper and constant collaboration with sanctifying grace, and how frequently we let the grace go wasted for love of much smaller passing pleasures or unfulfilling desires.

Mary's example gives us Advent hope that the coming of Jesus into the manger of our hearts can — again or for the first time — be a game-changing reality of faith, not just the annual sentimental commemoration of a religious tradition or holiday cheer. Mary lived spiritually her "yes" in her heart long before she embraced physically the result of her "yes" in her womb. During these last few days of Advent, we are invited into the heart of the Christian faith, a profound and challenging mystery so simple in its outward manifestation — the God-man taking human form — that it is easily overlooked and so unfathomable in its depths that it cannot be comprehended by the rational mind.

Let us ask for the grace to be awakened from our rationalized stupor through the arrival of the greatest mystery of all: the birth of a baby, who is the salvation of mankind. May we find hope that Mary's fiat could also be ours: to be wholly God's because He is wholly ours ([CCC 2617](#)).

Br. John Marmion Villa

PRAYER

Oh Lord, Grant that I may meet all that this coming day brings with spiritual tranquility.
Grant that I may fully surrender myself to your holy will.
At every hour of this day, direct and support me in all things.
Whatever news may reach me in the course of the day, teach me to accept it with a calm soul and the firm conviction that all is subject to your holy will.
Direct my thoughts and feelings and all my words and actions.
In all unexpected occurrences, do not let me forget that all is sent down from you.
Grant that I may deal straightforwardly and wisely with everyone I encounter, neither embarrassing nor saddening anyone.
Oh Lord, grant me the strength to endure the fatigue of the coming day and all the events that take place during it.
Direct my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to be patient, to forgive, and to love.
Amen