

Immaculate Conception Advent 2022

It's hard for us to realize what Mary went through in saying "yes" to becoming the Mother of God. As the saying goes, "You had to be there." Some husbands find out what their wives go through by "being there."

They had been married for seven years and had a four-year-old son. He was busy with work and pursuing his M.B.A., she was consumed with the work of motherhood and running the household. Their relationship was becoming one of "yawning" at each other. But one Christmas they received a gift that transformed their lives.

The driveway was icy that Christmas morning as they got into the car to drive to their parents. Picking up their son, she slipped. Both bones in her right shin were shattered. Instead of enjoying a cozy, leisurely holiday, they spent the day in the hospital.

"Some Christmas present," she said morosely

But that was just the beginning. Her leg had been so badly broken she was confined to bed at home. For her, it was like a prison sentence. For him, that meant becoming Mr. Mom--cooking meals, washing wheelbarrow loads of laundry, bathing a squirming, crying kid. He longed to get back to work and to school--which he was learning were painless by comparison.

It dawned on him one afternoon at the kitchen sink, scrubbing a particularly uncooperative pan. The window above the sink faced a field of black tree limbs against a cold sky. It was depressing. Then it dawned on him--she had been standing at that same sink for seven years. She had been scrubbing those same dishes, she had been lugging and washing those baskets of laundry every day, she had cared for their son when he was his least lovable.

Wow! he realized, she must really love me to do all this! He went to their bedroom, where she lay with her cast propped up on pillows. He sat on the bed and stroked her hair. "You really love me," he said.

She was not having realizations. She was watching a game show on television. "Of course I love you--scoot over, I can't see the TV."

"I just want you to know that I appreciate what you've done for me, for us. I never knew how much that was."

Stunned, she looked up. Then she smiled and patted his arm.

It was a turning point for them.

From "A precious gift at Christmas disguised as disaster" by Paul Prather, Lexington Herald-Leader, December 22, 1988, as quoted in Connections "Fourth Sunday of Advent," (7 Lantern Lane, Londonderry, N.H. 03053-3905), Dec. 1999.