

***Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God  
St. Francis of Assisi Church – Belchertown, Massachusetts  
January 1, 2019***



Scripture Readings: [Nehemiah 6:22-27](#) ✕ [Psalm 67](#) ✕ [Galatians 4:4-7](#) ✕ [Luke 2: 16-21](#)

We gather today to honor Mary because she is the mother of Jesus. We honor Mary because she is the mother of the eternal Son of God. She is, indeed, the Mother of God and our Blessed Mother as well.

Mary's life, as pure as it was, took on a deeper meaning when she agreed to allow Jesus to be born from her womb. She said to the angel Gabriel: "Behold, I am handmaid of the LORD. Let it be done to me to me according to your word."

These words of Mary hold the key to the deeper meaning that we are all searching for. Our lives will take on deeper meaning only when we do what Mary did: only when we turn our lives over to God and let Jesus be born in our hearts and souls will our lives move toward their truest purpose. Today we say to God what Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the LORD."

It should be no surprise to the person who is constantly striving to grow in faith that to do the will of God, to open one's heart, to open one's soul to the love, grace and the movement of God, to allow Jesus to be born within us is the only way to true fulfillment in this life.

To open our hearts to God implies a trust that God will be with us as we seek to answer His call; as we seek to do His will; as we seek to be

God's instruments of love and peace in our world. It was trust in the goodness, love, and presence of God in her life that helped Mary to



open her heart and soul to what God was asking of her; it's that same trust to which we aspire in our own lives; it's that same trust that we ask Mary to teach us by her example and by her prayers on our behalf.

At the beginning of each year, we are reminded of new beginnings and many people resolve to do better in certain areas of their lives. Perhaps, at the beginning of this year, as we look ahead to the weeks and months that will follow, we can work harder to trust in the LORD, to open our hearts and souls and our very lives to His will.

When we open ourselves the way Mary did, then, perhaps, we might one day pray as Mary prayed: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the LORD... For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is [God's] name... God has thrown down the rulers but lifted up the lowly. The hungry He has filled with good things and the rich He has sent away empty." ✕