



THE FLAME

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

December 2023 issue



“LET EVERY HEART PREPARE HIM ROOM”

By Maria Muratore



Recently, my friend Bernadette DiVito, shared an Advent reflection by the Daughters of Mary. As we ponder the Nativity scene in all reverence, I invite you this Advent to prepare a room in your hearts for baby Jesus.

Let's take time in prayer to prepare:

The Stable: Ask the infant Jesus to make your heart his home this Christmas-

Action: *Throughout your day (at both the busy times and during the quiet moments) offer your heart to Jesus*

The Roof: Make sure the roof of the stable in your heart is in good condition.

Action: *Carefully avoid all uncharitable remarks and gestures*

Crevices: Fill every crevice in the stable walls so that the wind and cold may not enter.

Action: *Guard your ears against sinful conversation*

“Let every heart Prepare Him room” article continued...

Cobwebs: Clean out the cobwebs from your spiritual crib.

Action: Remove from your heart the desire to be praised and honored. Allow all glory and honor directed to baby Jesus

Fence: Build a fence around the crib of your heart.

Action: Fight and remove all distractions when you pray and meditate

Manger: Choose the warmest corner of your heart for the manger of Jesus.

Action: Deny yourself some comfort/pleasures during the Advent season

Hay: Supply the manger of your heart with fresh hay. Create an inviting environment for baby Jesus.

Action: Do not give in to anger, resentments or old grudges. Surrender these to Jesus for his care.

Dear friends, I know that we all have so much on our plates. We're all so busy, especially at Christmas. Is God somewhere on your plate? I believe that God should be the actual plate in our lives, not just a piece upon the plate but the very plate itself. He is the one who is right there in the midst of every single thing we do and every person we encounter. We will never experience Him if we're not expecting him. We won't recognize him if we're distracted by something else. We won't be able to celebrate the blessings of God's goodness and mercy if we are spiritually "somewhere else" when God comes to meet us. It's difficult to focus but we can start by making an effort knowing how kind and merciful our king is. Let's prepare Him room in our hearts this Christmas and into the New Year.

A special note...

Thank you to everyone for making this year's Christmas party a success. It was a great time for fellowship. Thank you all for participating, helping out and a special thank you for all your generosity. We were blessed by fun games by Eddie, Bernadette DiVito, Nicole Jungclas and the beautiful music by Trish and Mike Bell.

I would especially like to thank Vita and Rudy Napoli, for spearheading this event and for their generous donations of time, talent and treasures. Thank you to our CCS Board and committee members for their dedication and service all year round.

We love all in our growing charismatic community. We've been blessed this year with new prayer groups, new members and the blessing of partnering with Magnificat and Encounter Ministries. I see the Holy Spirit present as we gather in unity, praise and fellowship.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All!

“BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN”...

BY TRISH BELL

Is 61:1-2A, 10-11 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God. I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise

Mary is larger than life during the Christmas Season. She is visited by an Angel who greets her, “Hail Full of Grace”, and is informed another birth is eminent. Mary’s cousin Elizabeth is in her 6th month for “nothing is impossible for God”. Mary joyfully makes haste to visit Elizabeth, who affirms her with prophesy, “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb”. Mary stays with Elizabeth till the birth of her son, St John The Baptist, who would prepare the way of the Lord. John would grow up to baptize, preach, prepare hearts for the message of Christ, and be martyred by Herod for witnessing against infidelity and immorality. The baby John lept in Elizabeths womb upon hearing Mary’s voice! I believe Mary and

John recognized each other. After John’s birth, Mary returned home to Nazareth. But Mary would be traveling again. The Romans declared a census and Mary and Joseph left for



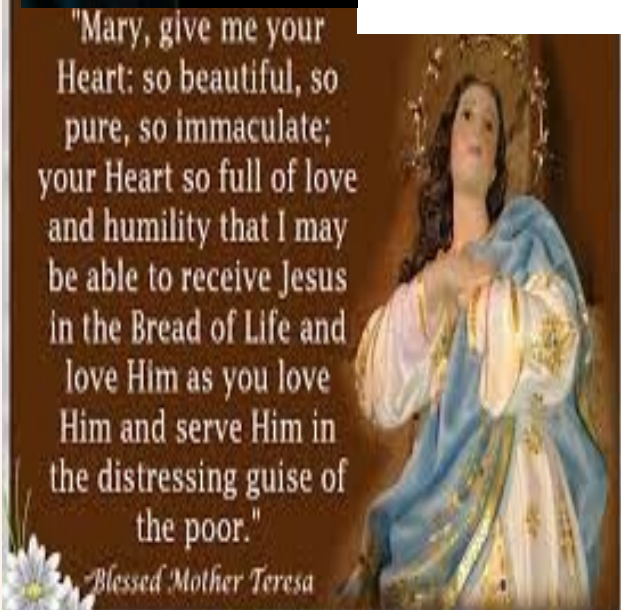
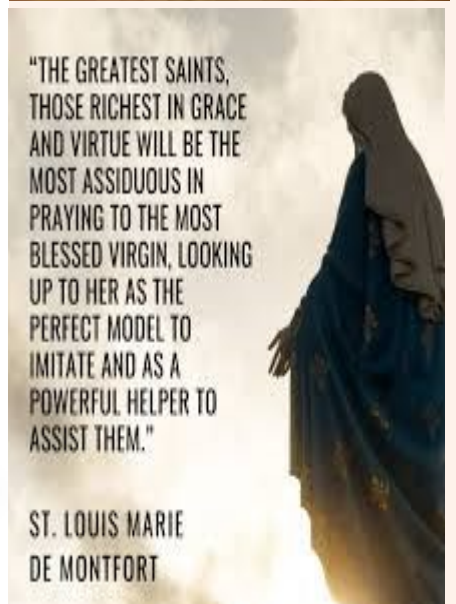
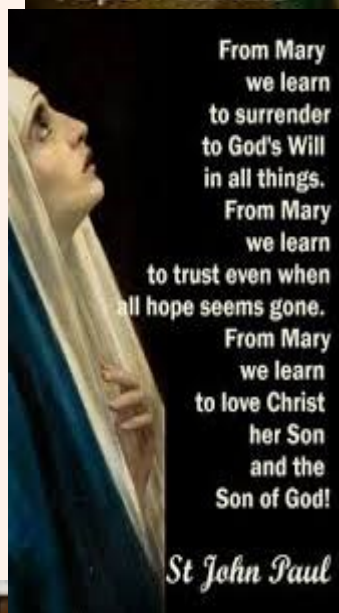
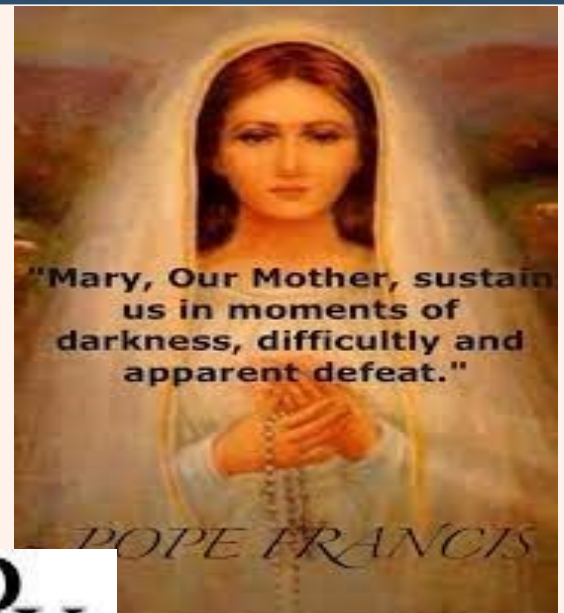
Bethlehem to register in the town of David. Mary went into labor while there and Joseph found only a stable where she would deliver Jesus with no comforts, friends or provisions. But God revealed His delight in Christ’s Birth with splashy signs from Heaven! Angels in a great multitude appeared to shepherds and told them to come see the Child who was Christ the Lord! The Heavens were ablaze with the star that travelled by night to led the Wise Men from the East to locate Jesus and Adore Him with gifts and worship! As the Angel declared to Mary, nothing is impossible for God. He has a plan for the world. He did then. He does now. *(continued)*

(Continued article..."Blessed are you among women" by Trish Bell)

As John was the herald to people to prepare their hearts for Jesus at His First Coming, so Mary is the herald for His Second Coming. I believe Mary is part of God's plan for our times. In the bleakness of our world today, we struggle to find the light and peace of God. We have lost our way. Our compass is broken. We need another Bethlehem star to lead us to the Manger. Mary is our Morning Star. Mary wants to lead us to her son in the manger, once again, to find His perfect love for us. He waits there. To heal us. To love us. To set us free. She teaches us to pray. Through the Rosary, the Mysteries, and the Fruits. We grow in grace. By attending Holy Mass, receiving the Sacraments, and Adoration. We are set free. Mary comes to show us His Face. She models a life of virtue. We can become like her. We then grow closer to Him who's nestled with surrender in her arms. I believe we, too, can grow in Grace through Mary's help. As Isaiah spoke of Jesus in the readings on the Third Sunday of Advent, so I think they also apply to the Spirit that came upon Mary at the Annunciation to prepare us for Christ, once again, today. *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners". Is 61:1-2A, 10-11.* As we prepare to take Christ into our Hearts this season, may we take Mary in our hearts as well. Her sweetness, gentleness, and concern never fails. And she is the sure way to her Son. God bless you and Merry Christmas.



ABOUT MARY...



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 16, 2023

Women's Christmas Gathering:

Date: Saturday, December 16th, 9:30am to 11:30am

**Location: St. Andrew the Apostle Church Care Center, Living Room
3008 Old Raleigh Road, Apex, 27502**

We are gathering Saturday, December 16th from 9:30am to 11:30am to share a special time with Jesus before Christmas. Will you join us?

We are so looking forward to seeing you there! Details for the event and RSVP information follow.

Suzanne Rives, Judy Shallcross and Jean Cost of the Triangle Women's Morning Retreat invite you to attend a morning dedicated to reflection, healing and community by journeying with other women towards a closer, more intimate relationship with Our Lord. Prayer, spoken and silent, scripture, journaling, and other "tools" will be utilized to create a nurturing and empowering sacred time. We pray this will be the first of many to come!

Thank you for sharing this invite with family or friends who might be interested in attending as well!

No charge, Please RSVP to: suzannerives@yahoo.com - (919) 946-3196

December 29, 2023

Healing Mass:

St Joseph Catholic Church, Raleigh 7:00 PM

Praise and Worship by *WithYou* Prayer group and Prayer teams available

COMING FOR 2024!

-Revival Nights for the Eucharistic Revival Year at St. Michael the Archangel:

Feb 2nd, May 10th, and Aug 9th 2024-Praise and Worship with Prayer Teams available

*- Healing Masses, Workshops, Conference and Seminars *dates to be announced*

*****Visit our website for more information, on prayer groups, events and more;**

<https://ccsraleigh.weebly.com/>