



December 23, 2025

O Virgo Virginum

To the clergy and laity in the Diocese of All Saints: May joy be abundantly yours in Christ Jesus, King and Savior for all the world!

It is often said at this time of year that “Jesus is the reason for the season.” Truly he is. He is the Incarnate Son of God.¹ Our redemption begins as he takes on flesh, healing our human nature.² Our Lord’s redemptive might is first seen in his mother. She is an icon of the Church. We are to abide in the Word and the Word in us.³ We are the temple of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.⁴ We are to pray in the Spirit, singing and making melodies in hearts.⁵ We are to speak the oracles of God.⁶ Our presence, as God’s Church, is to be a blessing to the world around us. As we see Mary, so are we to see our ideal reflection.

When the Blessed Virgin gave her *fiat* to Gabriel’s announcement, God the Holy Spirit began knitting together our redemption within her. In this holy act, “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. What Eve had bound in unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith.”⁷ The gold-covered acacia ark was a type and shadow, whereas she is the living ark of the new covenant.⁸ He, tabernacling in her, was made of her like Adam out of the virgin earth.⁹ He – the manna, the word, the priestly authority – resided within her womb.¹⁰ She, flanked by angels named and unnamed,¹¹ was both filled with the Word¹² and overshadowed by the Spirit.¹³ At her greeting both women and unborn babes were filled with the Holy Spirit, leaping in praise like King David before the Ark.¹⁴

This Christmastide, let us lift our voices in glad acclamation. “Unto us a Child is born. Unto us a Son is given.” Our King and Savior has drawn near. The Key of David has opened the door for reconciliation. The Wisdom from on High has come to dwell with those of humble and contrite heart. The Desire of Nations has illumed all the world with his gospel. Let’s draw near. Let’s worship. Let’s adore Christ the newborn King. We will be the better for it, and so will our neighbors.

Singing Joy to the World,

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¹ John 1:14

² Gregory of Nazianzus, Fourth Theological Oration, Oration 30. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310230.htm>

³ John 15:1-11

⁴ John 1:14, ἐσκήνωσεν, *dwelt*, is literally ‘tabernacle.’ The Word tabernacled in the Blessed Virgin entirely and now indwells the Church pneumatically and sacramentally, Rev. 21:3; cf. ‘abide’ and ‘dwell,’ Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:19, 3:16; Jas. 4:5; John 6:52-59, 63; 8:31 as theologically derivative of the Incarnation as ‘indwelling’ itself.

⁵ Eph. 4:29-32

⁶ 1 Peter 4:11

⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.4. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103322.htm>

⁸ Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1

⁹ Genesis 2:5-6; cf. 2:23; 3:17-19

¹⁰ Heb. 9:4-15

¹¹ Gabriel, the angel who spoke to Joseph, the angel who led them into Egypt and back, and the angelic hosts who appeared to the shepherds.

¹² “The word of the Lord came to me” is oft repeated by the Prophets. The word came as words, dreams, visions, and prophetic actions. It often came with a weight, or burden (Jer. 23:33), that communicated something of the divine pathos so that the prophet shared in the Lord’s heart (Gen. 8:21; Deut. 10:15). In the Blessed Virgin, the “word of the Lord” that comes is the fullness of God bodily in Christ.

¹³ ἐπεσκίασεν, *overshadowed*, (Luke 1:35). The term is specifically used in Exodus 40:35 after the completion of the tabernacle and its consecration. The conclusion of construction and consecration results in the divine indwelling. In the NT, our Lord is overshadowed at the Transfiguration (Luke 9:34). Peter’s shadow is an instrument of divine covering that conveys healing to people in the streets (Acts 5:15) points to the larger Church being indwelt and empowered by the Spirit of Christ.

¹⁴ ἀνεφώνησεν “*exclaimed* with a loud cry” (Luke 1:42) is used 6 times in the LXX for liturgical worship and celebration before the ark of the Covenant.