

# HAPPY FEAST DAY, DEAR PARISH!!

## **Feast of The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

*November 21*

When Mary was asked to be the mother of the Savior, she was completely free to accept or reject the offer. Her response “Let it be done to me,” was a great act of faith. Because she did not understand what was happening, she must have known that there would be difficulties ahead.

She replied yes to the angel's announcement and agreed to become the mother of Jesus, and the Church has declared Mary to be the Mother of God. Because she was the first to say yes to the Messiah, the Church has declared her to be the Mother of the Church.

The feast of the presentation of Mary dates back to the 6th century in the East and the 15th century in the West. It is based on an ancient tradition that says that Mary was taken to the temple in Jerusalem when she was 3-years-old and dedicated to God. What we celebrate on this day is the fact that God chose to dwell in Mary in a very special way. In response, Mary placed her whole self at the service of God. Every moment since your Baptism, God invites you to be open to His grace and dedicate yourself to Him, as Mary did.

The Eastern Church was more interested in the feast, but it did appear in the West in the 11th century. Although the feast at times disappeared from the calendar, in the 16th century it became a feast of the universal Church. As with Mary's birth, we read of Mary's presentation in the temple only in apocryphal literature. In what is recognized as an unhistorical account, the *Protoevangelium of James* tells us that Anna and Joachim offered Mary to God in the Temple when she was 3 years old. This was to carry out a promise made to God when Anna was still childless.

Though it cannot be proven historically, Mary's presentation has an important theological purpose. It continues the impact of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and of the birth of Mary. It emphasizes that the holiness conferred on Mary from the beginning of her life on earth continued through her early childhood and beyond.

(Sources: franciscanmedia.org and loyolapress.com).