

Merry Christmas.

Mary's response to all her overwhelming experiences before, during and after the birth of her son, Jesus, was to treasure and to ponder these amazing occurrences, in her heart!

Remember Luke 2:19, that small, silent verse "hiding" amongst so many grand, striking stories about Christmas. This saying teaches an important lesson. It says: "*But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart*".

On Christmas Day we will once again share with each other the unforgettable, unique story about a delicate young mother, a loving and protecting husband, the defenceless presence of a new born baby, the excitement of poor shepherds and a humble manger. It tells the story that the first Christmas celebration was an exceptionally *small affair*, not noticed by masses or celebrated on any impressive scale.

Yes, it was an immense event, but presented in small, modest circumstances with unpretentious details, noticed by unlikely witnesses, sharing in the intimate moment so treasured by Mary.

How quiet and small it seems to us who are bombarded by an image of Christmas that is larger than life, commercialised and, sometimes, agonizing.

How quiet and unnoticed birth day of Jesus came and passed.

"*But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.*" She protected the memory of the birth of the Saviour of the world in the only place fit for such a treasure: in her heart. Her worship is muted; her reverence clothed with meek humility and her faith is shared with her husband and a few seemingly insignificant shepherds.

Mary recognized a moment that led to the Son of God, Christ the Lord and Emmanuel, to rule, reign, redeem, save and conquer for our sake.

Our world greeted the Child with a manger and a cross.

Yet God honoured him with an angel choir, a heavenly throne and eternal victory and exaltation.

Be mindful that a new life, hope, peace, joy and love come from an intimate, private and humbling experience when Jesus enters your life. It was secretly treasured by Mary. And it carried her on a journey that passed a cross, shared a victory and reached a Pentecost.

You have seen the *bling*, did the shopping, listened to the noise and were frustrated by the kitsch dished up in the Name of the King who was born. We all saw these not so silent nights and celebrations!

But don't miss the small, quiet moment which is the true Christmas: *the treasured and quiet moment when Jesus becomes your Companion for life.*

This is the only memory that you and your children will carry with you, always, everywhere and for evermore.

Merry Christmas!