

Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start:

When you are thirsty you go to the well for a drink. If you want to be a teacher you go to school and study. If you want to be an administrative assistant you learn all the new computer programs so you can be more efficient. If you want to be an EMT you go to class to learn the skills so that you can save a life. So if you want to be a Christian....what do you do? Let's start at the very beginning. If you are thirsty you go to the well....etc. So if you want to be a Christian you go to the source. "The Glory of God is seen in **Humanity Fully Alive!**"



My favorite painting of the Annunciation is done by the artist Martini (I wonder if it has anything to do with the drink?). Look at Mary's face, she is quite perplexed. Can you read her mind? What would you be saying to yourself at that moment? I know what I would be saying to myself: "What the hell is going on here?" But she didn't say that. She said yes. That's when it all began. "Let's start at the very beginning." Whenever Champagnat began a new project he would go to Mary first and place his intentions in her Heart. Mary Our Ordinary Resource. So if you want to be a Christian go to the source. Let's place this reflection under Mary's protection, our ordinary resource.

In Mary we see **Humanity Fully Alive!** In Jesus Christ we see **Humanity Fully Alive!** **So it is possible for us to be like Mary and to be like Jesus.** We will not be them, but if we start to see ourselves as developing the gifts we have been given by Jesus at the moment of our creation we will become more like them, this is what we have been called to do. Mary's yes at this moment was on fire. The apostles on the road to Emmaus told us "were not our hearts on fire when he explained the scriptures to us." I want to be on fire.

Let us look at some quotes from Marcellin as he speaks to us of his encounter with Mary: "With Mary, we have everything; without her we are nothing; because Mary has her adorable son either in her arms or in her heart." "She has done everything for us." "Mary this is your work." And so we pray to Mary to guide us in this adventure. Marcellin's life shows us the many ways in which his heart beats in tune with that of Mary. He has shown us by example how to be and how guide young people, and in this world of ours today isn't it so desperately needed? Children are thirsting to change the world and we need to recognize this and make it happen.

As we all know Mary's life was not always a bed of roses. At the presentation of Jesus in the temple, the old man told her of the many swords that would pierce her heart. At the foot of the cross as she gazed upon her son her heart must have been so saddened. What was it like for her? We have all had to deal with tragedy of one form or another during our life. My father died in 1977 and in Rome on retreat I reflected on Mary and what she went through and I was overcome by such a strong emotion that I needed to leave the retreat for a time. I had a strong sense of what Mary had been feeling. Mary at the foot of the Cross, shows us, as she showed Champagnat, how to deal with our daily cross. We live in a turbulent world to say the least. Look around. Children are afraid to go to school because of gun violence, the rights of migrant children are being trampled on in different forms of abuse, political or clerical turmoil or even issues in our own communities or families. We pray and cry out to be that candle that lights the darkness. Mary at the foot of the cross didn't hide or turn away, Jesus gave her John "behold your son" and then Jesus gave Mary to us. "Behold your mother." Mary, who's heart was free and full of the warmth of our God.

So what are we saying here? Go to the source, go to Mary and see how she lived with Jesus.

Let us pray:

Jesus our companion, you know well that our spirits are willing to follow you, but we are often overwhelmed by other desires. In your great love, send your Holy Spirit to drive out all that separates us from obeying your will. Like Mary we always see in you the way, the truth, and the life that leads to heaven. Give us the courage to walk with Marcellin and help us to lead our brothers and sisters to eternal happiness with you. Amen