

# Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

Cycle B

January 1, 2012 10:30am and 12noon

Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

**Erma Bombeck**

Our well-known American humorist Erma Bombeck once came up with a list of six New Year's resolutions.

Erma's six resolutions go like this:

1. *I'm going to clean this dump just as soon as the kids grow up.*
2. *I will go to no doctor whose office plants have died.*
3. *I'm going to follow my husband's suggestion to put a little excitement into my life by living within our budget.*
4. *I'm going to apply for a hardship scholarship to Weight Watchers.*
5. *I will never lend my car to anyone I have given birth to.*
6. *And, finally, just like last year, I am going to remember that my children need love most when they deserve it least.*

**Mary**

With all of Erma's wit, she ends with a very insightful resolution.

That resolution – about loving her children when they deserve it least – seems to be the result of some reflection. Erma must have reflected on her role as a mother and on her children's needs and discerned what she was called to do.

In today's gospel, Mary is also presented as a person who reflects. Saint Luke says that after she has given birth to Jesus and the shepherds have visited, "*Mary treasures all these things and reflects on them in her heart.*"

So, Mary is a reflective person. She looks carefully at what is happening and looks at all of this through the eyes of faith.

This reflective spirit enables Mary to see God acting in her life. It leads Mary to go along with what God is asking her to do.

Well, the example of Mary calls us to the same reflective spirit in our own lives. This can be especially appropriate on New Year's Day.

If we are inclined to make some New Year's resolutions, I recommend that we reflect on the three dimensions of time – on the past, then the future, and finally the present. I recommend that we focus on these and see what resolution is appropriate for us.

### **Possible Resolutions**

First, the past. Maybe we need to resolve to stop saying things like *“If only I had done this”* or *“If only I had not said that.”*

Usually, our “if onlys” are a waste of time and energy. We cannot bring back or re-do the past.

On the other hand, if our regret is based on an appropriate feeling of guilt, then let’s ask for forgiveness from the person involved or from God. In this way, we bring the past to completion and just let the past be past.

Then, the future. Maybe we need to resolve to stop saying things like *“What if this happens”* or *“What if he does that.”*

Again, usually our “what ifs” are a waste of time and energy. They are almost always focused on something in the future that we cannot control.

In truth, the only thing we can do about the future is live today the best we can with our future goals in mind – both our earthly and our heavenly goals. So, maybe we need to take Mary’s approach and trust more that God will be with us and support us through whatever happens.

And finally, the present. Maybe we need to resolve just to give our attention to the person we are now with or the thing we are now doing.

So often we are thinking about the next person or the next task. So often we are not really “with” or present to the person we are talking with or the thing we are doing.

Maybe we need just to focus on how God may be present to us right now through your husband or wife or friend or in doing your job or cleaning the house or whatever. We can usually find God and the richness of life right here – in the present moment, in whatever we are doing.

### **Conclusion**

So, Erma Bombeck’s humor and Mary’s reflective spirit might lead us to some thoughtful resolutions at this junction of time that we call New Year’s. Happy New Year!