

# OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH

1911 UNION VALLEY ROAD • HEWITT, NJ 07421

Phone: 973-728-8162 Fax: 973-728-4650 Web: [www.olqpnj.org](http://www.olqpnj.org)

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY • DECEMBER 8, 2017



*From the desk of Fr. Hubert*

## **Embracing Servanthood** (Luke 1:26-38)

Advent is a time when the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated not only by members of the Roman Catholic faith but also by Christians of all denominations. But this year, shortly before Advent began, there were references to Mary, the Mother of God, in the political headlines. As a candidate for the Alabama Senate faced accusations of inappropriate sexual conduct from when he was in his thirties and the girl was fourteen years old, one of his supporters pointed to the Bible as a defense for the allegations. "Take the Bible . . . take Joseph and Mary. Mary was a teenager and Joseph was an adult carpenter. They became parents of Jesus." The response to this defense was swift and highly critical. However, amidst the controversy, the essence of why we revere Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is lost.

When the Angel Gabriel visited the young girl in Nazareth, he told her that she had found favor with God. The long-promised, long-awaited Messiah was about to be born. God would send his Messiah to the world not as a king or a warrior, but as a child. This child would arrive as every other child had arrived; he would be born. But Mary was a virgin. Most of the people in the Bible, when visited by an angel, react with fear. Mary, who was engaged to marry Joseph, was, we read, troubled by his words. "How can this be?" she asks the angel. He answers her, and then tells her that her cousin Elizabeth, an old woman thought to be barren, is six months pregnant. Clearly, this is a time when amazing events are about to happen. Mary's answer tells us why she has found favor with God. "I am the Lord's servant," she replies.

Does she understand all of this? Probably not. It's true that she was young; it was the custom at that time for girls to marry when they were capable of bearing children, so the estimations that she was a teenager are likely correct. But we can't lose sight of the fact that, regardless of her age, she saw herself as the servant of God. Her son, more than thirty years later, would wash the feet of his disciples as he explained that he came to be the servant of God. Mary taught her son to be a servant.

For Christians, Mary's willingness to serve God is headline news. It's not something that we see as a source of scandal on the political stage. Her humble agreement to do as God wished is not something that we see very often among the elite in the halls of power. But it is her example that we should follow this Advent season so that we, too, may say, "I am the Lord's servant."

*Fr. Hubert*

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