



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI JESUM

DEDICATED TO MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

“Salus animarum Suprema Lex esto — The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church” (Canon Law 1752)

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ADVENT WITH MARY



... the Bakerwoman

Each year as the Holy season of Advent approaches there is a need within us to find an inspiration that will contribute to making our Advent more meaningful for ourselves, our families, our children and our communities. It is always preferable if the inspiration also provides an invitation to prayerful participation, for symbols are powerful ways of communicating the divine.

We would like to share with you our own inspiration for this year, some of you may like to utilize and use it in your own homes, others may simply like to reflect and dwell on the deeper, inner spiritual meaning.

Advent is a time of waiting, a time of preparation, a time for nurturing the inner life in union with Mary, Spouse and Bride of the Holy Spirit, so soon to give birth to the Saviour of the world.

To contemplate, to keep Mary company in her expectancy can be very fruitful for our own understanding of Christ's very humanity, for truly He was flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone.

Our theme is *Mary the Bakerwoman*, Mary was the spiritual oven in which Christ the living bread was formed, born and ultimately offered to us in the Most Holy

Eucharist! He is the living bread from Heaven!

Jesus Christ truly is our daily bread, that which gives sustenance, meaning and body to our daily lives, Did not Christ himself teach us to pray, “Give us today our daily bread”?

Mary the Bakerwoman ... there is a hymn that has been in circulation now for many years called precisely this, “The Bakerwoman”. The following are the lyrics:

The Bakerwoman

The Bakerwoman in her humble lodge

received a grain of wheat from God.

For nine whole months the grain she stored Behold the
handmaid of the Lord.

Make us the bread Mary, Mary we need to be fed.

The Bakerwoman took the road which led
to Bethlehem the house of bread.

To knead the bread she laboured through the night, and
brought it forth about midnight.

Bake us the bread Mary, Mary we need to be fed.

She baked the bread for thirty years
by the fire of her love and the salt of her tears, by the warmth
of her heart so tender and bright, and the bread was golden
brown and white.

Bring us the bread Mary, Mary we need to be fed.

After thirty years the bread was done.

It was taken to the town by her only son; the soft white bread
to be given free to the hungry people of Galilee.

Give us the bread Mary, Mary we need to be fed.

For thirty coins the bread was sold,
and a thousand teeth so cold, so cold
tore it to pieces on a Friday at noon
when the sun turned black and red the moon.

Break us the bread Mary, Mary we need to be fed.

And when she saw the bread so white,
the living bread she had made at night,
devoured as wolves might devour a sheep, the bakerwoman
began to weep.

Weep for the bread, Mary Mary,
Weep for the bread we need to be fed.

But the bakerwoman's only son
appeared to his friends when three days had run on the road
which to Emmaus led, and there she knew him in the breaking
of bread.

Lift up your head, Mary Mary.
Lift up your head for now we've been fed.

Translated from the French by Hubert Richards.

The Statue and its Presentation

In order to make this concept, this inspiration visible we have formed this seated sculpture of Mary out of clay, as you see Mary's posture is one of anticipation , she is already fecund ... her womb forms the oven in which the living Bread of Life, Jesus, will be formed and brought forth.

Christ came among us, He became flesh out of love of all humanity and for us each individually, and He remains among us in love; our acts of loving service and suffering with and for others makes Him present. There is no greater pursuit, no greater or more valuable and worthwhile thing than loving and being love for others... for where there is love there is God himself. *Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.*

Conscious of this, during this advent our statue will be placed adjacent to our advent wreath, and in order for the infant Jesus to be formed through Mary as the Bakerwoman, every act of charity, no matter how small will earn a sister the joy of placing within the aperture over the womb of Mary on the statue, a small spoonful of flour ...

Just prior to the great feast of Christmas the flour will be taken out of the container (the womb of Mary) and formed and baked into a baby Jesus, so that on Christmas morning , resting over the aperture wherein the flour laid, will be the Christ Child!

This also gives a daily opportunity within your family or community to spend a few moments in the presence of Mary and your advent wreath reflecting upon Christ as Living Bread, and or any Eucharistic theme, this making your advent more alive and real.

Some of the more talented among you could make your own copies of the statue, but may we suggest the following.

That you print off the picture of the statue (see picture above) from your computer onto a card, leaving tabs on the bottom left an right of the picture in order that it can stand up like a card.

Cut out a hole in the area where you see Mary's womb to be and stand the card in front of a small container ... this way you will have your own Bakerwoman and you can encourage your children and others to place a small amount of flour into the womb of Mary. Every act of charity, kindness will win them the opportunity to do this.

As Christmas grows nearer remove the flour, mix with a little water and butter into a dough and make the form of a baby, it can be something very simple, and place it on a baking tray and bake in the oven ... when completed place the child in the area of the aperture or at Mary's feet ... if your efforts do not turn out as well as you anticipated, that is no problem, swaddle the baby in a little cloth leaving only the face visible, and just paint on the eyes with a little water colour.

Alternatively, you could cut out of a sliced piece of bread with a biscuit cutter a round of bread which you could then stand up in the hole representing Jesus as Eucharist!

Some of you may even use and make both...

A blessed Advent to you all in the company of Mary the Bakerwoman!

