Living in Grace – Mary, Mother of Jesus

What is grace? There are many definitions in the dictionary.

* Elegance of movement
* Courteous good will
* Fact of being favored by someone
* The free or unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessing

I think one definition, which was just a post by someone, not in a dictionary, was my favorite: unconditional love.

Whichever definition is correct, it is all a wonderful thing. So how do you live in grace?

Let’s take a look at Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus.

From Luke 1:26-38

Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Then Mary said, “Behold the maid-servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

We are not of Catholic faith and pray to Mary but I do believe we can be like her and admire her.

Think about the setting at the time. Mary was young in age. The verse said she was “troubled”. Gabriel told her to not be frightened after he told her she was chosen by God. We complain about our lives and our responsibilities, but image being told you are going to carry God’s own son in your womb, bear him and take care of him as he grows.

What a responsibility that would be. Mothers, think about when you were pregnant. We all worry about what we eat, getting our sleep and exercise, and staying sane while we are pregnant. Mary had the same worries as well. I would think though carrying God’s son would be a little more stressful.

Mary didn’t have the luxuries that we do today. She didn’t get the drugs to take away the pain. Instead right before she was to give birth she had to travel a very long way for a very long time on a donkey. Think of that up and down motion and how that would feel on your body at that time.

Then instead of the luxurious hospital, she gave birth in a barn stall in with animals there watching her. No doctor or nursemaid or anything of that sort. Just her husband and God. I am sure God gave her the strength she needed. Although I would think that she felt pain just like everyone else did. Jesus couldn’t be born in royalty or with favor or his creditability as a true king would be spoiled and unbelievable.

And it is not just the physical responsibility Mary had. How about the emotional responsibility? She was going to raise the Son of God, the Almighty King. King of kings, Lord of Lords.

Where the thoughts of carrying, bearing and raising the Son of God on Mary’s mind when Gabriel told her about her son? I am sure it was. How did she handle the situation?

First she was confused as she had not been with a man. Then when Gabriel explained it to her, did she say “No way man. Not me, I’m not doing it.”No. Instead she said “Let it be to me according to your word.” She took on that responsibility with grace and unconditional love.

Then she had to tell Joseph about it. How was she going to tell him? Ladies, back then, women were virgins when they got married. It was a disgrace to not be one. She was probably wondering how Joseph was going to react. Mary had normal feelings just like us.

Then eventually Mary had to watch Jesus, her son, get beaten and bruised, nailed on the cross, watch people make fun of him, and then eventually take his last breath and die. How heartbreaking for her.

Let us learn from Mary. Handle situations with love and grace. Remember that God is always there with us and his unconditional love. Don’t let the circumstances around you cloud your life. Let God in your life, let him lead you and let him give you his blessing of living in his grace. Accept him with an open heart and all he has in store for you, just like Mary did.

“Let it be according to your word.”