

**"But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart"**

In the Christmas story, there is a moment that stands out. It is the moment when Mary, the mother of Jesus, reflects deeply on the extraordinary events surrounding the birth of her son. The Gospel of Luke recounts that after the shepherds visited and shared their awe-inspiring experience of the angels' message, *"But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart"* (Luke 2:19).

Mary's response to these divine events was not to rush to action or immediately seek understanding. She paused.... She treasured the words spoken to her..... and she pondered them in her heart. This act of Mary—her treasured reflection—is not merely a passive recollection but a deeply spiritual response to the extraordinary revelation of God's incarnate presence.

Mary's response to the divine events was not one of immediate action or hurried understanding. Instead, she chose stillness—she paused to treasure the sacred words spoken to her. To treasure something is to hold it in reverence, to recognize its divine worth, and to protect it from being lost from memory. Mary treasured the words of the shepherds, for they bore witness to the fulfilment of God's ancient promises, the Advent of the Saviour of the world. These words carried with them the hope of redemption, God's eternal plan for humanity.

But Mary's response goes deeper than mere recollection; she also "pondered them in her heart." To ponder is to meditate deeply, to allow the soul to wrestle with the words of divine revelation. It is not a fleeting thought, but a deliberate, contemplative act that invites the heart and mind to dwell on the mysteries of God's will. Mary's pondering was an act of surrender, a contemplative prayer that sought to grasp, if only partially, the vast implications of the incarnation—the significance of bearing the Son of God. Though the full understanding of this divine mystery may have eluded her, Mary allowed herself to live within the tension of the unknown, trusting in God's even amidst her unanswered questions.

Her response offers us a profound example. In the midst of life's most extraordinary moments, there is immense value in taking time to reflect on what God is revealing. Mary knew that these were no ordinary occurrences. They were holy revelations—divine glimpses into the eternal plan of salvation. In response, she held them in her heart and reflected on their meaning. Her example encourages us to slow down, to open our hearts to God's unfolding revelation, and to seek understanding in God's time, not our own.

We are not told precisely what Mary understood in that moment, nor how much of the divine plan she comprehended. What we do know is that her heart was open to God's will, and her response was one of humble contemplation. In the same way, when God reveals his will to us—whether through his word, through prayer, or through the events of our lives—we are called not merely to react, but to reflect, to treasure, and to ponder. Like Mary, we are called to hold these divine revelations close to our hearts, even when their full significance remains unknown.

There is a quiet beauty in Mary's response that speaks powerfully to us today. In a world often marked by noise, distraction, and haste, Mary's reflective pause invites us into the silence of contemplation. It is in those moments of stillness—those sacred pauses—that we can draw closer

to God, gaining deeper insight into his purposes for us. Her example encourages us to reclaim moments of quiet reflection, to seek the sacred in the midst of our busy lives, and to allow God's presence to penetrate our hearts more deeply.

How can we cultivate a life of treasuring and pondering, as Mary did?

First, we must become more attuned to the presence of God in our lives. We need to develop the ability to recognize the sacred in the mundane—whether it is in a beautiful sunrise, a quiet moment of prayer, or a profound biblical text. Just as God spoke to Mary through the shepherds and angels, he speaks to us in the events of our everyday lives. When we treasure these moments, we begin to see the world through eyes of faith, understanding that each moment is precious.

Second, we must create space for reflection. Our lives are filled with constant activity and distraction. Yet, if we are to grow spiritually, we must intentionally carve out time for quiet reflection. Whether through prayer, meditation, journaling, or simply sitting in silence, we must give ourselves the gift of time to ponder the deeper truths of God's work in our lives. As we reflect, we are invited to discern how God's word shapes us and how he is at work, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Lastly, we must trust that God will reveal his plan in his own time. Mary did not fully understand everything in the moment, but she trusted in the unfolding of God's purpose. Similarly, there are moments in our lives when we cannot see the whole picture, when we do not understand God's ways. But like Mary, we are called to trust that God is at work and that his revelation will come in its appointed time. Our task is not to have all the answers but to remain faithful and reflective as God guides us.

Let us, then, follow Mary's example, treasuring and pondering the blessings of God in our lives. By doing so, we open our hearts to the transformative power of his presence, allowing his plan to shape us more fully into the people he has called us to be. May we, like Mary, embrace the stillness, the mystery, and the wonder of God's work, and may our lives be marked by a deep, reflective faith that continues to grow as we seek to understand the depths of his love and grace.

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