August 22nd: Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (*Lk* 1:26-38): In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, «Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you». Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, «Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; He will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end». Then Mary said to the angel, «How can this be if I am a virgin?». And the angel said to her, «The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible». Then Mary said, «I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said». And the angel left her.

«I am the handmaid of the Lord»

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Today, the Church invites us to look at our Lady as a Queen. But not as a Queen with a golden crown, and with a distinguished and gallant cortege. This Queen is the first to oblige. As it can be read in Luke, despite not fully understanding the words of the Angel, Mary says: "I am the Lord's servant" (Lk 1: 38). The Virgin is a sign of how God looks upon humanity: humility is the first and last criterion to follow. In his Son we find Jesus Christ, He who better lives this humility, to the point of surrendering His own life.

When contemplating today Mary as a Queen, each one of us must also try to imitate Her in that 'yes' She gave, which in turn, She invites us to give. Mary's path was not an easy one; the path of the disciple is never easy. However, the disciple is never alone and God accompanies those who trust Him. This is the conviction that St. Mary receives from the very first moment and which she gives to each one of us, so

that we -as she did- are able to say "YES".

With the words from the Angel, Mary must rejoice, because he told Her: «The Lord is with you» (Lk 1:28). This is Mary's great secret! She is a happy woman because She does not feel alone (loneliness is the right time for the malignant to attack). Mary is blessed with a joy founded in Christ, manifested in all the moments of tension: from the Annunciation to the Calvary, our Lady surrenders without fright or fear. Joy expresses the feeling of those who live in communion with Christ, communion that Mary experienced from the first moment, and whose highest expression is to be found in the Eucharist.

By celebrating this precious day, each one of us also receives the call to trust the Lord and, thus, be a witness of the "Incarnate Joy" which is Christ Jesus. However, we are not always able to rely on; this is why we should strive, with the prayer O Blessed Lady, from St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to achieve strength and closeness with Mary Queen: "Hail holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, God bless You...!".