November 21st: Memorial of The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (*Mt* 12,46-50): While Jesus was still talking to the people, his mother and his brothers wanted to speak to him and they waited outside. So someone said to him, «Your mother and your brothers are just outside; they want to speak with you». Jesus answered, «Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?». Then He pointed to his disciples and said, «Look! Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is for me brother, sister, or mother».

«Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother and sister and mother»

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today the Church remembers the moment when the little Mary completely surrendered her heart to the Most High. Holy Mary was full of grace and without any hint of sin from the first moment of her conception in her mother's womb, St. Anne. Evidently she was not aware of this status, but she certainly was fully unfailing.

The Christian tradition is convinced that Mary, being very young, decided to fully dedicate herself in soul and body to God. In fact, this is why in such day as today, but in 543, in Jerusalem, the dedication of the church of Holy Mary la Nueva took place.

How singular the ways of God are! Quite often so subtle but always effective. In ancient times it was totally unthinkable that a girl should not be given in marriage. A "single" girl, she alone, but what Mary intended was rather the opposite. So, these are the ways of the Holy Spirit! The young Mary was betrothed to Joseph. No doubt the Divine Providence had prepared a holy man – whom we also imagine young – who would be able to take care of Mary "as God commands."

We do not know how, but we can assume that Mary and Joseph had agreed to give themselves completely to God by sharing a "virgin marriage" (something also unthinkable). If it was not through this peculiar way, how could the virginity of St. Mary be protected? Surely St. Joseph was the only Jewish boy capable of accepting the mission of protecting Mary's virginity through a virgin marriage. Both of them, as brothers, fully dedicated to the will of God.

Finally, it turned out that such a peculiar marriage - virginal - was the precise instrument God had prepared to "send" His Son "born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal 4:4). "Mary first conceived Christ

in her heart before conceiving Him in her womb" (St. Augustine). We too, in imitation of St. Mary, can conceive Jesus in our hearts through faith and obedience to God, since «Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother and sister and mother» (Matt. 12:50).