

Follow Mary's example, archbishop urges

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien urged Catholics to follow the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary by accepting God's will despite fears and worries.

"Mary gave her 'yes' completely," Archbishop O'Brien told some 300 parishioners who gathered at Immaculate Conception, Towson, on Dec. 8 for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. A holy day of obligation for Catholics, the feast honors Mary's conception without sin.

When Mary learned she would become the mother of God, the archbishop said: "She was troubled; she was afraid. ... She did not know what this meant."

Nonetheless, she accepted God's will fully, Archbishop O'Brien said.

"We are asked to say 'yes' in our lives even though the easier way is to take that path that suits oneself rather than God's will," Archbishop O'Brien said. "So God has given us Mary as an example, but also as an intercessor."

Priests and deacons wore cream-colored vestments, complementing Archbishop O'Brien's and gold.

Three priests concelebrated the Mass: Father Michael Foppiano and Monsignor Edward Lynch, both of Immaculate Conception, and Father Adam Parker, the archbishop's priest secretary. Immaculate Conception's pastor, Monsignor F. Dennis Tinder, is recovering from an illness and was unable to attend. Three deacons also assisted.

As Mary was to give flesh and blood to the Son of God, the archbishop said: "It was only fitting that her flesh, given to him, would likewise be without sin. ... She is the mother of all that is given us by Christ from the cross. This is your mother."

Archbishop O'Brien urged Catholics to pray for Mary's intercession to help them accept God's will amid challenges.

“Grace still comes through suffering, as Mary can tell us,” he said. “So ask that you will say ‘yes’ in all the challenges that are given you. Knock on any door, there are challenges. Open any heart, there is suffering.”

Mary endured trials throughout her life, the archbishop noted.

During Advent, Archbishop O’Brien said, Catholics should pray for the “same sense of joy and anticipation and gratitude and love” that the Virgin Mary had that first Advent as she awaited the coming of Christ.

He told Immaculate Conception parishioners that Mary “is your mother in a very special way.”

The archbishop’s celebrating Mass brought rejoicing to the parish.

“To have the shepherd of the diocese there to celebrate Mass on our feast day was a big honor for us,” Father Foppiano said.

Parishioners read about Archbishop O’Brien and see him on TV, Father Foppiano said, adding, “People loved the opportunity to see him in person and shake his hand.”

Earlier on the feast day, Archbishop O’Brien celebrated Immaculate Conception Mass at St. Michael, Frostburg.