



# Allocutio



## Presentata Curia 24th March 2011

Allocutio: “Be it done unto me according to thy Word”

If Mary is our leader as Christians, which she is, then we must all take these words into our hearts and allow them to be our standard.

Be it done unto me according to thy Word. And so I must accept the parents I was given, the family I have, the time in history I was born into, the country I belong to with its culture and language. I was born male or female, I have such a height, such colour, such health. Be it done unto me according to thy word. And we must believe that although things in the world I belong to may not be perfect the fact that my soul has arrived here at this moment in time, this must be the will of God for me.

I recall reading a book about 14<sup>th</sup> century England. Those born into that century had it real tough. As the book said the one reason above all you would not want to have been born then was health. The big plague of 1347 was the worst but that was not all people had to put up with. And it may be that in 2675, the same number of years into the future as 1347 is in the past, people will say, “Glad I didn’t live at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dreadful. All those people killed on the roads, the terrorists, the earthquakes and tsunamis. Totally immature use of television. The superbugs. And that dreadful thing people used have to do: iron cloths!” Be it done unto us according to they will.

But the words of Mary are not just a case of enduring what we cannot change. They speak of a trust in God. They speak of someone who knows that God is great and in charge. They speak of someone who knows that God speaks of peace for his people, that he is good and wishes no harm. They speak of faith that God’s plan cannot be wrecked by any evil influence. Oh yes Mary knows that evil will cause you to be bruised.

But there is another dimension to these words. We really have no choice about our mother. Nor, for example, about being tied to planet earth by gravity. But we do have a choice in respect of another reality, namely the invitation by God to help him actively in his plan.

We are not just physical beings, we are also spiritual. And at the spirit level there is a challenge. We can allow our spirits sink into standards below our dignity or we can respond to the call to raise them to greater heights. And in a world of struggle when some movements may pull us down we may have a fight to pull out of slides and downward spirals and refuse to capitulate to what would lower our dignity.

Beyond our struggle to mind ourselves as individuals there is a call to help our brothers and sisters on this journey. And when Mary heard the message of an angel she knew that it was at this level she was being called. She did not hear this call selfishly, as if she was being honoured for being such a good girl. When the angel said, “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you” she was disturbed. As it stood these were great words. They were a compliment. Rejoice so highly favoured. God is with you. This was definitely a compliment from heaven. But Mary knew it meant more. The angel made clear that God’s intentions were peaceful. But there was a call, a mission. And Mary knew that in what the angel said there were huge implications for the whole of Israel and beyond. She was being asked to be the mother of a special child who would bring God’s grace to the world.

Now I ask you to note something. All God was asking her at a certain level was to be passive. He did not ask her to go out to the whole world. He just wanted her to be available and to let God do with her as he wished.



# Allocutio



Yes it did mean being a mother to this child. And that is nothing small as we all know. It was going to involve a sword piercing her heart. She would lose him at 12, she would be worried about him in his public ministry, she would see him dying on the Cross. All of these were things she didn't do; she just suffered them.

“Be it done unto me according to thy word.” God is calling us to be available to him. As with Mary God's plan for us is good. His call carries the same words, “Do not be afraid. Trust me.” To go with him, to agree to work with him will bring us up against evil in some forms. But we will produce good because he will be with us even when we do not know it. There will be moments of great surprises as he turns water into wine for us in some form or other. But even when shadows cross we need to think that as Mary stood at the foot of the Cross on a Friday afternoon the triumph of the Resurrection was less than 48 hours away. In the heart of any suffering the power of God is at work. And always in suffering the response must be “Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

Jesus was truly the Son of Mary. His fiat is the fiat of all in the Garden when he says, “Lord if it be possible let this cup pass. But not my will but thine be done!” His mission was reaching its climax as he prayed these words. What he immediately had to face was cruel but he knew deep down that God would vindicate him and that all would turn out well.

We too must make our own fiats with Mary and Jesus. As we do so we must trust the power and goodness of God as we say “yes” to whatever his mission for us is. And let us hear the words of the angel which reflect the spirit of God: Do not be afraid. Let us allow God's shadow come over us.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill