

Here is a very, very brief homily for the folks who really want to see all 26 Bowl games this weekend. This sermon will fit into a commercial break: Mary is clearly the mother Jesus. Jesus is God. Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God. That's what the Nicene Creed says: "true God from true God...incarnate of the Virgin Mary." Simple. Done. When is kickoff?

Wait a minute. This squealing baby with the soiled diaper is God?? This 14 year old is God? This eccentric, wandering preacher is divine? Or, on the other hand, God actually became a real human being? How could Jesus be God and yet be like us "in all things but sin?" Was Jesus half-human, and half-divine? How could Mary, a human being, possibly be the mother of God?

For 400 hundred years, there was discussion, and arguments, and we're told, fistfights. Teachings were condemned, some theologians were kicked out of the Church. Creeds were carefully written, trying to get the beliefs right. Who exactly was Mary the mother of? The Profession of Faith that we will pray in a few minutes was not completed until 381 AD. There we repeat that Jesus is "true God from true God...consubstantial with the Father...incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." If we knew how many years, how much effort, how many struggles it required to get those words right—I suppose we would fall to our knees in gratitude.

Jesus Christ, born of Mary, was completely a human person, and completely God. And Mary was indeed his mother. It is appropriate to call her the Mother of God. And that is the basis for the Catholic devotion to Mary, the special honor she receives, the Marian dogmas and feast days.

And if Mary is the mother of Jesus, it seems right also to call her the mother of the Church, which is his Body.

Friends, are we not all a mysterious blending of the divine and the human—of heaven and earth? Are we not all an amazing mixture of darkness and light? Are not human beings capable of the highest good and the most terrifying evil? If we are baptized, Jesus Christ and his Spirit live within us—but so does the damage of what we call Original Sin.

The purpose of our Catholic faith, the reason we come to Eucharist is very simple that we may become divine, that we will become Christ. We are to become God's Incarnation. And sometimes we do notice in ourselves glimpses of a higher, noble self. We experience a victory of goodness in our lives.

And often enough, we see God's presence in others. Each of you has people in whom you see the face of God. For me, one of them was Bob Armstrong, our business Manager, whose funeral we celebrated this morning/yesterday. Fully human and yet transformed, a heart full of love, joy, gratitude, and peace. Bob had clearly given birth to God in his life. I will miss most of all his goodness, which came from heaven.