

Mary, Mother of God (B) 01/01/2015

There is a story about one poor guy who calls his girlfriend's cell phone and gets the following recording: *'I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes.'*

People sometimes have a similar fear about **God**. **God** doesn't at the moment seem **available** to me. Is **God** dumping me? Have I not lived up to **God's expectations** of me? Have I done something to cause **God** to no longer like me? What am I to do if **God** no longer likes me? Am I damned?

The questions - often operating on an **unconscious** level - can be repeated 24/7 and effect and affect the way in which we **relate** with ourselves and others. They **undermine** the knowing that is **incarnated** within each of us at the moment of our conception that we are created in **God's image**. They can **obscure** this **objective reality** and **askew** the **image** that we have of **God**.

Often this leads us to **equate God-being-with-us** when we feel **blessed**. That is, when we feel something **good** is happening to us: we win the lottery, we have good health, we beat cancer, our children have wonderful marriages, we get promoted, we are singled out for our accomplishments. We refer to these moments as **God blessing us...** and **God is**.

This perspective also leads us to **connect God-dumping-us** when we feel **cursed**. That is, when we feel something **bad** is happening to us: we are forced into receivership and then bankruptcy, we lose our house, we are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, our marriage ends in divorce, we lose our

job. We feel that in these moments **God** has **abandoned** us.

The **Incarnation** - the birth of **Jesus** - offers us another perspective. It is the insight that **Saint Francis** happens upon as he chooses a life as a poor person. It is intuited by **Saint Thérèse of Lisieux** who practices her *'little way'*. It is the approach that our present **Pope Francis** embraces when he chooses to live and eat with others in a common house.

It begins - quite unexpectedly - with a visit from **God** who tells us that **God is free** to choose us; **God is free** to create us in **God's own image**... without our doing anything! Then - as **Jesus** models for us on the cross - we - somehow - know that **nothing** - as **Saint Paul** reminds us - can **separate** us from the **love of God**! The **fear** that so often **directs** our lives is **transformed by love**, and we know **peace**.