



My Spelling Bee Journey

I am Shirlyn Prabahaar, 6th

Grader at Warm Springs Elementary School, Fremont. I am pleased to share that I have won second place in the annual California State Spelling Bee held at Stockton, CA. The competition began at the class in October, then school bee in November, district bee in January, county bee in March.



Finally, on April 21, I was standing on the Stockton stage where the state bee was held. My parents, teacher, and principal were watching as the 61 competitors dwindled down to the 10 finalists, and finally to the last three competitors. At last it was two students, including me. After we went through a few rounds, my word was "scheherazadian", meaning strangely fabulous, which I had difficulty to spell correctly. I finished the competition as second place winner in California State Championship. But I had still achieved my dream of going to the state bee as county champion. Thanks to my parents, teacher, and everyone else who has helped me in fulfilling my dream.

"I am" - Agnes P. Raj

The Easter season is a time for sacraments, the way the Risen Jesus comes to us today. It's the time for First Communions, when our sons and daughters are initiated into this mystery and as parents we are reminded of it again. During the Easter season we will also be hearing from John's Gospel the powerful statements of Jesus. There are seven of them in the following order: "I am the Bread of Life", "I am the Light of the World", "I am the Gate", "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the Resurrection and the Life", "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life", and then lastly "I am the True Vine".

1. The bread of life. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35). We need bread for our physical life and to satisfy our physical hunger. It is obvious that Jesus also tries to tell us that He is the real bread from Heaven. We need Jesus and by having close relationship with Him we can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

2. The light of the world. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12). Light is essential for every living creature. Without light no life exists. Light help us to see things. Jesus helps us to see our own life and where it leads us. Light guides us in our earthly journey. Jesus guides us in our heavenly journey. Light is needed for life to exist. Jesus gives us everlasting life. Light gives us warmth. Jesus gives us comfort. Therefore, only who believe or follow Jesus can have clear guidance, direction in life and bright hope in the midst of darkness.

3. The gate. "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." (John 10:9). A gate gives us access to something. A sheep pen normally has one doorway, and that the shepherds often sleep in the doorway, acting as the door itself. He also sleep there because the sheep can go to him to enter the pen to be safe in the night. Thus, in the same manner, Jesus is saying He Himself is the gate and no other means we can enter into the fullness of life.

4. The good shepherd. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11). Taking care of sheep is dangerous, difficult, and tedious work. When one sheep is lost, the Shepherd will go in search of it and will find it. Likewise, Jesus as Good Shepherd has a great love for each and everyone of us. He laid down his life for

each one of us. Even when we go astray, he comes to find us. He can lead us in a clear path throughout our lives. He calls us to listen to His voice and follow Him. He loves us so much that He even becomes food for us.

5. The resurrection and the life. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes

in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (John 11:25) The resurrection is the feast of life. It is the feast that reminds us that Jesus has overcome death and resurrection has granted new life to all creation. There is no resurrection apart from Christ, and there is no eternal life apart from Christ.

6. The way, the truth and the life. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6). Jesus is the way. Indeed He is a two way street. Through him, God comes to meet us. Through Him and Him alone, we have access to God to such a degree that we can now call him Abba, Father. Jesus is the truth. And because He is true, all that comes from Him is Truth. Jesus is the life. He gives us not only commandments, but also the power to live them out, the power to become new people.

7. The vine: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does He prunes so that it bears more fruit." Jesus is the vine, God is the gardener, and we are all the branches. It is when we go alone, leaving Jesus or go in the wrong direction, we need pruning or redirecting. The words of Jesus give us direction and help us grow stronger. Like the branch that stays with the vine produce more fruit, we need Jesus and his words for our fruitful life.

Our greatest desire should be to draw so close to Jesus that we intimately share in his wonderful life. Then all that we do and all that we say will give Him glory. Some of our sons and daughters may receive First Communion in this month. This is the important stage in the lives of our sons and daughters. Through the celebration of these sacraments they will grow in faith and take their full part in the life of the Church. So let us pray for them at this time and provide them with living examples of faith so they may recognize the value of a life lived in close union with Christ.





Mother Mary

- Leenus Rich

As we honor all the mothers this month, I would like to write few words about our greatest

mother Mary.

God sent angel Gabriel to Nazareth to inform Mary about two good news.

1. To inform the birth of Jesus
2. To inform the birth of John the Baptist (Mary's relative Elizabeth's son)

Mary was shocked to hear this as she says "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "Since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34)

As we can imagine she might have lots of questions in her mind as Gabriel continues "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." (Luke 1:35-37)

After all the confusion Mary finally says I am ready to accept whatever happens as we read "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." (Luke 1:38)

Even though Mary was going to be the Mother of Jesus she visited Elizabeth and helped her. She did not think that I am the mother of Jesus and I am also in need of help so why should I go and help someone else.

As we read in the Bible, Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months while they both were approaching motherhood.

Their main goal was to help each other. They never argued who should command and who should listen. They never wanted to prove who is right and who is wrong. They never discussed who is senior and who is junior.

"At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what The Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" (Luke 1:39-45)

As we read in the beginning, Gabriel said to Mary "The Holy Spirit will come upon you". So mother Mary received all the fruits of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) as she received holy spirit and She performed such qualities in her life. For example, when she was standing near the crucified Jesus, even though whatever done to her son was completely wrong, she never complained, argued, shouted or never said a single word against anyone. We can imagine how much pain it will be for a mother to see her son suffering and dying in front of her.

As we celebrate mother's day, let us examine ourselves whether we perform fruits of the holy spirit in our daily life. If not, let us pray to mother Mary to grant us.

A Dedication to Mother

My dearest mother, I would like to dedicate these few lines to you on this Mother's day. I know you are always blessing each one of us in the family from heaven above. The days we were together are ever loved and cherished by each of us. I lost you when I was young and remember you every day when I pray to every morning when I leave for work. You are there guiding me, protecting me and leading me the entire day. A priest once told me that when parents die, they are in heaven and we pray to them for their blessings. I hear your voice and your beautiful singing when I sing the same songs that you taught me. Without you I would not be here today and I thank you very much for this. I remember very vividly the time you visited us here in the US and spent time teaching Tamil rhymes to our children. Dear Mother, help us, protect us, save us and bless us as always. Amen.



அன்னை மரியே
வாழ்க!



பரிசுத்த தந்தையின்
வாக்கை ஏற்று - நீ
அன்னை ஆனாய்!

ஒரு மகனைப் பெற்று
எங்களுக்கு
மீட்பைத் தந்தாய்!

ஏழு வியாகுலங்களை ஏற்று
எங்களுக்கு
விடியலைத் தந்தாய்!

எம் மனங்களைத்
தருகின்றோம் -உம்
தாழ்ச்சியைத் தாருமமா...!

இறை அன்பையும் ஆற்றலையும்
பகிர்ந்தளிக்கும்
அன்னையே நீ வாழ்க!...

அனைவருக்கும்
அன்னையர் தின வாழ்த்துக்கள் !

- Agnes Matilda

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