

**2019, Sept 7, Temporary Profession of Nov. Andrew Mc Donald  
and Nov. Thomas Bruneau**

1. **We live in a faceless society.** We have gotten used to being faceless, nameless, voiceless. We have gotten used to superficiality and rootlessness. To become familiar with a face and know it well, is to become rooted in a time and a place; **it is to become community.**

2. **On the other hand, we can think of Mary's Immaculate Conception,** as something given, like the mighty Fraser River below the hill. I didn't ask for it to be there! It just is and will be there, perhaps, for another thousand years! But if we permit ourselves to think of Mary's Immaculate conception, which happened a in moment of time and the space of St. Anne's womb, as something happening, as being done, **we will draw nearer to today's celebration.**

3. **The Fraser River is not a lake,** still and stagnant. It is fed and flows. It is fed by hundreds of mountain streams and flows into the ocean. Take away the mountains and the ocean and the slope between them and the Fraser River disappears. **Now come to the Gospel.**

4. **When the Immaculate Virgin gives her fiat,** "Let it be done to me according to your Word," she does so with an awareness of the presence of Others in her chamber besides the angel Gabriel: the Father who sent him and the Holy Spirit who overshadows her and brings about her conception of Jesus. **There could be no Jesus without the Father and the Holy Spirit!**

5. **When Jesus miraculously enters the womb of his Mother** and gets embedded there, he too is aware that he enters the Ark of the Covenant with Others besides himself. Jesus is inseparably united to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus' Body, when he was born,

became the reserved space for God in the world. As we heard yesterday: **"In him the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily" (Col. 1:15).**

6. **That God could be contained in the physical space of an infant's body is unthinkable** and would indeed be blasphemous, as Muslims hold, were it not that God announced this beforehand: "Behold a body you have prepared for me..." (Heb 10:5 ). If we could all be in close contact with that infant body, we would all be very close to God. **And our heavenly Father has ordained precisely that!**

7. **Jesus says to each of us, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given up for you."** He invites us to come and live in that body of his, born of Mary, and where the Father and the Holy Spirit dwell all the time. Between the mountain of the Father and the ocean of the Spirit is the mighty Son of God always flowing in and out of every **Christian community to give it life and give it a face and a name and a voice and root it deeply in itself.**

8. **Novice Andrew and Novice Thomas are about to pronounce their temporary vows for three years.** The context of the vows, besides their intentions to belong to Jesus Christ exclusively, is the monastic community that makes the vows possible for a Benedictine. One could be a hermit and make vows, but not according to the Rule of St. Benedict, which identifies itself with a community in time and in space. **The same waters that flowed through Marys little bedroom in Nazareth flow through this community.**

9. **There could be no Father without the Son, nor the Son without the Spirit nor the Spirit without the Father and the Son.** Each lives wholly for the Other. Mary too learned this from the moment of her Annunciation, to live wholly for Jesus and all joined to him, his Body.

**In each truly Christian community each member lives for the life of the whole Body and the whole Body lives for each.**

10. **When little Samuel heard God** calling him he confused it with Eli's voice. Later as a prophet, he learned to live for that one voice of God and taught Israel to do the same. **So too with the Benedictine vows.**

- **Stability** calls the monk to use all his time and space in a local place for the good of the whole community. He becomes familiar with all the faces in the community and lives wholly for them!
- **Conversion** calls the monk to turn daily to Jesus' crucified and risen face and to find it in each of the faces of his brothers and root himself there!
- **Obedience** calls the monk to put his body and soul at the disposal of God and the community and experience the Gospel joy of losing himself for Jesus as Mary did, as Jesus did for his Father and for the Church.
- **Monastic poverty** calls a monk to share all his time and good with the community so that his "I" can become a "we" with the life of the community.
- **Chastity** rejoices that its fruitfulness depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit and not just on the power of its own sexuality.

Thus all the vows are directed towards the formation of a Christian community which began in that little bed chamber of Nazareth and was born of the Virgin.