Assumption of Mary
Church of St. Joan of Arc, Marlton NJ

The Hour of Our Death

At the time of baptism we tell parents it is their responsibility to share their faith with their child. “Do you clearly understand what you are doing?” we ask.

I’ve never heard anyone say “no, I haven’t a clue.”

But do we clearly understand what it means to follow Christ? To be Christ-bearers in the world? To live for Christ and “in Christ”?

What about Mary? At the Annunciation, when the angel appeared, did she clearly understand what she was accepting? “You will bear God’s Son,” the angel says. “Do you clearly understand this?” Are you kidding? You can see the look of shock and puzzlement on her face. “How can this be?”

She says yes.

She accepts it. She will give her life – 100% of it – to Christ.

We are all asked to be open, like Mary, to the call from God to follow Christ, to live and love as Christ did. None of us understands it perfectly. But in saying “yes” we put our life, our time, our future, our will, our hopes and dreams, in God’s hands ... like Mary. And in doing so, God does something. God takes over. God overshadows and infiltrates. God assumes control of our life.

There is another time we are asked to do this, to let go: at the hour of our death. (It is not without coincidence that we ask Mary to pray for us “at the hour of our death”.)

Do we clearly understand what it means to put our death in God’s hands then, at that hour? No, I’m sure we do not.

May we say, at that hour, whenever it will come (and it will come for us all), like Mary, “let it be according to your will.” May we give ourselves over to God, body
and soul, without fully understanding, but also without fear, letting God’s Spirit overshadow us, letting Christ live in us, giving God the Last Word.