

# Say Yes to the Lord

On the Feast of the Assumption we do well to reflect upon the secret of Mary's success. It is an open secret. Mary excelled in surrendering to God's will.

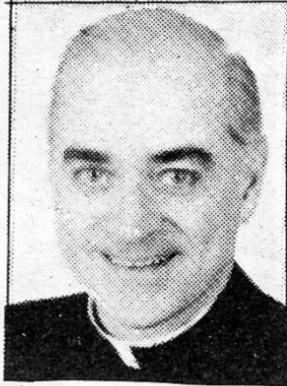
Surrender is the key to all kinds of spiritual fruitfulness. The best families in our cities, towns and villages have parents who give themselves totally to their marriage. The best parishes in our church are led by priests who are totally committed to their priesthood. And the opposite is equally true, those who fight their vocation every step of the way are usually unhappy and ineffective.

The secret of success is in the degree of one's surrender to God's will. Mary's self-giving was total. The reason most of us find spiritual surrender so difficult is that we're afraid of losing control, and yet that is precisely what Jesus asks of us: "Unless you lose your life in this world, you will not gain it."

How can you lose your life when every impulse urges you to safeguard it? How do you say "yes" to God when you feel like saying "no?" There are no easy answers, but this much we know: love can make it easy and perfect love can make it a joy.

Mary knew how to say "yes" to God. Her true glory is in her joyful acceptance of God's will in all things. Joyous acceptance is a far cry from pious resignation or reluctant acquiescence. It is a positive response, a conscious choice which enhances self-respect. It always focuses on God, not on self.

Pray for the grace of joyful acceptance.



Even though you may want to protect your freedom, it is possible to surrender yourself to the love of God. This act of trust is the highest affirmation of the human spirit. Surrender produces peace of mind, emotional stability and abundant fruit which will last for all eternity.

How far can we carry this act of submitting when it comes to pain?

In the past there were pious teachers who taught that all suffering was automatically blessed. They promoted a gloom and doom brand of holiness. But Jesus did not die that we may be sad. He specifically prayed that our joy may be full.

Today the spiritual masters are more joy oriented. They discern more carefully. Accepting every kind of suffering uncritically as coming from God's will can easily lead to an imbalance in one's judgment. Life is not meant to be full of misery. We can take pain-killers and still be holy. An abused wife does not have to submit to cruelty in order to save a sick marriage. Surrendering to God's will does not require suicidal behavior.

Ultimately, true surrender is in the will to give one's life to God. Mary was assumed into heaven, a happy and fulfilled woman, precisely because she knew how to say "yes" to God.

O Mary, teach us how to say "yes" to the Lord, every moment of our lives.

*[For a free copy of the Christopher News Note, The Fruits of Hope, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]*