

Prayer Reflection: Wondering with Mary

Explain the Reflection

Opening Prayer

**Mary, Undoer of Knots, pray for us.
Through your grace, your intercession, and your example,
deliver us from all evil, Our Lady,
and untie the knots that prevent us
from being united with God,
so that we, free from sin and error,
may find him in all things,
may have our hearts placed in him,
and may serve him always
in our brothers and sisters. AMEN**

Reading #1: Luke 1: 26 - 38 The Annunciation

Mary pondered this angel's visitation. She was scared. This news of being pregnant by the Holy Spirit seemed incredulous. To bear the Son of the Most High? The angel Gabriel helped explain, and she agreed. Yes. Now she is left with her decision.

Richard Rohr says you cannot start seeing or understanding anything if you start with "No." You have to start with a "Yes" of basic acceptance, which means not too quickly labeling, analyzing, or categorizing things in or out, good or bad. You have to leave the field open.

We like to put things in boxes. If something is good, we can cling to it. Sometimes too tightly. If something is bad, we avoid it. We push ourselves away from it. In reality, pure experience is never good or bad. It just is. All experience is here to teach us. All experience is an opportunity for love. We only have to look at Mary to see that.

Song: "I Am Your Servant" by Cathy Lombardi & Dan Mason (#7, 3:29 min)

- What is in your good and bad boxes?
- What are my feelings around these boxes?
- How can I grow into an openness of allowing things to be as they are?
- What might happen if I live a life of "Yes"? *

*And note that a life of "Yes" is not being a doormat or volunteering for every fundraiser. It is more an attitude of being open to what life brings.

Let us pray...

Lord, help me say yes to you,
to say yes to your love for me.

May I receive your love.

May I rest in your love.

May I say yes as well to your loving will for me,
to all you would teach me and change in me.

To say yes to you, my Love, my Life. AMEN

Reading #2: Luke 1: 46 - 55 The Cantic of Mary

Mary was able to see the gratitude in her situation and allow that to color how she saw the world. Living a life of gratitude helped her see where God was at work in her life and in other's lives. She acknowledged the gift of her pregnancy as gift. It put her in direct relationship with God. Seeing that dependence freed her to go forward into full gratitude. This gift of life inside of her would then gift all of creation.

Mary challenges us to recognize our blessings. And it is ALL blessing. To bless whatever there is, and for no other reason but simply because it is - that is our reason to be; that is what we are made for as human beings. Jesus was born into gratitude. We are born into the same. Whether we agree or disagree makes no difference. And in our heart of hearts we know it.

Living a life of gratitude gave Mary hope. It is a heart response. Being grateful for what is leads to seeing life as chances for opportunity and surprise.

Song: "My Soul Proclaims" by Shawn Tracy & Dan Mason (#1, 5:48)

- How does your soul proclaim the greatness of the Lord?
- What are you grateful for?
- What is happening in your life that is hard to be grateful for?
- What difference would it make in your life to approach everything as a gift?
- Picture that difference. How does it feel? Talk to God about it.

Let us pray...

Meister Eckhart said,
"If the only prayer you ever say
in your entire life is thank you,
it will be enough."
Here we are, Lord.
Thank you. AMEN

Reading #3: Luke 2: 15 - 20 The Visit of the Shepherds

Mary said yes and Mary was grateful. How do we begin to do the same? How do we move forward and follow Mary's example? By doing exactly what you are doing right now...taking time to reflect. "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." Mary saw what the shepherds were doing and experienced it with wonder. She took time to consider what it all meant and how God was at work in it.

How often do we miss these opportunities each day? How often does God pop into our day and we don't notice it? Jim Forest says, "There are times not to answer the door, not to answer the phone, not to do undone things, but to rest in silence from everything. The world can wait for 5 minutes. In fact, no matter how busy we are, no matter how well organized, no matter how little rest we allow ourselves, we will never do all that needs to be done. But to do well what we are called to do, it is essential to nurture a capacity for inner stillness; such quiet, deep-down listening is itself prayer."

Through taking this kind of time...through quiet, deep-down listening...we may hear the gentle whisper of what God might be trying to say to us, where God might be leading us. This is shown in Mary's example.

Song: "Springbrook" by Dan Mason (#5, 8:23)

- Can you think of moments that you "caught" which had an impact on you (a rainbow, someone's laughter, a kind gesture,...)?
- How do some of these moments impact you?
- Do you see a pattern in what you notice?
- What may you change so you notice more of these moments?
- How is God at work in you?

Let us pray...

Gracious God,

I am your messenger, ready to tell

Of your enormous kindness and mercy.

I will trust in you.

I believe that those with whom I live and work

Will see your love shining through all I am and all I do.

It is your radiance within me

That will transform the bits and pieces of my life

Into a tapestry of ardent devotion.

Thank you for being present in my life

And for calling to me with your gracious voice

Of unconditional love. AMEN

Hail Mary, full of grace.

Our Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women,

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death. AMEN

Reading #1: Luke 1: 26 - 38 The Annunciation

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,^[a] and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, ³³and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."³⁴ But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"^[b] ³⁵And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived^[c] a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷for nothing will be impossible for God." ³⁸Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Reading #2: Luke 1: 46 - 55 The Canticle of Mary

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

⁴⁸ For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;

behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

⁴⁹ The Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is from age to age
to those who fear him.
⁵¹ He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
⁵² He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.
⁵³ The hungry he has filled with good things;
the rich he has sent away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to his promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Reading #3: Luke 2: 15 - 20 The Visit of the Shepherds

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.