



Over the years I have asked members of the Marist Way to reflect in a personal way on Mary and what it means to be 'Marist'. Here is the reflection of a Marist and mother.

Mary through a mother's eyes

Pregnant

I can't believe it. How can I possibly be pregnant? I know where babies come from, I'm not stupid. I saw an angel, yes, an angel. I've never seen one before, don't know anybody who has. Of course we are told about them in our bible stories; they appeared often to important people in our history, but not to people like me. He (she?) said I'd been chosen by God to be the mother of his son, that the holy spirit would come down on me. It's truly awe-inspiring! I have such mixed feelings about it all; apprehensive, excited, worried, but full of wonder and trust in God who has done this to me.

What will Joseph think of it all? And my parents and friends, and all the people who know me? Will they understand? Will they believe me? Joseph is such a loving, patient man. I hope God will send an angel to him, to explain. If he can accept this, everybody else will, although, come to think of it, it's such an unbelievable privilege that I honestly don't mind what people think. It seems my cousin, Elizabeth, is having a baby as well. Another miracle!

Birth

Joseph and I have to go to Bethlehem for the census; it's more than 70 miles from Nazareth, and in my condition it will take three or four

days. The baby is due any day now.

What a journey! I walked a bit at first, but rode most of the way on the donkey's back. Joseph was wonderful, as always, but I couldn't wait to find somewhere to lie down and get on with giving birth to my child. I was so looking forward to being a mother; to hold my child in my arms and feed him and talk and sing to him, and rock him to sleep. Joseph and I are both of the house of David, so there were members of our family living in Bethlehem. Unfortunately, their house was full of older family members, so there was no room for us, but on the ground floor there was a room where they kept animals and tools and agricultural things, so they cleared out a manger and put in fresh hay, and that was where I put my beautiful baby when he was born a few hours later. I was so happy; I couldn't believe how much love I felt for him. I know every mother (or most mothers anyway) thinks her baby is special, and of course I thought that too, but in my case I knew that was true, because the angel had told me he was the long-awaited Messiah. Some shepherds came to see him; they told how they had seen a great light, and the angel had told them to follow it to where the baby was lying. Some time later, even three wise men travelled a long way, bearing expensive gifts.

Childhood

Jesus is a lovely child; beautiful, intelligent and loving. Joseph takes him into his workshop and he loves tinkering with off cuts of wood. As he's got older, he spends a lot of time in the temple, and once he went missing for several days. When he got back, I couldn't help losing my temper a bit; I'd been so worried, but then he said he'd 'been about my father's business' and I remembered what I'd

been told and what I had promised. Of course I did recognize his special nature, and I was proud of him, and I trusted him, but in my heart I was always worrying about him.

Adult ministry

As Jesus grew up, he spent more time preaching to those who would listen; he gathered around him a dedicated group of followers, men and a few women, some of whom travelled long distances with him. Sometimes I was with them; I saw him perform miracles - miracles! I don't know how anybody who saw him could doubt that he was the Messiah. He preached a message of God's love; his love for everybody. He hated hypocrisy; those who prayed fervently in the temple but mistreated their fellow human beings; those who gloried in their wealth and possessions while others around them were going hungry. He sought out the company of the poor, the lame, prostitutes and outcasts, races like the Samaritans who were regarded as inferior by our race.

Persecution

The powers that be were obviously perturbed at the popularity of Jesus. He was drawing crowds of thousands who were hanging on his every word. Our people love to be told stories, and he often spoke in parables to illustrate what he wanted to say. The time came, in his early thirties, when he was accused, and despite the fact that they could 'find no fault in him' they turned him over to the people, who decided he should be put to death.

Suffering and death

There is nothing worse for a mother than to see her child in pain. Her repeated prayer is 'Give it to me'! Everybody knows of the unimaginable torture that Jesus suffered, and if I could I would have taken it from him, but I knew he had to fulfil what had been prophesied for him. Looking back, I feel privileged to have shared these last years with my son as I did. When a woman has a baby, she cuts the umbilical cord at birth; her child is an independent individual. Many men leave home at some stage to marry; another woman

is now the most important in his life. Few mothers have what I had; a unique closeness to my son in his adult life. Despite all his suffering, I give thanks that I had that.

After

Since Jesus' death and inexplicable resurrection, I have stayed part of the group of his followers. His friend John has made a home for me, and I feel I have a special call to carry on his work, particularly with those rejected by society. I know that when he returns to this earth, he will go first to the poor, the hungry, the unloved, the sick and the homeless. This is the legacy he has left to us all.

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Happy are those who are poor in spirit
whose heart freely gives and receives,
who say with Mary: "Be it done unto me."
Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are those who are gentle,
whose concern brings comfort, whose touch,
healing,
whose manner says: "The Lord is with you!"
They will inherit the earth.

Happy are those who mourn with the mourning,
who reach out to the suffering, the oppressed,
who stand with Mary near the cross of her Lord,
in His cross they will be comforted.

Happy are those who thirst for what is right,
who use mind and heart for the Kingdom,
though persecuted in the cause of what is just,
with living waters they will be filled.
Theirs is the Kingdom of God.

Happy are the merciful, the peacemaker,
who forgive and accept the other,
who heal the wounded, reconcile the broken,
feeling oneness with sinful humanity,
mercy will be shown to them.

Happy are those, pure in heart, transparent,
who pray, "Your name is oil poured out...
in your footsteps, draw me. Let us run..
you are my joy and my gladness!"
Yes, they will see God.