



MARY

MIRYAM of NAZARETH

advent

DISCOVER
PONDER
DEEPEN

2018

dear ones,

The pages that follow provide an opportunity to discover spaces in your advent journey to ponder the life and blessings of Miryam of Nazareth.

From wherever you are, and in the way that works best for you, pray into the images and words that you may be lead into a deeper relationship with Mary/Miryam, Mother of God.

There is a good deal of text, so go to what is drawing you and leave the rest for another time.

*with limitless peace and justice for all
and smiles from gen cassani, ssmd
december 2018*

Some Sources Used:

“Truly Our Sister Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ
“When Mary Becomes Cosmic” by David Richo
“Birthing the Holy: Wisdom of Mary and the Sacred Feminine -online Advent retreat 2017- Abbey of the Arts
“Untie The Strong Woman” by Clarissa Pinkola Estes



Designer/Editor Gen Cassani, SSND

Her Hebrew name was Miryam of Nazareth



she is central to the Advent mystery

Miryam of Nazareth is the light in Advent's darkness. She is the central figure in the Advent Mystery, the arrival of the Christ of God in and through her body and in and through her generous YES.

She is known by many names and many images and has appeared in different ages to people across the world, in exactly the shapes and images we would most easily understand, be able to embrace her and be embraced by her.

The Black Madonna, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Lourdes, The Virgin of the Andes, are some of her thousand names and skin tones, frequently clothed in colorful dresses and often holding her child, Jesus.

Muslims hold Mary in esteem as the only woman named in the Qur'an. There is an entire chapter titled, Mary(am). The Islamic sacred text refers to her fifteen times and she is identified as the greatest of all women, with reference to the angelic salutation during the annunciation.

to the wild and wonderful of us . . .

Clarissa Pinkola Estes writes "no where is there a feminine force of more compassion and understanding about the oddities and lovability of the wild and wondrous variations to to be found in human beings" than Cosmic Mary, --Mother of the Cosmic Christ.



Begin by going to

YouTube and play
Abwoon D'Bashmaya -
The Lords Prayer in Aramaic
the language of Miryam
and Jesus by IndiaJiva.

From their album,
Sacred Ragas, by IndiaJiva,
this is Abwoon D'Bashmaya,
The Lords Prayer in Aramaic.
CDs are available from
our website
www.medicinemusic.com.au

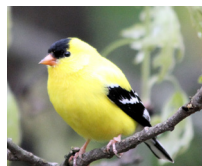
MARY of Nazareth?

None of us have ever met her.
We know her through our religious imagination.

Sacred Scripture, storytelling, tradition, church teaching, poetry, music, visual images, sculpture, and song are ways to learn of her and her ways.

FROM A WOMAN'S LIFE

S. Maura Eichner, SSND



**What Mary knew was just enough for the usual day:
pull water, flint fire, bake bread, smile, pray**

the dark orations, sleep, wake, wait. When pain honed a nerve, when birth or dying clotted an hour, she leaned to the curve

of living, resilient to fear, laughter, suffering. Partings are a little death. Each one's journey is a thing

wholly without precedent. She looked at the sky for compass. None. She, too, created a road to travel by.

• invitation

Read the poem, "From a Woman's Life" out loud three times.

IS THERE A SINGLE descriptive WORD in S. Maura's poem you are drawn to?

Allow that WORD to unfold in your religious imagination and prayer

welcome in the images, feelings, and memories which stir in you.

Enhance the WORD with other words and create a simple poem of your own creating.

Read your poem to someone.

She was a Galilean Jewish woman, poor, illiterate, rural, young Spirit filled, blessed with the fullness of grace, and was enveloped from the beginning in the love of God.

She is the divine feminine

She is a human being

She is our friend, sister, comforter and prophet

She is a powerful and loving mother of Jesus, faithful married woman, middle aged, and elder . . .

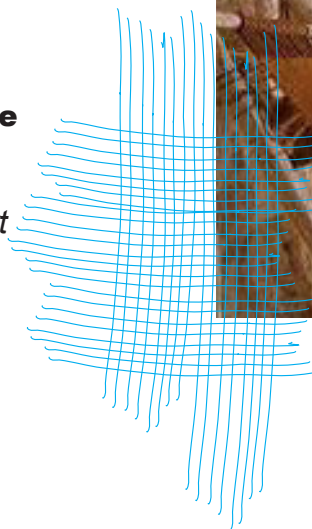
She lived through tears and tedium
distress and bitterness
agony and death
joy and light
aches and pains . . .

"Hail, full of grace,"

• invitation

Which description or image appeals to you?

- stirs something in your heart
- stretches you
- invites you . . . Why?





seat of WISDOM

MARY

Holy Wisdom arises from the heart



Our Lady of the Chair

Mary, Seat of Wisdom, a very old title for her, is sometimes known as **Our Lady of the Chair** or the Latin name (Sedes Sapientiae).

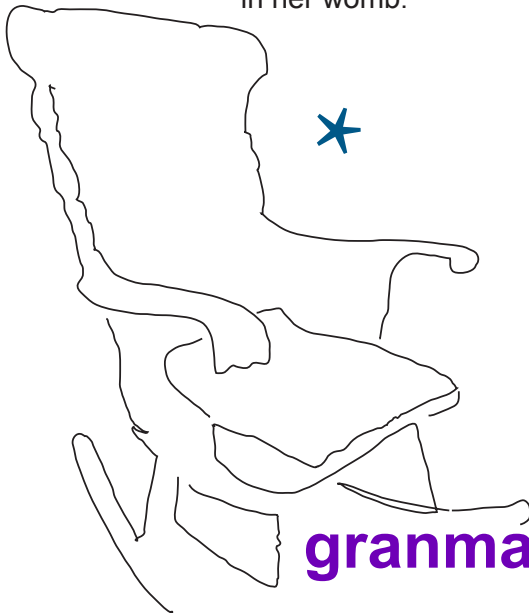
Many early Christians saw Christ as Wisdom incarnate; therefore, **by holding him on her lap, Mary becomes the "seat" of wisdom.**

On another, deeper level, the title also refers to the fact **THAT MARY "HELD" WISDOM INSIDE HER** by carrying Christ in her womb.

The true feminine brings a deep wisdom rooted in trusting one's intuition and heart. It is a passionate, creative, and life-giving force. The true feminine supports deep heartfelt nurturing of all creation and the passing along of traditions from one generation to the next.

What wisdom does Mary, as the face of the sacred feminine in the Christian tradition, offer you, offer us?

These are challenging times. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need the powerful and tender aspect of the divine feminine to come fully into our world.



granmary

• *invitation*

the wisdom of our grandmothers/fathers and earth

When you consider the teachers, mentors, and muses or some being in the natural world that have influenced your spiritual understanding and intellectual knowledge, **who comes to mind?**

If they are still living, write to them, or have a conversation with someone about the message you received.

Questions from: Mary, Seat of Wisdom: A Reflection by Sibyl Dana Reynolds
A_b_b_e_y_o_f_t_h_e_A_r_t_s_2017

• *invitation*

Mary, Seat of Wisdom, invites contemplation of what it means to embody YOUR wisdom.

- **FIND A favorite CHAIR, A ROCKING CHAIR and sit in it.**
- **Practice mirroring Mary's grounded, seated, posture upon her chair as embodied wisdom.**
- **How does this position make you feel?**
- **What does this form of posturing inspire for you?**

Spend quiet time with your journal to reflect. . .

Ask Mary, as Seat of Wisdom, to help you in your spiritual and self-understanding in light of your wisdom?

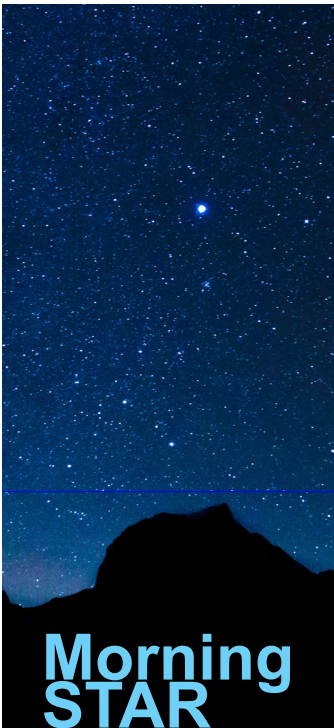
- What gifts have arisen?
- What surprises?

Offer gratitude for them and soak for a while in a sense of joyful abundance.

Wisdom is hidden in the unlikeliest of places in creation and the most humble of people.

What are those places and who are those people?

★ STAR of the Sea

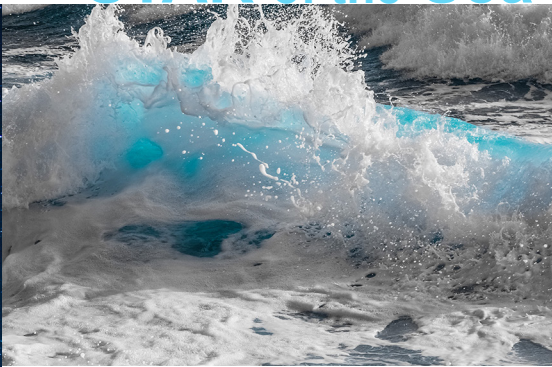


The morning star is sometimes referred to as THE SUN our star. Dawn is the time of new awakening, new light, and new life full of promise and new beginnings .

Mary as our MORNING SUN STAR is symbolic of all that we hope of what is to come.

At other times she is seen as THE MORNING STAR, the star that precedes the sun symbolizing the first light coming before the brilliant illumination of the sun. ★

Much like the STAR OF THE SEA, THE MORNING STAR beckons to us, guides us and shows us the brightness of God and the way to a life illuminated by wisdom. ★



MARY

We sail on the sea of this world, a world of beauty and harmony, also a world of discord, division, and alientation. Tossed upon waves of fear, even the waves and wind of our own inner turmoil, finding ourselves at times headed for rocks, at other times headed for the peaceful shore with grace and confidence

in a GUIDE who accompanies us as sure as the stars are forever in the sky.

Her name is MARY, STAR OF THE SEA.

pray the sea of your life at this time

With open hands and a courageous spirit, navigate your heart in the presence of MARY, THE STAR OF THE SEA to a place of holy silence and vibrant stillness, and then sail back outward with the contemplative fruits gathered to respond to our hurting world. *Engage in one action from this prayer you feel fits you.*

find the glimmers and gleams of the inner gold that you are

Mary, as the Morning Star also calls you to the inner work of embracing the shadow side of yourself. She accompanies you to find the glimmers and gleams of the inner gold that you are. She is the archetype of our North Star, a compass to guide us home again to our true selves.

Our shadows are places inside us we reject. We often discover the shadowed areas of our lives in dreams as the face of something we dislike.

Pay attention to your dreams. Keep pen and paper near your bed. Ask Mary to illuminate this place within you. Show you a part of yourself you have hidden away. Sometimes our dreams are so jumbled they don't make sense. Write them down anyway.

Dialogue with each of the symbols in your dream. Listen to what they tell you. Invite Mary to be your companion in this process.

In S. Maura's poem, Mary is the one who looked at the sky for compass and found "none," becomes for the old sailors THEIR COMPASS

"a star of the Sea."

She is believed to be THE GUIDING LIGHT interceding for them to come back home safely from powerful storms at sea.

Hail, o star of the ocean,

Ave Maris Stella

God's own Mother blest,

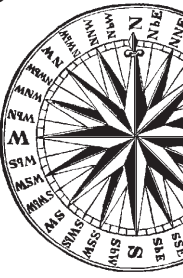
Dei Mater alma

ever sinless Virgin,

Atque semper Virgo

gate of heav'nly rest.

Felix coeli porta.



mystical ROSE

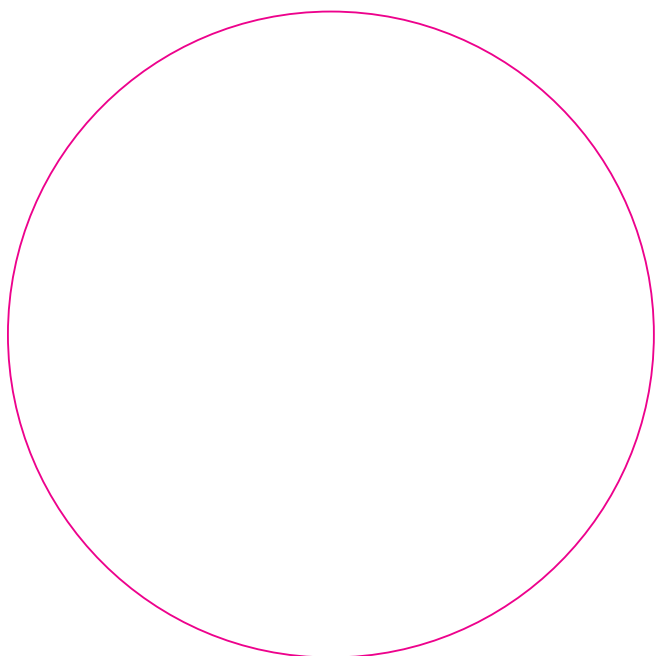


divinity humanity

Mary is often shown wearing **blue the color of the divine** *because she took on divinity.*

Yeshua/Jesus is often shown **wearing red** *because he took on humanity.*

How do you view or picture her? Write a description of her. Draw and color your Mary.



The rose is a symbol often connected to stories of Mary's apparitions. The rose is an emblem of the natural world and its beauty.

Red roses from Our Lady of Guadalupe . . . Our Lady of Lourdes appeared with a white rose on one foot and a gold rose on the other to show the union of human and divine.

The rose is called of all flowers the most beautiful. Mary is the Mystical or Hidden Rose, for mystical means hidden.

The rose evokes her quality of unfolding and slow revelation which connects us mystically to the divine. When we open up our inner mystical vision, we can see the sacred beneath the surfaces of things. The rose is an emblem of the natural world and its beauty.

adapated from
A_b_b_e_y_o_f_t_h_e_A_r_t_s_2017

The mandala imaged in the circular windows of great cathedrals in Europe is reflective of the wholeness within us and all things.

Dante wrote about Mary as rose: *"Here is the rose wherein the word of God was made incarnate."* Interestingly it is Mary here who is symbol of the incarnation rather than Jesus. She is the one who brings heaven and earth together.

• invitation

Play "O How a rose er blooming"
Hummmmmmm "O How a rose er blooming"
listening with the ear of your heart.

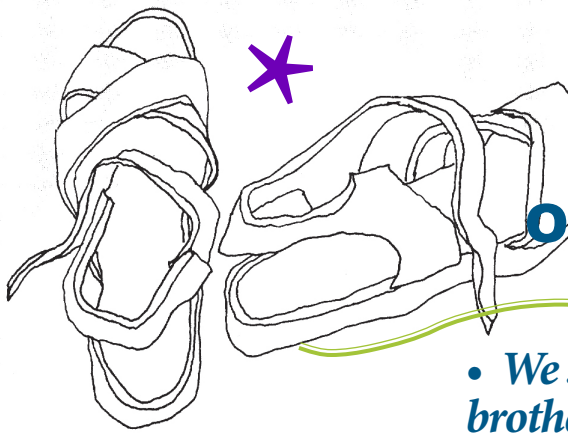
What are the longings kindled by this image? How does Mary as Mystical Rose meet that part of you?

What is she calling forth? Take five minutes to mindfully draw a circle on a piece of paper and then draw any images that arise from the music and create your own mandala form.

THE ROSARY is circular; those prayer beads dedicated to Mary and her story, are rooted in the rose. In medieval times the five petals of the rose were expressed through the five decades of the rosary, combining joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries.

The rose is a great healer of the heart. Rose petals and hips are nourishing to the body and offer the heart emotional and physical support.

- **Buy a few roses (unsprayed if possible) and sit with them in meditation. Follow their journey from bud to full blossom. Inhale their scent. If they are unsprayed organic roses, once their petals fall you can dry them and then infuse them into an oil like almond oil. Use 1/3 rose petals to 2/3 almond oil and let it sit in a dark place for a month (a moon cycle is a beautiful way to connect with plants). Then strain off the plant material and use the oil for anointing yourself.**



drawing: mary beth megrew

God bearer

MARY

Our Lady of the Refugees

continued on
next page 7

- *We stand in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters AND*

the animal refugees fleeing from human made activities causing them to go into isolation - sanctuaries.

No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.

Warshan Shire

On my way to a month of service with immigrants, Rhonda Miska wrote:

“Paula who wore – as I do – a medal of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe around her neck. Under the bare feet of the Guadalupe of her medal – and mine – is a serpent, crushed by this powerful, loving mother. Paula gently fingered her medal as she told me her story of traveling through El Salvador and Mexico, crossing the border at Reynosa, being apprehended by the Border Patrol. Subconsciously, my hand went up to my own Guadalupe medal as I took notes of Paula’s testimony. ***It suddenly felt as though there were three women sitting together in that over-air-conditioned court room in downtown Miami: Paula, myself, and this mother that she and I – across difference of age, race, language, economic status – both claim.***

young adults catholic blog

- ***invitation***

Refer to our corporate stance in solidarity with immigrants and refugees for action and prayer.

- ***invitation***
caravan of migrants/refugees

Consider submitting a letter to the editor

to your local paper to counter the disinformation circulating about the migrant caravan that is heading to the United States from Central America.



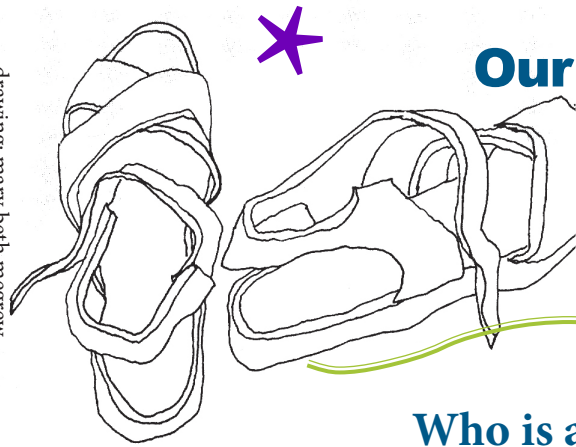
OUR LADY OF THE REFUGEES

By Sister Maura Eichner, SSND

**Mother who knew
what hardship shakes
a woman bundling clothes,
and putting by her wheaten cakes;
Mother who urged the donkey,
(making happy riot
on the straggling stones)
urged the beast to be more quiet;
Mother who heard the Child
whimper beneath the thin blue shawl,
our aching prayers cry out to thee,
Mother, pray for them all.**

**A thousand Bethlehems
mask dark tonight,
the eyes of friendly little homes
have lost their light;
pathetic heaps of poor, dear things
are laid aside; a small bird sang
where a latched door swings.
Mother, whose sad Egyptian flight
preceded all of these
guide them in faith beneath familiar stars,
Our Lady of the Refugees.**

Our commitment to work for systemic change and address the root causes of injustice motivates us to look at why people are fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. U.S. policy in Central America – support for repressive/ corrupt governments, militarization of local law enforcement and support for economic interests that exploit land and other natural resources – has made life impossible for the majority of the people. They have no alternative but to leave.



Our Lady of the Refugees

7

MARY

God bearer

ANIMAL REFUGEE CRISIS

Laudato Si

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home because of war, violence or persecution, often without warning. They are unable to return home unless and until conditions in their native lands are safe for them again

AND

Any animal or species who is displaced due to human made activities isolating populations in ecologically marginal and suboptimal habitats.

? WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO GRIEVE THE CREATURES LAID WASTE BY THE ABUSE OF POWER BY HUMANS?

Mention the word refugees, and the image that comes to mind is that of humans that have been forced to leave their countries due to war, persecution or natural disaster. Botswana, a landlocked country in Southern Africa, is facing a different kind of refugee crisis – one caused by the hundreds of thousands of elephants that have fled their homelands to escape ruthless poachers.

This is not the first time the mammals have sought refuge at the Chobe National Park, an 11,700 sq. km (4,500 sq. miles) animal **sanctuary** located in northern Botswana. But Michel Chase, founder of Elephants Without Borders (EWB), who has been tracking the African elephants for the last twenty years, says this **migration** is different. In the past, the pachyderms used the **sanctuary** as a temporary home and always headed back to their respective countries after a few years.

READ AND LEARN MORE

www.dogonews.com/2017/1/26/botswanas-elephant

★ MARY, THE MOTHER WHO CARED FOR JESUS, *NOW* cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world.

CRY OF EARTH CRY OF THE POOR

Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, *SO NOW* she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. *Laudato Si VIII. Queen of all creation*

... she grieves for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. *Laudato Si VIII*

ANIMAL REFUGEE CRISIS

The animal world may be facing a 'refugee' crisis of its own as species splinter into isolated populations, according to researchers at The University of Manchester.

The issue of animal refugee populations is potentially widespread and this forced displacement has resulted in:

- fragmented populations across habitats which can lead to 'ecological refugees' in the animal world
- refugee populations that have low ecological suitability and poor reproduction, leading to potentially unstable populations animal-refugee-crisis-species-increasingly.

READ MORE AT: <https://phys.org/news/2016-10-animal-refugee-crisis-species-increasingly.html#jCp>