

Month of May – For Mary and Mothers

A reflection

Reflection on Mary by Rachel McLean, Leader Formation, Catholic Education Services, Cairns

The proper place for devotion to Mary is a clear one: she is the mother, the woman, the human participant in the work of redemption by her Son. She is the one who heard the Word of God in her heart and followed it to the end, whatever the cost to herself. By her unconditional fiat, she became the perfect recipient of God's will that each of us would like to be. Her life belongs not simply to her own life but the life of the world as well. From [The Liturgical Year](#), Joan Chittister



Figure 1 Marian Resources [Accessed here](#) (with lots of additional resources)

In our dress up box was a blue cape that my Mum and Aunty wore as children. Growing up, my sisters and brothers would don the cape and become superheroes who swung on Willow tree branches and road BMX bikes fast down country roads. When we asked Mum where the blue cape came from, she explained that she and the other girls used to wear them at school. Our imaginations ran wild, what kind of schools allowed girls to wear capes? It wasn't until much later that I learnt that the capes were worn by students who were part of the Children of Mary Society. The capes were an external sign of your commitment to the Society and your hope to nurture your spirituality through your membership. While there are no societies or committees in our schools today that ask students to wear blue capes, there are plenty of examples of how students are asked to wear or use something that shows their commitment and membership to particular activities or organisations: Red Rosies T-shirts; school leadership badges; wrist bands; or coloured ribbons.

To show your belief in the cause or your commitment to leadership, we must do more than wear the item, we must believe in it. As a young person playing superheroes in Mum's cape, I didn't really understand the significance of Mary in my faith. It was through my experience of Mary's story through iconography, art and later prayer that I have come to have a deep respect for and affiliation with Mary. I continue to nurture my belief in her courage, commitment and compassion for the world. The month of May is a wonderful opportunity to come to know Mary through experience. We can understand the radical nature of a young Mary's 'Yes' to the Archangel Gabriel by practicing [contemplative imagination](#) or unpacking the [meanings of icons](#). We can begin to comprehend what Mary meant to the early Church through [reading](#) or [viewing](#) her story. We can draw on her strength by praying the rosary and calling Mary, our Mother.

To Share

A reading from the Gospel According to Luke (1:26-38)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; her name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, '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 holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Prayer by Nicola Slee

Prayer is not merely
what you do
when you kneel
in church
or sit in a chair
to be still
light the candle
repeat the mantra
but handing your life
over
time and time over
to be set aflame
to be enlightened
to become
a passionate presence
to pour love in
where love is not
as the Fathers said
to become a mother
to Jesus
and all the motherless ones
to search for the presence
where all you can see is absence
a limitless watching
and waiting
not for the moments
of glory
which may
or may not come
but because this
is the pledge
you have made



Figure 2 Virgin and Child 2001 by Leslie Xuereb provided by ©Superstock

Something to Ponder

You are invited to take a moment to ponder this quote by [Omid Safi](#)

“In place of an unrealistic and commercialised Mother’s Day, let me suggest for us to move to celebrating the ethics of care. Let us honour and acknowledge all those who care for others, whether family or simply fellow human beings. Let us recognise compassion put into the service of humanity as what takes us simply into the realm of being fully and completely human.

When there are mothers who embody this ethics of care, let us celebrate.

When there are fathers who embody this ethics of care, let us celebrate.

When there are women, not merely mothers, who serve fellow human beings, let us celebrate.

When we see love and compassion anywhere, let us celebrate.

Yes, let us recognise that so much of the love and service in this world does come from mothers. And let us celebrate the ethics of care and compassion, love and tenderness. Here, there, everywhere.”

Resources

- Check out the suite of [resources on Mary here](#)...you can find information and reflections on the many roles of Mary and her influence on the Catholic Church.