

## Mary as Mother of the World

John 19: 25-27

“<sup>25</sup>Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup>and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”

Mary becomes mother to humanity and the Church after Jesus' crucifixion – to take on a new way of being Mother.

The pain and suffering of Mary: after the joy of giving birth to a child - a holy child - God's acknowledged son - and then watching, from the foot of the cross, as he is mocked, brutalized and killed.

Mary shows us through her life and example the highs and lows that mothers share.

She accepts her place as mother.

When I thought about this homily, I looked up the reference to John, and on my way there, as I flipped through the Bible, my eye landed on a passage I had underlined:

Luke 1: 35-38

<sup>35</sup>The angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called<sup>[3]</sup> the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup>For nothing is impossible with God."

<sup>38</sup>"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her."

As a mother, this story has great meaning for me. I have learned to "Let go & Let God". Even though Mary was terrified, unsure and awed by what the angel said, she bravely went forward. I don't know any mother, or father, for that matter, who hasn't felt those same emotions. But like her, if we let go of the fear and anxiety, and let God's will happen, we'll be ok.

Nothing is impossible with God.

While pregnant I have felt like a "handmaiden" – that I too am carrying a miracle and that God has acted directly upon my body by making this miracle of life possible. The words are common and all around us, but are true.

I know the awe of Creation. I think of myself before my first child was born, and how it feels and felt to have another little being growing and

living inside of me. And then emerging to be and become her own person and self.

I delivered that possibility, but neither Tuomi nor I was fully responsible for it. A huge power, far greater than us was.

I remember that I had this vision of the baby coming, being formed, from a vast celestial soup. Like the Milky Way was poured through me into a little glob that appeared in my belly. That somehow that glob gelled into our baby and came out as Lilly. After she was born, I wanted so much for that feeling of being like a portal to the cosmos again. To feel that touch of the divine again.

That's what makes Mary seem so accessible – not distant or judgemental. She had experienced a much larger brush with the divine, but she felt it. She helped her child grow up and make choices about his life, probably knowing that she would have to endure watching his suffering – something no parent ever wants. But she did it, and was right there with Jesus 'til the bitter end. It was then that Jesus gave her a new son [John], and the World a new mother.

The world needs a new mother, and we see her presence in the world as Mother of all.

I had a mini-epiphany when I heard the story of the shrine to Mary in Baghdad at the start of the Iraq war. Muslim women would go to the shrine to pray since Muslims consider Mary as the mother of the great prophet Jesus. She is greatly revered for her miracles.

Since hearing that story I think the miracle *is* Mary.

She is the Mother we need and crave who is strong. She suffered the way mortal mothers do. Maybe through our similar struggles we can borrow some of her strength to make it through the highs and lows of our lives. She can help us to see the Human face of God and that all is not lost.

That even when we go to the empty tomb, we can see that our love and spirit will live on. As she has.