

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

It's been another full, rich, wonderful day babysitting my grandson Hall - he's finally sleeping. I think he's trying to catch a cold or it might be allergies, for he's had a restless sleep these last three hours. He's now been rocked and comforted and had a bottle and some cough medicine. Maybe now he'll be more at ease. There's nothing more maternally satisfying than to rock a baby to sleep. Don't worry, precious Stuart, daughter of mine, I'm not planning to move in and take over. Rocking is not a possessive movement, but rather a relinquishing one.

Relinquishing one. Relinquishing one. My mind rocks to the rhythm of those words. Today is the third day of Holy Week and also the Feast Day of the Annunciation. It commemorates the coming of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and his announcement that she was to bear the Messiah. She humbly asked, "How can this be?" for she had known no man. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her for this miracle to occur. I'm sure her positive response was also instrumental in God's Messiah coming forth. Mother Mary and her "yes-ness" has been strongly on my mind today. It must be rare for this day to fall during this holy week, but it does seem highly appropriate.

This day started with my reading Morning Prayer at daybreak before Hall awakened. That's when I learned it was this Feast Day. When another Mary, our family friend, housekeeper, babysitter, arrived at Stuart and John's, I went to church and set up for the 7:30 service, attended it, and then cleaned up. The rest of the morning was spent running around gathering decorations for the Seder Supper, which is a reenactment of a Passover Dinner and will be held at our church Thursday night. The reason I mention these activities is that they seem so intimately, timelessly, feminine - the washing, the cleaning, the preparation. I don't want to denigrate their importance, but rather celebrate them. We are, as women, homemakers, whether we like the term or not, or whether we have the added responsibility of having an outside career. I haven't yet read Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus, but I plan to, for every little excerpt I've heard sounds right on target. We are the nesters. God made us that way. It is good.

I also like the term The Feminine Mystique. I haven't read that either, but the words do capture some of what I'm talking about. There is holy mystery and a softness, a kindness, a nurturing trait when the feminine is positively in play. It flows throughout the ages. Of course, the positive masculine traits can be celebrated, too, but seeing that today commemorates one of Mother Mary's many "yes" days, I'd rather focus on the feminine and more particularly, her.

I might have mentioned earlier that there are two large art photographs that hang in our bedroom. They are special to me; first, because they were birthday presents from my husband a couple of years ago. Second, because the artist, Paige Williamson, is a friend of ours, and third, and probably most importantly, because of their subject matter. They are close-ups of parts of two stained glass windows at the Advent Cathedral in Birmingham. The first one has been titled, "Let it be." The image is of a lovely young girl's face, which is humbly cast down. It is from the Annunciation Window.

The other is a close-up of a woman whose face is looking up. There is one frozen tear suspended from her eye. We can only see part of her vision. In the upper right-hand corner is a wooden stake with two feet nailed to it. The name of this photograph is "All is Well." It represents Mary's standing at the foot of the cross watching her Son being crucified."

"All is well." Can you imagine the topsy-turvy powerlessness and powerfulness of such a statement? Here the most dastardly deed, heinous horror known to man - rather done by man - had just occurred: the crucifixion of Christ, and His mother stood and watched. Her very presence stamped it with a seal of approval - not to the people's purpose, no - heaven forbid - but rather to her Father God's will being done. Totally, totally, complete trust and another, "Yes," "Yes." Her whole life's response to God was, "Yes." Did she always understand? Do we? Did she comprehend? Do we? Know

what was going on? Do we? I doubt it, but she did say, "Yes." Could she fix things, rearrange things, change things? Not really, nor usually can we. She could suggest - like changing water into wine, but she couldn't force the miracles to begin. She could encourage and love lightly, and she could relinquish.

For me, the "Yes" to the Annunciation is just one side of the story; the other, maybe even more important one, is the "yes" to the crucifixion.

For me, the holding of baby Jesus in her arms as the shepherds and wise men came to worship and adore is just one side of the story. The other side, maybe even more important one, is the holding of her crucified child. She would have always seen Him as her child, her firstborn, as all mothers do. And I envision her rocking His lifeless body back and forth, ever so gently as if she were comforting her Babe-in-arms once more.

And as I said earlier, rocking is not a possessive movement, but rather a relinquishing one.

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Father God, I give You thanks for the Blessed Virgin Mary. I thank You for the eternal example of her "yes" to You and Your will. Thank You for placing Christ's living and dying so close to each other this year. I like the Feast of the Annunciation falling in Holy Week. The two should live

together, for they always have. The life, the death and soon to come...the risen Life. Lord, may this also be our story - the life, the death...and soon to come...the risen life. And I think it has to do with our Mary-like response to You and Your will. "Let it be - all is well." Yes!

Good night, precious grandson. Sleep in the knowledge that you are being rocked in the eternal arms of Love.

Peace, Precious Pilgrim.

*I am your relinquishing sister in Christ,
Lucy*