

## **Mary in the Bible**

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“Women believers at the service of life, dignity and common good”: the title of this convention is suitable for nobody more than for the Virgin Mary; she lived and embodied it before and more than every other woman.

Mary summarized in herself all the expectations of the poor and little ones of the Old Testament who were waiting for the Messiah; welcoming Jesus she gave the possibility to the plan of God's salvation to be realized.

Life and growth of our Brotherhood have been accompanied by the Virgin Mary from the beginning: she brought us to her Son and she still accompanies us every day to try to be sign of presence of God for the world, a sign of love, hope and mercy. We met and learned about Mary through listening the word of God: the few words about Her we can read in the Bible show us her essential features.

Today we simply would like to retrace with you this process of listening, to renew together our common effort to live – as Mary did and with her help – our mission at the service of everybody with Jesus in our hearts.

### *Mary, woman of hope*

Mary lives in the hope of God's promises that are being fulfilled. Hearing the words that the angel Gabriel said to her: “ Rejoice”, “Do not be afraid” and “you have won God's favour”, Mary enters immediately and with all her soul in the universal dimension of the plan of salvation, expressing it in the canticle of Magnificat.

Only people conscious of their littleness (“God has looked upon the humiliation of her servant” Lk 1, 48) and at the same time of God's greatness, that is revealed by His care for little and poor ones, can experience the universal dimension of salvation.

Mary, a young and poor woman, sings God that “has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly” (Lk 1,52): she didn't remain closed in an intimistic relationship with God, but she gave voice to her people, she spoke about the hope that she felt inside herself.

We live in a time that needs hope. It needs joyful and strong women who announce the Gospel of Life: even more than to do something, it is asked to us to be women of hope.

### *Mary, woman of faith*

"Nothing is impossible to God". "You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you said" (Lk 1, 37-38).

The conclusion of the dialogue between Mary and the angel expresses her deep feeling: she believed without evidences, she accepted without understanding how could this come about. Mary lives of her faith, opened to the action of the Holy Spirit, abandoned to God's willingness. The Magnificat is the canticle of a person that believes without seeing: Mary didn't see the arrogant of heart routed or the princes pulled down from their

thrones or the rich sent away empty (Lk 1,51-53), but she saw Jesus, she felt His life inside her and she accompanied Him through all His mission. She saw in Him the fulfillment of God's promise and she never stopped believing that the Kingdom of God and its promise would have been fulfilled for all humanity, all time, all history.

Mary trusts to God in her life and she lives through her faith. Jesus asks also to us to live her style: welcoming Him – Way, Truth and Life – and living of our faith, with the certainty that He will bring to completion the work He has begun.

#### *Mary, woman of communication*

"Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country. (...) Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb" (Lk 1,39.41).

Mary's first action after the annunciation is to travel in order to serve. She is realized through service; to donate herself to the others is for Mary a request made to her from the love.

Service is the way she chose to communicate: in the pages of the Gospel she appears silent and humble, but at the same time as a perfect communicator. Her greeting to Elizabeth makes happy also the child in her womb. Mary's words, actions and gestures communicate and transmit the Truth she has inside her soul.

Our world needs authenticity in communication, needs truly people that can communicate in a simple way the Truth they keep in their hearts, not just through words but through the facts of their life. In this time full of false and artificial communication we can communicate the Truth that is Jesus, we can speak to people's hearts. Few people make this, but our world needs it desperately.

#### *Mary, welcoming woman*

"She gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space" (Lk 2,7).

Mary is a mother. She lives her maternity like all women, welcoming her Son, fruit of her womb. But at the same time she recognizes Him as God's gift, believing strongly that her son is the Son of God.

It is asked to us to learn from Her how to be mothers, how to take care of the people that we have to custody, especially the weakest ones. To learn from Her how to welcome them as they are, helping them to grow up without losing the treasure that God put inside their soul and without losing their Hope when difficulties come.

#### *Mary, contemplative woman*

"His mother stored up all these things in her heart" (Lc 2,51).

Mary looks at her life, at Jesus's life, at the history in a contemplative way, so that she is always able to read concrete facts under the light of God's plan of salvation.

Let us make grow up in our life Her contemplative look. To live a continuous interior dialogue with God that doesn't cut us off from concrete life but helps us to live and read everything as a sacred history, history of God.

#### *Mary, careful woman*

"The mother of Jesus said to Him: 'They have no wine'. (...) His mother said to the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you' " (Jn 2, 3.5).

Mary is completely open to the other people: she takes care of everyone, she look at every situation in order to catch needs and difficulties. Everyone's problem becomes Her problem, a problem to be solved. She always acts following her desire of good. She never surrenders, she always asks and it has given to her because She puts all her desires in God's hands. Mary collects and welcomes the needs of the entire world and bring them to Jesus, certain that He can answer to them.

We can learn Mary's carefulness, her capacity to individuate problems and to look for a solution, not through intelligence but through love. The Gospel describes Mary as a careful person because of her love, as an always-ready person: She has a deep love for Jesus and a deep desire to help Him to realize as soon as possible God's project of salvation.

#### *Mary, woman of listening and communion*

"My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice" (Lk 8,21). "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Lk 11,28).

Mary constantly heard the word of God and kept it during her life: she kept it, stored it in her heart, lived it, murmured it day and night.

Jesus's beatitude for who hear and keep the Word of God is first of all suitable for Mary; for this attitude she could sing in the Magnificat: "all generations will call me blessed".

And listening becomes communion: this beatitude is not only for Mary, but it is for all the people that following Her example lived, lives and will live life in an obedient listening of the Word of God.

#### *Mary, woman permeated by God's love*

"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother: 'Woman, this is your son'." (Jn 19, 25-26).

Mary's greatness is revealed near the cross: She was able to look at her Son's death without losing her faith. She doesn't refuse this unjust suffer, She doesn't abandon her place and her mission, so She permits to Jesus to donate Her as a gift for all humanity.

In the people who entrust to Him, God transforms the human need to love and be loved in a universal love able to reach everyone. This universal love, so great and so powerful, is not without a price; Mary knows it well from the beginning of Jesus's life on earth, when in the temple Simeon told Her: "A sword will pierce your soul" (Lk 2,35). Love for Jesus is a love that gives everything but also asks to give everything.

This love made Mary Mother of the Church: she carried the beginner church that was near the cross of Jesus through the night of faith, from the darkness of Jesus's death to the light of Pentecost. Her presence in the community of the disciples after the resurrection is attested in the Acts of the Apostles (Act 1,14).

It is possible also for us to live immersed in people's sufferings without losing our faith, our direction and the interior strength that we have received from Jesus. So that we can help suffering people to meet Jesus resurrected and to receive the Holy Spirit who opens hearts to God's love.

This is a period in which violence, death, wars seem to be stronger than life and peace. The Gospel of Life asks to us not to abandon the man who suffers, to be present in the places of suffering. Looking to the Virgin Mary and keeping Her as our model, we discover our specific responsibility to spread in the world Jesus's reconciliation. As Saint Paul wrote to Corinthians, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Co 5,19-20). Jesus went among us as one who serves and asks to us to live the same service among the people, in order to witness Him and His word and to announce the Kingdom of God through our service.

A last thought. Mary was a young woman when she accepted to welcome and take care of the difficult situations of her time, to meet and speak with people in order to give them courage. She always emanated God's energy and strength, offering them to all. Mary is really the model of young people that can be future and hope for all the humanity.

This is a good way to think about the mission entrusted today to young people all over the world. Together with the Virgin Mary we like to put all of them in God's hands, particularly the young people of our belonging communities, the ones who are suffering or are in the trial. Let's ask to the Lord strength and courage for them, so that they can discover the holiness that God has sown in their hearts and give hope to the world.

In our Brotherhood we pray every day the Virgin Mary as Mother of the Young People. If you like, we propose to you to share this prayer with us, in order to reinforce more and more the "security cordon" made of prayer that can help them every day to "turn away from evil and do good" (1 Pt 3,11).