

Common Rule

Chapter 13

Paragraph 7

Let us respond as Mary did when she was called to service, humbly openly and joyfully:

“Here I am , servant of the Lord ; let it be unto me according to your word”.

To wrap up this chapter on Mary during the season of Advent, brings a deeper meaning to it for me. I read in Richard Rohr’s Advent meditation book “Preparing for Christmas: Daily meditations for Advent”. “How do we also give birth as Mary did?” This question caused me to stop, although it was the first sentence of the meditation.

I was struck by the question of how is it that I give birth as Mary did, in connection to this portion of the common rule. Do I respond to the idea in the same way Mary responded, humbly and joyfully? Or do I respond by managing, which is how American males are trained to deal with life. We are trained to be managers, to organize life, to make things happen.

Mary gave birth out of faith and trust, she knew how to receive spiritual gifts, in fact how to receive the most important spiritual gift we have been given. Mary out of faith followed her heart and let things happen. She is probably the perfect image of how fertility and fruitfulness break into this world, because she was open and humble and simply said yes to the will of God.

I am learning that I cannot manage, maneuver or manipulate spiritual energy. It is a matter of letting go and receiving what has been given freely. It is the gradual emptying of our attachment to our small self so that there is room for a new conception and a new birth. There must be some displacement before there can be any new replacement, which is what Advent is all about displacing the darkness of our lives and replacing it once again on Christmas with the True Light of Jesus. Mary is the Archetype of such self-displacement and surrender. If Jesus is the

symbol of the gift itself and how God gives the gift, then Mary is the symbol of how the gift is received and treasured.

This chapter of the Common Rule has brought me from someone who did not like Mary, or understand her role in our lives into a real devotee of the Mother of Our Lord.