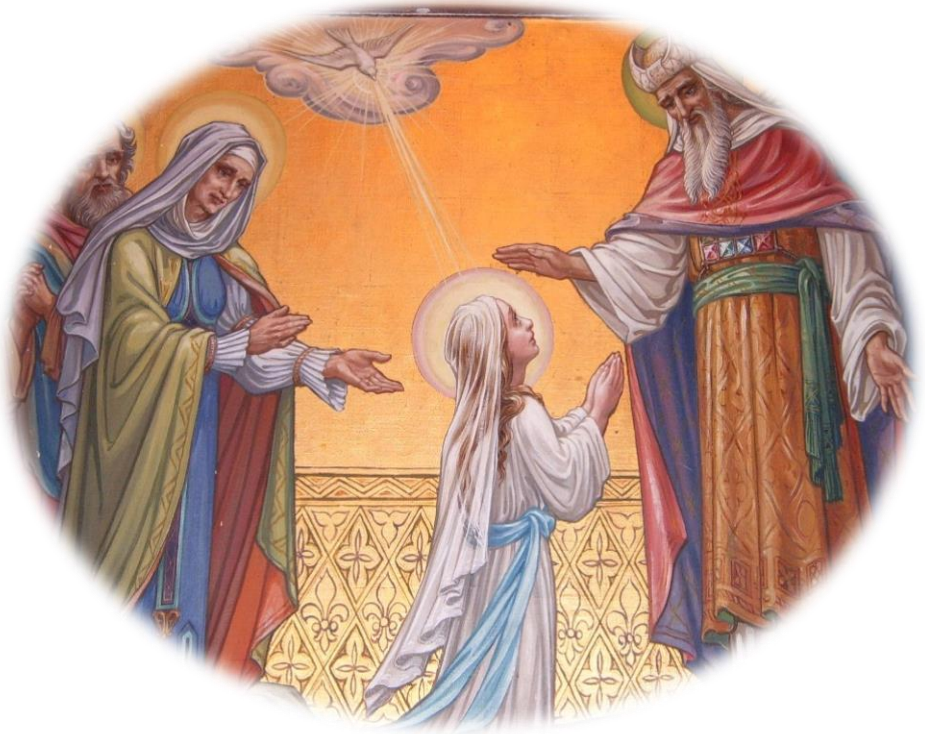


# Presentation Day Novena



2016



## Day 1: 12 November 2016

### *Mary of Nazareth, Woman of Unconditional Yes*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are a part of our Presentation Family in Latin America and New Zealand.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.



### **Called to Ponder**

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary .... Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus .... But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you ...” (Lk 1:30-35).  
(<http://blessedaboveallwomen.blogspot.ie>)

Your world hung in the balance of her yes or no.  
Yet, “she must feel absolutely free,” You, said,  
and chose with gentle sensitivity not to go Yourself  
– to send a messenger instead.  
I like to think You listened in at that interview

with smiling admiration and surprise to that humble child who –  
though she didn't amount to much in Jewish eyes,  
being merely virgin, not yet come to bloom-  
in the presence of that other worldly Power  
crowding down the walls and ceiling of her room,  
did not faint or cry or cower  
and could not be coerced  
to en flesh Your covenant  
but asked her valid question first  
before she gave her full and free consent.  
I like to think You stood  
to long applaud such womanhood.

(Irene Zimmerman, *Woman Un-Bent*, 1999)



- ✚ Mary, I am also called to leave some security behind and face the challenge of the unknown before me. Help me Lord, when you send messengers to me, to receive them with deep trust in you, “Let what you have said be done in me.”
- ✚ “Meister Eckhart said that we are all meant to be mothers of God, for Christ is always needing to be born.”
- ✚ Mary is afraid – “deeply troubled” – yet continues to say yes to the Spirit. Reflect now on what it means for you to be a ‘woman of unconditional yes’. Are there implications to this ‘yes’?

(Judy Cannato, *Quantum Grace*, 2002, 124)

## Call to Share

- ✚ What is being evoked in you through this time of reflection?

## Call to Pray

Mary with what sureness you choose silence,  
waiting on God's Word in heart's stillness pondering.  
Lead us into that silence where Word meets life,  
Piercing the mystery of God-with-us  
Emmanuel. (Raphael Consedine, pbvm, *Songs of the Journey*, 27)

## Day 2: 13 November 2016

### *Mary, Theotokos – the God-Bearer*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are a part of our Presentation Family in Cambodia, Philippines, and Thailand.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

### **Called to Ponder**

✚ This wonderful title, Mary, the *Mother of God* (*Theotokos*), reveals a profound truth not only about Mary, but about each one of us. We are



now invited into the very relationship that she had with her Son. We can become "God-bearers" and bring God to all those whom we encounter in our 'few short days under the sun'.

([www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org))

She is a reed, straight and simple, growing by a lake in Nazareth; a reed that is empty until the Breath of God fills it with infinite music; and the breath of the Spirit of Love utters the Word of God through an empty reed. (Caryll Houselander, *The Reed*, 1944)

✚ Mary “bore him in her womb with love beyond all telling.”  
(Eucharistic Prayer 2)

✚ “We all exist solely for this – to be the human place God has chosen for his presence, his manifestation, his epiphany.”  
(Thomas Merton, Merton.org)

✚ Mary, mother of God, offered the hospitality of her womb as the dwelling place for the Holy One.

### **Call to Share**

✚ As I reflect on Mary as God-bearer, how is the womb of my heart open and available to the whispering nudges of God’s creative Spirit, ever at work in our lives and our world?

### **Call to Pray**

Sacred Wisdom, who pervades all living things with radiance, intelligence, beauty, and the spirit of kindness, breathe upon us your powerful spirit and open our hearts to your Word. Amen.



## Day 3: 14 November 2016

### *Mary, Companion on Life's Pilgrimage*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in Canada and the West Indies.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

### **Call to Ponder**

Mary was familiar with uprooting and journeying. Each journey evoked from her a deeper yes and a fuller consent as she entrusted her unknown future into the hands of a known God.

We invite you to contemplate any one of these journeys and their implications:

✚ Journey to the hill country to visit Elizabeth

✚ Journey to Bethlehem



- ✚ Journey into exile/return journey to Nazareth
- ✚ The searching journey for the boy, Jesus
- ✚ The journey to Calvary
- ✚ Journey with the disciples and the young Church
- ✚ We are called ... *as a pilgrim people to a way of life, rooted in stillness, contemplation and wonder at the unfolding mystery of God and of all God's creation.* CG 2012
- ✚ “True pilgrimage changes lives ... whether we go half round the world or out to our own backyard – capturing the quiet revelations that are all around us.” (Barbara Flynn, Mary Ruth Broz, *Midwives of an Unnamed Future*, 2006, 167)

### Call to Share

- ✚ Are there aspects of Mary's journey that resonate with you?
- ✚ As you reflect back on your life's journey what 'quiet revelations' do you notice?



Mary Southard

### Call to Pray

God of our life's journey, you have carried us all along the way to this very day. As we continue our journey, be gracious to us, uncover your face to us, and give us your peace. Amen.



**Day 4: 15 November 2016**

## *Mary, Woman Presented in the Temple*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in Ireland, England and Slovakia.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

### **Call to Ponder**

Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor. 6:17, 19; cf 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph 2:22)

✚ The Eastern Church celebrates the Presentation of Mary as the moment of exchange between the Old Covenant and New Covenant. Mary's womb will become the temporary dwelling place of the Word, her heart its permanent dwelling place through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 2:19). (Anne O'Leary, pbvm, *Woman of Light*, 2010, 65)



Watson Studio

✚ Presentation people are called to be ‘Temple-people’. Like Mary, presented in the Temple, we too are called to be people of contemplation – filled with the dynamism of the Holy Spirit that leads us to be in solidarity with those who are oppressed. (Ibid.)

✚ In the Eastern Church, the Feast of the Presentation is also called the *Feast of the Silence of Mary*. Entering into the Temple is a symbol of entering into the silence of God, into the life of the Spirit. In our world, the Feast of the Presentation could also be called the Feast of the Voiceless – in solidarity with the voiceless who are forced into a silence that is the deadly fruit of oppression. (Anne O’Leary, pbvm, *Boundless Love Video/DVD*, 2000)



Julie Watson, pbvm

## Call to Share

✚ Notice what has stirred in you from the above texts and share with others.

## Call to Pray

Lord, as we move daily from our times of prayer and contemplation, may we stand with people in their struggle. Give us the grace to challenge values, systems and structures which perpetuate poverty and injustice in our dark and groping world. Amen

## Day 5: 16 November 2016

### *Mary, Woman of Faith*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in India and Pakistan.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.



Mary Southard

### **Call to Ponder**

His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” (Jn 2:5-7; cf Lk 1:26-38; 2:51-53; Jn 19:25)

✚ The ancient title “Woman of Faith” is relevant for our day. Mary travelled a road that was often shrouded in obscurity. The sword of sorrow repeatedly pierced her heart. She did not always understand what was happening. She had to ponder the events of her life to see God’s hand in the darkness (Luke 2.19, 51). But despite the darkness, the doubt and the not-knowing, Mary never wavered in her commitment to God. “Let it be done

to me according to your word” may have been said only once (Luke 1.38). She was completely at the disposal of God. There must have been times when she could not see the fullness of God’s plan for her. Yet it did not cause her ever to withdraw her consent or hedge her commitment with reservations or qualifications. ‘There were no “ifs” or “buts” with Mary. Her faith was wholehearted and strong. She did not turn back or seek an easier path, even on Calvary when all seemed dark and her hopes dashed.

## **Presentation**

Mary, by your unconditioned Yes,  
Lean down to us who stammer out our weak assent  
And tremble lest God take us at our word.

By your swift love, redeem our paltriness,  
When with a sparing hand we dole  
From what, unmeasured, has been heaped on us.

Without a backward glance  
You followed He led to Calvary.  
Come, lest from that all-demanding love  
We turn, Lot’s wife, immobile, hard as stone.

Ah, Mary, little one  
Whom God raised from the depths unto the heights,  
Help us, we pray, grow small enough again  
To marvel at the wonder of our call.

*(Consedine, pbvm, Songs of the Journey, 30)*

## **Call to Share**

 What is stirring in you?

## **Call to Pray**

God of our lives, deepen our faith to see all of life through your eyes. Fill us with hope and trust that you dwell in us amidst our joys and sorrows. Amen.

**Day 6: 17 November 2016**

## *Mary of the Magnificat*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in Palestine and in the Africa Unit: Zambia and Zimbabwe.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**



<http://faithofthefatherslearnfaith.blogspot.ie>

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

### **Call to Ponder**

✚ Magnificat (Lk 1: 46-55)

✚ The Magnificat of Mary is not frozen in time. God's mercy flows from generation to generation. God's graciousness reverses the fortunes of the poor.

- ✚ The God who cares for his “poor ones” has chosen a poor one to be the human instrument in which the Word will become poor flesh. Karl Barth reflecting on Mary’s low estate writes: Thus it is clear that God is a God of the poor, a God of those who are in need, who are there beneath, deeply beneath. How should it be otherwise if He is the Saviour? But just because of this, that He regards the low estate of his handmaiden, He shows himself as gracious God; as He who is good to us, with a kindness which presupposes nothing, who knows the condition we are in and yet which comes to our aid.
- ✚ Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, reflecting on the customary images of Mary, invites us to re-imagine Mary, as a woman who would not be standing on the moon. She would be standing in the dirt and dust where we stand. This Mary would not be wearing a crown. She’d have an old hat like the rest of us, to keep the sun from causing her to faint. To see Mary thus, is to envision a young Jewish peasant woman who proclaims a God of liberation.
- ✚ Pope Francis calls us “to be present with the weak and the defenceless, especially those at the mercy of economic interests and indiscriminate exploitation.” (*Evangelli Gaudium*)

## **Call to Share**

- ✚ What do the above reflections evoke in you?

## **Call to Pray**

Guardian of the orphan,  
Defender of the Widowed  
Such is God,  
Who gives the lonely a home. Amen.

## Day 7: 18 November 2016

### *Mary, Model of Discipleship*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

- ✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space and some gentle music.

### **Call to Gather**

- ✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.



Mary Southard

### **Call to Ponder**

When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:13-14)

- ✚ Mary can rightly be called the first of all disciples. Jesus presents her as the model of a disciple – a woman radically open to the Word of God and prepared to take the risk of living by it. Mary is acclaimed as the Mother of the Disciple and Mother of the Church.
- ✚ “We look to Mary of Nazareth to inspire us in discipleship And to help us discern the ways of wisdom.” (*Our Way of Life*, C6)

## Hallmarks of discipleship

- ✚ Joyful wholehearted giving of ourselves to God
- ✚ Deep attentiveness to the creative spirit in our lives and in our world
- ✚ Trust in God’s gracious providence
- ✚ Proclaiming God’s faithfulness to the dispossessed of God’s world
- ✚ Like Mary, called to a relationship of mutual love and care.
- ✚ Fidelity to contemplating the Word of God
- ✚ Living life in a discerning way.

## Song for Two Hundred Years 1775-1975

Here is a Bethlehem, a woman pierced by the Spirit’s light,  
 waiting in stillness on the Spirit’s strength,  
 empty of aught save the Spirit’s gift.  
 A woman faithful to the Word received,  
 whole in her heart and her hands  
 To raise a house built leaning on the breath of God.  
 (Considine, pbvm, *Songs of the Journey*, 19)



## Call to Share

- ✚ As you contemplate these texts how do they impact on your call to discipleship?

<http://cardinalsblog.adw.org>

**Call to Pray:** Gracious God, we thank for giving us Mary, as our patron and model of true discipleship. We ask you to guide our steps as we continue to respond to Your gospel call to ‘follow you.’ Amen.



## Day 8: 19 November 2016

### *Mary of the Cosmos*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember our Sisters and all those who are part of our Presentation Family in the United States of America.

### **Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

### **Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

### **Call to Ponder**

✚ “Everything I see, hear, touch, feel, taste, think, imagine, is completely a perfect circle drawn by God. Every object, every creature, every man, woman and child has a soul and it is the destiny of all, to see as God sees, to know as God knows, to feel as God feels, to be as God is.” (Meister Eckhart)



Gail Worcelo, Green Mountain Monastery

- ✚ We need to acknowledge and repent of our ecological sin - the negation of human and cosmic well-being. Our individual and collective blindness is well and truly alive: we mar, we spoil, we destroy and we rupture the delicate balance of Mother Earth. “Earth today is the body of Christ in agony, and we, the disciples are asleep.” (Elizabeth Johnson)
- ✚ Mary of the Cosmos was awakened to the mystery of the Divine within herself. Like Mary, we are called to re-discover our own capacity to carry the Sacred and to allow the life of the Universe to flow through, embracing all of life in love and peace.

### **Call to Share**

- ✚ What is awakened in you by the reflections?

### **Call to Pray:**

Mother of the Night,  
Daughter of Dawn,  
Breath of the Spirit,  
Born of the Earth,  
Help us to listen to the cry of the earth  
and those made poor.



**Day 9: 20 November 2016**

*Mary, Woman of the New Creation*

*Gather with soft music playing. Be aware of Presentation Sisters and Friends all over the world, gathering as one.*

Today, we especially remember all the members of the Nagle-Rice Family.

**Creating the Sacred Space**

✚ We invite you to create a simple sacred space.

**Call to Gather**

✚ In the quiet be mindful of your breathing ... breathe deeply, breathe alone, breathe together. Allow the silence to take hold of you. Feel the presence of the living God, calming and reassuring you, as you gather for this time.

**Call to Ponder**

Presentation – Mary of the Dawn

Mary,  
Living from that sacred space  
Where earth meets heaven,  
Your heart discerned the Holy One  
In stars, in sun,  
In lives of men and women,  
In wind ... in rock ... in miracle of leaven,  
In sacred Word proclaiming Israel's story,  
In all the dailiness of life.



Woman of life,  
Welcome us into your home  
Your place ... your sacred space!  
Our eyes search to see as you saw.  
Our hearts yearn to know as you knew,  
To know the thousand faces of the One  
Above ... below ... within ... beyond ... among us,  
Flesh among us. Be light for our darkness.  
Be dawn for our new day. (Consedine, pbvm, *Songs of the Journey*, 29)

✚ Can we journey in this ‘in-between world’ with Mary –  
‘a woman wrapped in silence; and await the promise of ‘a new  
deed’, a ‘new creation’, and a ‘new beginning’?

Pope Francis challenges us:

- ✚ to make the whole of our lives  
pilgrimage of transformation”
- ✚ to “leave our nests”
- ✚ to “go out through that door and  
meet the people”
- ✚ to “go out on the streets”
- ✚ to “go to the frontiers”
- ✚ to “leave the centre and travel towards the peripheries”
- ✚ to “reach the fringes of humanity.” (Pope Francis, *Keep Watch*, 2014)



Source: Pat Murray IBVM

## Call to Share

- ✚ Where in my life am I noticing the signs of new creation?
- ✚ How am I/we birthing this new creation?

## Call to Pray

Mary, woman of the new creation teach us to listen well and be impregnated by the Spirit as you were. Help us to be co-creative partners in God’s dream for humankind. Amen.

**For Private Circulation ONLY**

Cover image from Mount St Anne’s, Ireland