

## Faithful Witness of Women in the Church

Faithful Witness—through simple, ordinary lives in service to others  
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Our faithful witness most often is in the form of simple, ordinary lives in service to others. As women, in our homes, among our family, neighbors, friends and coworkers, we take care of others without fanfare. When we see a need, we look for ways to meet it and when we see something wrong, we look for ways to make it right. We pray for those we know and love as well as for others in need—for true justice and peace to rain down from heaven.

During the season of Advent—already seeming so long ago—we were drawn to reflect on a model of astounding witness, wholly faithful and humble—Mary. She listened and believed the invitation sent by God and brought to her by an angel. She allowed her surprise and fears to be calmed and asked the question that perplexed her, “How...?” And, after a moment’s pause to take this in, Mary responded simply, “Let what you have said be done to me.” In this quiet, awesome moment she became *Theotokos*, “God-bearer,” the Mother of God and of all creation.

What then? Without fanfare, she continued her life as Joseph’s wife and a mother raising her child, following the customs and traditions of her heritage. As her life unfolded with such extraordinary moments among the ordinary ones, she “pondered these things in her heart.” She paid attention to what was happening within her as well as around her and held all in her heart, a heart truly filled with love and the courage to face and embrace all that lie ahead for her and her son. She lived her life “letting it be done....”

As we live the lives to which we are called, we, too must take what we know, what we hear in silence and darkness and proclaim it to others, not by “official preaching” but through ordinary exchanges in our day to day encounters with our children, brothers, sisters, strangers and friends. As daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend to those we know and those we have just met, many times a day we are invited to moments of graced encounter with another, God present with/in us—ourselves and each “other.”

Sometimes I am mindful like Mary, wholly present, attentively listening, responding from the depth of my being with generous love and gratitude, recognizing and embracing the sacredness of the moment. Sometimes—actually often—I am distracted, discouraged by how I see my life or the state of the world, busy about many things, not really “in” the present moment. At those times I miss the invitation to sacred encounter. The real question, however, is not, “How many times did I succeed or fail today?” but “Did I take time to embrace all of these encounters and misses and ponder them in the depth of my heart where God is with me?” Those are moments when I am transformed.

In those moments I can humbly accept and embrace the reality of who I am, how I have been each day. I regain the trust that Emmanuel, God-with-us, loves me as I am and will weave all that I see as good or failed fragments of my life into the whole/holy being I am always meant to be, one with the glory of all creation that God sees as good. This is when I rise to begin anew with joy, gratitude and hope. I say with Mary, “Let this be done in me.” In this day, let me join in God’s work of bringing about the “kissing” of justice and peace and the “springing forth of truth” in me and all creation.

This is what we each have to offer as our most faithful witness.

