

# Conference Minister's Corner

## Let's not disregard Mary, full of grace

By Rev. Amy S. Zimbelman



Ever since preaching during my first pregnancy, I've been especially drawn to Jesus' mother Mary:

Her pioneering spirit as the first disciple, the first human to say, "Yes!" to inviting Christ's life to weave into hers.

Her ability to calmly *ponder* things in her spacious heart, as opposed to what I would likely do: totally freak out (a.k.a. stay in the "perplexed" state of mind that she felt at first).

Her courage in leaving home to save her loved ones.

Her flexibility with her birth plan that definitely didn't go as expected.

Her enduring some of the most intense physical pain that humans can endure, squeezing Joseph's hand tight in unsanitary conditions with no meds and no reassuring doctors in sight.

And then her care for new life—not only in the early moments of nursing little Jesus, but in day-in-day-out teaching, bathing, feeding, cleaning up after him, dealing with his two-year-old tantrums and his 12-year-old independence, and singing him worldview-shaping and power-upending songs as he fell asleep that might have started with lyrics like, "My soul

proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior..."

And so for the last few years, I've lamented that those of us who are not Catholics are have not always given Mary the respect she's due (fear of deifying her, perhaps?)...

So in order to enhance our contemplative practices this Advent/Christmas season, here's a Mary roundup of a few things that honor this exemplary disciple and mother whose legacy of care belongs to all of us.

**"[No Wind at the Window](#)":** A colleague/friend recently recommended [this song](#) to me and it's lovely.

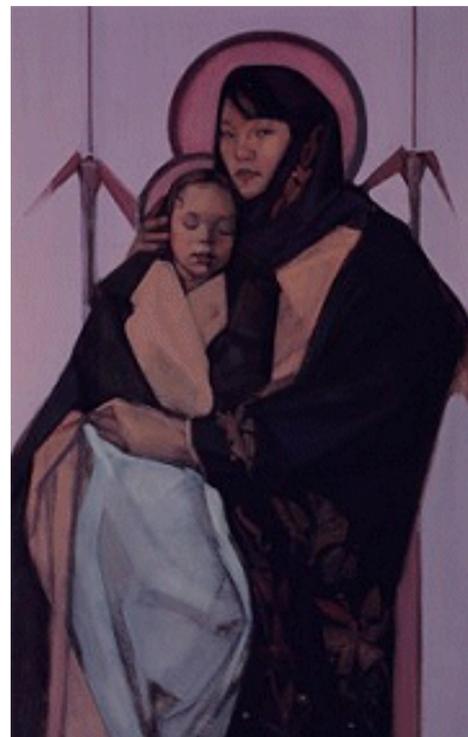
See stained glass above. My mother (also named Mary) brought back [Madonna and Child from Kitengeta Hot Glass in Kenya](#) in 2011 and it's been hanging in the kitchen window of each place I've lived in since.

Yale Center for Faith & Culture has a couple podcasts on Mary. This one is pretty interesting: [Mary Theotokos](#).

From my childhood: [Sister Act's "Hail Holy Queen"](#).

**Artist Janet McKenzie:** See her prints [here](#). Pieces like "Holy Mother of Comfort and Solace," "Mary Mother of Mercy," "Holy Family," and "Madonna and Child with the Origami Angels" feature diverse images of Mary. (Christmas gift idea: get someone in your life who loves Mary the greeting card set #4 of all Mary images.)

Classic ["Ave Maria" with Andrea Bocelli](#):



From John Donne's circular poem "[La Corona](#)":  
Whom thou conceivest, conceived; yea, thou art now  
Thy Maker's maker, and thy Father's mother  
Thou hast light in dark, and shutt'st in little room  
*Immensity, cloister'd in thy dear womb.*

And finally, a poem from Joanna Harader's [Expecting Emmanuel: Eight Women Who Prepared the Way](#),  
a brand new book that's coming at you highly recommended.

### *Mary's Blessing*

My fellow travelers—  
    you who flee danger,  
    and you who return home;  
    you who make a faithful pilgrimage,  
    and you who search for what is lost:

I cannot tell you where the road will lead,  
    who will accompany you,  
    or what stars might guide you.

I cannot promise ease or safety.  
I cannot say whether you will have to turn around  
    to go back for something left behind.  
I cannot guarantee that every blessing you receive on the way  
    will be a blessing you want.

But I hope *this* blessing is one you will carry,  
    a blessing to ride comfortably in your pocket,  
    or rest softly in your hands;  
    a blessing to accompany you, whatever the journey brings:

May you know God in your own heart  
    and in the heart of your faith community.  
May you be brave toward your fear  
    and persistent through deep difficulties.

May you hold your responsibilities faithfully  
    and lightly—with grace and joy.  
May you teach well  
    and learn well.  
May you give attention and compassion  
    to the lives that surround you,  
    and to your own hard and beautiful life.