

# How is God asking us to say yes this Lent?

Today is Holy Thursday, the day we celebrate the institution of the Eucharist, as well as the priesthood. It's a day when we think of all that will come on Good Friday, the journey Jesus will undertake.

It's a moment to stop and wait and pray and trust that we will be celebrating the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday. And we feel confident that we will.

Today, though, I find myself thinking about Jesus' mother. I'm not sure why, but this Lent my mind keeps coming back to Mary.

Perhaps it is because as a wife and mother, my Lenten experience is interwoven with my journey as a member of my family, so Mary and I have that in common.

But there is something deeper at work for me—the realization that Mary said yes not just to being the mother of a baby who would be born in a stable in Bethlehem, or a child who would grow up learning carpentry skills from her husband, but to being the mother of a child who would work miracles, create a new church, and suffer and die for all of humanity.

There is a tradition that, at the Annunciation, Mary was able to see a glimpse into the future to see just how much sorrow her life would hold. I'm not sure that's based in scripture, but there is a belief that she realized just how much she was taking on in those moments with the Archangel Gabriel.



*Annunciation, Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Baltimore*

If that is true, think of how much more meaningful her yes is. She wasn't simply accepting the role of Mother of Son of God, but all the many sorrows and trials that would come with it. She must have known that the pain might be almost unbearable to endure, yet she trusted God.

And she said yes.

How many of us would find the strength to say yes to being the mother of Jesus if we knew He would endure the Cross? How many would feel equipped to stand at the foot of the Cross as his mother, watching our child, on Good Friday?

As a mother, I can't imagine it. I can't bear even to think of losing a child, never mind seeing that extent of suffering.

Because we became parents through adoption, my husband and I had the opportunity to say yes—or no—to parenting specific children. Each time we were sent a child's files to review, and we had to decide. We couldn't see into the future, though, and I am so glad we couldn't. I prefer a leap of faith full of optimism to one where I can see all of life playing out before me.

Like Mary, we also realized that our children would be ours and yet also not entirely ours. Our sons have stories that precede us, and they will carry that with them always. Like Jesus and every child, they are also God the Father's, and, in fact, the whole world's. Mary knew she wasn't saying yes to a child who would be hers and Joseph's, but a child who would have a life beyond her. And she knew that would bring challenges and joy and sadness.



*Tabernacle in side chapel, Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Baltimore*

Even knowing all of that, she said yes.

No wonder she is the Mother of God.

But it makes me stop and think. What is God asking of me? How does He want me to say yes? And how much do I need to strengthen my faith and trust in Him that I can say yes even if the journey might be extraordinarily difficult?

I haven't figured that out this Lent. Still, I have a feeling there is a reason my mind keeps coming back to the Blessed Mother. If God is preparing me to say yes somehow, I hope I will be open and willing and ready.

How about you? How has God been working on you this Lent? How is He asking you to say yes?  
*Joining Theology Is a Verb and Reconciled to You for Worth Revisiting Wednesday on March 2, 2016.*