



MARY IS NOT WEARIED WITH  
OUR LITTLENESS; HER SMILE  
COMES DOWN TO US LIKE A  
BENEDICTION THROUGH THE  
SEA OF FLICKERING CANDLES,  
AND SHE BLESSES OUR WILD  
FLOWERS WITHERING AT HER  
FEET. FOR EACH ONE OF US IS  
“ANOTHER CHRIST”; EACH ONE,  
TO MARY, IS HER ONLY CHILD.  
IT IS THEREFORE NOT TEDIOUS  
TO HER TO HEAR THE TRIFLES  
THAT WE TELL HER, TO LOOK AT  
THE BRUISES THAT WE BRING TO  
HER, AND SEEING OUR WOUND  
OF SIN, TO HEAL IT.

CARYLL HOUSELANDER,  
*THE REED OF GOD*





FIRST WEEK  
OF ADVENT

# MARY AS HEALER



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FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT  
SUNDAY

TO YOU, O LORD, I LIFT UP MY  
SOUL.

O MY GOD, IN YOU I TRUST,  
LET ME NOT BE PUT TO  
SHAME.

PSALM 25:1-2

## SHE RECEIVES YOU

We begin the first week of our Advent season by meditating on our mothers, which is fitting because it is in our mothers that we find our beginning. Every human comes to earth through the womb of a woman, and that is made possible first and foremost by an act of receptivity. With Mary, we see her receive the message from the archangel Gabriel, who tells her she will conceive and bear a son through a virgin birth and become the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Despite how startling this news must have been to Mary, a young girl on the brink of marriage to Joseph, she gives her fiat and is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. At that moment, Jesus begins to be formed, just as you and I once did, in his mother's womb. Mary receives him without hesitation. So too does she receive us here and now.

Depending on the circumstances of how you were conceived and born, it may not be natural to image yourself as welcomed or happily received. This does not change the fact that in the quiet of your mother's womb, before she or your father knew you existed, *God* began to form and shape you. The Lord of lords willed you into existence, and Mary received you as her child just as your earthly mother received you in her body and heart. This is a profound and inscrutable reality of how you came to be in time, place, and circumstances.

No matter the situation of your beginnings, you are not an accident. You are chosen and beloved by God, and Mary has already received you into her heart. Although your mother may have had many different thoughts and emotions regarding your existence, Mary's heart for you is one of pure joy and delight. She can't wait to meet you. She already delights in you. She receives you.

## REFLECT

What is the story of the beginning of your existence? What does Mary want to say to you in this story?

[illegible]

[illegible]

## PRAY

LOVING GOD, PLEASE HELP ME OPEN  
MY HEART TO MARY'S MOTHERLY  
PRESENCE AND YOUR GUIDING HAND  
AS IT LEADS ME TO WHOLENESS.

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FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT  
MONDAY

BE STRONG, FEAR NOT!  
BEHOLD, YOUR GOD  
WILL COME WITH  
VENGEANCE,  
WITH THE RECOMPENSE OF  
GOD.

HE WILL COME AND SAVE  
YOU.

ISAIAH 35:4

## I AM YOUR MOTHER

We now know that Mary has conceived us in her heart, in her womb. She tells St. Juan Diego, “Am I not here who am your Mother?” A child in the womb is fragile, defenseless, and dependent. At the same time, the mother’s body holds the child within and quietly gives space and nurturing for the child to flourish, develop, and become. This is our state in Mary’s heart. We are entirely vulnerable and yet perfectly nurtured and protected.

Your biological mother’s womb offered you a similar haven: unseen, day and night, your mother’s body nourished you and sustained you. God designed this process of human gestation to be perfect so that you would grow and thrive without restriction. True nurturing does not grasp at, take from, constrict, or smother. True nurturing feeds and protects, supports and encourages. True nurturing blesses.

Mary blesses you as her child. Her delight is to behold you, rejoice over you, and encourage you to grow toward everything Jesus has for you. We need not fear with Mary. She only gives and brings us to her son. But maybe when we think about being nurtured by a mother, we feel afraid and unseen, unprotected and underfed. It’s likely that your earthly mother was not and is not perfect, and you have felt the effects of her deficiencies in some way.

We hear a lot about the “father wound,” and for good reason. (We’ll talk more about that one next week.) But we can also have a “mother wound,” wherein our mother did not or does not provide for us in the way we need. We must ask Jesus to gently illumine the places in our hearts where our mothers have wounded us and where we are still bearing the pain of those wounds. Today we begin turning to Mary to tend to those wounds. We seek the healing power of her spouse, the Holy Spirit, to overcome us and be our life support.

## REFLECT

What feelings rise up in you when you consider being nurtured by a mother? How has your earthly mother nurtured you? In what ways has your earthly mother fallen short? What kind of nurturing do you need from Mary now?

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