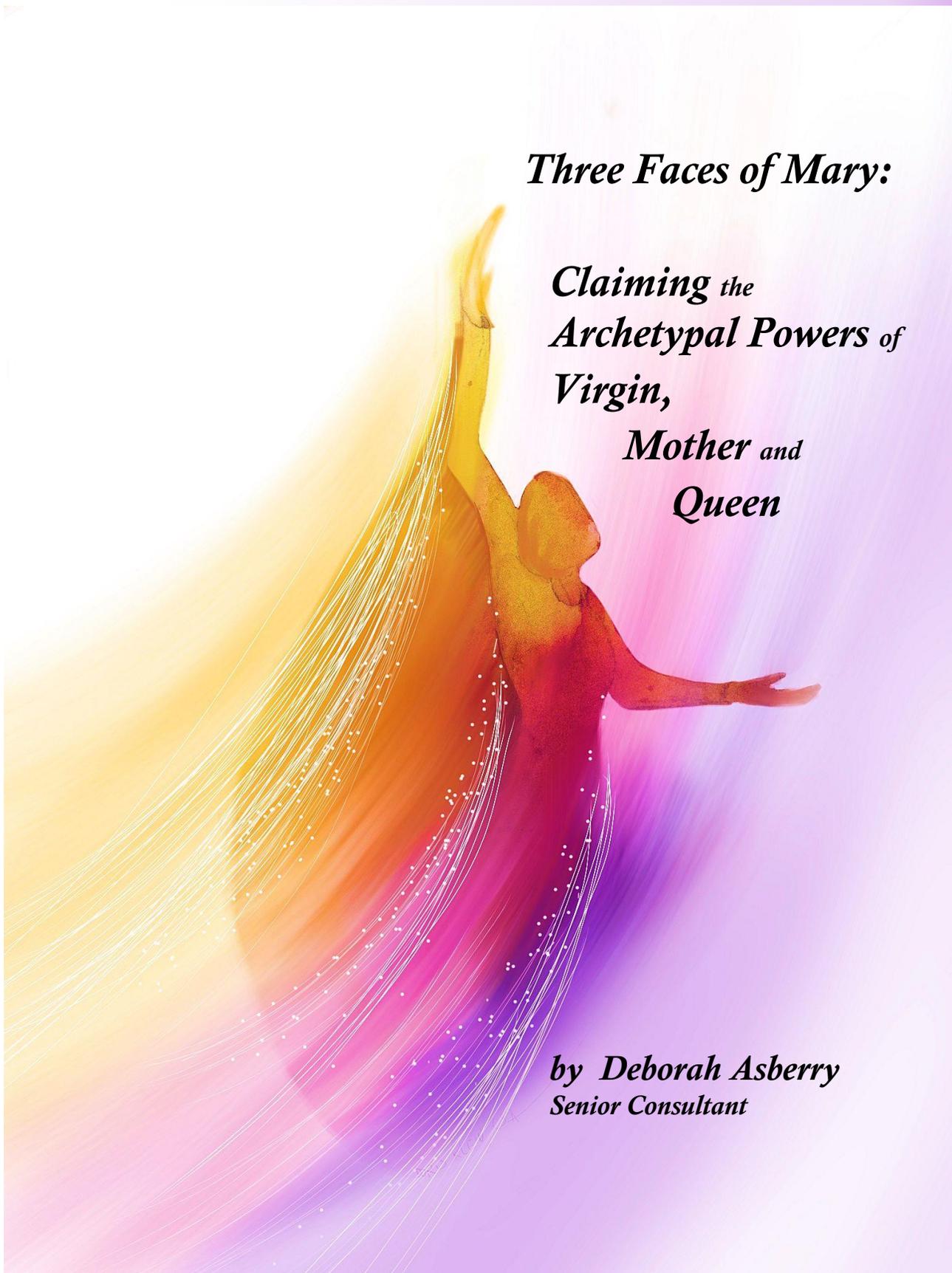


Three Faces of Mary:

*Claiming the
Archetypal Powers of
Virgin,
Mother and
Queen*

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*Three Faces of Mary:
Claiming The Archetypal Powers of
Virgin, Mother and Queen*



Prologue

I wrote this essay twelve years ago as a study guide for the North American Province of The Little Company of Mary. I recently came across it as I was cleaning out my computer files. I could not have written this today. In 2004, I was grieving the loss of my mother, learning what it felt like to have a hole in your heart that could never be fully healed. My oldest son was in the grips of his own existential crisis while my youngest was still in the pre-adolescent innocence of boyhood. The transition into menopause was unpleasant and I was resisting the changes that it brought. I was in dream analysis with a Jungian psychologist and was studying the Greek and Hebrew scriptures with my Episcopal faith community. I knew and felt things twelve years ago that I have long since forgotten. It seems important that I re-learn or at least remember what I once knew.

The original purpose of this essay was to explore the biographies of two women; Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Potter, the foundress of The Little Company of Mary. Both women deeply influenced the charism and spirituality of that congregation. While Mary Potter is specific to The Little Company of Mary, her story and the parallels of her life to that of the biblical Mary are transcendent and offer a universal appeal. I am convinced that the power and wisdom of the archetypal Mary is sorely needed in our world and in the church. The pious and sentimental Mary that is often presented in church teachings does not hold the numinosity nor the power of the archetypal sacred feminine. It seems more relevant now than ever to take a deep dive into the stories of Mary the Blessed Mother and Mary Potter as a study of the Divine Feminine and her relevance in these times. It is my hope that this exploration speaks to all women regardless of their choice of lifeform or life style. In this exploration, we will examine the intersection of the themes of the two Marys and note the implication of their biographies to the contemporary issues facing our world. Their biographies offer a symbolic and archetypal wisdom relevant to all of us who find ourselves living in the turbulent and uncertain times of this 21st century.

If we are to examine the human biographies of these women from a symbolic and archetypal perspective, it is important to have a common understanding of an archetype. An archetype is an *expression of the universal psychological patterns and energy systems that all human beings have in common.*¹ The universal patterns that we will explore related to both Marys are the archetypes of *virgin, mother, and queen.*

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist who lived in the last century, wrote extensively about archetypes. Jung is attributed to being the first person to explain the existence of archetypes and understand their applicability to the psychological and spiritual development of individuals. He explained that archetypes are universal and present in the unconscious of each person, combining in infinite variations to create a myriad of individual personalities and personas. He also believed that archetypes exist within the *collective unconscious.* The collective unconscious influences our cultural values, norms, beliefs, rituals, and customs. Archetypal images and narratives are found in mythology, folk tales, dreams and the dominant narratives of our times.

To examine the biographies of both women, we need a historic review. Although Mary Potter's biography is well documented, we have scant *primary* sources for the biography of the biblical Mary. David Richo, a Jungian scholar and author of several books on spirituality and Marianology, states that "we don't know anything clearly about the historical Mary, but we intimately know the transhistorical Mary because her reality is in our very souls."² He goes on to say that "we have always venerated not the literal Mary but the feminine dimension of the divine in her and that is in all the universe and in all of us."³ Therefore, the fruits of our exploration will be to know these two women from a symbolic perspective so that we can claim their strength and wisdom for these times.

An appreciation of the relevance of symbolism and metaphor to our everyday lives requires the use of our creative imaginations. The Hebrew and Greek scriptures speak to us of the power of a poetic imagination and invite us into that landscape. The ancient prophets and early Christian preachers were poetic and called upon the language of symbolism to speak of the Divine. In the book of Wisdom we are told about the trans-generational and trans-personal dimension of Sophia, another example of the archetype of the Divine Feminine, when we read:

¹ Johnson, Robert. Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth. HarperSanFrancisco, 1986 pg. 11

² Richo, David. Mary Within: A Jungian Contemplation of Her Titles and Powers. Crossroad, 2001

³ *ibid*

*Every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them
friends of God and prophets.*

And in Ephesians, Paul talks about the power of the in-dwelling Divine when he says:

*Glory to God, whose power working through us can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.*

In both texts we are given poetic images of an incarnation. Jung's writings provide an exegesis of the teachings found in the sacred Christian texts. He provides a psychological explanation on the incarnation, suggesting that we 'incarnate' the Divine through individual development of expanding *awareness and consciousness*. He was deeply interested in world religions and the ways in which the sacred was understood across centuries and cultures. From his studies of Christianity and human psychology, he concluded that there are *three incarnations*: the incarnation that occurred during the *annunciation*; the incarnation that occurred during *Pentecost*; and the incarnation that occurs when each person engages in the process of *individuation*. Individuation occurs when we engage in our own inner work, and are individually able to recognize our capacity for both brokenness and wholeness, sin and virtue; and integrate all these capacities into our full personhood. He described individuation as the psychological equivalent of incarnation, thus integrating the personal ego with the gifts and virtues of the indwelling Divine. He went on to say that "we are not complete as human until we activate – individuate – these gifts."⁴ His suggestion that God is incarnated in us through our own inner work and expanding consciousness is breath taking in its implication for our world. His words echo what we see in the Greek scriptures when the writers of the gospels said that the reign of God is *within* us.⁵ His writings invite us to claim the archetypal power of Mary *in solidarity with her and the ancient story of the annunciation*. If we are to believe Jung, Mary becomes more than an intercessor – she indeed resides in our souls.

So from Solomon, Paul, Jung, and Richo we are emboldened to look again at the biblical Mary and Mary Potter in order to claim their powers and bring to life their energies to meet the challenges and needs of these times.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ See Luke 17:13, Matthew 24:23-28, Mark 13:21



Mary as Virgin

Our first glance of Mary involves our understanding about her as a virgin. The belief of Mary as being pure and innocent has sparked many conversations by theologians and church officials, often resulting in doctrinal statements, calcified dogma, and sanctimonious pronouncements. The gospel accounts are not much help in settling any dispute that may arise concerning the historical Mary and her human physiology. Perhaps the conflict involving the literal nature of Mary's purity has kept us from the deeper conversation involving the symbolic aspect of virginity.

The first chronological gospel is the Gospel of Mark. Mark's gospel is believed to have been written about 64 C. E. (Common Era) and begins with the birth of John the Baptist. This gospel does not mention the annunciation or reference the purity of Mary. He wrote the gospel after the great fire in Rome in which the Christians were blamed and were being rounded up, tortured and killed. The young church was in crisis and his gospel was written to comfort and assure the neophyte Christians of their call to take up the cross and follow Jesus. His writings influenced the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Matthew's writings, which are believed to have been recorded around 75-85 C.E., don't speak of the annunciation, but do mention that Mary *was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit*⁶ before she had lived with Joseph. Joseph *being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.*⁷ An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said for him to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for the child *conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*⁸ Matthew's text quotes Isaiah as evidence of fulfilling the prophesy, and the Isaiah text describes a *young woman is with child and will bear a son*⁹ – the Hebrew translation does not imply virgin. Matthew's Gospel suggests that Mary may not have been a perpetual virgin when he writes that Joseph *'had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son.'*¹⁰ Matthew was a wise and experienced teacher, deeply schooled in the teachings of Judaism and the Law (Torah), so his account of the story is worth noting. His gospel was written to declare the authority of Jesus as the new messiah and to bridge the teachings of the Jewish tradition to the life of Christ.

⁶ Matthew 1:18

⁷ Matthew 1:19

⁸ Matthew 1: 20

⁹ Isaiah 7:14

¹⁰ Matthew 1: 25

The Gospels of Luke and John were written very close together, but with very different motives and perspectives. John's writings spoke out against the synagogue authorities and described Jesus as a mystic and prophet. His text begins with the teachings of John the Baptist. It is important to note that in John's text, he never mentions the mother of Jesus by name, only referring to Mary as *woman*.

It is only in the Gospel of Luke, the historian, where we encounter the version of a virgin birth. Luke assumes a very clear and historic perspective as he tells the gospel story as we can see in the opening four verses: "*I too decided after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.*" As a skilled storyteller, Luke wove the stories of the Hebrew scriptures into the accounts of Christ's life and ministry. Several of his passages have become classics in Christian tradition and public usage, in part because of his narrative skills.

If we can think of the psychological and symbolic understanding of virginity as being a 'woman unto oneself', not defined by status, circumstance or roles, we can read the beautiful narrative from Luke *let it be with me according to your word* and see a very different Mary than the sanitized and sentimental images we have inherited. If one approaches the Bible as a faith document and not a news report, we can move beyond literalism into a place of mystery and metaphor. A metaphoric understanding of Mary's submission to Gabriel is to understand a young woman's complete surrender to the voice of the Holy One.

Mary was a young, unmarried, uneducated woman and considered to be from the lower class of the society in which she was born. Using our poetic imaginations, we can begin to imagine how she came to hear the voice of the Divine calling her to become the mother of God. This voice could have come to her in a dream, in which once awakened, she could have completely dismissed as nonsense and the result of something that she had eaten the night before. She could have been bathing in a small stream and saw an image of an angel in the water's reflections telling her of God's will. Perhaps she was resting underneath the shade of an olive tree and heard the still voice inside her telling her of her destiny. Or she may have been going about her daily tasks, drawing fresh water from one of the wells, and been approached by a stranger bearing the news of being the *favoured one*. However it was that the voice of God spoke to her, we must understand that she *heeded* it.

We cannot underestimate the historic realities of such a 'yes'. To be young, unmarried, and with child was a dangerous place to be in that time. Clearly this was not a *choice of convenience*! At the annunciation, she grants life to the Self

(indwelling divine) through death of her ego. Her ego voice would have talked her out of this grand scheme, telling her it was much safer, wiser, and prudent to live out her life by more conventional norms. Mary's *yes* was full of paradox. She *surrenders* the needs of the ego and makes a *choice* in service to the Divine. Her ability to live the tension of the opposites is the *occasion of grace*. Mary is full of grace because she is full of yes. Her yes was considered *passively subservient* in the more traditional version of Mary that has been passed down through patriarchal teachings. It is time to relinquish that image and instead see Mary as an active participant in the salvation story.

To see Mary as a spiritual virgin takes away any need to quibble over her physiology! Such literalism trivializes the mystery. Virginity in the realm of the spiritual psyche refers to the strength and clarity of purpose that opens one to the Spirit so that a new consciousness can be born. To see Mary in this light invites us into our own willingness to partake in the ongoing salvation of the world. We can understand our own submission to the Divine not as subservience to alien powers but a willingness to surrender to the Love that seeks to be expressed in us and through us. *Surrender means to heed the call of the Spirit, to say 'yes' to the impulse that pulls us into greater wholeness.*

The biography of Mary Potter holds similar themes of wise innocence, faithfulness, and radical yeses! She too heard a still voice and marked the date as "The Friday I was called".¹¹ On November 6, 1874 she experienced the clear directive, "*I have chosen you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.*" The next day she again heard the still voice which said "*It is my will that you do this work.*" Mary Potter heard the voice of God and was faced with similar choices as those of Mary of Nazareth.

Mary Potter was frail and overprotected by a doting mother. She had been engaged briefly to family friend, but had decided (with the counsel of a Bishop) to break off the engagement and enter the Sisters of Mercy at Brighton. She remained there only briefly and returned home very ill if not disillusioned. It was after these experiences that she heard the call to found a religious order based on the example of Our Lady and to be in service to the sick and dying. Seeking the guidance of her spiritual director regarding what she considered to be a call from God, she was told that under no circumstances was she to consider this foolishness and to put the entire plan out of her mind. Her mother and brothers concurred, suggesting that her thoughts were pure folly. Here we see a young woman who by conventional standards should have listened to the council of her elders and the church authorities. However, she defied conventions and listened instead to the voice of God, who is never bound by

¹¹ Tothill, Moira. Venerable Mary Potter and The Little Company of Mary. Joan Lotter Publications. 1999

earthly norms. One cold day in January of 1877, three years after hearing the first call, Mary told her sister-in-law that she was not returning home with her after a visit to Brighton, but instead was going to London to see her brother, and from there to Nottingham to go about founding a new order. She disobeyed her mother, went against the wishes of her spiritual director, and traveled alone to a distant city with little money, no place to stay, weak from chronic illnesses and no guarantees.

Both Marys traveled dangerously and defied conventional wisdom and local custom in faithfulness to their inner voice. In these circumstances, they embodied the archetypal energies of the virgin. They were women unto themselves, not defined by custom or social norms. Their faithfulness required death of the ego and complete surrender to the voice of the Divine. We can see in both examples a fierce determination to be about the work of the reign of God.

We could ask ourselves if we are being called to defy customs or norms of our modern world. Is there a 'dominant narrative' within our society, our church or world that we must refuse? Is there an annunciation within our lives; a radical 'yes' to which we are being called?



Mary as Mother

As we continue our story of the biblical Mary, it is important to differentiate the archetypal *good mother* from that of the *Great Mother*. Mary embodied both. We can imagine with confidence that the earthly Mary was most probably the quintessential good mother. She followed the norms and traditions of the times as Jesus' mother. She took the baby Jesus to Jerusalem for circumcision, following the teachings of the church. At the temple, she met two important people who reminded her of her role in the world as the Great Mother. Simeon said this child *is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.*¹² Mary and Joseph barely had time to get over their astonishment concerning the words of Simeon, when Anna, the prophetess of the temple, also began to prophesy concerning the role this child would have in bringing about the redemption of Jerusalem. Despite these prophetic pronouncements, the mother and father of Jesus returned to their home in Nazareth and raised their son according to the norms of the times.

¹² Luke 2:31-32

Our next glimpse of the good mother is when Jesus was twelve and was taken by his parents to the city for the feast of the Passover. After a full day's journey from the city, they discovered that Jesus was not with them nor among the travelers. Again, we can use our imaginations and see the panic that overcame his parents as they noticed his absence, hurriedly returning to the city in a desperate attempt to recover Jesus. They searched for three days, finally finding him in the temple *sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions*.¹³ Confronted by his anxious parents demanding an explanation from their wayward son, he replied "*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*"¹⁴ The transition of the earthly mother to the Divine mother is foreshadowed when we are told that upon the family's return to Nazareth Jesus obeyed his parents and *His mother treasured all these things in her heart*.¹⁵ This experience must have been an existential turning point for the human Mary.

These passages help us make the transition from what it means to move beyond the earthly realm and enter into the archetypal dimensions of the Great Mother. Good mothers advise their children to wear their boots, get plenty of rest, study hard, and to avoid strangers. Perhaps in the case of the earthly Mary, we could hear her warning Jesus to stay away from that unlikely bunch of disciples that he was so taken with! The good mother may resist sending her child into an initiation experience, because she knows that the child may not make it. The biological instincts of the earthly 'good mother' activate at the thought of one's child facing the challenges of an initiation experience. I know the instincts of the 'good mother' when my own children have faced ridicule, heartbreak, and loss due to serious illness, mean spirited teachers or the everyday hurts of just growing up. Great Mother points to those experiences that hold the promise of transformation...in faith, without the need for false promises or guarantees of what lies in store for herself or the initiate. The Great Mother knows there is no escape from the suffering of the soul piercing sword as she witnesses her child in the midst of the fires of initiation. The ability of living into the wisdom of the Great Mother involves heart piercing suffering. I know such people: those parents who have survived a suicide, mental illness, addiction or existential loss of a child yet managed to survive with grace, hope and compassion – not only for themselves and their families, but for their communities and beyond.

The Gospel of John illuminates for us Mary's transcendence from the earthly mother to that of the Great Mother. Two primary events mark this journey: the wedding feast and standing at the foot of the cross.

¹³ Luke 2:46

¹⁴ Luke 2:49

¹⁵ Luke 2:51

The wedding feast at Cana is not just a story of the miracle of turning water into wine; it is a story of initiation. As a guest at the feast, Mary noticed that they were about to run out of wine. She knew her son was among the guests and she went to him to tell him of the problem. Jesus' reply to his mother was "*Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.*"¹⁶

In this passage it could be said that Jesus 'copped an attitude' with his mother. However, Mary seems unperturbed at his comment and was very clear in her response to the disciples when she told them to "*do whatever he tells you.*"¹⁷ We know that Jesus indeed did perform the miracle of turning the water into wine, and his disciples were witness to this miracle and *believed in him*. It doesn't take much imagination to see Mary saying to herself, 'if not now, when' in response to Jesus' insistence that his hour had not yet come. Wise, not needing to show her power or authority, quietly instructing the disciples to do what Jesus tells them – this is the image of the wise mother, the Great Mother. Jesus is initiated into his ministry and it is safe to assume that Mary knew exactly where this journey would end.

In John's Gospel, our last image of Mary is her standing at the foot of the cross. Here we are told that she watches from afar the events of that tragic day, and we are given a glimpse of her capacity to stand in the blackness of the death of her son, *not victim to the suffering, but victor through the suffering*. John's Gospel speaks to Mary's role as the cosmic mother when Jesus says to the disciple standing beside Mary, *here is your mother*.¹⁸ It is as though here Jesus is saying to the world that Mary's role as mother transcends any particular time in history. Through her suffering and obedience to the word of God, she has become everyone's mother, the archetypal embodiment of the Great Mother. Although not explicitly stated in the gospel writings, we know that Mary was witness to the resurrection of Jesus, and lived to see the Pentecostal fires descend upon the believers. We intuitively know that she stood among those gathered in the upper room as the fires of the Holy Spirit descended.

The narrative of Mary's role as mother is not unlike Mary Potter's story of founding the new Congregation and then withstanding the trials and tribulations of the community. The biblical Mary's savvy at the wedding feast is similar to the strength exhibited by Mary Potter when the Bishop had deposed her as Mother Superior and appointed in her place Mother Magdalen without consulting either of them. For six months she was among the rank and file until the Bishop gave her the perfunctory title of Mistress of Novices, only prescribing

¹⁶ John 2:4

¹⁷ John 2:5

¹⁸ John 19:27

that role to entail giving one lecture a week. The Congregation was being pulled apart by various issues, her role had been undermined if not outright sabotaged, and if these things weren't enough, she twice underwent surgery for breast cancer. Immediately following these events, the Bishop then directed Mary to beg for alms when traveling on a visit to her home, and then he appointed a novice, who had just been received into the community that very day, as Assistant Superior. The tensions grew worse in the community, and finally, after eighteen months of unswerving obedience, she stood her ground and insisted on a proper election. The Bishop complied, and Mary was reinstated as Superior. Like the biblical Mary, Mary Potter seemed unperturbed by the extreme circumstances and took charge of the events in her own style. Her actions were not motivated by self promotion; rather, she acted in service to her beloved community. These events are testimony to her role as the archetypal good mother in the establishment of the community and nurturing its growth, and as Great Mother in the suffering that she experienced in service to the community as it underwent various rites of passage and stages of development.

The themes of death and resurrection were evident in the biographies of both Marys. Mary Potter witnessed the birth and mini-deaths of her struggling Congregation, the one that she had birthed. Additionally, she was given last rights in June of 1883, but lived 20 more years! Her own physical story is one of resurrection. Though near a physical death, her spirit knew that she had too much work to do and that her time had not yet come to leave her earthly work. Much of her work was undoing the devastation created by the Bishop and ensuring that the fruits of her labor were congruent with her original vision and call. She faithfully labored to ensure that the apostolate of the Congregation was one of deep prayer, spirituality, and ministry to the sick and dying.

These examples help us understand the power of the archetypal mother. Good mothers nourish and comfort the new life they have birthed and help *form* the new life as it grows into its full expression. Great Mothers point the way to the *transformational* experiences of death and rebirth. Our challenge is to take these examples and claim the power of the mother archetype for ourselves and for those creative impulses seeking new life through us.

In the book, [The Secret Life of Bees](#), Sue Monk Kidd explains to a young orphaned girl that the power of the Blessed Mother resides inside her heart. We can read this passage and be assured that the archetypal powers of the Great Mother reside within each of us; all we have to do is claim them in our lives. Here is what she says:

“Listen to me now, Lily. I’m going to tell you something I want you always to remember, all right?”

Her face had grown serious, intent. Her eyes did not blink.
“All right,” I said, and I felt something electric slide down my spine.
“Our Lady is not some magical being out there somewhere, like a fairy godmother. She’s not the statue in the parlor. She’s something inside of you. Do you understand what I’m telling you?”
“Our lady is inside me, “ I repeated, not sure I did.
“You have to find a mother inside yourself. We all do. Even if we already have a mother, we still have to find this part of ourselves inside.”
She held her hand out to me.
“Give me your hand.”
I lifted my left hand and placed it in hers. She took it and pressed the flat of my palm up against my chest, over my beating heart.
“You don’t have to put your hand on Mary’s heart to get strength and consolation and rescue, and all the other things we need to get through life,” she said.
“You can place it right here on your own heart. *Your own heart.*”
August stepped closer. She kept the pressure steady against my hand. “All those times your father treated you mean, Our Lady was the voice in you that said, ‘No, I will not bow down to this. I am Lily Melissa Owens, I will not bow down.’ Whether you could hear this voice or not, she was there saying it.”
I took my other hand and placed it on top of hers, and she moved her free hand on top of it, so we had this black-and-white stack of hands resting upon my chest.
“When you’re unsure of yourself,” she said, “when you start pulling back into doubt and small living, she’s the one inside saying, ‘Get up from there and live like the glorious girl you are.’ She’s the power inside you, you understand?”
Her hands stayed where they were but released their pressure.
“And whatever it is that keeps widening your heart, that’s Mary, too, not only the power inside you but the love. And when you get down to it, Lily, that’s the only purpose grand enough for a human life. *Not just to love—but to persist in love.*¹⁹ (*emphasis mine*)

¹⁹ Kidd, Sue Monk: [The Secret Life of Bees](#). Penguin Books, 2002. (I used this excerpt in the eulogy that I gave at my mother’s funeral in 2003.)

In this amazing work of fiction, Sue Monk Kidd assures us that it is possible to embody the power of the Great Mother, and offers an image of the ancient Black Madonna as a source of this power. Black skinned Madonnas were found in Eastern Europe and are considered some of the oldest images of the Madonna in the world. Black Madonnas are often the rallying images revered by oppressed peoples struggling against persecution.²⁰



Mary as Queen

There does not exist an exact biblical text that explicitly states that Mary was assumed into heaven. The dogma of the Assumption stating *'at the end of her earthly course, Mary was assumed into heavenly glory, body and soul'* was an ecclesial pronouncement made by Pius XII in 1950 in *Munificentissimus Deus*. Similar to the disputes concerning Mary's virginity, many men over many centuries had argued and attempted to prove their particular perspective on this issue. The *Munificentissimus Deus* put an end to the conversation!

A symbolic or archetypal understanding of The Feast of the Assumption is to see Mary's assumption symbolically as the union of body and spirit; that heaven and earth are one; two aspects of one reality. Symbolically, her assumption signifies the union of the opposites, and we know that to live in the tension of the opposites is the place of grace and transformation. Mary's assumption moves us out of the 'either/or' thinking that keeps us stuck in absolutes and irreconcilable differences. Using our poetic imaginations, we can see this festival as a celebration of liberation. We are freed from the erroneous notion that human beings are separated from God; rather, we are assured that our bodies are at home in heaven. This feast day is a celebration of non-duality, a feast day of wholeness and integration.

This festival is also a 'yes' to women, who are still too often treated as second-class citizens by many in our society and the hierarchal church. Mary's assumption is a statement of her rightful place as Divine, giving us at long last a feminine and compassionate face of God. Mary assumes her rightful place in the royal court, assumes her authority as Queen of Heaven. Perhaps Pius XII couldn't help himself but to finally put an end to the interminable arguments to

²⁰ Ibid. Refer to the afterward provided by Penguin Books "A Penguin Reader's Guide".

prove or not prove the fact that Mary was assumed into heaven; perhaps the voice of God speaking to him was the Queen, insisting on her rightful place!

Carl Jung states that the proclamation by Pius XII inaugurated a quadernity into the Heavenly realm, the Trinity plus Mary. He went on to say that, *“This is the most important religious event since the reformation...The new dogma expresses a new hope for the fulfillment of that yearning for peace that stirs deep down in the soul, and for a resolution of the threatening tension between the opposites.”* ^{21 22}

The parallel in the life of Mary Potter perhaps can best be seen in the way that Mary’s body survived in her last years. Heart disease, cancer, tuberculosis, chronic bronchial alveolitis, and failing eyesight racked her body, yet she was available in her cell and her sitting-room (her court) where she received the Queen of Italy, Cardinals, clergy, religious, rich and poor. Her spirit prevailed, and despite her physical limitations, she gave counsel, wisdom, and comfort to the legions of visitors that came to her. Clearly, the world acknowledges the divinity that was expressed through her and in her by virtue of being named ‘Venerable’ by Pope John Paul II, the first step to canonization. Mary Potter died on April 9, 1913 at the age of 65. *It isn’t difficult to imagine her walking with Mary of Nazareth, both wearing the crowns of heaven.*



Epilogue

Carl Jung coined the term synchronicity to help explain the mystery of things ‘turning up’ just when one needs them. He cited examples of such events in his work with patients. The mysterious gift can be an image, a person, an object, an insight, or a dream that seems to come just at the right time. It seems more than a coincidence that I rediscovered this document a few months ago. The words I wrote so many years ago seem even more relevant today. I am deeply grateful to The Little Company of Mary for the privilege of working with them in 2004 and being asked to write a reflection in preparation for their Chapter. I am most grateful that they introduced me to Mary Potter!

²¹ Richo, David. Mary Within: A Jungian Contemplation of Her Titles and Powers. Crossroad Publishing, 2001. pg. 75

²² As I was proofing this page a newsfeed popped up stating that Pope Francis just announced to a reporter as he was returning from commemorating the Reformation that the Catholic Church’s ban on women will stand forever. NY Times, Nov. 1, 2016

Our world has significantly changed over these past twelve years. We have experienced four of the ten hottest years in recorded history. Americans elected the first African-American man as President, and are on the eve of possibly electing the first woman president. Democratic institutions are under attack. Terrorist cells are proliferating and cyber-terrorism is a constant threat. There is a refugee crisis of global scale. Just a few days ago, Pope Francis celebrated the 499th year of the Reformation and on the same day proclaimed that the church's stance on women's ordination will prevail into perpetuity. Religious life as it has been known over the past one hundred and fifty years is shapeshifting. Our entire global family is experiencing a time of great turbulence and uncertainty.

There will be voices from within and without who try to soothe and smooth over what is happening. These voices will suggest that it is possible to avoid the pain of transformation and that we must go back to a time when things were simpler and less complicated. Don't trust those voices. We know that the Good Mother could not save Jesus from the cross. There can be no promises of safety, security, or certainty that everything will turn out all right. The old forms, structures, theologies and customs are artifacts of the past and are passing away. If we are to gestate, incubate, midwife or birth an emergent future, we must be willing to surrender to the unknown. We need to find others who are willing to go on the journey with us, and then stay together. We must summon the archetypal powers of the Divine Feminine. Our world needs her.

***Three Faces of Mary:
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Virgin, Mother and Queen***



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Artist's Statement

“Claiming Virgin, Mother and Queen”

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I sensed a deep, fluid energy in Deborah Asberry's invitation to personally and communally claim the archetypal energies of Virgin, Mother and Queen. The movement of Grace through each of these energies releases an inner dance of evolution, beckoning us into an unknown future.

The open arm of Virgin energy extends with light into potential and possibility. The creative fire of the great and loving Mother rises within and reaches beyond. The Queen energy ascends in white wisps of light, trusting the amethyst wisdom within. Together, at one with Divine Feminine Energy, we are inspired to create new ways of BE-ing.

Doris Klein, CSA