

An online rosary group, The Way of the Rose, brings me great joy and has become my primary spiritual community. Every day, someone writes a reflection to support our ongoing novenas. This was my offering in December 2024.

Annunciation

We often talk about Mary's Yes, and it continues to inspire throughout the ages: Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel and invited to bear a child and she said Yes...

Years ago, in what feels like a different lifetime, I taught a Jungian psychology class, *Myths, Dreams, & Symbols*, to university students. One of the texts was Joseph Campbell's *Man & His Symbols* - I would do it differently now, and would definitely promote a less gendered languaging, but in that pre-internet day and age, teaching Jung rather than Freud was revolutionary in and of itself. The assignment was always for students to identify an adventure in their own lives and to experience themselves as the hero. The lesson was often profound: our lives, even when we are still young, contain archetypal elements that speak to a greater meaning which I now think of as the long story of our souls. For me as the instructor, shepherding students through the structures of their stories again and again provided me with a backdrop that became second nature, and it ingrained in me an archetypal sense of my own life. My students' inspiration became mine.

In the hero's journey, the story begins with a call. Something unexpected crosses the Hero's path (be the hero male or female) - a meeting with a magical frog, an unexpected light in the forest, or a visit from a supernatural being issues a call to adventure. There is then a choice to be made: to say yes accepts the invitation and the adventure, to say no invites stagnation and spiritual malaise or death.

Visited by an angel, Mary, of course, said yes. Because of my academic training, the invitation to the adventure, the journey, the Life comes up for me every time we announce the Annunciation and launch into Mary's story. They weave together as I live my own life. I watch for invitations and recognise them in their many forms. Then there is the choice to be made - you can cross the threshold or not. Step into the journey, the adventure, the sacred story of your life, or not. If you do, what next? You follow the signs just as a pilgrim on the camino follows the yellow arrows of the Way, or as the labyrinth walker puts one foot in front of the other without being able to see the entire journey to the centre.

I am a person who loves something new. I love Mondays, crisp notebooks, and the promise of Christmas Eve when anything feels possible. Even winding a skein of yarn to start knitting a new pair of socks or a scarf to warm a cold neck brings me a breath of excitement and fresh interest.

Announcing the Annunciation at the start of every cycle of Mysteries gives me a frisson of excitement. For that brief moment, anything is possible. As we pray the beads, Mary accepts the invitation every time - she says Yes again and again. With my love of newness, I thrill to her acceptance, and her every yes invites my own. We are hard wired to respond to the mystery of Annunciation, of calling, of invitation. It is an embodied mystery that leads us forward into Life.



We don't know the journey our yes will launch, but if we do not set forth, we will stagnate.

Photo: vintage card, artist uncertain