



Rosa Mystica Reflection

(November 5, 2020)

Mary as the Archetype of Courageous Faith

We know very little of Mary historically except we can assume she was a real person subject to the parochial beliefs and attitudes of her time and place. As Christians, we learn of the Annunciation through the simple narrative that one day an Angel named Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she, a virgin, would have a child who would be the Son of God. Her disbelief as to how such a birth could happen still echoes after more than 2000 years through Gospel writings today. But she chose to believe because of her faith in the greater good, in God.

What is most remarkable regarding artists' depictions of the Annunciation over time is the consistency of Mary's image. The lines and contours of her face, regardless of her color or clothing reveal an expression that always has a beautiful elegant stillness. Mary's depiction models the kind of inner tranquility that radiates through a person with a strong faith.

Language is often limited in its ability to convey the enormity of Mary's faith. We owe a debt of gratitude to the visual artists who, over the centuries, both known and unknown, have captured her expression so consistently. All we have to do is turn our awareness to her image to remember what it means to have profound faith.