



To trust or not to trust -- one of life's great questions.

There is something in us which spontaneously, unreflectively trusts life. We drink water and eat food depending that it will refresh, nourish and sustain us. We enter homes and other buildings whose construction we take for granted will shelter us safely. Day by day we pass people on the street expecting that they mean us no harm. We anticipate that family and friends care for us.

But then water may be polluted and food contaminated. Faulty wiring may cause a home to burn. People get mugged on the street. Children are sometimes abused. Relationships fail. Experience teaches us caution, even suspicion.

To maintain trust as an adult means to accept risk, to be willing to walk in the dark as well as in the light. It means that we must live forward with confidence in the midst of ambiguity.

Advent is a time of trust and hope, a time of containment, of quiet waiting; it is Mary's season *par excellence*. And it is the image of Mary which dominates the biblical scene of this week's liturgy.

Mary – virgin, mother, woman of faith, the first Christian. She is the first to say "yes" to Jesus Lord. Mary is God's heroine for our sake. She opens herself to being impregnated by God's word. She submits herself to a radical transformation. In doing so, in giving flesh to him who is Christ for us, she is the first among us who may point to Jesus and say: "This is my body; this is my blood."

"Blessed is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled."

The model disciple, she exhibits in her life the pattern for conversion: openness to God's word, submission to transformation by the implanted word, the realization of the divine life within.

We need not, indeed can not accomplish the whole work. Our task is to trust, to cultivate the disposition of openness, and receptivity, to expect that the Lord's words to us will be fulfilled.

will know all things are possible in God.

Side 1: Holy is the place within me where God lives.  
God's tender fingers reach out from age to age  
to touch the softened inner spaces of those  
who open their souls in hope.

Side 2: I have experienced the creative power of God's  
embracing arms and I know the cleansing fire  
of unconditional love.

Side 1: I am freed from all earthly authority  
and know my bonding to the Author of all  
earthly things.

Side 2: I am filled with the news of good things;  
my favor with God,  
faithful trust in the gentle shadow of  
the Most High, the mystery of my son, Jesus,  
the gift of companionship with my beloved  
kinswoman, Elizabeth, who believes as I believe.

Side 1: The place in my heart that I had filled  
with thoughts of fear and inadequacy  
has been emptied and I am quiet within.

Side 2: God comes to save Israel, our holy family,  
remembering that we are the ones who remember,  
...according to the kinship we have known...  
remembering that we are the ones who remember  
and that where God and people trust each other  
there is home.