

Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote an amazing number of song lyrics. But the foundational line for one their greatest songs was lifted verbatim from the gospel of Luke:

*When I find myself in trouble, Mother Mary comes to me, speaking words of wisdom:
Let it be*

Long before her “let it be:” “when I find myself in trouble” was where Mary found herself as our reading begins. She was still a young girl, likely 14 or 15 years old, when this encounter unfolds. Gabriel suddenly appears, though Luke *nowhere* says that Mary is told who or what the visitor is. Mary is understandably perplexed. Agitated. Troubled. When Gabriel says not to be afraid and speaks of God’s favor and promises, Mary remains – well, believable. “How can this be?”

But notice, Mary doesn’t say: this *can’t* be. Even in her perplexity, even in the mystery Gabriel announces: Mary does not close the door. Her question is not one of unbelief. Her question is one of possibility. How? Gabriel responds by revealing God as One for whom nothing is impossible. And then? Mary becomes the gospel’s first disciple. *Let it be*. Or you could say, the gospel’s first new creation. In the Greek Version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, that verb translated as “let it be” occurs repeatedly in Genesis 1: “let there be. . .” So faith, so life, begins.

For Reflection and Action:

Put yourself in Mary’s place in this story: what would you be feeling; what would you be asking?

How has the church struggled with, how have you wondered about, the role of Mary?

In what ways have “how can this be” and “let it be” been a part of your faith’s journey?