

Journey into Marian Spirituality

Judith Best, SSND

March, 2008

Reflecting on Mary's role in my life has been like watching a lovely rosebud unfolding. Mary grounds me in my community, church, family and Mother Earth. In sharing this reflection I raise several questions that reflect my desire to be faithful to church teaching and listen to the Spirit in the dialogue of my contemporaries.

Growing up in a Pre-Vatican II Church

My life has been under Mary's care since my birth: others told me I was born while the Angelus was ringing. Mary's presence in our family was found in a lovely painting of the Madonna and Child that graced our living room. My mother's Irish energy often included encouragement to pray to Mary when in doubt. She was also aware of the "wee people" whose presence in our lives was a reality to me. My father's quiet, hard working German personality was the opposite of my Irish mother; but both found solace in saying the rosary. Theirs was a "stormy" relationship, as my mother described their marriage. Mary's presence was like calming background music that no one really listened to, but she seemed to keep family tensions from destroying us.

Meeting the School Sisters of Notre Dame as my high school teachers I was attracted to their dedication and good humor. But there was not much support from my family for a religious vocation.

When I wanted to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame my parents were not pleased. They took me to Europe to try to change my mind. En route to Lourdes they "slipped" some money to two sisters traveling on the same train, asking them to talk me out of entering SSND after high school. However, it was at Lourdes that I gained the courage to enter the congregation against my parents' wishes. It was 1958 and one year later the name I received as a novice was "Mary Lourdes."

Living in a pre-Vatican church I was inspired by May Crownings, the Litany of Loreto, and the rosary. Entering SSND in 1958 brought me into a world of celebrating Marian feasts with world class Gregorian chant. Our music teacher, S. Theoda Wieck, SSND, was the first mystic I ever knew. She taught us to pray the music. High Masses and Solemn Vespers, billowing incense, glowing candles, and the hushed contemplation of my sisters gave me a love of Mary that no words can express. She was honored as our Queen and Mother; I felt blessed to be called to her service as a School Sister of Notre Dame.

I was in those classes which were among the beneficiaries of the Sister Formation Conference. Our SSND teachers were among the finest any where and I consider my education a vital context for my own spiritual journey. I received a B.A. in History from our sister formation college in St. Louis in 1962.

After Vatican II Meeting Mary in Scripture

After Vatican II, (1962 – 65) there was a shift in Marian practice. The church encouraged us to meet her in scripture and let her be the faithful Jewish wife and mother she was. Meeting her in scripture, particularly in directed retreats, opened my heart to another Mary; a woman who freely consented to God's request, (Annunciation) who rejoiced with her older cousin, (Visitation) who was unabashed in proclaiming her hope in God's limitless compassion for the lowly, (Magnificat) and whose fidelity at the cross (John 19) called me to solidarity with all who are oppressed. For SSNDs she was the one who saw unmet needs and courageously sought help. "Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you," was Mother Theresa's motto and it took root in my heart.

High School Teacher

As a religion and social studies teacher in several high schools I cherished moments of Marian spirituality that I could share with students. Mary's Days at Rosati-Kain High in St. Louis, an all girls' school, were times of special music, art, and Eucharistic celebrations that included liturgical dancing, a schola singing a special Marian hymn, and developing sensitivity in young women regarding their own dignity and potential. Picnic lunches outside, beautifying our environment with cleanup crews, and celebrating an urban spring festival made Mary's Day memorable for faculty and students.

Master's Degree

Working toward a Masters in Theology from the University of Notre Dame put me into campus community where the Lourdes Grotto and hootenannies on the lake were two sacred memories. Anti-Vietnam rallies as well as mind-expanding debates gave Notre Dame an energy that has sparked my desire for life-long learning. The Civil Rights Movement taught me the prophetic power of non-violence. The role of women in church and society energized my dreams.

It was also a time when dear friends and community members left SSND and moved into a different relationship with the church. For some who came to class one summer as Fr. X and Sr. Y, might return the next summer as Mr. and Mrs. Like others who chose to remain in religious life I continued to ask myself "Why am I staying? The answers were elusive as I saw much of a former way of life that I had found attractive, changing. However, I entered into the process of post-Vatican renewal with my sisters and had hope for the future.

1970's

The 1970s brought many challenges within the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Our constitution, *You are Sent*, called us to new ways of governance, greater responsibility for our own spiritual development, a widening of our hearts to embrace diversity both within the congregation and the world beyond Notre Dame.

It was during the summer of 1970 that I was called to work in spiritual development, implementing the General Chapter directive to establish Centers of Spiritual Development. This meant that I traveled widely visiting my sisters in Europe and North America before actually establishing a Center in St. Louis.

Communism

It was also my first direct experience with communism as I visited our sisters in Berlin in August, 1970. I was touring Europe with my mother and left the group to fly alone to Berlin, arriving at the convent unannounced and without authorization. The sisters were very cool at that first meeting; then they decided to test my authenticity by quizzing me on the history of the congregation. With deep gratitude I realized they were pleased with my response and accepted me into the community. In subsequent conversations I realized that the week before I arrived, they had hired a teacher for the gymnasium, discovering later that she was a communist. This community has received me graciously for five additional visits in the last 35 years.

While with them I remember seeing Mother Armgard, their provincial leader, showing me her false bottom purse. If she had important documents to take to the East zone, she would place them in her false bottom purse, and place it before the statue of the Blessed Mother the night before her departure. The next morning she would follow her intuition as to whether it was safe to carry them or to revert to her regular purse and take them another time. Mary's powerful presence to our sisters was evident: they lived so close to the Berlin Wall that we could hear shots during the night.

Spiritual Direction Ministry

As I continued in spiritual development the call to serve in spiritual direction opened me to another world of faith-filled adults. I remember a lovely Baptist woman, a coordinator of the Billy Graham Crusade in St. Louis, who asked to make a directed retreat. As we met, she taught me so much about the Word of God. And the so-called boundaries between Christian churches began to blur, being replaced by communion, deeper than either of us could imagine. Devotion to Mary was not part of her spirituality, but a deep relationship with Jesus was evident in her life of service and compassion.

Hearing "Confessional Material"

Listening as a spiritual director meant that I heard much "confessional material." At those times my companion would often express her/his sadness that I was forbidden to

celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with them. And I was aware of the “disconnect” between honoring Mary and refusing to legitimize the gifts of dedicated women.

Role of Psychology

As we moved into the 70's, psychology became an integral part of the spirituality of wholeness. Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, promoted an emphasis on the soul, seeing spirituality as a priority in individuation. He engaged dreams as fountains of living water, flowing into consciousness. He taught that archetypes, those collections of universal consciousness, constellated under Mother, Father, etc. called forth a new understanding of personal integration. An understanding of the Great Mother, for example, had been part of the human psyche since the beginning of consciousness.

For School Sisters of Notre Dame this awareness of the role of psychology in spirituality and integration was a challenge. Where do feelings fit into the scheme of religious obedience? Those SSNDs who received a Ph.D. in Psychology often met with opposition as they introduced their classes to the role of feelings in community life or discerning another ministry.

Learning to Trust My Experience

For me, living religious life with integrity meant looking at new ideas, not only as data but processing my resistance or acceptance of them. I was learning to process what others said out of my own experience and the experiences of others. It was often a frightening and liberating experience to trust my own inner authority, informed by church teaching, but not limited by it.

Without naming it at the time I, and many others, were claiming adulthood in a church whose power was often based on a parent-child relationship. Fear of punishment was/is held over the heads of those who see life differently. And because of a patriarchal mindset, a woman's experience was often discounted.

Much more could be said but School Sisters of Notre Dame took the call of Vatican II seriously. Provincial Assemblies, general chapters, and numerous meetings educated us in participative governance, collaborative dialogue, and faith-sharing that changed our lives and led us into new ministries.

Mary emerged in these settings as the “Magnificat” woman who knew God's power could “topple the mighty from their thrones.” Mary gave us courage that “God would raise up the lowly.”

Mary as Mother of the Oppressed

It was out of a “Magnificat” consciousness that I attended a symposium on Ignatian Spirituality in San Francisco, 1973. Integrating “action for justice being constitutive of the gospel message” (U.S. Bishops) there was an opportunity to become acquainted

with the struggles of the United Farm Workers who were hoping to establish the first non-white-led union in the U.S. At the symposium participants were invited to join the UFW on the picket lines. I chose to participate.

As the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe was carried on the picket line, and we sang hymns and said the rosary, I met Mary in a new way. This choice to stand in solidarity resulted in being arrested and spending two weeks in the Fresno County Industrial Farm. During our two weeks in prison, we had nightly prayer vigils where 56 Chicano women and sisters could take an hour of prayer during the long nights. In those silent hours we sat at a picnic table placed in the center of the room. On the table was a holy card depicting Our Lady of Guadalupe which someone had “framed” in the foil from a gum wrapper. On either side of the holy card were copies of the English and Spanish New Testaments. Those midnight hours were special times of reflection, praying with Chicano wives and mothers, concerned about their families and their future.

Two weeks later, to avoid publicity we were released from prison at midnight. Dorothy Day, age 73, who had been imprisoned with us, had become a new image of Marian devotion for me, along with the Chicano women and men who had risked everything.

This experience changed my view of media, criminal justice, and the power of corporations to distort information and create a different picture. I was learning to trust my own experience and found it revelatory.

The Women’s Movement

Within the broader church the women’s movement was being reflected in greater participation of women as pastoral life coordinators, administrators of parishes, chancellors, etc. Along with hundreds of women, I participated in “Listening Sessions” on “Women in the Church.” These were sponsored by diocesan offices, initiated by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, from 1973 – 1983. This Ad Hoc committee on “Women in the Church and Society” encouraged many women to share their hopes for the church as well as stories of domestic violence, clerical abuse, and being silenced in their desire to serve in church leadership.

Simultaneously, some sisters who had Masters of Divinity degrees offered their services to Bishops, hoping to serve in smaller, poor parishes as the priest shortage deepened. One former SSND shared her experience of celebrating a “dry Mass” as part of her course work for the degree. She said her priest professor wept when she completed the “dry Mass,” acknowledging her gifts in leading worship.

It was in 1979 that Pope John Paul II came to the United States and was greeted at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. by S. Teresa Kane. Her three minute address mentioned Mary in several instances and deepened my awareness of the role of women in the church, or lack thereof. (See, “New York Times Fact Sheet,” **Voices of Change**, *Sturdy Roots II*, for her full address.)

1980's

In 1981, five bishops were given an award by the U.S. Catholic magazine for their work in "Furthering the Cause of Women in the Church." They were Archbishops Raymond Hunthausen and Rembert Weakland, Bishops Charles Buswell, Michael McAuliffe and William McManus. These men of the church risked their careers and reputations by their solidarity with women. Their courage is gratefully remembered.

As Catholic women found their voice and held positions of responsibility in diocesan offices and as parish life coordinators, the hierarchical church often responded out of fear. When difficult questions were raised such as participation in decision-making for women or the question of ordination, Mary would be raised as the exemplar of submission. And gifted, faith-filled women often felt silenced, some leaving the Catholic community looking for those churches that might welcome them into ordained ministry. Others found their way into interfaith havens of dialogue and contemplation, such as Buddhism, Hindu Ashrams or among Native Peoples. There the feminine was honored in Mother Earth, Tara, or Kali.

At the same time there was a new wave of conservatism influencing all aspects of politics such as the Moral Majority and Opus Dei, along with other movements. And violence against women, especially in the United States continued to escalate.

Liberation Theology

Opus Dei became stronger in the Catholic Church as Base Communities in Latin America fostered reflection on the Word of God from one's lived experience. This vibrant educational process led to deep faith-sharing, strengthening oppressed communities, who saw Our Lady of Guadalupe as their Companera on their dangerous journey. Archbishops Helder Camera, Oscar Romero, Cardinal Arns, and Gustavo Gutierrez among others, championed the rights of the downtrodden. Liberation theology was viewed as dangerous to military dictators who negotiated with church leaders to destroy all who opposed them. It was a time of martyrs and some were priests and sisters we had known and worked with, murdered because of their stand in solidarity with the oppressed. Pilgrimage sites such as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Aparecida, Our Lady of Suyapa, to name just a few, are filled with pilgrims seeking to honor Mary.

Simultaneously, liberation theology, or theology from below, was condemned by the church. Many liberation theologians continue to be silenced such as Jon Sobrino, Ivone Gebara, and others.

European Devotion to Mary

Devotion to Mary throughout Europe was increasing as pilgrimage sites saw and are seeing record crowds. Visitors seem especially eager to visit the gothic cathedrals

dedicated to Mary as well as the shrines to the Black Madonna of Le Puy, Montserrat, Altoetting and others.

The power of Mary's energy has been seen in political struggles from Latin America to Germany. In his recent book, "The Secret Mission," Dan Kurzman explores the plot to kidnap Pope Pius XII by the Nazis in 1943 – 1945. Due to complex political negotiations the plans were abandoned. In the course of the dialogue among Hitler and his henchmen, Heinrich Himmler warned that kidnapping the pope might unleash the Catholic energy around Mary. What might Heinrich Himmler have known that we may have minimized?

This energy has been seen in Poland and elsewhere.

Our Lady Czestochowa

The Solidarity Movement offers evidence of Mary's power in changing unjust structures. Under the protection of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Lech Walesa offered his life to the struggle against communism. His wife accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in 1983 since he was in prison at the time. He often wore a badge of Our Lady of Czestochowa, who was acknowledged as the catalyst for Poland's resistance to communism. During the imposition of martial law a copy of the icon of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa was circulating in the villages. This copy of the icon was so powerful in igniting the passion of resistance among the people that the government put the painting under house arrest.

Pilgrimages to her shrine at Jasna Gora became rallying points for all who wanted to topple communism. And it was Mary who was the catalyst for change.

2000 and Beyond

Moving forward to the last eight years we can see a flowering of information on Mary. Among these there are three women whose reflections on Mary I've found helpful: Mary Maher, SSND, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, and Charlene Spretnak.

In 2001 Mary Maher, SSND asked the question: "What are they saying about Mary?" In her presentation for the Theological Development Committee, she suggests that whatever we say about Mary we're saying about ourselves. She asks us to consider the questions: "How do I let God's fire enter my life and renew the Earth?" and "How do I fit Mary's experiences into my life?" Standing with Mary, an extraordinary woman, praising the Trinity is our call and our challenge.

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, in her book, "Truly Our Sister," (2003) developed a biblical perspective showing Mary as a devout Jewish woman, courageous, and modeling an extraordinary inner authority, a source of hope in ecumenical dialogue and across cultures. She was portrayed as the "compassionate companion," particularly of those whose suffering she understood. Drawing on scholarship and the experience of Asian,

Latina, African-American, and Protestant scholars, she showed the diversity in understanding Mary. This enriching scholarship continues to deepen as women share their views of Mary out of their lived experience.

The third woman whose work on Mary has guided my thinking is Charlene Spretnak. In October, 2007, I attended a workshop in San Francisco on “Mary and Modernity,” at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Our teacher, Charlene Spretnak, is on the same faculty with the cosmologist, Brian Swimme, and has written a book entitled: “Missing Mary.” (2004) Her thesis is that the pre-Vatican II Church saw Mary as more than a human being. Her status was rooted in the bible plus centuries of ethnic devotions with shrines and cathedrals built in her honor. Often they were built on the site of ancient shrines honoring the divine feminine of pre-Christian cultures. Such shrines include Chartres Cathedral, built on the site of a Celtic shrine; Our Lady of Guadalupe built on Tepeyac hill, the shrine of the Aztec deity, Tonantzin-Cihuacoatl.

In her course on “Mary and Modernity,” Charlene Spretnak developed a context for studying Mary out of the consciousness of the Universe Story and the reality of a pre-Christian culture. Studying Mary in the context of our 13.7 billion year old universe was thought provoking. Looking at Christianity through the eyes of the Hubble telescope, and the awareness that the universe is expanding, we see Mary in another perspective. Could her presence be an organic evolution of the millions of years of honoring the divine feminine in pre-Christian cultures? Can we link Mary with the archetype of the Eternal Feminine as described by Carl Jung?

The views of Mary Maher, SSND, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, and Charlene Spretnak have provided insights for my own Marian pilgrimage. The abundance of interest in Mary is producing a constellation of positive energy centered in this woman. Is she only an outstanding Jewish woman whose relationship to Jesus has been tried and true? Or is she someone whose stature has evolved over centuries and her connection with the Divine Feminine is igniting hearts with compassion? Or is she so filled with integrity as to contain all of the above?

Question for School Sisters of Notre Dame

In studying renewal among religious communities of women for the past several years, I have asked several dedicated to Mary if they have initiated some kind of dialogue reclaiming her spirit in their congregations. To my knowledge no religious community dedicated to Mary has actively engaged in such a dialogue.

What would it mean for SSND to tap into this source of energy to help co-create a new perspective? What depth of union with God might she teach us to hunger for? What reservoir of trust might she open to us as her daughters? And how might we, in our super nova phase of life, send forth an explosion of compassion to our Earth and all we meet?

Can We Reclaim Mary as School Sisters of Notre Dame? How might we Begin?

Here is a possible way to address this among School Sisters of Notre Dame.

A contemporary American Jungian psychologist, Jean Shinoda Bolen, has inspired dedicated women to form a million circles of wise women, with spirituality at their center. She considers three prerequisites for such circles of wise women:

1. Gather three women who are focused outside themselves; her book, "Crones don't Whine" gives the personality type needed for this selfless focusing.
2. These three women should have fun together and enjoy being together.
3. Their motivation for action must be love.

Her theory is that when the millionth circle of wise women with a spiritual center is created it will be the tipping point for the collapse of violence, domination, and patriarchy. Such circles are already in most parts of the world.

SSND Beginnings

Perhaps such a circle happened more than 175 years ago when Karolina Gerhardinger, Anna Hotz, and Miss Blass, met to discuss forming a community to educate girls. The other member of this wise women's circle was Mary, whom Mother Theresa called the "Superior" of the new community. Could we, as School Sisters of Notre Dame engage in dialogue regarding what it might mean to invite Mary to be a member of each Circle of Wise Women? I believe this conscious desire to embrace Mary's fierce compassion would tap a source of energy beyond our imagining.

Ideas to Consider

1. There has been serious study of Mary in Roman Catholicism since the Council of Ephesus in 431 C. E. There she was named "Theotokos" Christ-bearer, and proclaimed Mother of God.
2. Is it mere coincidence that Ephesus was also the site of the temple of Artemis (Diana) from the 11th century B.C.E.? Her temple was acclaimed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
3. It is noteworthy that after the proclamation of Mary as "Theotokos," the people of Ephesus danced in the streets, carried the Bishops on their shoulders and celebrated with the hierarchical church for three days.
4. Our Byzantine sisters and brothers have had a much stronger role for Mary in their lives, their liturgy, and their devotion. Their focus on Mary as Co-Redemptrix is being considered by Pope Benedict XVI as a new dogma.
5. The Middle Ages saw the rise of gothic cathedrals dedicated to Mary. Many were built on sacred sites where indigenous peoples had gathered to honor the sacred feminine. Chartres was the site of a Celtic sacred spring, and the Black Madonna of Einsiedeln is one of the most contemporary forms of ancient worship, going

back to a pre-Christian era. The concentration of sacred energies in the Earth often designates such shrines.

6. In 1539, Our Lady of Guadalupe's appearance to a Nahua Indian, Juan Diego, when she identified herself as one of his people, describing her role as a Mother, filled with compassion. Her appearance was on Tepeyac hill, the same sacred spot where the Aztec goddess, Tonantzin-Cihuacoatl had been worshipped.
7. In the 1800s apparitions of Mary occurred in Lourdes, France, Fatima, Portugal, and numerous other places. At Lourdes Mary's gift was a healing spring. Often Mary identifies herself with Earth, not unlike her portrayal in the Book of Revelation (12) where she is clothed with the sun and the moon and stars are at her feet.
8. Another example was brought home to General Chapter delegates when they visited Aparecida, Brazil. In 1717 while fisherman were catching fish for a banquet of a dignitary, the body of the Virgin, turned black by the water, was caught in the net. The head was missing from the body of the statue. The fisherman cast his net again and "caught" the head. Thus she became known as Aparecida, the one who had "appeared." Unlike the white virgin of their conquerors, she had become black in the waters and her identity with the poor, hearing their cries, made her their companion on life's journey. As the Brazilian poet, Pedro Casaldaliga has written:

- Sing on the mountaintop your prophecy
- That overthrows the rich and the powerful, O Mary,
- Raise up those held down, mark the renegades,
- Dance the samba in the joy of many feet... I. Gebara, p. 157

(I remember S. Maria Josette, one of our Brazilian sisters, dressing up as Mary and dancing the infant Jesus around an SSND circle to express an inspiring Brazilian Christmas custom.)

Our Lady of Aparecida's shrine holds more people than St. Peter's. She is the Mother of the Excluded, and as Archbishop Dom Aloysius Lorscheider explained: "all that have been marginalized by conventional society are upheld and revered in the figure of Brazil's Black Mother of the Excluded- the poor, the broken, the female, the dark-skinned, the earth, all that are seen as Other. She is their champion, she is our champion, and she is black because she is the Mother of Us All." p. xxvii, Galland

Living into the Answers

Catholic theologians are being challenged to see the Catholic Church and our Judeo-Christian heritage as part of a much larger picture. This raises many questions.

The Asceticism of Dialogue

1. Does Mary provide a connection to a vast knowledge of worship in a pre-Christian context?

2. Is Mary's role in meeting the needs of the poor a ministry the Catholic Church will deepen as the feminization of poverty expands?
3. Is Mary's gender a source of hope for women in the church today? Or is it a symbol of submission?
4. If Mary is more than a Jewish woman, who is she in this post-modern period?
5. As shifting consciousness impels many to move from a dominant relationship over creation to "being in communion with all of creation," is Mary trying to show us the way?
6. Does Mary's identification with Earth call us to a reverence for all of creation, i.e. St. Bernadette at Lourdes being told to dig in the ground until the healing spring was revealed; Our Lady of Aparecida's "appearing" out of the water, caught in a fishnet, or Chartres built above the sacred spring honored by the Celts?
7. Would we see in the syncretism of the church a sign of hope? i.e. we accept the choice of the church to use Plato and Aristotle and integrate their wisdom into our own Catholic philosophy. Could we accept the presence of Mary appearing on sites made sacred by ancient worship as a link with the Eternal Feminine? (According to Webster's dictionary, syncretize comes from the Greek word meaning "to combine or reconcile.")
8. Is Mary a 21st century symbol of feminine energy of compassion, nurturing justice, and collaboration that some women and men are feeling in their bones? Is she challenging us to live a life far different from the violent, coercive, non-dialogic status quo?
9. Could it be that not only is Mary an image to be venerated (not worshipped) but also an inner dynamic, compelling dedicated women to claim their inner authority and change unjust structures?
10. Or is Mary the Mother of the Church unable to speak because her daughters are silent/silenced and have not found their own voices?

Perhaps Sue Monk Kidd in her novel, "The Secret Life of Bees," gives a new image of Mary. August, an African American wise woman says to 14 year old, Lillie: "This Mary I'm talking about sits in your heart all day long, saying 'Lillie, you are my everlasting home. Don't you ever be afraid. I am enough. We are enough...'"

With Mary we School Sisters of Notre Dame are enough. I believe this conscious desire to embrace Mary's fierce compassion would tap a source of energy beyond our imagining.

Bibliography for Journey into Marian Spirituality

- Benedict XVI, "Eucharistic Concelebration with New Cardinals," Homily of His Holiness, Benedict XVI, St. Peter's Square, March 25, 2006.
- Berry, Thomas. The Dream of the Earth. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books), 1988.
- Bolen, Jean Shinoda. Crones Don't Whine. (San Francisco: Conari Press), 2003.
- _____ Urgent Message from Mother. (San Francisco: Conari Press), 2005.
- Cunneen, Sally. In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol. (New York: Ballantine Books), 1996.
- Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium). (Boston: Pauline Books), 1964.
- Elizondo, Virgilio. Guadalupe: Mother of the New Creation. (Maryknoll: Orbis), 1997.
- Galland, China. Longing for Darkness, (New York: Penguin Books), 1990
- Gebara, Ivone and Bingemer, Maria Clara. Mary Mother of God, Mother of the Poor, (Maryknoll: Orbis), 1987.
- Gebara, Ivone. Longing for Running Waters. (New York: Fortress Press). 1999.
- Gilligan, Carol. In a Different Voice. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 1982.
- Gimbutas, Marija. Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000- 3500 B.C. (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1982.
- _____ Literatuer (Internet)
- John Paul II, Theotokos: Woman, Mother Disciple – A Catechesis on Mary , Mother of God. (Boston: Pauline Books) 2000.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. Truly Our Sister, (New York: Continuum), 2003.
- Kidd, Sue Monk, Secret Life of Bees, (a novel) (New York: Viking) 2002.
- Konig, Stefan, Altoetting City Guide, (Altoetting: St. Antoninus Buchhandlung), 2005.
- Maher, Mary, SSND. "What are they saying about Mary?" Theological Development Committee video, October, 2001.
- Paul VI, Marialis Cultus, (New York: Paulist Press), 1974.
- Spretnak, Charlene, Missing Mary, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 2004.
- Sturdy Roots I and II. Ed. Judith Best, SSND, (Milwaukee: BraeRex.com) 2008.
- Tolle, Eckhart. A New Earth. (New York: Dutton) 2005.
- Worcelo, Gail, Unpublished manuscript, 2008.
- Zielinsky, Vladimir. "Mary in the Mystery of the Church: The Orthodox Search for Unity" in Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological foundations II, (Santa Barbara: Queenship Publishing) 1996,