

The German writer Rilke wrote about mystery in the classic book *Letters to a Young Poet*. He described seeing various threads woven together, not seeming to make sense. Yet when the work was completed, the cloth was turned over to reveal a beautiful tapestry.

We may consider the experience of Mary in today's Gospel of Saint Luke.

Pregnant.
A teenager.
Unmarried.

Imagine the townspeople's whispers, the judgment, the clucking tongues, and the pitying looks that Mary's parents would have received from family friends.

We don't know much about Mary's family from Scripture. The tradition from apocryphal literature names Mary's mother as Anne, or Hannah, the Hebrew name meaning *Grace*. Mary's father, Joachim, means *Yahweh prepares*.

It is believed that Mary's parents were an older childless couple like Elizabeth and Zachariah. Apocryphal tradition says that an angel appeared to Anne to tell her that her prayers were answered and she would have a child who would be blessed by all the world.

These parents, Anne and Joachim, said *yes* to the child, who in turn would become the pregnant teenager who would say *yes* in the darkness, the uncertainty, and the profound mystery.

We are invited to embrace this mystery, the darkness and uncertainty. Mary was called to faithfulness as we are called to faithfulness. We trust with anticipation. We know that God is with us. Emmanuel. We may trust the blessing that the darkness will lead to the light. That fullness will emerge from emptiness. God is with us.

Amen.

~ Father Christopher Szarke