

Have Yourself a Mary Christmas

Sometimes it feels like a daunting task to have a Merry Christmas. With such a long list of things to do and sometimes painful memories attached to this holiday, how do I also muster up feigned joy? What if sadness is the emotion that rises to the top during this season? Then do I really have to subscribe to the lyrics “It’s the most wonderful time of the year” or “Have a holly, jolly Christmas?”

So I started to wonder what it would look like if I secretly changed the spelling of Merry Christmas to Mary Christmas? What would a Mary Christmas look like?

It seems to me that the heart of A Mary Christmas is being unexpectedly greeted by the Divine. It is a voice that says you will carry God within you; God will be near. A Mary Christmas invites me to believe that there is something within awaiting its birth.

And as I imagine faith as that small child within, then I see how a life of faith is very complex. It is a life that can kick us or press a hard heel into our core. It is often uncomfortable, stretching us beyond what we have grown accustomed to, and leaving marks as we grow. It can fill us and quickens us with awe, and when we are still, we notice its life and movement the most.

A Mary Christmas is a Christmas where we pay attention to what is growing within us. It is pondering what we hope to birth into this world. It is trusting that a “Yes” to the in-dwelling of the Divine has the potential for far-reaching change, even when we cannot fathom what that might look like.

And when this hope and faith is delivered into the world, it is messy. It is beautiful, even though it is a bit smushed, discolored, or dented. And that life is ushered forth in a froth of mixed liquids and broken membrane parts. That life still hears the echoes of groans and wails of pain. And that life brings unmatched comfort as it lays on our chest and listens to our heartbeat.

A Mary Christmas isn’t a Christmas with tinsel and extravagant lights. It is a dusty, long path with faraway lights guiding the way. We will have traveled difficult roads before a bright star finally rests over our head.

A Mary Christmas isn’t coming home, it is leaving the comfort of home. It is leaving our pre-conceived expectations for this birth, and turning down a road where we have a

vague sense, at best, of how and where the Divine will unleash this new life. It is being turned away perhaps countless times before someone finally invites us in.

A Mary Christmas isn't a tree hovering over an abundance of gifts. It is *one* gift. It is that gift we re-open each day as we continue to choose faith and hope.

A Mary Christmas isn't the pitter patter of reindeer feet above. It is the pitter patter of an expectant heart within.

So maybe a Merry Christmas isn't what I want to wish you or me anyway.

I think I would rather wish you a Mary Christmas.