

**Mary's Presentation:  
Becoming One with the Temple of Creation**

by Maurice Lange 11/21/22

This morning, November 21, my wife and I walked into the lovely parish church of Saint Louis in Castroville, Texas. The gothic setting was quiet and we were all alone. The stones and native timbers from which this historic church, constructed in 1870 by Alsatian settlers, reminded me of the construction materials of the Temple in which Mary was Presented. Inside this Catholic Church was such a surprise for today's feast-day: we beheld both a statue *and* a stained-glass rendition of St. Anne instructing a young Mary. What a treat for today - Presentation Day!





Being associated with the Presentation Sisters and Friends of Nano for less than a year, I am still in a sort of “novitiate” time. And...this Thanksgiving week, I find my heart extremely grateful for the mysterious path that brought me to this Congregation...and the Congregation to me.

Yesterday (on the eve of Presentation Day) I was asked to share the ritual of the “*Cosmic Walk*” with a gathering of 20 Friends of Nano and Sisters. We laid out this immense 14-billion-year timeline on the floor of the Presentation Ministry Center. After then praying together the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the Presentation Novena, we contemplatively plumbed some of the depths of all-encompassing meaning flowing from the Universe’s Story. We first heard this Story thoughtfully narrated---and then each Presentation Person had the opportunity to physically walk the spiral timeline celebrating everything from the beginning of Creation to the current moment. *We deeply experienced that we humans are not separate from but intimately related to the Cosmos!*

How to connect this dawning realization of the Story of the Universe with the centuries-old feast of Mary’s Presentation in the Temple?

Being recently blessed with a rich article by Sr. Joyce Meyer, PBVM entitled “*Presentation of Mary: The Meeting Place of Human and Divine*”,<sup>1</sup> my ongoing formation into Presentation life, ministry and meaning has been greatly enriched!

From this treasure, I have learned much flowing from early writings from various religious traditions. Firstly, that Mary’s parents Anna and Joaquim presented young Mary in the Temple as a gesture of gratitude to God for the end of a painful time in their lives. It turns out that the couple suffered from infertility. Their baby Mary was the answer to a life of faith, prayer and hope-filled waiting. Bringing the child to the Temple on her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, Anna and Joaquim handed her to the priest Zacharia who set young Mary down on the third temple step. There, the three-year-old girl danced with joy for the Lord!

I have also learned that for the Jews, the Temple represented God’s act of Creation. “*The tabernacle is equal to the creation of the world*” is a quote from Midrash Tanhuman 11.2. Presenting young Mary in the Temple was placing her within all that is holy and all that is treasured in Creation.

Sr. Joyce writes that not only did Mary enter the Temple, but she “*became the Temple, the meeting place of human and divine, a transformation that is our call as well.*”

Mary was, like each of us is, called to birth a new creation. Our self-giving, like hers, evokes and evolves the ongoing story of the Universe into greater

complexity, diversity and beauty. Mary's generosity and self-giving only mirrors the generosity of the Universe---from whose elements she was made. Consider the generosity of the sun: each second it burns off 4 million tons of itself which becomes transformed into light... and the sun does this giving of self without counting nor complaining. Mary was true to the nature that filled her: the goodness of both her parents and the Creation of which she was a part.

Finally, I have learned that Mary's Presentation in the temple is archetypal: it speaks to us deeply and across religious traditions. This Presentation reveals human vulnerability experienced in family bonds, connects us to the story of the Universe and unites us as humans in our call to be co-creators and believing that all Creation is holy from its earliest moments.

In this time of war and deep political and religious division, may today's feast of the Presentation of Mary call all of us to that which unites us: the fact that we are one human family within the one family of Earth. May we Present ourselves by being true to the nature that fills us. May we build on the Goodness given to us and leave an endowment for Creation that is life-giving for generations hence.

Oh, and don't forget to dance today, like the young Mary, with joy for the Lord!

<sup>1</sup> In this writing I drew several times from the wonderful 2015 article by Sr. Joyce Meyer, PBVM in Global Sisters Report (National Catholic Reporter) "*Presentation of Mary: The Meeting Place of Human and Divine*". It can be found at [Presentation of Mary: The meeting place of human and divine | Global Sisters Report](#)