



The Mary Facebook Project



“Mary shows us that anything is possible.”

Nasra from Oman

“I think the Mary Initiative is really exciting! Coming from a back ground in peacekeeping and diplomacy, we talk a lot about hearts and minds initiatives but rarely do we see the real hearts initiatives that can touch people and I think the Mary Initiative can do that.”

Caroline Jaine
Artist and former British Diplomat



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The Mary Initiative

‘Finding constructive ways
to deal with our differences’



THE MARY INITIATIVE

Transforming the Story



Three Faiths, Two Stories, One Woman

If you thought the story of Mary was confined to a single faith, belief or time, think again. The Mary Initiative asked people around the world what Mary means to them revealing surprising answers, raising new questions and an awareness about Mary’s potential as a bridge between Islam and Christianity today.

What does Mary Mean to you?



“Mary means a lot to me as a Muslim, as a scholar and as a person.”

Dr Mohammad Shomali

Director International Institute of Islamic Studies, Iran

What is the Mary Initiative?

The Mary Initiative is the collective title for a range of peace building programmes in which the Virgin Mary is introduced as a figure with the potential to bridge the Abrahamic faiths and transcend religious difference, helping to discover new conversations and new ways of working together.

The Mary Initiative is part of the Le Menach Foundation, a conflict resolution and peace building organization. Programmes include a range of faith based initiatives including art, education, and entrepreneurship and supporting external projects inspired by the Mary Initiative.

The Mary Initiative put that question to people around the world, of different faith and no faith, documenting their thoughts and responses in a series of filmed interviews, demonstrating that if we cannot find common ground then we can surely find common values.

Participants speak from the heart about personal and global issues; their interviews forming part of a unique study programme around Mary as a common figure in Islam and Christianity, Christian/Muslim relations, peace building and women's issues.

Mary was born a Jew, died a Christian and became a significant figure in Islam after her death. Introducing the transformational figure of the Virgin Mary as a meaningful bridge between the Abrahamic faiths, represents more than a powerful new opportunity for dialogue.

This most famous mother in history, mentioned, more times in the Qur'an than the Bible, the only woman to have a chapter named after her in Islam's most holy book and whom the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), described as 'the best woman to be created', represents universal principles and qualities with practical applications for us all.

Why an Initiative on Mary?

The Mary Initiative was created in response to a growing demand around the world for our unique transcendent approach, focusing on similarities rather than differences and tangible outcomes in peace building. It is hard to find new conversation in existing traditions, particularly one that includes women. Introducing Mary as a bridge between Islam and Christianity is such a conversation.

Three Faiths, Two Stories, One Woman

“The Mary Initiative is a unique opportunity for inclusive conversation with practical application. Our stories maybe singular but our destiny is shared.”

Ingrid Stellmacher - creator the Mary Initiative.



“Mary means a lot to us Palestinians.”

Palestinian Ambassador to the UK
Professor Manuel Hassasian



“How Mary is perceived by Jews is a complex, fascinating one deserving a lot more close scholarly inspection.”

Professor Miri Rubin
Queen Mary University, London