



Daily Reflections

JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE

By Julie Mussché

From the Gospel of Luke

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the

Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

LUKE 1:26-45

Reflection

The Gospel narrative from Luke beautifully illustrates the first two Joyful Mysteries, the Annunciation and the Visitation. From the introduction, we can see that the lives of the two women are intertwined by Divine invocation and their respective faithfulness. Both women are courageous, holding both the blessing and peril of pregnancy in First Century Judea. Mary, betrothed but not wed, could have been stoned to death or completely shunned by her community. Elizabeth confronted the hazard of a later-in-life pregnancy. Both mothers-to-be knew that their sons were called to serve God and that the Messiah had been heralded by Gabriel. Can you imagine the mix of emotions for both women? And the gratitude they must have held to have each other to share this extraordinary moment and awareness with?

It is in this account that we are also first introduced to John the Baptist and Jesus. Not yet born, and yet present nonetheless. John leaps at the meeting of his cousin and Elizabeth cries out in joy. We have a glimpse of the promise ahead. With joyful anticipation, there is patient waiting and preparation. This seems like a timely message as we travel toward the Third Sunday in Advent.



Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral in Lamego, Portugal
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

You are invited to take a moment and choose some portion of the reading to sit with. Exercise your imagination in trying to imagine the scene: what do you see and hear? What is the weather like? How are you feeling about what you are witnessing? Are you a casual observer, or do you actively participate in the moment? Where and how is God calling you?

For Prayer

The Magnificat

And Mary said:

*“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age
to those who fear him.
He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.*

*He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things;
the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,
according to his promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*

LUKE 1:46-55

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