



Daily Reflections

SPRINGTIME OF THE SOUL

By Sr. Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance. Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!"

SONG OF SONGS 2:10-13

Our soul waits for the LORD, who is our help and our shield, For in him our hearts rejoice; in his holy name we trust.

PSALM 33:20-21

Mary set out in those days and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice, and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

LUKE 1:39-42

Reflection

The artwork below is by Jen Norton. She describes her artwork: “Elizabeth’s halo in the colors of a sunset to indicate her age. Her rich garments contain patterns of faded roses and dandelion seed pods for blowing wishes into the wind. Yet the God of Life is full of surprises and suddenly this woman of God finds herself bearing new life!” She adds: “In the distance, we see Mary approaching, the life within her bearing the springtime from within its sacred ark. Light emanates from her womb, trees break into blossom and a skein of geese follow her, representing the Holy Spirit.”

We barely see the face of Mary in the picture, yet we can tell it is her because of the radiance of the Light that emanates from her.

Coming from the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel (“God is my strength” in Hebrew), Mary went to Elizabeth. She traveled the 80-100 miles from Nazareth to Judah. It had taken her up to 5 days traveling on foot. ***What prompted Mary to travel that far?*** Although the angel mentioned that Elizabeth was pregnant, Mary could have chosen to stay in Nazareth.

Mary professed her fiat, “Let it be done to me,” a humble surrender, true obedience to, and profound trust in God that flows from a grateful heart. God granted her the grace to say Yes. It marked Mary’s renewed relationship with God, that which was deeper and more intimate and fruitful. It was just like springtime. She allowed God to reshape her being. Everything was new, fresh, bursting with vigor and swelling with joy that is life-giving. It was very much like the first reading, which describes the meeting of the two lovers in Spring. In God, Mary’s heart rejoiced. In God’s name she trusted.

Humble surrender creates space and allows one to be open to God, to be open to possibilities, to see things in a new light, and to accept living in a new way. When the Holy is let in and is encountered, one’s being, personality, perspective, and outlook are stretched and expanded. One is changed and transformed inside and out. There’s a joy that comes from within. Light radiates from within. It creates room for others, just like the blooming fig tree that gives fruit. It blooms by the grace of God.

Elizabeth was a testament to Mary that “nothing will be impossible with God.” Knowing that her cousin is up in age, Mary visited Elizabeth to help her. She

made space and time for Elizabeth. Likewise, Elizabeth made room for Mary by welcoming Mary, accepting Mary's help, and recognizing Mary's honor of being the chosen Mother of the Messiah. The joy and honor of having been visited by Mary so filled Elizabeth with joy so that John the Baptist leapt in her womb.



The Visitation
Artwork by Jen Norton. Used with permission.

For Pondering

What stirs inside of you? Have you ever experienced springtime in your soul? Have you been springtime for others? Have you made space for others? How did it feel? Is there someone you would like to make room for this Christmas?

For Prayer

O Emmanuel!

Be with us always.

Give us the grace to always be open to follow your lead.

Grant us the grace to be springtime for others.

Amen.

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