



THE FAVOR OF GOD

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*“Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his Kingdom there will be no end.”*

*But Mary said to the angel,
“How can this be,
since I have no relations with a man?”
And the angel said to her in reply,
“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.”*

Reflection

We are getting close to end of the Advent journey for this year. We are reminded of the “reason for the season” as today’s scripture tells of how Mary became the mother of the Son of God. Her “Yes!” made the incarnation of God’s great love possible. Both Mary and Joseph’s great “YES!” to God’s invitation has made all the difference. Without their cooperation with God, we would not be on this Advent journey.

There is a moment no one speaks aloud: when Mary could still refuse the invitation. In God’s wisdom and gracious love, Mary and Joseph had, and we have, a choice. How different life could have been if either had said, “*No thanks, God. Your invitation is too much. Saying ‘Yes’ will unsettle the perfect life I have planned for myself.*” I doubt that Mary foresaw all the ramifications of her decision, all the hardships and stigma that would be set in motion by her response.

I can only imagine that, as young as they were at the time, Mary and Joseph were obviously people of God blessed with great faith, deep trust, and profound hope to say “Yes!” to the undulating path of life to which God was inviting them. We do have a Loving and Gracious God of surprises, who invites each of us to participate in the dream God has for us. I hope to trust and engage the Holy One who first seeks first me. Whether life is ordinary or filled with challenge, God is our constant companion. May we hear God say to us “Do not be afraid, _____, you have found favor with God.”



For Pondering

Ask yourself:

- What are the surprising invitations God has offered me over the years?
- To what might God be inviting me at this time of my life?

For Prayer

Gracious God,

I know that Advent is about waiting and trust.

*I pray that I learn how to listen to your invitations in my life.
Teach me to wait as Mary waited, that first Advent, patiently,
open to your love, alert to your presence.*

Guide me to wait as Joseph waited,

trusting in your promises,

embracing your dream for the fullness of Life for all.

*Awaken in me a deep trust, abiding hope, and generous spirit
to say "Yes!" to all you ask of me.*

May Your Love find a home in me as You did in Mary and Joseph.

Amen! Come, Emmanuel!

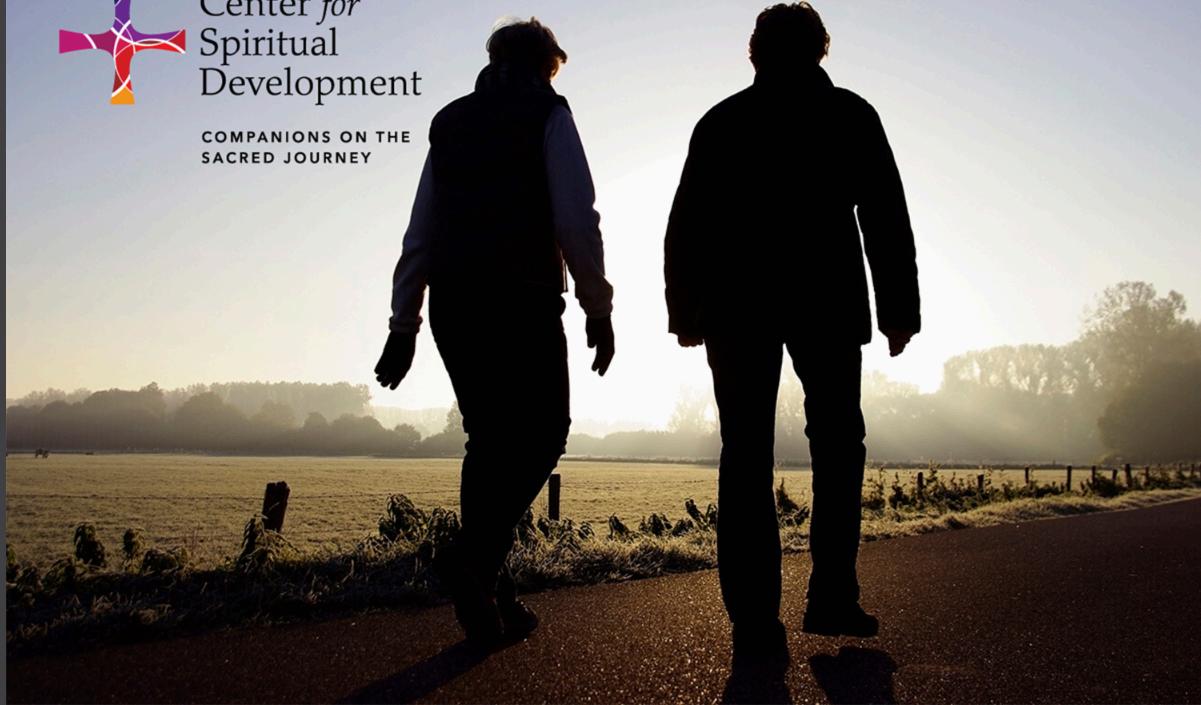
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