

4th Sunday of Advent
Luke 1: 39-45

Welcoming the God of the Impossible

So much of the Advent scriptural messages have to do with awe, uplifting joy, and with the mystery of how much God loves us. How could it have happened that the Son of God, Divinity, would enter the realm of humanity? Through the willingness of a young, unknown woman, the Incarnation became possible. Father Matt Malone, SJ, described this event as “the moment when the temporal was touched by the eternal...” (*America Magazine*, February 24, 2014)

God promised his ancient people a prophet, an announcer, to affirm the truth that the Christ, God’s only Son would come to save us. This event too would have been impossible except for the prayers of an elderly woman, apparently long past fertility, to conceive and deliver a child, a precursor.

In today’s lovely scene of Mary meeting her cousin Elizabeth, there is a leap of joy in Elizabeth’s womb and a cosmic pause as the two women realize what God has done for them and for the future of all humanity. Both women were in potentially challenging situations. Elizabeth’s infertility generated cultural shame. People of her time saw her circumstance as her fault and as earning God’s disfavor.

Mary, a pregnant, unmarried, young woman, would also have drawn cultural shame had God not intervened and had not Joseph willingly taken Mary into his embrace. But at the Visitation neither woman worried about what the world might think. They knew the importance of their meeting and understood what God was calling them to do. Elizabeth’s question captures the wonder of it, “...how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1: 43) and Mary responds with one of most beautiful and profound affirmations of her role in salvation history, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior...” Take minute to find or make a copy of the Magnificat. Read it over several times this week in preparation for our celebration of God’s magnificent in-breaking into 2021 and into a world sorely in need of disciples who understand their roles to affirm his presence and do his will.

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