

Because with God Nothing is Impossible\*

Advent 3 Year A

Luke 1:46-55—the Magnificat

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May the God who creates us, redeems us, and sustains us, be with us this day, and remain with us always.

Please be seated. Good Morning!

I'm thinking of the story of an older woman, maybe in her late 60s early 70's who found herself pregnant. It was, to say the least, something of a surprise. At another point in her life, it was certainly something she had thought about, even dreamed for, but at this point, do the math...who seriously wants to be waiting for their teenager to come home from their first date—when you are 86?

Her husband, well you would have thought that he would have been perhaps filled with some swagger, a bit of bravado down at his watering hole, but he wasn't saying much, actually he wasn't saying anything. He's a priest, one day he went into the temple, to perform his allotted duties, perfectly normal day, and well when he came out he was ashen. When asked what had happened. He didn't say a word. Or couldn't say a word—he was mute. Not long after that his wife's pregnancy began to show: strange things happening down at the Zachariah and Elizabeth household.

It's about six months later that Elizabeth's teenage cousin comes to visit. Walking all the way from Nazareth, to their town in the hills of Judea. She comes to see. She comes to see if it is true. She comes to see if what the messenger from God said was true. Was he from God? Was it a dream? Because this is what she knows.

The one who claimed to be from God, said to Mary, matter of factly, (as if this happens all the time,)

*"Hail O favored one, the Lord is with you,*

she had no idea what he was talking about and wondered what was his scam?

And he replied, *"Do not be afraid, the Lord is with you. You will conceive and bear a son, the Holy Child of God, you will call him Jesus, Immanuel."*

Which made no sense since she was only engaged, she was a virgin and pretty much intended to stay that way until her actual wedding to Joseph.

But the strange one continued, answering her questions as she voiced them, *"the Holy spirit will be with you, He will be called God's son.*

Then as if to prove it all to her, the messenger of God says to her, *"Even now, your cousin Elizabeth, even though she is really old, she is now some 6 months pregnant---because with God—NOTHING is IMPOSSIBLE."*

Against, perhaps her better judgment, but filled with the possibilities of God, Elizabeth's young cousin said 'Yes.' "Yes," she said to that strange messenger, "Let it be with me according to your wishes."

The messenger of God, breathed a deep sigh of relief, because with God, nothing is impossible.

Mary then grabbed her cloak and walked some 70 miles to see her cousin. To see if it was all TRUE, REAL and POSSIBLE.

So imagine again, please, our elderly Elizabeth seeing her young, teenage cousin suddenly appearing at her door. Her cousin, who looks rounder and softer in her face than the last time they met, she also looks older, perhaps more determined. And as she greets her young cousin, the child in her womb, makes a move that she can only describe as convulsing in JOY.

Mary, at that same moment looking at her venerable very, significantly pregnant cousin it is then that she to knows---it is real. God has come to her.

Elizabeth as her child leaps, understands now that God is very near. That the world is about to turn, because with God---nothing is impossible.

Mary marveling now in a way she could not let herself before breaks forth in the words that echo through history.

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant,  
Oh my god—from this time forth forever more, people will call me blessed,  
For God has done great things, but even more than that,  
God has now shown God's strength,  
God has scattered the proud in their conceit,  
God has lifted up the lowly,  
Filled the hungry with Good things,  
He has remembered his promise of mercy made to our forebears, to Abraham, Isaac and  
Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel.  
God has not forgotten—

These are a pair, these two women, proving to us and to all, that with God nothing is impossible, the hungry will be fed.

Faith communities, can grow,  
Locked doors, can be opened,  
Broken hearts made whole,  
Divisions slowly mended,  
New lives created---  
Hope abounding all around—for God is with us.  
In this time, in this place—in the most unexpected of ways, in the least likely of places,

God is calling us, blessing us,  
Daring us to go and see what we can do.  
how we can be, for he came among us,  
born in a manger, a lowly stable to change our lives.

And its happening, right now, all over again  
How will we in the Diocese of Michigan throw our collective doors wide open?  
How will we discover our neighbor's deep longings and fears?  
How will your hopes and desires, intertwine with theirs so that all of us together may live  
into God's hopes and longings for our world.  
Imagine what that might look like  
    Imagine what that might be  
God is calling all of us, just as God called Mary and Elizabeth  
God is calling all of us to envision and embody a new world filled with possibilities  
For we know—that a virgin had a baby and with God nothing is impossible.  
Amen.