

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16  
Magnificat  
Roman 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

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4 Advent  
Year B  
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### Impossibilities Made Possible

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.*

Here begins, what the church has named the Annunciation. The announcing of the Incarnation—that is that God/Jesus will come to live with us, to be with us, to physically touch us and walk in places that we have walked on this earth. As far as proclamations go this is colossal and life changing in our relationship with God. So mind bending is this moment in scripture that perhaps we gloss over it, not really wanting to think about it but instead hurrying on through to the Christmas Eve chapter of Luke, where we can see the baby Jesus born, which seems a bit more comfortable and tidy to us, I think.

But that is not where we are at this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent. Instead we are here, right alongside of Mary looking and pondering this announcement, from God's angelic messenger, straight on. We are here with this very young woman, from the very tiny, insignificant village called Nazareth. We are here listening to what God has to say about how the Son of Man will be kindled and born through this young woman and we utter along with her, wonder with her, the *possibilities of this impossibility*.

Mary means so many things to us depending on our culture, or upbringing, our life experiences, and walks of faith. The ways each one of us feels and relates to her is varied and so precious. For me, where I love Mary the most, is in these first moments of the Annunciation where Mary is first perplexed, then *ponders and thinks* and finally questions Gabriel's message. I love this because, as you may have noticed, she didn't brush the angel off or turn away instantly and run, rebuffing the message and complex questions of what being called by God in this way may entail. Instead, she pauses and waits, allowing one foot to slip into the

divine question and keeping the other foot in the world as she understood it just before Gabriel's visit. It is in this holy pause and posture she *ponders the possibilities of the impossible*.

Pondering the impossible, considering and wondering the deepest mysteries of God's yearning for us, and discerning if we will reach into these mysteries is Mary's gift to us this last Sunday of Advent, I think. When Mary pauses in this time with Gabriel, uncertain of what is real and what is possible, she allows us, she gives us permission to do the same. She allows us a moment to ponder ourselves and look at the incredible gift that God is bringing and offering to the world. And, it is also in the pause of this moment that allows us 2000 years later to stop and catch our breath and consider what our lives will be like if we let down our guard, and let God break in to our lives, in a holy and impossible yet very possible way.

This moment, if we just let it be for a minute cries out to us because we know that there are moments in our own lives when God breaks in and offers the idea and possibility of our participation in the impossible becoming possible. And, we also know that sometimes we are not certain which way to lean. Do we keep our feet firmly planted in what we know with certainty is possible and comfortable or do we ponder and question a bit, ultimately trusting God, and reaching out for the divine offering and embrace, which allows for the impossible to become possible, saying yes to God, as Mary did?

God does come into moments of our lives, as it was with Mary when we are least suspecting it and we will be called to pause and decide which way we will walk into this uncomfortable but also liberating opportunity. I think back to these kinds of moments in my own life and recognize this posture held by Mary, with a foot in both places, where I have been called to stop and ponder and believe in the impossible possibilities when very few believed.

When I was a very young social worker, just out of college, working with young adults with developmental disabilities I was full of impossible hope. I leaned deeply into the belief that so much was *possible* for these folks that I served. But others that I worked with, who had been around awhile and even some that

hadn't been around awhile, told me much of what I dreamed was impossible. Mostly they told me this was because I was young, idealistic and I had not been hardened by the world and I would understand differently someday. But I don't think they had every considered or pondered the actions taken by Mary when she was asked to believe in the impossible, but I had.

And in that moment I chose to reach out and embrace the impossible. I didn't believe them, and instead I continued believing in the impossible being made possible through the yearning and invitation of the one who came to live among us and made all things possible.

Now twenty-five years later, I assure you, after being leveled by the many griefs and sadness's this world can bring us. And understanding that not everything impossible is made possible in the way we may have hoped and prayed I still believe in the impossible made possible. Because I have seen it happen over and over again in the largest of ways, and in the smallest, obscure moments and places of my life and I know you have too. We have seen it in each other in our healings and hopes made possible, in our faith journey's widened, in the expansion of our ministries, to include all the children God. So much has been made possible. It's what happens when we lean into the divine and embrace the mystery that continues through the incarnation.

Poet and writer Madeleine L'Engle says, *Possible things are easy to believe. ...but The Glorious Impossible are what bring joy to our hearts, hope to our lives, songs to our lips.*<sup>1</sup>

It is where we stand this day with our beloved Mary embracing that Glorious Impossible which is that song of hope and joy she sings to us this day in the words of the Magnificat:

*My soul proclaim the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior  
For nothing will be impossible with God.*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Glorious Impossible*. Madeleine L'Engle, Pg. 1