



December 22nd Reflection No. 249

In this season of Advent, we have been awaiting the coming of Jesus in Bethlehem. Among the images that come to mind for me as I ponder the absolute wonder of what we await is a picture of a mother - and father-to-be. I imagine them, carrying in their hearts the uncertainty and exceptionality of what had entered into their lives. And yes, of course, I imagine a nativity scene with Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

These images, though predictable for the liturgical season, are a departure for me from what I typically envision when I think of Jesus. Usually, I imagine him as a man. I am sitting with him, listening to him, and seeing him in his ministry. I imagine myself as his companion. This is why today's reading from Luke is so striking for the season. It shows Mary as Jesus' companion; indeed, his first companion. As Mary proclaims God's greatness to Elizabeth, Jesus is there. Though still carrying him in her womb, Mary has already been transformed by Jesus' presence within her. Invoking God's promise, her trust is complete.

Such unwavering trust in God can be difficult, especially during challenging times. In this, Mary (and my wife, I might add) are my

models. But to be a companion of Jesus is to have such trust in both good times and in bad. Mary would need such trust, especially as Jesus fulfilled his mission here on earth in his final hours. I give thanks for her example and for the many ways Jesus left us whereby we are invited to build and demonstrate this trust in him. I speak here of the sacraments. In baptism, we place our trust in him. In confession, we place our trust in him. In the Eucharist, we place our trust in him and, like Mary, can also be transformed by Jesus' presence within us.

As we await Jesus' coming at Christmas, let us pray that such trust enters into our hearts as it did for Mary. Let us pray, further, that we demonstrate and share the joy that this trust brings to those we meet, just as Mary shared with Elizabeth. Let us share this joy with one another.

by Scott McClure

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