

Reflection

My best friend and I had our babies about 18 months apart. I remember very clearly the day she came over to tell me she was having a baby. I was standing in my kitchen holding my daughter in my arms and we both shrieked with joy, startling my baby and making her cry. Which I still have mom guilt over, 21 years later. We were both ecstatic. But you know, either of us broke into song nor did we sing about our children overthrowing the government which is what Mary's song is about.

We didn't sing because we don't in fact live in a Disney movie and let's be honest Jesus didn't either. However I don't say this to take away from this scripture passage, it is a powerful story of prophecy. And while it might not have literally happened as recorded in Luke – it has truth to it because it invokes truth. It speaks of wisdom and it inspires. And that's what good story telling does – it accentuates which is not exaggeration. It brings truth forward and says – here look at it! See how important this is?

Mary's prophecy is exceptionally important. Throughout Advent we've been hearing from other prophets – Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah. All of whom lived 100s of years before Jesus. The writers of the Gospels knew these ancient prophecies well and used them to accentuate their telling of the life of Jesus.

But Mary, Mary was more contemporary to the writers and she had a direct and intimate connection to Jesus. When people heard the prophecy attributed to Mary they would have known 3 things.

This was a mother who loved her son dearly and believe that he would change the world.

This mother brought a child into a world she knew was dangerous and where there was little hope for change in her lifetime.

This was a mother who knew that her prophecy ultimately doomed her child to death – remember all of these stories were recorded after Jesus died – all stories in the gospel are written through the lens of having experienced Jesus' death and resurrection.

And she did it singing, because she believed with her most sincere heart that the world could be a better place, it would be a better place through the wisdom and actions of her child. A child who would grow to be a man and ultimately influence the world for centuries to come.

That influence would cause a great deal of harm through misinterpretation and humanities weakness for oppressive power. And that influence would do a great deal of good as well – when we remember to be humble and we remember that we, like Mary carry the Holy within ourselves.

Mary as a prophet looks at the world around her with clear vision. She sees the reality of oppression and subjugation around her and she sees hope. She sees peace, she finds joy and she is resolute in her love.

She does not and will not let the world around her hold her down. She knows what's good and right in the world and is determined to bring it to the light in her way.

Which is what we have been invited into doing as well, this advent and every advent. Everyday really – we have been and are invited to house the holy within ourselves, to hold the presence God within our hearts with the love and gentleness we would hold a baby. And we are invited to bring that presence of God into the world, to open the doors of our heart to not just let people in, but also to step out into the world bringing – hope, peace, joy, love with us in whatever unique way we are suited to do. Remember we can't do everything, but we can do something.

We've spent these last four weeks wondering and dreaming about how we might open our doors to the holy. We have this room with a view – where we can look out over the landscape of our lives – metaphorically and physically. Where we can look out over the landscape of our community and see clearly the reality of the world around us.

What is present? What is missing? Who is missing? What's been lost or forgotten? And what are we going to do about it? I wonder...