

Luke 1:26-38—The story of the Angel Gabriel coming to Mary

I think this is my favorite part of the Christmas story
Probably because I can relate to the sense that God has come to me
I have felt this sense that I'm to do something in this world that seems impossible
I didn't fully understand it in the beginning and it has changed along the way
True, I haven't seen an angel or had a supernatural encounter
But there was still a clear sense that God has called me and that I have a higher purpose

I wonder what Mary was doing that day?

I doubt she was on retreat or even doing something spiritual
I've always assumed she was probably at home doing her daily chores
Going about the daily-ness of her life—expecting this day to be so like many others
But suddenly everything was different as the Angel Gabriel stood before her
Just to see an angel would be startling and full of wonder
But for the angel to tell her that she would conceive and bear the "Son of God"
That must have been overwhelming and also exhilarating
While she was probably full of questions, they pale in the face of the message
She only wants to know how it can be possible
In the end she says, "*Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*"
And the angel departed from her!
She was left alone

Suddenly everything is different and nothing is different

An angel of God came to her with news of her pending pregnancy—carrying the Son of God
God chose her, Mary—just a young woman without fame or fortune
I wonder if she remembers the words of Isaiah
*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with
child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 NRSV*
"Immanuel, God with us"—it is suddenly true in new ways—*God within me
God, living and growing within*

Yet, physically there is no perceptible change and it will be awhile before she feels the changes
Was it just a dream? Was it real?
No wonder she rushed to see her cousin Elizabeth
She needed confirmation that it wasn't all a dream that would evaporate away
Holding on to another person who has had a similar encounter with the divine reality
Knowing that the impossible is possible

Then the waiting begins—but a defined 9 month wait in which a lot is happening
Her body changes and grows at the same time that she is preparing for the birth
It is a pregnant waiting, full of stretching, expectancy, patience, and wonder

To me, this is when God entered our world

God entered a young woman as an embryo—a beginning
Yet long before that coming could sustain life on the outside—it takes time

This is true for all of us—God comes and plants within us the impossible

The Spirit comes to us and we are overshadowed by God, placing the Holy One within us