



December 23, 2018 Fourth Sunday of Advent Lectionary: 12 Gospel LK 1:39-45

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Spiritual Reflection: In today's Gospel - Matthew's version of Jesus' birth - the whole grand event depends on Joseph, whose life has been turned upside by the angel's news. Joseph accepts the son as his own, not as a matter of biology, but as a matter of love and compassion, of trust and faith. God's birth in our midst depends on human partners - a Mary, a Joseph, you, me - willing to claim the unwanted, love the helpless and neediest, put aside our fears and dare to hope that God is with us. In this season and in every season, may we imitate the compassion and faith of Joseph: to seek understanding and acceptance within our families even at the cost of our own expectations and hopes, to be sources of affirmation and support for our spouses and children

Spiritual Questions:

1. How can you develop compassion for your family members?
2. Are you willing to sacrifice your own expectations and hopes in order to help others?
3. Are you willing to sacrifice your own expectations and hopes in order to understand those who are different than you?
4. How can you be a source of affirmation and support for others?
5. How can you be more like St. Joseph?