



Advent Reflection for Monday, December 5th

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Luke 1: 18-23

Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so, that Elizabeth will bear a child? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Reflection by Vi Lynk:

How will I know?! Zechariah's question rings throughout Advent. This Messiah that we anticipate, that we wait for - He is coming, but how will we know? A virgin conceiving. A long-barren woman carrying a companion of the Savior baby. An overlooked suburb with no room. The shepherds, the workers, the ones whom no one listened to, they listened? And the 'wise' lost for a time until they were found. The Messiah is coming, this we believe, but how, God, how? How can this be, in the midst of this pageant of unexpected, how?

Today I find myself asking this same question in a slightly different form- how do I know? Yes, God, promises of the Divine have been spoken, signs in history have pointed, but how, God, how do I know that this is so, how do I know that the Spirit is here in our midst moving, working, even today? It is hard to know. I share Zechariah's doubt.

And yet, even in his doubt there was something in Zechariah that believed. When he emerges from the sanctuary, even without speech, the onlookers know that Zechariah has been visited, that he has seen something. His body professes a knowing. I wonder, then, was Gabriel, in silencing Zechariah's words, allowing a certain truth to be proclaimed, to be known? Were Zechariah's words taken away not as punishment but to silence the skeptical logic betraying his faithful flesh? He knew, in his body, he knew. Still, the seductive skepticism of a reasonable world stifled this visceral inkling. So, the presence of God intervened and called Zechariah back to the conviction of the Spirit that spilled out through a body in motion.

Friends, perhaps this is the Advent invitation. In the midst of calculated and unbearable violence we are asked to believe in our bodies that there is a God who loves. As this brutally unimaginative world continues, as the questions persist, as we attempt again and again to make sense of it all, we are called to believe in the Divine incarnate. The inconceivable will happen, a Messiah is born. We are called to know this miraculous not through tangible evidence, or systematic validation, not through proof or ordained judgment, rather we are called to know through the Spirit, in our bodies.

The Word is made flesh and dwells among in and through us.

May our finite minds give way to the invitation of Zechariah's spirit filled physicality. May we anticipate and know the Divine incarnate this Advent, in our hearts and in our bodies. Amen

Vi's call to the Episcopal church began in the candle lit chancel of All Saints chapel in Sewanee, TN and has continued in choir lofts in Seattle, historic parishes across Connecticut, in-person and online sanctuaries of Manhattan's Heavenly Rest and now to Holy Apostles. She completed a Masters of Divinity at Berkeley Episcopal Divinity School last spring and is now working on a Masters of Sacred Theology at Yale Divinity School. For 20 years she has worked in community building in the form of technology, education and now spirituality. Vi continues to discern how to practice the call to love as an artist, a theologian and a spiritual leader.

