



Advent Reflection for Tuesday, December 20th

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Luke 2: 21

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Reflection by Larisa Shaterian:

My mother named me in a moment of inspiration. She loved Russian literature and had been reading a lot of Turgenev short stories. My parents couldn't agree on a name. So, after I was born, my mother asked my father, "How about Larisa?" and he said, "Yes!" As soon as they were in the hospital elevator, however, people were not getting my name right.

Now, in this day and age, I make sure that people say my name the way my parents gave it to me, with the long ee sound in the middle. Lareesa, like La-Reese's Pieces, I often say. This way I can let people know that I get that the way that it is said not instinctual to American pronunciation. And I can let people know that I care enough about them to make sure that they say my name the way I like to hear it.

When I was in preschool and learned how to write my name, I remember knowing—or imagining, but knowing—that if you opened my body up, there it would be, my name, written across my chest, in an indigo color. Despite my name always being a teaching moment, I knew it was mine.

Before Jesus was conceived, the Angel Gabriel told Mary that the son that she would bear would be named Jesus. Not a spontaneous name at all. A special name.

As I've listened to this passage, I keep being reminded of how, after Jesus is buried when his friend Mary Magdalene goes to his tomb, she thinks she sees the gardener walking around it. It

isn't until he says her name, "Mary." That she recognizes him as her friend and teacher, Jesus. How good it is for our friends to call us by our names.

Larisa (la-REESE-uh, like La Reese's Pieces) Shaterian is a postulant from the Diocese of California. She is a first year Masters of Divinity student from Union Theological Seminary! She is one of our seminarians this year.

