

ASSUMPTION AUGUST 14, 2016

**"FOR THE MOMENT THE SOUND OF YOUR GREETING REACHED MY EARS,
THE INFANT IN MY WOMB LEAPT FOR JOY...."**

**I PRESUME IT IS NO BIG SURPRISE TO YOU THAT I HAVE VERY LITTLE
EXPERIENCE WITH PREGNANT WOMEN.....**

**HOWEVER, AS SOME OF YOU KNOW - I DID MY DISSERTATION IN
GRADUATE SCHOOL ON THE DREAMS OF WOMEN DURING THEIR FIRST
PREGNANCY....**

SO THAT MAKES ME AN EXPERT, DON'T YOU THINK?

**IT WAS A DELIGHT TO MEET WITH THOSE YOUNG LADIES BACK IN SAN
DIEGO IN 1980....**

**I REMEMBER VERY WELL ESPECIALLY THE LAMAZE CLASSES I USED TO
ATTEND AND RECRUIT MY SUBJECTS, VOLUNTEERS TO RECORD THEIR
DREAMS....**

**THE ENERGY, THE JOY, THE EXCITEMENT, THE SPIRIT OF ANTICIPATION
IN THOSE ROOMS WAS PALPABLE.....**

**THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE WOMEN WAS A WONDER TO
BEHOLD...**

THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT WE HAVE IN OUR GOSPEL STORY TODAY....

**IN THIS CASE, A YOUNG PREGNANT GIRL AND A RATHER ELDERLY
PREGNANT WOMAN - HER COUSIN - SHARING THEIR
EXCITEMENT.....THEIR PREGANCY**

**OF COURSE, ON THE ONE HAND THE MEETING IS JUST ANOTHER
ENCOUNTER IN THE COURSE OF HISTORY BETWEEN TWO EXCITED**

***PREGANT WOMEN - BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS TOTALLY UNIQUE IN
WORLD HISTORY.....***

***SO UNIQUE THAT IT REPRESENTS THE LENGTHIEST CONVERSATION
BETWEEN TWO WOMEN RECORDED IN THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT....***

***A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A VERY YOUNG GIRL - A NOBODY, IF YOU
WILL, VERY POOR AND FROM A LITTLE BACK WATER VILLAGE IN
GALILEE CALLED NAZARETH - AND A RATHER ESTBLISHED AND
RESPECTED WIFE OF A TEMPLE PRIEST - ELIZABETH.....***

***NOTICE, HOWEVER, FOR A RARE MOMENT IN SCRIPTURE, THE MALE
VOICE - ZACHARY - IS QUIET....***

THE WOMEN SPEAK OUT....

***FOR THIS INFORMATION I'M INDEBTED TO AN ARTICLE BY A FEMALE
THEOLOGIAN NAMED PENELOPE DUCKWORTH WHO POINTS OUT THAT
MARY IS A PROPHET IN HER MAGNIFICAT...***

***MARY STANDS IN THE LINE OF THE PROPHETS WHO WERE INSPIRED BY
THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND WERE THE TRUTH-SPEAKERS OF ISRAEL, WHO
DELIVERED GOD'S WORD TO THE PEOPLE***

***MARY DELIVERED GOD'S WORD NOT ONLY IN THE WORDS SHE SPOKE
BUT ALSO IN HER PHYSICAL DELIVERY OF THE CHRIST CHILD....***

***IN HER ROLE OF PROPHET SHE EXPRESSED AN ALTERNATIVE
CONSCIOUSNESS TO THE DOMINANT CULTURE AROUND HER...***

***MARY'S SONG KINDLES AN ANGER AT THE STATUS QUO AND A HOPE FOR
A NEW WORLD TO COME....***

OF COURSE, THIS YOUNG GIRL IS LIVING IN AN OCCUPIED TERRITORY...

WELL AWARE OF THE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE OPPRESSOR (ROMANS)

AND THE OPPRESSED (JEWS).....

HER SITUATION IS SOCIALLY PRECARIOUS - OSTRACISM AND REJECTION

ARE REAL POSSIBILITIES CERTAINLY

SHE HAS GONE TO THE HOME OF AN ESTABLISHED AND SOCIALLY

PROMINENT RELATIVE....

ONE MIGHT EXPECT HER TO COWER BEFORE POTENTIAL CRITICISM BUT

INSTEAD SHE STANDS UP STRAIGHT, AS IT WERE, AND SINGS HER SONG -

TELLING HOW HER WHOLE BEING DELIGHTS IN THE WILL OF GOD.

SHE IS ONLY A TEENAGER BUT IS EMBOLDENED AND IMPASSIONED IN

HER LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR THE HONOR GOD HAS BESTOWED ON

HER....

SHE IS AN EMBODIMENT OF THE TRANSFORMING WORK OF GOD...

HER VOICE IS THE VOICE OF A PROPHET WHO HAS PERCEIVED AND

PROCLAIMED THE DIVINE REALITY IN THEIR MIDST....

HER POEM, HER SONG IS UNIQUE AND, INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH,

INVOLVED THREE THEMES THAT WILL BE MORE FULLY DEVELOPED BY

HER SON...

WE CAN LEAVE IT TO OUR IMAGINATION TO WONDER HOW THESE

THEMES MAY HAVE BEEN INCULCATED FROM MOTHER TO CHILD....

THE FIRST, IS THE MERCY OF GOD - THE ONLY NOUN SHE USES TWICE -

*OF COURSE, JESUS MADE MERCY A FUNDAMENTAL TENET OF HIS
GOSPEL*

*BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL AND
BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL RECEIVE MERCY...
THE SECOND, MARY ALIGNS HERSELF WITH THE POOR AND
UNDERSTANDS GOD AS THE GOD OF THE POOR - JUST AS HER SON DID
SHE SINGS OUT THAT GOD HAS "FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS
AND SENT THE RICH AWAY EMPTY"....
AND JESUS BEGAN HIS MINISTRY QUOTING THE PASSAGE FROM ISAIAH.
"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME
TO BRING GLAD NEWS TO THE POOR...
THIRD, SHE SAW GOD AS A GOD OF THE HUMBLE - JUST AS HER SON DID...
SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT PRIDE HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE OUR
GREAT WEAKNESS...
MARY DESCRIBED GOD AS HAVING "LOOKED WITH FAVOR ON THE
LOWLINESS OF HIS SERVANT" AND "HAVING LIFTED UP THE LOWLY"
AND JESUS, OF COURSE INVITED OTHERS TO FOLLOW HIM AND HE SAID,
"LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART, AND YOU
WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS....
HE INSTRUCTED HIS FOLLOWERS NOT TO TAKE A PLACE OF HONOR BUT
THE LOWEST PLACE AT THE TABLE FOR "ALL WHO EXALT THEMSELVES
WILL BE HUMBLD AND THOSE WHO HUMBLE THEMSELVES WILL BE
EXALTED."
IN THESE THEMES WE SEE THE ROOTS OF WHAT WOULD BECOME JESUS'
TEACHING.....*

WE GIVE THANKS TODAY FOR THAT WOMAN AND HER RELATIONSHIP

WITH THAT MAN, HER SON.....

IT HELPS US UNDERSTAND HOW HE VALUED NOT ONLY HIS MOTHER BUT

ALL WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE.....

LET US PRAY FOR THAT SAME GRACE TO KNOW AND VALUE THAT WOMAN

AND THE IMPORTANCE AND MAGNIFICENCE OF HER RELATIONSHIP

WITH HER SON.....