

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2018

When I pray with Scripture, I usually follow St Ignatius' method of prayer called Lectio Divina. I read the text one phrase or sentence at a time to ask myself what does this passage call me to do? How does this passage help me in my relationship with God? What gift does this passage lead me to ask from the Lord? Following are some of the thoughts I had from this week's Gospel of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-45)

Mary went on a journey in haste. There is urgency in her journey. Do I have urgency in my journey? I'm only on this earth for a blink of an eye, relative to all of human history. Am I urgent in cultivating my love for God and my neighbor, or am I distracted by worldly things and worries?

Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting. Jesus often said, "Let those who have ears hear." I must be listening in order to hear. Elizabeth was listening. Am I listening? Do I take time to be quiet and listen to God through Scripture and prayer? "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

The infant leaped. He jumped or sprang; or was it a leap of faith? When was the last time I jumped or sprang for joy at the presence of my Lord? How easy is it for me to take a "leap of faith?"

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She was open to the Holy Spirit. Do I believe that I can be filled with the Holy Spirit? Am aware enough to be open to the Holy Spirit? When was the last time I "cried out in a loud voice" because I could not contain my joy?

Blessed are you among women—AMONG—Am I among these women? Am I blessed? Certainly not as the mother of God, but I am undoubtedly blessed with many gifts and want to take time to be grateful for them.

And how does this happen to me? Elizabeth feels unworthy, a feeling I often have and yet, she was the person Mary and Jesus came to see. Jesus is always "coming to see" me and calling me out of my humanity into his sacred realm. Do I respond to his call?

Blessed are you who believed. Am I blessed when I believe and respond? I need to be listening.

Vickie Armstrong