

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ADVENT 2018

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IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP !



Asleep. This is how Advent surprises us and makes us start with his announcement: "*It's time to get out of sleep!*" (Rm 13,11).

The announcement disconcerts us because we tend to be strange sleepers who do not know it, and we live convinced of being awake, attached to a trivial existence, accommodating ourselves to a flat horizon that we call realism, and we are inclined to describe as "dreams and utopias" all that overflows.

But the voices of Advent are obstinate and insistent, they are pressing at the gates of our imagination, sneaking between the cracks of our memory, invading our habits, shaking our certainties.

They insist to convince us that they do not belong to this world that we call "dreams", but that they are (their characters, their symbols, their images, their affirmations, their promises ...), the real "reality",

as amazing as it may seem to us: God comes, he never tires of us, he is attracted by this somewhat chaotic encampment that is our world, he approaches us with a certain shyness, he asks permission to pitch his tent next to ours. It will be an easy neighbor, he says. He will not bother us, he will be like one of us, getting used to us and giving us time to get used to him. He will not scream or install speakers. Only he was heard in the night from the little cry of a newborn ...

Too normal to be divine. Too human this God, who no longer kills, no longer divides the waters of the sea, nor rains manna. This makes us a little afraid to see him so close to us, crossing with us cold and hot, sweat and toil, shoulder to shoulder with us. It is a dream, we think, in any case, it is an abnormal and disconcerting reality of which it is better to escape

And we lie down to dream to our own dreams.

The prophets of Advent speak to us, they send us "ambassadors" to open the way to the great news of the coming God and the mystery of his presence: a mountain towards which all peoples converge, spears that transform wild beasts that are tamed by a child into wild serpents, deserts that bloom ... In the end appear human faces: John the Baptist, Joseph, Mary and the humble places where everything began: Bethlehem, a cave in outskirts and a lost village of Galilee called Nazareth.

The definitive time broke out, the night when only shepherds who were watching heard the great news and the name of the one beside which all the rest was only the anticipation and the shadow (I do not understand the sentence!)

And Through these characters, these images, the news and these calls, we will be given the opportunity to recognize that this time is our time, that these places belong to us, that God continues to come and pitch his tent with us and that he has a human name: Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us ...

MARY, COMPAGNIE DE OUR AVENT

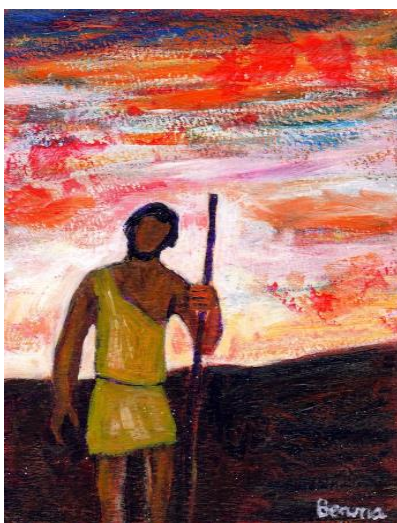


Everything that happens between God and us always takes place, as in the case of Mary, at a specific moment ("the sixth month ...") and in a given space ("a city of Galileo "). At each concrete moment of our life, with its circumstances, its problems, its research or its misplacement, the initiative always comes from God and it is a "gracious" and mobilizing initiative, a news that always surprises us because it seems too much good. Well beyond what we usually expect from him, he does not claim, ask, impose, but invite: "*Rejoice*". It is an urgent call to get out of fear, to enter into joy, to become aware of our true name, the way he looks at us, the way he recognizes us: although "small", each of us is also "full of grace", and can be proud of this name and repeat it with astonishment: God loves me as I am.

Imagine that we can search for God with Google Maps: the text of the Annunciation made us discover that the red and flashing ball that indicates its presence (here, it is here ...) it coincides with the joy, with the loss fears, with the new liberator that "we love you", with the invitation to welcome Jesus into our lives, to accept this precious vocation to expand, to develop, to become fertile, to say: Yes, I Agree, whatever you want ...

Travel inside Nazareth, enter Mary's home, sit on a low chair next to her and say her name. Let her explain that being "the Immaculate" is equivalent to saying the Integral, the Coherent, the Authentic, the Loyal, the one who is always connected to God and to herself ... Choose one from these names to be the chorus that accompanies you on the path of this Advent.

JOHN, THE ONE WHO DANCES OF JOY



The first thing we know about John the Baptist is that he jumped for joy in his mother's womb and his fetal state says a lot about his personality as well as his precursory activity of Jesus.

There is a sentence of Master Eckhart, a mystic with whom I think John would have agreed if he had known it: "Speaking in hyperbole, when the Father laughs at the Son and the Son responds with a laugh of the Father, this laughter generates pleasure, this pleasure generates joy, this joy engenders love and this love gives birth to the people of the Trinity, one of whom is the Holy Spirit ".

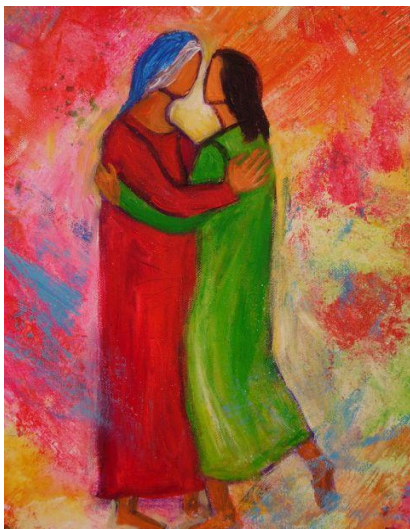
We naturally associate ecclesial behavior seriously, seriously, solemnly and circumspectly, and we fill our mouths with the words "sacrosanct," "sacred," "dignified," and "venerable," as if it were self-evident. that it is more pleasing to God than gaiety, joviality, freshness, laughter and humor. And yet, the first thing we know about someone as respectable as John in the Christian tradition is that he did something as joyful, free and spontaneous as dancing in the small space of he had at that time.

Could we not infer that he was "Precursor" of Jesus in this area as well? Did he not open the space to explode on the roads of Galilee freedom, the joy of living in the presence of his Father, his ability to show tenderness, to make friends, to enjoy eating and drinking in company?

His arrival divides the history of mankind into two and, within it, that of Israel. John the Baptist belongs to the first stage, symbolized by the time before entering the promised land. Now, the presence of Jesus and the announcement of His reign have become the true promised land and all those who welcome Him are greater than the Baptist, for they have been granted to live the time of the fulfillment of the promises.

John's life had only one meaning: to go forward to prepare the way. Are we not also a little "John the Baptist," charged to open the way so that others can know Jesus?

VISITS



With the visit of Mary to Elizabeth, we contemplate two women carrying a mystery of life, inhabited by a life in seed. Both were attentive: Mary at the announcement that Elizabeth, the barren, was waiting for a son; Elizabeth, at the voice of Mary, to the invisible life she carries in her. The two go beyond themselves: Mary leaves Galilee; Elizabeth goes beyond what she sees: she calls Mary "Mother of my Lord"

Each gives, receives and learns from the other: Mary, a greeting and a service; Elizabeth, a blessing, the proclamation of happiness. Each leads the other beyond herself: Mary provokes the faith of Elizabeth who is filled with the Holy Spirit; Elizabeth brings Mary to sing the Magnificat. The climate of the scene is

full of joy, presence of the Spirit, praise:

" My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord ..."

Mary visits Elizabeth while she was "at home".

To become aware of what it means for us to be at home, to know if we live in it and if we are present at what we are living today, in the situation in which we find ourselves. Do not run away from reality, do not disguise it, do not deny it ... Here and now "it's our home".

Do we ask: is the door of my life open or closed?

Mary leaves her house in Nazareth, sets out and crosses mountains to go to Elizabeth. Like her, we are called to be "visitors" of others, to become servants close to their problems.

Let's name our difficulties when we leave "our territory" to get closer to others. What relational mountain separates us from someone?

Elizabeth discovers that Mary is a carrier of a mystery of life that is pregnant in her. Let us see in the "visitors" that we receive that they are carriers of Jesus, although in a hidden way. Let's take the time to recognize and appreciate the secret life present in the people with whom we are in relationship.

Let us also give thanks for the life we carry.

ary in her Magnificat expands our horizon of faith and invites us to look at the world with the gaze of God. Let us not escape into a spiritual world unrelated to reality, but consider God's action in the midst of the ambiguous density of social, political, and economic relations.

Let's ask Mary to tell us God's preference for those who are "outside" and "below." Let's discuss with her concrete ways to serve her.