

How Can This Be?

Scripture: Luke 1:26 – 38

Second Sunday of Advent 2023

On this second Sunday of Advent, let us look at Mary, one of the most pivotal people in the Advent story. As we move closer to Christmas, let us look at Mary.

Mary is not of any royal bloodline. Her background has no royal link. She is a righteous young girl. She is a virgin and she is engaged to a man named Joseph of the House of David. Joseph does come from royal bloodline but Mary does not. In Jewish culture, being engaged is very close to being married.

The Angel Gabriel comes to Mary and tells her she is a favored one. Mary is surprised and perplexed by the words and she has been given. Mary wonders what kind of greeting is this so the Angel Gabriel reassures her and tells her not to be afraid because she has found favor with God and that in her womb is a child who she will call 'Jesus'!

The Angel Gabriel continues by telling Mary that her son will be great and he will reign over the House of Jacob forever!

Mary pauses and contemplates her situation and then she responds with a question – How can this be? Mary clarifies her question by adding – I am a virgin!

First thing to notice about Mary is after receiving wonderful news, she pauses and contemplates her situation. When a situation comes our way, we need to pause and contemplate. When trouble comes our way, we need to pause and contemplate. When good news comes our way, we need to pause and contemplate.

Think about your life, when a situation happens, do you pause and contemplate? Let us learn from Mary – let us pause and contemplate when a situation comes our way!

Let us now pause and contemplate all that is happening in our world and nation. Let us pause and contemplate

This news for Mary is not ‘great news’ because she is engaged to Joseph and when Joseph finds out about her situation, he has the right to request that they stone her at worst or at least he could ask Mary to leave town to save him from being embarrassed.

Joseph is a good man so he takes the news of Mary being with child and accepts the news.

With everything happening in this world, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With everything happening in this country, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With war in Ukraine, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With war Gaza, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With a person calling fellow US citizens 'the enemy', we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With political unrest in our country, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

*With mass shooting taking place in our country on a regular basis, in fact, we had two mass shootings on the same day recently, we may ask the same question Mary ask- How can this be?

The angel tells Mary how this all will take place. He tells her that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her causing a child to be born.

Mary responds with these wonderful words – maybe the most wonderful words ever spoken – 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word.'

Mary has NO hesitation in accepting the news. She is not like Zechariah, she does not chuckle at the news, and she accepts the news!

May we accept God's message of a Savior being born. May we accept the news of the Prince of Peace coming.

Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, our Prince of Peace, please hear our prayers as we stand in compassionate solidarity with the people of the world. Protect us and defend us from all violence, aggression, and oppression. Change our hearts and minds of those who bring violence and hatred into the world. Shelter us in the shadow of your wings. Bless us and keep us. Turn us into a gracious people and look upon us with kindness and give us peace. May every heart and nation on earth but one with you. We pray this by the power of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.