



## **“At a Distance” - Advent 4**

### **“Messengers”**

#### **Scripture Reference: Luke 1: 26-38**

Greetings again Saints. Mona and I, along with our Worship Team here at All Saints greet you warmly and in a good way on this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent. It has been an amazing season for us here with you all in our Community of Faith and we hope that we have been able to do our small part to help make this time, special, spiritual and sacred for you and your Families.

Together, we have spent the first three Sundays of Advent with Mary, Our Blessed Mother and together we have walked her “birthing journey” alongside her through some interesting phases. We have experienced “The Waiting”. We have experienced “The Preparation” and last Sunday we experienced “The Connecting”. All of those temporary stopping points contained important learnings for us on our Advent Pilgrimage with Mary, as with her, we become “God Bearers” ...and begin to birth the “Divine Spark” within us this Christmas.

Saints, many of you have heard me use an expression that I learned early from some of the Indigenous Elders that have befriended me along the way. They told me early on, that when good things happen, or sometimes strange things happen, or when a prayer gets answered yet in some unexpected or goofy way...the saying goes, “Always be amazed, but never surprised.” Well, that was certainly the case this week with this very message that we offer to you today. I admit that I struggled mightily at first, trying to give birth to today’s learning. After an inspiring and relatively easy three weeks with everything developing smoothly and well, the gestation of my sermons was proceeding quite normally and without complication. Until today’s message. Today’s message was a stubborn, breech positioned, butt-first affair that no amount of pushing, straining or intellectual Pitocin could touch. This baby was stuck...determined to stay right

where it was. I tried to apply all my usual tools. I tried to be the Hollow Bone to open myself to whatever Creator had in mind. Nothing came. I had writers block, writers' cramp, and every other malady that unproductive writers develop. And then I remembered something else...something St Francis said. And that was..."until we have, we have done nothing." And so, I prayed. "Creator, I could really use some help on this one. I am stuck, empty, dry." And then I re-read Mary's words from today's Gospel from Luke":

***"Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your Word"***

And I re-read more from Luke, about Elizabeth's unlikely and rare pregnancy and the Angel's words stood out from the page:

***"For nothing is impossible with God..." Angel Gabriel***

And so, I waited. For what I didn't know. Perhaps a sign, an inspiration, a message or a messenger? And I waited some more.

Finally, on Thursday afternoon with no sign, inspiration, message or messenger appearing or even pending I thought I would help Mona over at the Babies In Need building. She was loading and unloading and was about to make a delivery and I asked her if I might ride along. I shared that Sunday's message was stuck awkwardly somewhere in the birthing canal and it hadn't moved for days. She casually asked what the Sacred Stories were about for Sunday and I shared with her today's amazing Gabriel story. Immediately she responded, "You should talk about the Messenger, about Gabriel and about all the different and varied messengers that Creator sends our way, that sometimes we hear, sometimes we ignore, or sometimes we don't even recognize. Let Mary rest for a while, she will need her strength later. Talk about Gabriel and The Messengers."

Boom! Right then and there was my "sign, inspiration, message and messenger" that I had been waiting and praying for. My homiletic "waters" finally broke and today's message emerged health, whole and happy.

And Saints, today it is a message about messages and messengers. About the many and varied ways that Creator attempts to communicate with us. Mona was my "Gabriel" last Thursday, but it isn't always so obvious. In fact, rarely does an Angel of the Lord appear, like in some Heavenly "Mission Impossible" segment and cherubically challenges us with..." your mission, should you choose to accept

it.” No, it is usually far more subtle, far more elegant and yes, often far more challenging to recognize. We acknowledge these many and varied messengers of God each week in our Eucharistic Prayer said at the Liturgy of the Table. We say...” Your Spirit speaks through Elders, Prophets, Sages and Saints in every age, to challenge us and to reveal again and again the Vision of Your New Creation”. Yes, Saint’s, God is not done talking to us. Creator has a lot more to say...and uses all different kinds of messengers to do this work. Messengers that as Mona said...” that sometimes we hear, sometimes we ignore, or sometimes we don’t even recognize.” And the list of Creator’s messengers is a lot longer than we acknowledge in our Eucharistic Prayer. Sometimes, no...even often the messenger may be a child, or an Elder, or a co-worker or even a “stranger”. A Messages that comes in a dream, or on the Wind, or riding in an unexpected letter from a loved one. That “blinding flash of common sense” that resolves conflict, that achieves clarity, creates consensus...that is delivered by the messenger of “silence”.

All sorts of unique, personal, simple and profound messages crafted by Creator and delivered by varied and diverse circle of messengers. Why, simply to help us...to help us “do the next right thing”; to help us make the next “best” decision possible; to stay true to our values and to our Baptismal Promises; to help us see each other as Relatives and as People, to help us “birth the Divine Spark within us” and yes...”to gather what is scattered”. Delivered by Angels? Yes, sometimes but not always. Be alert for both the trumpet blast and the whisper in the night. For the thunder and the nudge. Our job Saints, with Creator’s messages is this:

***First recognize the Creator both the Messenger and the Message***

***Then, listen to the Message***

***Next, hear the Message and take the time to understand***

***And finally, like Mary...receive the Message. Say Yes!***

Remember as Gabriel said: “Nothing is impossible with God”. And as Mary said: “Here I am, the Servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to Your Word.” And as the Elders said: “Always be amazed, but never surprised.”

