

GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A Companion in the Waiting

It is possible that not everyone who found out Mary was pregnant was as supportive as her cousin Elizabeth in our reading today. Since receiving the angel's message, Mary likely felt uncertain, worried, scared, and alone plenty of times. So, when she visited her cousin Elizabeth and received Elizabeth's blessing in words that echoed the angel Gabriel's announcement, it must have been comforting to Mary. Hearing Elizabeth's words of affirmation was a reminder to Mary that she was not alone in her journey and that God really was at work in her life.

At one point or another, we all need a reminder like this in our lives. It is not always easy to recognize God's presence or to see just how God is at work in and through us. And sometimes much waiting is required until we see the fulfillment of God's promises. That's why we need people in our lives who will believe with us when we feel less than certain, walk with us through uncharted terrain, and support and pray for us along our journey.

Our gospel presents us with two unlikely mothers. Their experiences remind us that knowing God is with us—and even that we have received God's favor—does not mean our lives will be without hardship. We will still encounter challenges, experience grief, and have our hearts broken. But it does mean that in our waiting, and in our struggles, we are not alone. Through those who wait with us, and through the promise of Advent, we are reminded that Emmanuel is here, and has been with us all along.

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